



WRITERSTALK

Volume 17
Number 12
December 2009

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

Holiday Bash

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008, 6–9 PM

(There is no December General Meeting)

POTLUCK DINNER

Please bring a dish according to your last name:

- A-H Main Dish
 - I-R Salad or Side Dish
 - S-Z Dessert or Appetizer
- Club will provide beverages.

GIFT EXCHANGE

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



LOCATION

Home of Betty Auchard

November Recap Larsen and Pomada

by Andrea Galvacs

Our prez Dave LaRoche started the meeting with the usual announcements, then called our attention to Carolyn Donnell, our member extraordinaire this month. She is a woman of many hats: she participates in blogs, takes photographs, contributes to *WritersTalk*, and is in charge of uniting people who need a ride to CWC-related events with people who can give them. And, on top of all this, she still has time to write poetry!

Following the other monthly introductions and announcements, Bill Baldwin introduced our guests, literary agents Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada, along with their associate Laurie McLean.

The Larsen-Pomada team has been in existence since 1972, helping people to publish their work. Their advice: agents and editors must be hooked by the first paragraph or even first sentence of a query letter. If these don't grab them, they won't even touch the manuscript. However, if they decide to give the manuscript a look, *it* has to appeal to them in the same way, right from the start.

What does it take to be a successful author? "Writing is an art", said Michael. "People see what they want to see."

Elizabeth pointed out that style is crucial. "Style is you; you cannot sound like somebody else." Feedback is also very important, and the more impartial the person giving it, the better.

This is a great time to be a writer. Publishing houses are in great flux and don't know what will happen in the

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President's Prowling

by Dave LaRoche
President, South Bay Writers

Are We Just First Sentences?

How many times have we heard this admonition: *The first sentence or paragraph must be a lollapalooza or you've lost the race before you're out of the blocks.* I'm tired of it—how about you?

I have another question I think is related.

Does anyone read literary fiction, or is lit fiction itself just a fiction? I am always intrigued by the agent's presentation, glib voice and charming sidekicks, but I don't get this: *it's all on the first page.* "An agent reads only until he can make a decision." Well, that makes sense, but thumbs up or down with the first sentence or paragraph? That must take some wild kind of insight.

Most of the authors I like—Russo, Doctorow, Atwater, Fitzgerald, Proulx, and the like—are stage setting in their first twenty pages, and even then, there isn't much of a "grabber." If you want a grab, finish the book—then it's a hug, and it lasts for a lifetime. I mean, these people win big and lasting awards, but according to agent-speak, they'd be out grazing on a hillside.

I ask myself what kind of a mind needs immediate titillation and that roller-coaster ride through the story; moreover, what kind of a life lends itself to that telling? Art doesn't just imitate life, it reflects it. We are about art and art about us. So then, are we all just "first sentences?"

Everywhere agents are complaining about the "pile." It's getting so high and mostly it's crap, and they only have time for a sentence. Well, truly, life is tough—we all work for our reward.

Digging in a bit, we hear, "Well, that grabber business applies only to genre." I wonder, if truth be told, if we are all, and only, genre readers and must have that juicy first sentence, the breathless dialog, one-page chapters, staccato voice, and the twisty-turning, globe-covering, sex-laden narrative dressed in green gauze and twinkles to read on. And if that's the case, why are my favorite authors on the best-seller list for months at twenty-eight bucks a copy?

Here's what I think about writing: do what you do well. Write a good book. It will be thoroughly gratifying. You'll believe in it and come at its marketing with passion, and the likelihood is that it will sell and endure. But if you contort your opening into that uncomfortable first sentence and a book full of glitter, it *might* get picked up by an agent—but you'll be loath to take serious credit, and I'll bet it won't make a second edition. WT



A novel idea! January will be the novel issue. Send *WritersTalk* a 600-word sample of your novel.

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

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Submissions

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

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Guest Columns

Almost Anything Goes (400 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs
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Creative Works

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

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Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

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Editor's Perspective

by Dick Amyx
Editor

The new is in



No, I'm not trying to get a jump on the new year. I'm talking about publishing here. What Katie Hafner said at our September meeting: "The old is out and the new is in."

The old, which is the system I grew up with, is to put yourself at the mercy of the publishing industry: write a book, find an agent, let the agent shop your book around for a publisher, and cut a contract with the publisher. (And then sit back and watch your book rise to the top of the charts.)

The new, apparently, is just about anything that isn't the old: self-publishing, print on demand, and e-books. At our November meeting, Elizabeth Pomada said that there's no longer a stigma associated with self-publishing. The pejorative notion of a vanity press doesn't exist any more. She also said that with the industry changing as quickly as it is, even the publishers are unsure of what's going to happen next, and that offers a new set of opportunities for authors. If you have a manuscript you're not having any success with by the old method, self-publish it and get on with your next project.

Although I understand the new technically, I have to admit that I can't really get a sense of it, wrap my arms around it, internalize it, somehow fit it into the same universe as the old. Late one evening, as I was once again puzzling over the new, I realized that I had these tools, facilities, or resources available:

- A website. I got the domain name in 1995 or so, I think—long before the Web was the province of everyman—under the guidance of a friend who was far more knowledgeable about such things than I was at the time. The domain name remained parked courtesy of the same friend (I didn't have a clue what parking a domain name meant) until amyx.org was launched in February 2001.
- Adobe FrameMaker. FrameMaker is a professional text manipulation program designed for making books. This is a leftover from a job I had between 2001 and 2003. It's a bit down-rev, but still quite serviceable.
- Adobe Acrobat. Acrobat is the software used to create Portable Document Files (PDF) from FrameMaker files. PDF files can be emailed directly to a printer for printing. I've had Acrobat around since about forever.
- A graphic artist. I can likely sweet-talk my son into creating a book cover design for me. He did our anthology cover, after all.
- An editor. I know a real good editor.
- A printer who does good work economically—the company that prints *WritersTalk* and that printed the SBW anthology.
- A blog. I installed a copy of WordPress on my website a little over a year ago in the process of helping Meredy install a blog on her website (meredyamyx.com).
- A PayPal account. I've had the PayPal account since just about forever, too.

I mention the provenance of these things to indicate that I didn't acquire them at the same time for any particular purpose. They're just sort of lying around, so to speak.

