



May Speaker - Alice LaPlante

## When Reliable and Unreliable Voices Collide

By Colin Seymour

Point of view is one of the most exacting elements of writing. A point-of-view miscue can generate deal-breaking disrespect from agents and editors.

It's safe to assume, therefore, that we primarily unpublished authors strive to be reliable narrators.

That's why Alice LaPlante will be exposing us to unreliable narrators as SBW's May 10 dinner speaker. Some of her pointers will be of the "don't do this" variety, but she's also fascinated by the consequences of bucking conventional wisdom concerning reliability.

In fact, her soon-to-be-published novel *Turn of Mind* "is a murder mystery told from the point of view of the murderer, who has Alzheimer's disease," LaPlante says, "so she's a very unreliable narrator."

LaPlante thus makes the 2010-2011 season's third presentation on craft, a sequence that began with Tanya Egan Gibson's "world-building" concept of creating settings and continued with Nora Profit's "Think/Feel" system for structuring your narratives and scene-building.

"According to the conventions of fiction," LaPlante says by way of definition, "a third-person narrator always tells the truth."

LaPlante's focus on "reliability," which definitely is a fundamental part of point-of-view analysis, drove me to Wikipedia, I must confess. "Reliability" doesn't get much P.R., even among writers.

But most of us are aware of it anyway, says LaPlante, a onetime Wallace Stegner Fellow whom many of you may know as a creative writing teacher at Stanford

*continued on page 6*

## 7 Reasons Why Blogs Include Numbered Lists

by Luanne Oleas

People will read articles named 5 Ways to Lose Abdominal Fat or 10 Reasons to Bring an AK-47 to Work while ignoring one entitled Reading This Could Save Your Life. But why?

Here is the numbered list that will tell you all about numbered lists:

1. There is an end in sight. If there 10 ways to cook a skunk, you can be sure that after reason #10, it's over.
2. You can read the items in any order. Skip around. The subject won't change. You won't get lost.
3. White space. People love white space. It helps them feel like they are reading more than they are.
4. You don't feel obligated to get to the end. This isn't great literature. It's a list.

*continued on page 4*

## How to Write a Novel with No Dull Parts

by Victoria M. Johnson

Alfred Hitchcock once said that drama is life, with the dull bits cut out. I've yet to find a better statement that describes a valuable writing goal for a novel: write a dramatic story with the dull parts taken out. If you accomplish this goal, your novel will be compelling, un-put-downable, and memorable. No one wants to read dull narrative so why waste your valuable time writing dull scenes or boring conversations or worse—prolonged internal monologues that go nowhere? Instead direct your energy on writing a story with energy.

*continued on page 7*

## David Rasch

### Recap of April Meeting

by Jackie Mutz

### Overcoming Writers Block and Procrastination

Have you ever had the overwhelming urge to do just about anything but what you should be doing, which is writing? David Rasch, Ph.D., Central Coast CWC President and psychologist with over twenty years of experience helping writers overcome problems

*continued on page 5*

# Write & Rewrite - Setting the Scene

by Lisa Eckstein

When writing a story, whether a work of fiction or a nonfiction narrative, it's a good idea to describe the setting of a scene so the reader can imagine where the action is taking place. Here's an attempt at doing that:

Nora walked into her old childhood room. It looked almost the same as when she left home twenty years earlier, from the pale pink carpet to the eggshell paint on the walls and ceiling. To the right of the doorway, alongside the wall, was a single bed covered in a comforter with a green and black abstract pattern. Opposite the foot of the bed stood a tall pine dresser with six drawers. The dresser top displayed a collection of glass animal figurines arranged on a piece of blue silk. To the left of the dresser was a window framed by pale green curtains, and to the left of that, an oak desk with three drawers on one side and a hutch on top with two shelves.

The writer has described Nora's old room in painstaking detail, so the reader should have a clear mental picture of what the character is seeing, right? Well, probably not, because chances are, the reader skimmed past this paragraph, fell asleep, or threw the book away.

A powerful description goes beyond cataloging every object visible in a scene. It shows the reader what's important in the setting while providing insight into a character. Learn to create effective descriptive passages, and you'll keep readers engaged and paying attention to every word.