But what it means is that I have, right now, today, at my fingertips, the ability to publish, promote, and sell my own book. Extreme Self-Publishing, you might say. Heck, all I need now is a manuscript. WT

Blogging as a Platform for Publishing, Marketing, and Selling Your Writing

by Bill Belew

So, you have a blog. Now what? How do you turn your blog into a platform for publishing, marketing, and selling your writing? How do you use your blog to sell yourself as a writer? The answer is the same for newbies, oldies, and even old newbies.



Bill Belew
Contributing Editor

For the purposes of this article I will define a writing platform as a tool that serves these purposes:

1. To drive sales of your books
2. To prove your ability as a writer
3. To demonstrate to potential publishers that you have a following
4. To promote your book and to promote yourself as a writer.

A well maintained blog can be a great platform for a writer.

Suppose you have a book about a travel writer who digs up material for her books by working as a lady of the night at her different destinations.

If I wanted to attract attention to this book, I'd create a blog about prostitutes from all over the world and their schemes, the tricks of their trade, their appeal, or lack thereof. I'd research red light districts in every country in the world and introduce them to my readers one by one. And if I found that a high-profile politician, movie star, or some other newsworthy individual had been involved with a call-girl, I'd be all over it in my blog (not that politicians and movie stars in the US get involved with such folk, mind you.) My blog would be the "go-to" place for the topic of whoredom and dumb whores, and folk who get involved with them. I'd introduce famous ladies from history. I'd come up with some ideas of my own. And not a few folk interested in this topic would happen upon my site via search engines. Each day, the word "prostitute" is searched 1,636 times on Google. "Whore" is searched 3,631 times. "Red light district" is searched 656 times. If searchers were to put any of those words in a search engine

window and find you on the front page of the results, chances are good they would come to your site, no? And on your site there would be links, images, and introductions to your book about that travel writer mentioned above. And maybe, just maybe, you'd be able to sell more of your books.

Could you prove your ability as a writer? What if I were to write about the red light districts in Amsterdam, Prague, Budapest, Bangkok, Frankfurt, NYC, or Berlin (these, by the way, are the cities where folks are searching the most on this topic)? What if I were to write about the women who walk those streets and the men who find them there? What if I were to be able to churn out quality stuff consistently about this topic over the course of weeks, months, even years? Would I build an audience? Acquire a readership? Would I prove myself? Gosh, I might even come up with more and more material for my book or a sequel to it. Indeed, a blog done well is hard evidence of an exceptional writer. And the really good blogger gets folks to subscribe to his blog so that the subscriber can get everything he writes. It happens. I have more than 1,300 people subscribed to my blog sites. I know of a blogger who has 126,000 people signed up to get everything he writes in their emailboxes just after he hits send. I feel small.

Now, suppose I have been blogging for about a year and I have a few thousand regular visitors who just happen to find me via search or referral from other websites. Suppose I am good enough for a number of people to decide they want to receive notices via email of anything I write and that number reaches a thousand or more. A good blogger would then be able to determine the average age of those readers/finders, the sex ratio, their annual income averages, and even the continents on which they live and the time of day they come to the blog. There are tools on the net, some free, some for a fee, that will give this information. Do you think a prospective publisher would be interested to know that you could provide all this information?

Golly-gee, shucks—with all this information and this many people coming to your store, um, site, regularly, would you even need or want a publisher? You could sell your stuff directly.

A well-done blog is a great place to create a platform to market and sell your book. Indeed, it can be a tremendously valuable source of information for prospective publishers if you choose that route. Or you might be so easy to find that you could sell your book yourself.

The next question is how you get people to visit your blog site. I could tell you here and now, but then I'd have to shoot you. Or you could come to my workshop in January (shameless plug). Getting folks to your website is what I plan to cover in the workshop. Be there or be left behind. WT

New Members

by Jackie Mutz

Madeline McEwen-Askers joined South Bay Writers last month at her brother's urging all the way from Beijing, China. She said, "He told me to stop hiding and get out of the house." (Her brother is the author of *The Long March: The True Story Behind the Legendary Journey that Made Mao's China*. ISBN 10: 1-84529-255-3.) Originally from the UK, she has lived here for fifteen years where she enjoys "gardening in a country where everything grows without effort, a real Garden of Eden." A potter as well as a gardener and writer, Madeline's focus is writing mysteries or whodunits, and a critique group is possibly in order.

Although she finished her first novel eight years ago, and family life kept her busy after that, she carved out the time to complete her second novel. "Writing is great therapy," she said. You can contact Madeline by email at m.mcewen-asker@att.net.

Welcome, Madeline, and we hope to see you at the Holiday Bash this month. WT

Writecraft: An Object Lesson

by Lisa Eckstein

I'm writing this column halfway through November and halfway through this year's National Novel Writing Month effort. It's been a while since I worked on a first draft—about a year, as it happens—and the process of attempting to write 50,000 words this month is really driving home everything I talked about in last month's column.



Lisa Eckstein
Contributing Editor

Remember how I said that first drafts are terrible? I wasn't kidding. I also used the words *embarrassing*, *garbage*, and *flawed*. Check, check, and check. Boring parts? Out the wazoo. If my own advice is worth anything, I'm on exactly the right track and will end the month with a diamond in the rough just waiting to be polished in revision.

But during the first week of November, I didn't have much faith in that so-called wisdom I so blithely dished out in October. I had intended to write a novel about a woman dealing with aging parents and a failing marriage, problems that were sure to lead to many conflicts and therefore an interesting plot. Instead, I was composing the world's dullest manuscript about a woman driving from place to place, drinking coffee and making tea, checking Facebook, and having long inner monologues about her dissatisfaction with her marriage. Where were the unanticipated moments of brilliance that I'd promised would emerge if I sped through a first draft? All the moments in my novel were boring me to tears.

It took me until sometime in the second week of the month to figure out why I wasn't writing my way into any pleasant surprises: I wasn't embracing the unexpected. I wasn't even giving it a polite nod. Occasionally I can be stubborn, and in embarking upon this novel, I was determined that it would follow the character and situation I'd planned, even when I couldn't bring myself to write about a sick parent or to

care whether my main character had an affair with her conveniently divorced high school boyfriend. I believed I wasn't censoring myself since I was writing long passages that would be completely expunged if revision ever occurred. But I wasn't having any fun as I met my daily word count by writing pages of dialogue about how to play a video game. My novel was boring because I was bored.

Once I realized this, I threw myself at the unexpected. I interrupted my character's lengthy contemplation of the kitchen tiles by having the doorbell ring, and then I made myself decide what the stranger at the door wanted. The resulting conversation with an obnoxious neighbor wasn't exactly a work of literary genius, but it was the first really entertaining scene I'd written all month. I started to relax and run with wild notions. I wrote long flashback chapters to explore my main character's past and found it more interesting than her present. I began to consider the possibility that some small portion of my novel might be worth looking at again after November 30.

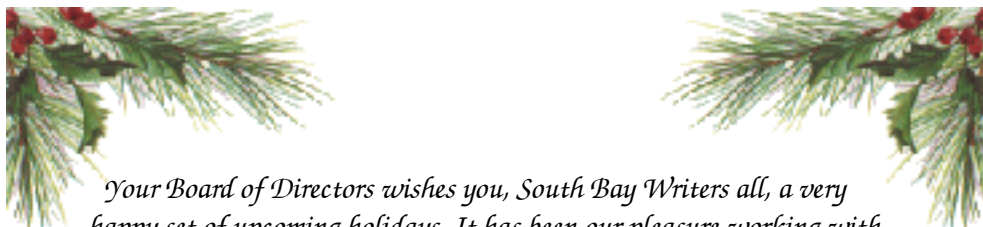
A few days ago, my main character's sister took over the narrative, and her story has captured my attention, at least for this week. I'm now writing a completely different novel from the one I set out to produce, and I'm finally enjoying myself. I've stopped questioning what brand of temporary insanity led me to extol the merits of writing a first draft in a month. It turns out it's a pretty good idea after all.

There are a whole lot of ways to approach a first draft, from having no plan to following a detailed outline to throwing away your original plot halfway through. But whatever your strategy, don't be afraid of pursuing the storylines you didn't plan for. And most importantly, don't forget to have some fun.

If you missed National Novel Writing Month and would like to try a novel in a month on your own, consider using one of these books as a guide:

- *No Plot? No Problem!* by NaNoWriMo founder Chris Baty takes you

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Your Board of Directors wishes you, South Bay Writers all, a very happy set of upcoming holidays. It has been our pleasure working with you this past year, and we thank you for that special opportunity.

This is a marvelous time of year, when doubts are put aside to let hope and charity abide. It is a giving time and a thankful time. It is a time for great joy and merriment among friends—and a time for true blessings. It is a time to take stock of our good fortune and to recognize our spiritual wealth—and it's time for a double shot of Jack Daniel's in our eggnog.

And soon another year will be upon us, presenting yet another "time" to consider

... but we'll talk about that later. For now, a Very Merry Christmas to you all.

Dave LaRoche, Bill Baldwin, Loureen Giordano, Rich Burns, Marjorie Johnson, Cathy Bauer, Edie Matthews, Marilyn Fahey, Ro Davis, Dick Amyx, Jamie Miller



Critique Groups: Swapping, Feedback, and Respect

by Becky Levine



Over the past few years and, more recently, as I researched my book *The Writing & Critique Group Survival Guide*, I've heard a lot of horror stories about writers whose work has been trashed in a critique group.

I've also heard, though less often and in much quieter voices, stories about critiquers who have had *their* work dismissed, scoffed at, ignored.

Obviously, neither of these scenarios makes me happy.

Respect in a critique group needs to be two ways. Okay, depending on the number of people in your group, maybe four or six ways! The important thing to remember is that, whether you're giving or receiving a critique, there's someone across the table who has worked hard to put together a manuscript or a solid chunk of comments and suggestions. And that work needs to be recognized and given its fair share of appreciation.

So, in case you've been a character in one of those horror stories, here are a

few tips for being a respectful critiquer and writer.

When You Critique

- Remember that the manuscript belongs to the writer. Your job is to help that writer produce the best story or nonfiction piece they can—the book *they* want. Make suggestions, give feedback, but don't push. Yes, a small nudge is okay!
- Always start with the positive. If you don't think you can find something good to talk about, look again. Think about the work the writer has put into the pages, the potential for character growth, the start of a lovely description. Now show those places to the author.
- Don't get irritated if the writer doesn't take every bit of your advice. There is a magic chemistry that happens between strong, respectful feedback and the writer's own ideas, and *that's* what's going to show up in revision, what's going to make the book better and better each time through.

When You Receive a Critique

- Listen. Don't argue, don't interrupt, and try to save questions until you've heard what all the critiquers have to say. Take notes to keep track of any thoughts of your own you want to bring up.
- Don't tell the critiquer they're wrong. Your critique partner has put serious

time and energy into their feedback, and dismissing their ideas is the equivalent of dismissing all that work. Besides, you may feel very silly, two drafts later, when you realize their comment was right on target!

- Give *serious* consideration to the feedback you receive, especially when you sit down to revise. No, you don't have to make every change that your critique partners suggest—the final yes and no belong to you. However, take a close look at all the comments, especially if you're hearing the same thing from more than one critiquer. You've come to this group looking for a few pairs of fresh eyes. Use them.

A critique group is not a committee; it's a community. One you want to belong to, and one you want to help build. Treat your partners in this community as you would ask them to treat you. Then sit back and watch your writing skills and projects grow.

The Writing & Critique Group Survival Guide will be released by Writer's Digest Books on January 15, 2010, and presented at a launch party on January 30 at 3:00 p.m., at Books Inc, 855 El Camino Real #74, Palo Alto. Everybody's invited! If you'd like to be on the Evite list as a reminder, send me a note at beckylevine@gmail.com WT

Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

I spent two mostly rainy weeks in the Portland area, where winter definitely made itself known. Of course, one hears about the overabundance of the threatening clouds and rain, but it was how the clouds seemed to hug the landscape that surprised me. It made me feel all cozy inside, like I wanted to take a nap. And so I did, almost every afternoon.

Usually in the morning as I reached for my coffee, there was a patch of blue and the somewhat sheepish smile of the sun.



Jackie Mutz
Contributing Editor

But it never lasted. Rain always followed, softly, "on little cat feet," a reminder that the temperature would drop and the wind would blow its loneliness over the landscape, sending leaves skipping down the path next to my parents' house. Yet even in the bleakness of such a shift in season, there was such an array of green foliage, so rich and varied in color it hurt the eye.

You may wonder what all this has to do with success in writing. Good writing starts with the ability to use your senses to take in what is around you; it has to do with observation and just plain noticing. For me, it is the first step in my own writing process, the start of painting the landscape of my thoughts and feelings with words.