When you write a scene, you may know exactly what the setting looks like. Perhaps it's a real place, or it's based on a location that's familiar to you, so you find it easy to record all the details of the surroundings. Before listing every attribute indiscriminately, consider what's relevant to the story. Does the reader need to know that the carpet is pink? If Nora resents that she automatically got the pink bedroom because she was a girl, then maybe so. Can the reader understand the scene without knowing the positions of the furniture? Unless a ninja is about to

burst through the window and engage Nora in combat while hopping from dresser to bed, it's unlikely to matter how the reader pictures the layout of the room. Since the reader will assume a bed in a bedroom, do you even need to mention it?

In any setting, real or imagined, not all features are equally prominent or interesting. Mention the intriguing and unexpected elements. Focus on aspects that the character notices first, what he has feelings about, or details that contribute to the plot. By all means describe the flooring if the shiny hardwood makes your protagonist happy every time he walks into the room or if later in the story he's going to slip on the polished surface and break his neck. But when an unremarkable characteristic can remain unspecified, leave it to the reader's imagination.

The best way to write descriptions that readers won't skip over is to make the passages about character as much as setting. The example paragraph is dull because of the excessive bland details, but another shortcoming is that it reveals nothing of how Nora feels about what she's seeing. Does she have a pleasant nostalgia for her old room, or is she returning to a place she never wanted to visit again? Are there good or bad memories connected to any of the objects? Does she spot any surprising changes? How is Nora's perspective on this setting unique?

Rather than visualizing a setting objectively, look through the eyes of one of your characters. The way he responds to a location depends not just on its characteristics but also on his own. He'll react differently to a familiar place than to one he's never been in before. Maybe something previously happened to him at this spot. Maybe he has current needs or desires that the setting either helps him achieve or makes more difficult to attain. By describing the details that have significance to the character, you'll give the reader information about the character's personality and history at the same time as you illustrate the world you envision.

Let's go back to Nora's room:

Nora walked into her old childhood

room. It was so unchanged that she began to laugh, though it depressed her that her mother hadn't altered the room in twenty years. Nora sat down on the bed, with the green and black comforter she'd chosen at thirteen because she believed the abstract pattern signaled her maturity. She'd been glad at that age to get rid of her pink flowered bedspread, but unfortunately the matching carpet had been too expensive to replace. Nora moved to the dresser and inspected the collection of glass figurines. She'd never cared about them enough to justify packing them for her move cross-country, and she was surprised by how much it delighted her to find the delicate little animals still here.

Find a description in your own work to rewrite, and ensure readers won't ever think about setting your book down! WT

---

## South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10

At the meeting.  
On the website.

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

# SAGE ADVICE -Astrology: Resources and Comments

by Sara Aurich

## Introduction

Astrology is an ancient tradition that suggests planets and stars influence our lives. When considering astrological charts, the planets and luminaries (sun and moon) represent raw energy, astrological signs filter the expression of raw energy, and astrological houses represent areas of life in which filtered energies will likely have greater influence. In addition, certain angular relationships (called aspects) between astrological bodies and/or calculated points are also thought to influence how planetary and luminary energy is expressed.

Because the study of astrology is complex, I feel providing a variety of informational resources and a few comments will be more useful to writers than a brief discussion of any one subtopic.

## Best Astrology Website

If you want to research western astrology, go to [www.astro.com](http://www.astro.com). This site offers educational information, free chart interpretations, and daily forecasts specific to your birth data. For more experienced astrologers, this site will cast many different types of charts and provides access to an extensive data bank.

To get the most out of your site visit, have your birth data on hand: the year, month, day, time recorded on your birth certificate, and the city or town in which you were born.

## Want to Read More? Try...

- The Art of Chart Interpretation by Tracy Marks
- The Art of Predictive Astrology by Carol Rushman
- Astrological Voids by Janis Huntley
- Astrology, A Comprehensive Guide to Classical Interpretation by Kevin Burk
- Astrology, A Cosmic Science by Isabel M. Hickey
- Dynamics of Aspect Analysis by Bil Tierney
- Fixed Stars and their interpretation

by Ebertin-Hoffman

- Horary Astrology Plain & Simple by Anthony Louis
- Horoscope Symbols by Robert Hand
- The Only Way to Learn Astrology Vols. 1-3 by Marion March & Joan McEvers
- Planets in Transit by Robert Hand
- The Twelve Houses by Howard Sasportas

## A Few Comments

Astrology uses symbols, and each symbol has many different meanings; thus chart interpretation can be as much an intuitive process as it is an understanding of the traditions and data upon which astrological forecasting is based.