Am I successful in my own writing

process? Sometimes, but not as much as I would like to be. This I do know: I am happiest when I am writing. It is my mental exercise; it moves me beyond the mundane and into the world of what if.

Now on to more practical things. Last month was NaNoWriMo, a chance to write a novel in a month. Did you participate? If so, how did you do? Let us know. We would like to hear about your experiences. And don't forget to email your good news about your own writing success stories. It is best to email accolades@southbay.com directly to get into the next month's column. Please be sure to include your name and email address if we need to contact you.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season. WT

To Really Hear

by Terry DeHart

He's driving in the Sierra Nevada with his wife and their small daughters and the girls are fighting and he can't take much more of it. But then he forgets all about his fighting girls and harried wife and underpaid work because he's being pulled down into the abyss of nothingness, void and without form. He escapes from his loud, messy days, but he does it the hard way. Tragedy and dread have brought him here, though he hasn't gone anywhere since the accident occurred. The accident hasn't happened all that long ago. In fact, he's still in the flashing-hot crashing of it, and only now seeing how things will end up.

The car has gone through the guardrail and they're falling. It's simple physics. They have no choice but to roll and bounce and shred. He's a high school physics teacher, a man of science, and so he understands these things. He really believes he does. But microseconds turn into hours and the violence hasn't reached him yet because he's protected by the car's seatbelt and airbags and stout safety cage. He can sense that it's not going well for his wife and their small daughters, who had taken off their seatbelts to allow more mobility in their argument. He tries to will the damage to himself, to take it all upon himself for his family, but all he can do is watch as the forces of nature tear them apart. He's horrified and fascinated by the kaleidoscopic flashing of carnage caused by equations he's written on chalkboards.

But he doesn't have a scratch on him, and that's the cruelest outcome of all. His thoughts of work and bodily needs and monetary expenditures and his longing for tranquility have disappeared. He wants to go back to the raucous time of squalling children and short-tempered wife. He wants to revel in the sounds of rote bickering, and if that isn't possible, he wants the accident to continue for all eternity so that at least they can be together. It's a miracle he asks for. He tries to pray, but he doesn't remember how. The car is still shredding itself against the stony precipice and his loves are gone now, he

can feel it, and he's never heard such quiet in all his life.

The tumbling continues and he knows that he's alone and that the violence won't come for him unbidden. And so, between impacts, he opens the car door and unbuckles his seatbelt. The jaws of nature clamp down on him and pull him into the maelstrom. He tastes rock and dust and the steely gush of blood, and then suddenly he's back in the car, driving the winding mountain road.

The sky is going yellow and silhouetting the pines and the guardrails and the rocky ridgelines, so that everything seems to be tall and two-dimensional and lovely. He wipes the wetness from his cheeks and sits up straight and drives carefully. His daughters are fighting over the last bag of potato chips. His wife is shouting at them to behave themselves, to please, please, please at least try to *pretend* to be civilized human beings. There are shrieks and wails and accusations and counter-accusations, and he's the happiest man who ever lived, to hear them. WT

This story originally appeared in Vestal Review, vestalreview.net, January, 2001.

Poets Please Take Note

by The Editor

In April, I installed a new disk drive in my computer with the aim of replacing the old drive before it failed.

Because I had a nice new drive, I wasn't diligent about backing up for four and a half months, and I got bagged. The new Maxtor drive failed.

The failure was not catastrophic—but it is with considerable embarrassment that I have to make public the news that I lost my backlog of poetry, the kinds of poems I usually use to fill spaces just about the size that this confession occupies.

If you poets would be so kind as to take a look at the *WritersTalk* cumulative index on the SBW website and sort on author name, you'll be able to see which of your poems I've published. And then if you would be so kind as to help me rebuild my poetry backlog, I'd surely appreciate it.

Dave LaRoche Receives Jack London Award

Periodically, CWC branches nominate one of their members to receive a Jack London Award in recognition of outstanding service to the organization.



California Writers Club president Casey Wilson presents SBW's Dave LaRoche with the 2009 Jack London Award. Photo: Cindy A. Pavlinac

In 2009, SBW honored Dave LaRoche for his many contributions to the branch and to CWC. As a new member, he took on the job of editing our monthly newsletter, *WritersTalk*, and transformed it into a publishing opportunity for our members. Dave built a staff of editors and columnists and cut time and costs of production, printing, and delivery.

Dave also helped SBW develop a budget to bring our expenses into line. Since 2007, Dave has been SBW's president and has used his team-building skills to make our branch bigger and better. He increased the number of workshops we present in his cause of providing more educational opportunities for writers.

He has served as our representative to the CWC Central Board, where he has fostered many ideas and projects to improve the club and keep costs in line at the state level. He was a founder of the CWC NoCal Association of the nine northern California branches to instruct and celebrate writers through branch collaboration and exchange.

For his positive impact on South Bay Writers and CWC, Dave LaRoche was our unanimous choice for the 2009 Jack London Award. Thank you, Dave, from all of us! WT

Spotlight

by *Dave LaRoche*

Carolyn Donnell is one member who knows with certainty that our branch does not run by itself, and at most every turn, is available to help or initiate. She is an active member, a poet and fiction writer, who believes as much in pitching in as in taking out.

Throughout my relatively short time with the branch, she has been a contributing editor for *WritersTalk*, and according to the two managing editors I am acquainted with, participates fully and generally makes the first move, no nudging required.

One of three founders of the Yahoo! Group, she now “owns” it, encourages membership, and of the current 87 now on the roll, is the single largest contributor—all her doing. (Visit groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthBay_Writers_Exchange/ to join.)

SF/Peninsula Branch Holiday Party Honoring Bay Area Literary Agents

**Saturday, December 12th
5:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.**

The Peninsula Regent
One Baldwin (at El Camino Real)
San Mateo, CA 94401
\$20 CWC Members, \$25 non-members
Hors d'oeuvres

No-host bar
RSVP at cwc-peninsula.org
CWC Hotline: 650 615-8831

Celebrating our 100th Year! Agents attending will include Amy Burkhart, Verna Dreisbach, April Eberhardt, Felicia Eth, Andy Ross, and Gordon Warnock.

Come schmooze and mingle with friends old and new and toast our partners in the literary game! Bay Area agents—where would we be without them?

One attendee will win the opportunity to promote his or her book in a YouTube video and on the TV show *Michael Killen on Creativity* (see killen.com).

With equal enthusiasm, she has populated the SBW Journal, our club's blog, with information about contests, workshops, seminars, trade shows, and other upcoming events. No one asked; she simply steps in, researches, and posts.

Undoubtedly you have visited our website's photo gallery, the only formal record of our informal activity. Of the 18 events currently recorded, 15 were photographed by Carolyn—527 photos well taken and posted.

Her recent endeavor, a ride-share exchange, resulted from requests from some of our members for help getting to meetings. Carolyn has taken on the task of coordinating this new feature, connecting those in need to those with rides to share.

Thank you, Carolyn Donnell, for your ideas and your willingness to implement them. WT

WANTED

Contributing Editor for *WritersTalk*

Lend your journalistic hand to the creation and production of *WritersTalk*.

As a contributing editor, you'll have the opportunity to write articles on topics of interest to you, report on activities within the writing community, take on occasional writing assignments, proofread or edit copy, hone your writing skills, AND enjoy a monthly powwow with the *WritersTalk* staff.

If you're interested, drop a note to

[newsletter@
southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

NaNoWriMo Halfway Party

by *Carolyn Donnell*

On Saturday, November 21, from 3:00 to 7:00, writers and non-noveling supporters took a break and went to the South Bay “NaNos at the Halfway Party.” (As they said on the website forum, “November 21 is more than halfway through the month, but ‘Two-Thirds Party’ doesn't roll off the tongue.”) Stephanie Neal and her husband have hosted several parties at their beautiful home in South San Jose. As always, this one included food, drink, and even noveling. Imagine, writers actually writing. What a concept.

Some reasons for going to a NaNoWriMo party:

- Behind on your word count.
- Stuck for ideas.
- Meet other writers.
- Find good food and company
- Win raffle prizes.
- Looking for an excuse to get out of the house.



Six South Bay NaNoWriters needed an excuse to get out of the house: David Strom, Lisa Eckstein, Carolyn Donnell, Diana Richomme, Suzette Gamero, and Karen Sweet.



Late-Breaking NaNoNews

SBW members Meredy Amyx, Carolyn Donnell, Lisa Eckstein, Suzette Gamero, Luanne Oleas, Diana Richomme, and Karen Sweet have crossed the finish line.

Gallery of Memories

by *Meredy Amyx*

A token gift for the baby shower was all Chloe could manage. She laid the picture frame on the mahogany dining table. She would wrap the gift, drop it off at the home of Linda's sister, and escape before any guests arrived.

"Gallery of Memories," said the label on the glass. Five windows displayed color prints to show customers what glad memories they could enjoy if they purchased this frame.

Who *are* these people? thought Chloe—these shining faces that appear in photo frames as surrogate loved ones, placeholders for your own? Where are these idyllic places that seduce your imagination while you contemplate your purchase? She stared at the five images showing through the windows of the mat. A charming young couple baring apple-white smiles. A rosy baby with a sunshine face. A bronzed windsurfer leaning into his sail through an arc of glistening spray. A tree-lined dirt road radiant with autumn colors, beckoning the viewer into the hazy golden distance. A dimpled girl in an antique dress and a broad-brimmed hat adorned with a cascade of ostrich plumes.

Professional obligations, she had said, begging off. With her demanding schedule of client therapy sessions and workshops, she was frequently busy on weekends. No one knew she was planning to hide out with rented movies and a bottle of wine until it was safely over.

Chloe ran her fingers over the polished rosewood frame. She truly hoped it would preserve wonderful memories for Randy and Linda. Much as she loved her brother and his wife, she couldn't bear the spectacle of their joy, which magnified her deprivation.

Her baby brother, about to become a parent.

Chloe shuddered as the thought surfaced. She had not risked getting close to any man, never mind bearing children of her own. The horror of her childhood was still too near. If Randy had made his peace, it was only because

she had shielded him from the worst of it, willingly paying the price for her brother's life of relative normality.

She had battled her demons through her years of education and professional training in hopes of healing herself even as she counseled her clients. Fiercely proud of all she had achieved, she knew that her pain had given her strength. Her authenticity was her gift to her clients, and it had not come cheap. Chloe's gallery of memories was bitter and fraught with anguish. Growing up in a run-down tenement, subsisting through college and graduate school on a part-time income, living like a pauper through her first decade of clinical practice while repaying her student loans, she had taken delight in little besides her relationship with her younger brother.

On the living room mantel, a palm-sized silver frame gleamed in the sunlight filtering through the leafy oaks that sheltered her broad lawn. Chloe crossed the thick carpet and picked up the picture.

Four-year-old Randy grinned at the camera, his laughing blue eyes reflecting his natural buoyancy. A mark above his left eyebrow was barely visible. The boy leaned against his seated fourteen-year-old sister, whose left arm draped protectively over his shoulder. Chloe wore a black skirt and her grandmother's white silk blouse. She had haunted gray eyes and long dark hair, and the smile that she had assumed for the photograph revealed more pain than it concealed. Her buttocks were raw that day from a whipping she had suffered the night before.

If she hadn't intervened, the mark on the boy's face might have been an injury traumatic enough to blind him.

It did not matter what Randy's offense had been; imagined was as good as real. Mother's rages needed no rational cause.

Chloe set the picture down gently and returned to the wrapping of the shower gift.

Her eye was drawn to the girl in the vintage gown and the picture hat. Something about the image seized her, something so compelling in the sparkling brown eyes and the blond curls. . . ah, yes, now she remembered. Great-

grandmother's dress. Dreamily she recalled how her grandmother had let her try it on, how she had grasped the brim of the hat as her grandmother snapped her ancient Kodak.

Chloe shook her head vehemently. What was she thinking? Somehow for a moment it was almost as though she remembered—

Remembered Tony on their honeymoon, sporting the waves in Maui while she watched from the beach. The brilliant day, the pulsing surf, the rush of heat that coursed through her body. The warm sand beneath her back at night. Tony!

Chloe had never known a Tony—had she? Were these her memories? Impossible. Strange—and impossible. Impossible, too, to look away from that radiant double portrait on the day of their betrothal, his hand touching her shoulder tenderly and confidently. The hazel eyes of the young man mesmerized her as they always had.

And then came Lucy, child of sweet smiles, dearest baby ever born. Chloe stared at the infant's photograph. Did she remember? Did she? Did she?