It's important to remember that if a trait appears once or twice in a chart it may or may not be significant; if it appears three or more times, it is almost always significant. Also remember that when timing events, if the sun (natal or transiting) is not in simultaneous aspect to the natal planet being transited, an event is unlikely to occur.

Charts are as unique, complex, and interesting as the people they represent, and it has been my experience that no person's chart is more fortunate than another's. We each have opportunities and challenges that are represented by the location of planets and luminaries at specific moments in time.

Although astrology is considered by many to be a valuable source of information, charts and forecasts should never be the sole source of important decision making. WT

## Nominations are open for SBW office.

See article, page 15.

## Directory of Experts

*Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? Send a message to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.*

### Asia, Japan, China, Russia, Blogging

Bill Belew  
[wbelew@gmail.com](mailto:wbelew@gmail.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)

### Banking

Pam Oliver-Lyons  
[polpap@prodigy.net](mailto:polpap@prodigy.net)  
Character Development

### ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

[ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net](mailto:ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net)

### Engineering: Mechanical,

### Aero, Aerospace

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

### 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)

### Library Science

Molly Westmoreland  
[mulcarend@hotmail.com](mailto:mulcarend@hotmail.com)

### Mathematics: Teaching and History; Fibonacci Sequence

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

### Knitting, Harp

Danita Craft  
[blue2eternity@me.com](mailto:blue2eternity@me.com)

### Teaching and the Arts

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

### Music, Art, Graphics

Benjamin Belew  
[mephistoape@hotmail.com](mailto:mephistoape@hotmail.com)

### Hiking, Biking, Scuba, Classic Cars, Motorcycling

Rick Deutsch  
[mrhalfdome@gmail.com](mailto:mrhalfdome@gmail.com)

### I am an expert too, in...

Your Name  
Your email address

# Betty Auchard at Friends of the Saratoga Libraries

by Carolyn Donnell

On Wednesday, April 6, 2011, Friends of the Saratoga Libraries featured South Bay Writers Club author Betty Auchard in their Author Series. I arrived at the community room at the Saratoga Library at 10:00 a.m. to find over 25 people already seated and waiting eagerly for Betty to talk about her latest book, *Home For The Friendless*.



Betty published her first book, *Dancing In My Nightgown* several years ago. That book began with a compilation of the notes she started taking after losing her husband. She called it journaling on junk, writing on anything handy – old envelopes, napkins, etc. Some days she didn't even get dressed, just stayed in her nightgown, hence the title. Since then the book has been transcribed to audio/CD and translated to Spanish.

Those successes encouraged her to continue writing. *Home For the Friendless* came from the experiences of her unconventional family life during the Great Depression. Betty relates how her parents married and divorced several times, throwing the children into the homes of relatives and finally into the *Home for the Friendless*, where “they enjoy three meals a day, indoor plumbing, a grassy playground, and plenty of holiday parties.”

The enthusiastic audience asked Betty many questions, such as “how long were you in the Home, were you bitter

about being there and how did you manage to survive into early adulthood relative unscathed?” Several people told Betty that her stories trigger memories they thought they'd forgotten.

Betty encourages everyone to record the own stories, saying, “No one can tell your stories but you. When you die your stories will go with you. Our stories connect us to our descendents.”

Betty Auchard is the recipient of an IPPY Award for *Dancing in my Nightgown: The Rhythms of Widowhood*. This book has also been endorsed by celebrity widows Jayne Meadows and Rosemarie Stack. Her stories and

essays have been published in the San Jose Mercury News, *Today's Senior*, and *Chocolate for a Woman's Soul* series. Betty lives and writes in Los Gatos, California.

Betty's next speaking engagement in the Bay Area is on Saturday, May 14 • 2:00pm - 3:30pm in Milpitas. Keep up with Betty on her blog at <http://betty-auchard.com/blog/> or find her events on FaceBook at Betty Auchard, author. WT

*Preview of  
Bringing Down The Wall*

## 7 Reasons continued from page 1

The 6 best practical jokes may be listed, but you can stop at #3 and go buy a whoopee cushion.