An ache of mellow sweetness clutched her throat as her gaze settled on the autumn path, the oaks and elms dazzling in ochre and gold, the maples ablaze with lustrous orange, crimson, and deep maroon. Rays of sunlight streaked across the amber trail where a wrought iron gate stood open beneath an arch of scarlet branches. A sharp breeze lifted Chloe's hair. In the distance a wisp of smoke twisted skyward from an unseen hearth. There, Chloe knew with a great swell of longing, there was home.

Home. Tony. Tony and Lucy. Their modest wood-frame dwelling, large in love and happiness, waiting just beyond the bend in the road. So intense, those memories, that Chloe could almost inhale the fragrant wood smoke borne toward her on the suddenly chill wind. Tears leapt to her eyes, and she reached out, extending her hand toward the image as if hope alone might transport her to that blissful place. Her fingertips touched the cold surface of the glass. She recoiled, jolted back to the solitary real. The vision dissolved like a reflec-

Continued on page 12

January Workshop

Saturday, January 23, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Lookout Inn, 605 Macara Ave., Sunnyvale (at the Sunnyvale Golf Course)

Bill Belew Blogging as a Platform for Publishing and Promoting Your Writing

A content-rich workshop that explores blogging as a platform for publishing and promoting your work.

This workshop will explain in practical ways—by the numbers and with real-world examples—how to create and maintain a successful blog.

Learn the four key elements to a successful blog, where success is defined as

1. Being able to answer these questions with confidence: “Who would be interested in your book?” or “What’s the market for your book?”
2. Having several thousand (tens of thousands) come to your site daily.
3. Having several thousand people subscribe to read anything you write.
4. Knowing the average age, sex ratio, salary, and continent where your readers live.

According to a recent Stanford workshop on publishing, “Over the past few years, a sea change has occurred within the publishing community. **Power has shifted from publishers to authors.** Today’s top authors also know not only how to write but also how to establish and maintain their voice in the marketplace of ideas.”

Participants who put into practice the lessons learned in this workshop can realistically expect to have 1000+ visitors (viewers) of their book ads at their websites within one year.



Early Bird Special—Register before January 3, 2010:

CWC members \$35; nonmembers \$45

After January 3 or at the door: CWC members \$45; nonmembers \$60

Students (24 and younger) \$35 with student ID

Registration fee includes continental breakfast and lunch

NOTE: cancellation in full, less \$5, before Jan. 16. Requests to dalaroche@comcast.net. No refunds after the 16th (hardship exceptions may apply).

Register online at southbaywriters.com

or clip and mail this coupon (or a copy of it) to

SBW Blogging

PO Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

Make check payable to South Bay Writers

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After Jan. 3 or at the door
CWC Members \$45
Nonmembers \$60

Student Registration
24 or younger, with ID
\$25

Mikhail

by Victoria Ballard

He stood in the center of the classroom and threw his hands and a pair of black stockings up to the heavens. "You think I am not man?" he bellowed at no one in particular. He threw off his white rabbit coat and slammed it to the floor, revealing a red windbreaker.

"Now, Mikhail, no one ever said anything about your manhood. I simply asked if you would like to take off that warm rabbit coat now that the heat is back on," I said, knowing he could see through the ruse. The real reason was that he was so busy playing with himself under the coat that he was disturbing the class, which was becoming aware of his shenanigans.

Later I received a call. He wanted to see me.

"I sue you for what you do to me," he mouthed, snarling his nose.

"And what was that?" I said steadily.

"You insult my manhood. Not think I a man."

"Look, Mikhail, you go see the Dean and make it quick," I said, knowing she spoke Russian.

"OK, I do," he said.

He began stalking me. First there was the elevator. Then the subway. He would lie in wait and then jump out from a corner and yell "Boo!" like a child. A few months later he began calling. How he got my private number, I don't know, since he had no friends in the office.

His next prank in class was to throw a handful of dollar bills into the air and stamp on them, screaming, "I hate U.S.! I hate U.S.!" Again, I asked him to go the Dean's and hoped this time he would be expelled, but enrollment was down, they needed the heads, this being a small English as a Second Language school.

A few weeks later, another call. "Miss Bennett, you insult me again. What is wrong with being gay and Mormon?"

He had to be kidding. Gay and Mormon? Mikhail? In class the next day, when the students brought in a favorite object to speak and write about, he

toted a lushly illustrated *Book of Mormon*. "I live with Mormon family first in U.S. Now I alone," he stammered. Was I supposed to have already known this? And what if I had? Was he crazy?

I was tired of him, so I was extra careful that the topic not stray toward religion too long. He would use it as an excuse to again insult the two pretty blonde Jewish doctors who had already suffered his jibes. But today he was busy looking down the blouse of the Dominican girl and then staring at the crotches of two Arab guys, who squirmed in their seats. The fire alarm went off, but no one moved an inch as flames enveloped us in our minds. It was only a drill anyway.

Then one evening, after a grueling day of meetings and subway traffic, I stumbled up the stairs to my walk-up and cautiously rounded the last flight. No Mikhail. He had never gone that far, but I could imagine he would if he got a hold of my address. I had stupidly given out my phone number at the beginning of the class for one student who sat next to him and seen him copy it down. At the time, I paid no mind, but now that the phone was ringing as I struggled with my keys, I had the gut level feeling it had to be the student. Everyone else I knew would have known better than to call so early ... or late. As I slammed the door behind me and locked all three locks, I nearly broke my leg getting to the phone. It was Mikhail.

"Miss Bennett. This is Mikhail. I not happy you insult my manhood. Maybe I still sue you. Maybe not. You know what I was think—" His voice trailed off, and it sounded as if he were calling from a bar. Then the phone went dead. I called the police.

A young policewoman came quickly. I explained what he had said and was going to tell her about his class behavior and the stalking when the phone rang again. I answered the phone. It was Mikhail. She took the phone. She listened, shifting her weight from one foot to the other and chewing gum. Finally she said, "Look. This is Lt. Martin. I've heard enough of your threats to Mrs. Bennett and what you just said, that you would sue her if she didn't come up with two thousand dollars is called a crime. That's C-R-I-M-

E. You try calling again and you may be looking at jail, buddy. Got that?" She hung up abruptly, and I could still hear him whining away as only Mikhail could whine. WT

Midwest Summer Rain

It begins like gossip.
Before you realize it
it's all you hear.

Each drop racing
to fill the crater
left by the last.

Steady, uniformly
without rhythm.

It comes down like sand
from a kid's beach bucket—
the deluge is a blur.

Then a shower . . .
a mist . . .
a fragrance . . .
and it's gone.

— Kent Werges

A great Christmas gift!



South Bay Writers Anthology

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Command

Here is a blank sheet,
Stark in its nakedness,
Blanched.
Yours to fill, to enhance.
It waits expectantly with a calm
smugness
That dares you to bring words to
surface.

Words that sing of truth and fire,
Words to awe, perhaps inspire.
Born of turmoil, pain, and tears,
Worn thin and fragile through the
years.
Revelations, speculations,
Offered with trepidations.
Small truths torn from deep within.
Go ahead. Strike the keys. Begin.

—F. Srmek Schorow

Larsen and Pomada

Continued from page 1

future, so they are scared. What will it be: Kindle, e-books, printed books? Writers must take advantage of this uncertainty because it creates opportunities. To find them, Michael recommends reading *Publishers Weekly* and blogs.

Since the advent of print on demand it is easier than ever to get published. Before embarking on a self-publishing project, though, it is crucial to know what one wants, to have a goal, and to test the market for one's genre. These days it is just as important to know how to promote one's book as it is to write it.



SBW President Dave LaRoche (left) with November speakers Elizabeth Pomada, Laurie McLean, and Michael Larsen. Photo: Carolyn Donnell

Online publishing is a good way to make oneself known because people who read one's book online will recommend it via the same medium, and this is a powerful tool to sell a book. It certainly is faster to become known online, as it may take at least two years from the moment one has an idea until the book hits the stores.

The attendees' tables had two hand-outs provided by Michael and Elizabeth. One of them was a list of words used in everyday speech but applied to the writing and publishing business. Called "From Advance to Zeal, Words and Ideas You Need to Know to Become a Successful Author." People asked the meaning of a few; my favorite one was "747," which means getting the book off the ground. The other hand-out was full of good advice.

To show their goodwill our guests played a game. Each of those who wanted to participate handed them a pitch, query letter, or 250 words of a fiction or nonfiction piece. Elizabeth and Laurie read them out loud and then announced the winners, who received

prizes. For the best nonfiction pitch, Vickie Wynne took home Michael Larsen's *How to Get a Literary Agent*; for best pitch for an unpublished book in twenty-five words or fewer, it was Luanne Oleas, who was given *Guerrilla Marketing for Writers*, by J.C. Levinson, R. Fridman and M. Larsen; and Gisela Zebrowski won for the best first 250 words of a novel, and she went home with *How to Write a Book Proposal*, by M. Larsen.

Having Michael, Elizabeth and Laurie as our guests was entertaining and very helpful. Their website is larsenpomada.com and you may contact them at larsenpoma@aol.com. WT

I want to write books that
unlock the traffic jam in
everybody's head.

—John Updike

Gallery of Memories

Continued from page 9

tion in a pond, almost deceptive enough to entice her beyond her depth, and then—fantasy exposed, she was freed of its seductive spell.

No luminous dreams could lure her away from the self that was hers, built of her own true memories, which made her who she was and no one else. Memories that had cost her dearly and that now, amazed, she clasped to her breast like a treasure.

Chloe pried off the back panel of the picture frame, removed the glossy sheet of paper imprinted with five full-color images, and slid the panel back into place. The frame and mat stood empty, ready to receive real memories, the happy future of Randy and Linda and of their little one to come.

As she crumpled the sheet of stock images and tossed it away, Chloe's gaze fell on the road glowing with autumn color. A faint aroma of wood smoke drifted across the horizon of her mind. WT

Writecraft

Continued from page 5

through the theory and practice of writing a novel in the spirit of fun and word count, unencumbered by your inner editor.

- *First Draft in 30 Days* by Karen S. Wiesner offers a more formal method, including outlining techniques and planning worksheets.
- *Book in a Month* by Victoria Lynn Schmidt presents another workbook-based strategy.

Or meet up online with other writers attempting a novel in January at JanNoWriMo: ymakadomain.com/janno WT

Second International Plot Writing Month

SBW member Martha Alderson is offering plot hints for working with first drafts created during NaNoWriMo. Check it out at plotwhisperer.blogspot.com/

Depth Charges

Placid lagoon like
breeze dancing rippled shallows
just off the rocky shoals
of Fitzgerald
Marine Reserve.

Undersea battles.

Never before
have I seen
migrating
pelicans
making
elegant
exploding
white water splash
power dives,
usually alone,
occasionally in tandem
simultaneous
meticulously choreographed
frothing pairs,
to hunt their
hidden
submerged
aquatic foes:
their prey,
their food.

—Stephen C. Wetlesen

© 2009 Stephen C. Wetlesen

Five Gorgeous Girls

by Forrest “Woody” Horn

I REMEMBER the first time, but not the last, that I went to a burlesque show in Columbus, Ohio. A burlesque theater was one amenity that my home town, West Lafayette, Indiana, did not have. If it did, they kept it well hidden from me. Therefore, I was deprived—or was it depraved—of this rapidly fading facet of Americana. That was until 1951, when I transferred my scholarly pursuits to Ohio State University.

Shortly after school got under way, some of my dorm’s old-timers offered to introduce the newcomers to the time-honored tradition of attending the scandalous burlesque—better known to aficionados as a “hoochy coochy show.” On that maiden voyage to the burly-Q there were about six sophomoric recruits and maybe two or three seasoned veterans. We novices were assured, it’s even better when attended in numbers, not to mention, a hell of a lot safer.

This turn-of-the-century theater on South High Street had obviously seen better days. The weather-worn facade had been jazzed up with neon lights that buzzed noisily and flickered erratically, and some of the graffiti on the walls promised much more than was advertised.

These minor imperfections seemed incidental to the eager initiates, who stared bug-eyed at the chipped gold-framed poster displaying glossy photos of five “Gorgeous Girls” just waiting to entertain us. We probably drooled more like adolescents than the young college scholars we should have been.

With our collars turned up for protection from the chilly night air, we entered the darkened theater during the middle of a comedy sketch. We carefully made our way down to the front for the benefit of one of our nearsighted members, and took seats in the second row. Since everyone was kinda tired from studying so much, we all slouched down in our seats like the other respectable patrons.

One of the performers, dressed in the shortest nurse’s uniform imaginable, was assisting some toothless “old coot”

playing a doctor, who wore a reflector on his head and a stethoscope around his neck. They were giving another very buxom “beauty” a rather extensive physical exam. I believe the patient had come to the doctor’s office with some minor ailment, like a pimple on her nose.