5. You always know how close you are to the end. Web pages, articles, and blogs can go on forever. Numbered lists? Not so much.

6. By item #6, you know if there is any point in continuing. Maybe the author provided 5 really lame reasons to sleep with pigs, but if reason #6 is lame too, you can stop reading. {Wait! You only have one more to go.}

7. Our world is chaotic. Numbered lists give a sense of order to the universe. If there are 10 ways to salvation, all is right with the world. If you have to struggle through a Bible, a Kuran, or stone tablets – oh wait, that was a numbered list. Anyway, life is unpredictable enough. Who needs unending stress?WT



## David Rasch

*continued from page 1*

with productivity, asked the SouthBay group this question. Most admitted to being guilty of some form of procrastination in order to avoid writing: doing the dishes, housework of any kind, pacing, and prolonged research to name a few.

Dr. Rasch first took an interest in the complex issues around writers block and procrastination while working at Stanford counseling professors who had difficulty producing academic pieces for publication, an often competitive and stressful part of academia. This led him to ask the question: Why is writing so hard for some people?



The mechanics of writing are complex. It is a skill that requires capability and training which in our culture is a luxury. While as Rasch said, "it's a fortunate problem to have," fear around writing can cause all sorts of anxiety and dread. Writing can be very satisfactory but there is a downside in that it is a solitary and often lonely endeavor. It also can leave one feeling especially vulnerable to scrutiny by others. There are life demands—how to fit writing into a schedule and finally, the inability to focus or chaos in one's head. Put all this together and you have a good case of writers block.

Intrigued, Rasch researched the topic on writers block, sharing ideas of how to break this cycle in therapy world. He came up with what he calls The Wheel of Suffering, a series of steps where procrastination impedes the writing process. Setting unreasonable goals, delaying the starting help create feelings of fear, anxiety and resentment because no writing has taken place. A pep talk of sorts takes place, in which the writer promises to do better, but still avoids writing, creating more anxiety and self-criticism. But there is no satisfaction upon completion. Disappointment is followed by rationalization that next time the process will go better. How then does a writer go about changing bad writing habits and make the writing process a more positive and

productive experience? By changing the behavior with regard to the individual writing process, which is different for each of us. Taking a cue from behavioral psychology, Rasch suggests writers start small with a habit that is self-reinforcing, such as writing for ten minutes every day. The ten minute process in a short time becomes a realistic goal, one that is easier to accomplish than one so unrealistic failure is inevitable.

Establishing a new writing behavior takes some time. Being willing to look at those uncomfortable feelings around writing such as fear and avoidance, those "conditioned thoughts," once they are identified can be diffused so they do not get in the way of successful writing. When the negative feelings around writing come up, it is important to recognize unreasonable expectations, remember successful writing experiences, relax the rigid writing rules and "temper perfectionism with conscious relaxation." And don't be afraid to seek assistance if you need further help, Rasch said if you need it.

In order for a project to be successful, Rasch suggests writers break it down into smaller increments in order to make it more manageable and ward off the neuro-anxiety around the act of writing itself. Before sitting down to write have some sort of plan or map of the subject matter. As he notes, "writing difficulties are as different the individuals who experience them."

Finally, to make writing a more positive experience, look for feedback to help you write better. Seek progressive exposure for your writing, plan on criticism and rejection as part of the writing process. See constructive criticism as a means to improve your writing. And if you receive a rejection letter of a submittal, have a resubmission plan. Most important, make sure you have support of other writers. Or pick up David Rasch's book *The Blocked Writer's Book of the Dead: Bring Your Writing Back to Life!* You won't be disappointed by what he has to tell you. WT

# South Bay Writers Blog Novel Writing Contest

For lots of reasons that are well beyond the scope of any writing contest announcement, 250 is the new 150. Bloggers know why that is. Ask one. But for the purpose of this contest, think flash novel - fiction or non-fiction.

Here's the challenge.

Write a novel that can fit in a blog post, a blog post of 250 words or LESS.

It can be fiction or non-fiction.

The theme - Memorial Day memories.

Deadline: June 15th, 2011 midnight

First place - \$40

Winner will be announced at the SBW summer BBQ in July.

Submissions can be sent by electronic mail (email) only in Word.doc or .docx or .rtf format to;

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

Our magnificent team of regular editors will be the judges.

Winner and honorable mentions will be published in WT and all entries will make it on to the SouthBayWriters blog. WT

## Reliable and Unreliable

and San Francisco State.

"Most of us do ask 'Can I rely on what this narrator is telling me?' " She says we do the same "with people we meet and talk to." Therefore "reliability" is an important element.

Then come the exceptions that prove the rules. Like the Oscar-winning narrative for *The Usual Suspects* – "one of the few instances of an unreliable narrator in film. In film it's particularly difficult to pull off" -- or Chief Broom (Bromden) in the Ken Kesey novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

"Where unreliability gets even more interesting is third person," LaPlante says. Despite the presumption of truth, "there are technical tricks you can use to imply unreliability. I'll save it for my talk.

*continued from page 1*

"When you want to stay in third person but show unreliability, there are really cool ways to do it."

She says *Cuckoo's Nest* will be a focal point of the presentation. Given Chief Broom's schizophrenia, that could have lots of dimension. "Chief Broom is pretty crazy," LaPlante says, "but we get a pretty accurate picture despite the distortion."

There's a different distortion in *The Great Gatsby*, she points out, as narrator Nick Carraway's evolution as a character is central to the book's artistic merit.

"Any character who tells a story, like Nick Carraway, has a point of view. He says, 'I am the most honest man I've ever met.' But he's not very honest about his emotions, about his motiva-

tions. In the end he wouldn't be able to make the same statement about his own honesty."

A lot of memoir writers stumble to the same conclusion about their work. Some have considered going from first-person to third or from non-fiction to fiction over potential disagreements over the facts.

That pertains to LaPlante's agenda.

"A friend of mine (Francisco Goldman) published what really is a memoir about how his wife died in a freak chimney accident. He published it as fiction because 'I don't remember everything. . . just to avoid all those hassles, I'm going to call it fiction.' "

But for those who'd rather avoid calling it fiction, as well as those who are indeed writing fiction, the "reliability" focus May 10 should prove helpful. WT

---

## Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

In the March issue of *WritersTalk*, there was no Accolades column due to unforeseen personal circumstances. Sometimes, life gets in the way of routine commitments – things change drastically and the world once viewed clearly is now pitted. For me it changed in a second; a phone call of a loved one lost and suddenly my life was different. How we as human beings live our lives is affected by the things that happen to us. It is the same with writing; it only happens if we actually do it. Making a commitment to write now is a good choice, simply because nobody knows what can happen to change things – the opportunity to write may no longer exist.

If you have the desire to write, do it. Make it a practice, part of a routine that you do often. Schedule the time to do something you love as these writers

have. Accolades this month include the following:

**Bill Belew's** network of blogs has reached 47,000,000 viewers worldwide.

**Betty Auchard** will do a book signing at Milpitas Alliance for the Arts Annual Author Presentation on May 14th from 2-3:30pm.

**Pat Bustamante's** poem *About Libraries* has been accepted for publication and will appear in the May issue of the poetry quarterly review *Song of the San Joaquin*.

**Tina Glasner** was added as an editor to Don Poynter's editorial list of suppliers, was a guest speaker at the West Valley Chapter on April 2nd and will speak June 25th at the Fremont Chapter of CWC. Check out her website at [www.DreadedMomLady.com](http://www.DreadedMomLady.com).

**Steve Wetlesen** is now the part-time wine writer and taster for the fledgling

Tavola Paradiso food and beverage company located in Sunnyvale.

Choose to view writing as an opportunity rather than a chore that has to be done; it will help you to write more consistently. There is no magic potion that will get you to write every day; only you have the answer. Writers are all adept at avoiding writing as noted by David Rasch at the Tuesday night SouthBay meeting.

As I have said before, when you write every day for two days or two weeks, publish that poem, finish the first draft of that novel or any other accomplishment related to writing, send an email to [accolades@southbaywriters.com](mailto:accolades@southbaywriters.com). Share your writing success stories – it motivates your fellow writers and gets us "all fired up about writing" as one member said. WT

## Want to help run SBW?

Serve on the Board. See article, page 15

## How to Write a Novel

*continued from page 1*

Back to Hitchcock's quote, which, by the way, is not only profound insight from a master storyteller, but it requires dissection into three parts for proper contemplation.