Even under all those layers of makeup, it was apparent that these “girls” were no spring chickens. The jokes were ridiculously corny with almost every line having some sexual innuendo. The actors—I use the term loosely—generally delivered their ribald repartee with punctuations from a bleary-eyed drummer in the orchestra pit, *da-da-dum!*

The next act featured one of the strippers. She seemed young enough, but was kinda full-figured for an exotic dancer. She didn’t really dance, just sorta slunk back and forth across the stage to music from the rinky-dink band, while indifferently removing her costume of sequins and feathers, until she got down to only pasties and a G-string. Her grand finale was getting those pendulous beauties to rotate in opposite directions. Unquestionably, these were talented performers. Unfortunately, she lost her rhythm, and her marvels collided in the middle, *da-da-dum!*

The curtains closed and it was intermission. When the house lights came on, we cautiously peeked over our shoulders to check out the other patrons of the arts. The audience was composed of a few “strange” couples, some more students and a lot of empty seats. Two of my buddies recognized a couple of blushing coeds seated a few rows behind us. From the way they slouched down in their seats, I decided that they must have been tired, too, from studying so hard. Or maybe they were just reviewing their notes for a research paper.

In the glaring house lights, we could see the torn and tattered seats, scraps of refreshments splattered on the floor, and a gossamer layer of dust coating everything in sight. The proscenium curtain showed signs of poorly mended seams and threadbare spots where the backstage lights peeked through. Some unwelcome source provided a chilling breeze that replaced the stale air with a

sickly sweet aroma.

The only enjoyable part of the intermission was the hawkers in the aisles. Like carnival barkers they hustled overpriced Cracker Jack boxes, which usually sold for a nickel, “Two-bits each or five for a dollar! Many of these specially packed cartons,” they promised the suckers, “contain diamond rings, 21-jewel Swiss watches or other priceless prizes.” Worthless would’ve been more accurate. Obvious “plants” in the audience jumped up and claimed they got one, but no one I knew ever did or even expected to.

When the house lights dimmed, the five-piece band resumed its futile struggle to play in the same key. The curtain rose on the second show, which continued to alternate between comedy sketches and the featured strippers. The “rosy” stage lighting returned our visual perception to the mythical image that Hollywood had given burlesque—provided we overlooked the coffee stains on the comedian’s baggy pants or the snags in the girls’ fishnet stockings, *da-da-dum!*

The stripper who had played the nurse earlier must have been old enough to be my Aunt Methuselah. This gal, or should I say this matron, was so skinny you could count her ribs as well as the varicose veins in her legs. Earlier, I had assumed that her thick spectacles with large ornate frames were part of her bizarre nurse’s costume. Since she wore them when stripping, I concluded that they were necessary to keep from falling into the orchestra pit, *da-da-dum!*

Obviously, our field-trip to the burlesque didn’t turn out to be quite as glamorous as I had anticipated. Next time, I planned to sit farther back to see if that would give me a better perspective. For now, I headed back to the campus with my manly education . . . enhanced, even though it was a bit disappointing. Meanwhile, I couldn’t help wondering what happened to those young “gorgeous girls” pictured out front—probably in their prom photos, *da-da-dum!* WT



Directory of Experts

Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? Send a message to networking@southbaywriters.com or to the club post office box and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.

Asia, Japan, China, Russia

Bill Belew
belew@panasianbiz.com

Astrology, Singing

Sara Aurich
saraaurich@comcast.net

Astronomy, History of Astronomy

Bob Garfinkle
ragarf@earthlink.net

Character Development

ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.
ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net

Counseling

Dr. Audry L. Lynch
GLYNCH7003@sbcglobal.net

Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace

Jerry Mulenburg
geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net

Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up

Martha Engber
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marthaengber.blogspot.com

Hiking, Backpacking, Scuba, Bicycling, Classic Cars, Running

Rick Deutsch
MrHalfDome@gmail.com; 408-888-4752

Hospital and Nursing Environment

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Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/ Psychology

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Profile Writing

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Real Estate, Horses, Remodeling, Southwest History

Reed Stevens
reedstevens@earthlink.net; 408-374-1591

Teaching and the Arts

Betty Auchard
Btauchard@aol.com

Television Production

Woody Horn
408-266-7040

USMC and NASA/Ames

Terry DeHart
tdehart@earthlink.net

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

January 16 through July 15
July 16 through January 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.

CWC Around the Bay

These are the published meeting times and locations for the other 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

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

Fremont: Meets (except in July, December, and on holiday weekends) from 2-4 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of the month at Mountain Mikes Pizza, 35760 Fremont Blvd., in the Brookvale Shopping Center, one block south of Decoto Road in Fremont. Contact: Bob Garfinkle ragarf@earthlink.net or (510) 489-4779

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

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

Redwood: Meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month (except for holiday weekends), from 3-5 p.m. at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa.
redwoodwriters.org

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

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

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December		1	2 7P Board Meeting LaRoche residence	3	4 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza, San Jose	5
6	7	8 6P Annual Holiday Bash Home of Betty Auchard	9	10	11 7:30P Open Mic Borders Books Santana Row, San Jose	12 11A Editors' Powwow
13	14	15	16 WritersTalk deadline	17	18 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	2009	
Future Flashes		January 12 6P Regular Dinner Meeting Gerard Jones				January 23 8:30A-2:00P Blogging Workshop Lookout Inn

Stay Informed!

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

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

Check out the new
South Bay Writers
Blog
southbaywriters.com
Click SBW Journal—Blog

SBW Poets

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

South Bay Writers Anthology



\$12.50 + 9.25% sales tax
At the meeting.
On the website.
southbaywriters.com

Other Open Mics

Thursday Gig

Third Thursday, 6:30–9:30 p.m.
411 E. Campbell Ave., Campbell
Stone Griffin Gallery

10Ten Gallery

Last Friday, 6:30–10:00 p.m.
1010 E. Taylor St., San Jose
Al Preciado's home

Poets@Play

Second Sun. 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
1650 Senter Rd., San Jose
Markham House History Park

Poetry Center San Jose Readings

Art Object Gallery
1st Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
(September–May)
592 North Fifth St., San Jose

Willow Glen Library
2nd Mondays, 7:00 p.m.
1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose

Free admission.

See pcsj.org for details.



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

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

No General Meeting in December. Come to the Annual Holiday Bash instead. See the front cover for directions.



January will be Novel Month. Send *WritersTalk* 600 choice words from your published novel, your unpublished novel, or your NaNoWriMo novel.