### 1. Drama

What is drama anyway? I had the good fortune of hearing a fine discussion about drama from another master storyteller. Bestselling author Ken Follett had this to say about the subject: "Focus on drama. If a scene doesn't have drama, get it done with quickly, then get back to the drama." He defined drama as conflict between people.

Drama is not people thinking about what they had for lunch. Drama is not someone feeling sorry for himself over running out of gas. Drama requires more than one person. So if you want a character to think about his lunch or run out of gas, there needs to be a good story reason for it. Otherwise, do as Follett suggests and get the scene over with quickly; or cut it.

### 2. Life

Do we want our novels to reflect real life? You bet. A necessity for compelling, un-put-downable, and memorable novels is characters that resonate with readers. Create believable characters that make life-altering decisions. (They generate drama). Create real plot situations that have potential for high drama. Then follow through. Make your novel universal by crafting characters with universal emotions.

Universal emotions are those emotions that people have felt since humans began walking the earth. Whether you were an Eskimo in Alaska, a pharaoh in ancient Egypt, a film star in Hollywood, or a farmer in South America, at some point in your life you felt fear, love, hate, anger, joy, desire, greed, and jealousy. This is the stuff of life and the stuff of compelling fiction!

### 3. Dull Bits Cut Out

Cut out anything that slows the momentum of your novel. While you may have breather moments in your story, those scenes still must drive the story forward. In fact, there needs to be a reason for every scene in your novel. However, scenes that perform just one task aren't enough. Another expert, Debra Dixon, author of the book, *Goal, Motivation, and Conflict*, says, "Move the story forward. Don't relive scenes from different points of view. Each scene must serve three purposes; one purpose must be goal, motivation, or conflict." Aha! If every single scene in your novel is performing service to your story in this way, can you see how there couldn't possibly be dull parts?

So, if you have a scene where a character runs out of gas, now you know it can't be there as filler or simply a way of getting your character from one place to another. That scene has to do three things. Maybe it's to heighten suspense; will he get to his sweetheart before the bad guys do? Maybe it's to show motivation; his sweetheart might talk and she knows where he stashed the money. Perhaps it's to expose character; he requires a wheelchair and can't walk to get gas. Maybe it's to introduce another character, such as the highway patrolman who pulls up alongside the road. Insist that your scenes carry their weight and you'll have a riveting novel.

### 4. Putting The Elements Together

Think of your favorite books and decide if they have dull scenes. I can easily name three books that have absolutely no uninteresting moments: *Prey* by Michael Crichton, *False Memory* by Dean Koontz, and any romance novel by Nora Roberts.

Take a look at your manuscript and put your scenes to the test. Are they filled with drama? Do they feature characters and plot situations that resonate with readers? Is the story gripping from beginning to end? If you answered yes, then you may have a page-turner on your hands. And that's a good thing.

WT

## From the Membership Chair

Dear South Bay Writers Member,

It's that time of year again.

Renewal Reminder: The 2010-2011 CWC South Bay membership year ends June 30. Renewal dues \$45 keep you a member in good standing through June 30, 2012. Save \$20 by not letting your membership lapse.

Benefits of membership:

- Savings on dinner at regular meetings
- Savings on conferences/seminars
- Networking and fellowship with other writers
- Getting your creative work published in *Writers Talk*
- Getting a free web page on the SBW website
- Free advertising for writers on the SBW website

NOTE: New members pay \$65. (\$20 one time only, initiation fee)

Please send your basic information with your check for \$45 to CWC South Bay, P. O. Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055, Attn: Marjorie:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

To pay by credit card, Use Renewal Online at  
<http://www.southbaywriters.com/>

Write on!

Membership Chairman

## South Bay Writers Board meeting, 4/06/2011 7:35 p.m.

**Present:** Bill Baldwin, Colin Seymour, Richard Burns, Marge Johnson, Dave LaRoche, Danita Craft, Ric Scott and Sylvia Halloran.

### Approval of March Minutes and Agenda

**MOTION:** (R. Burns/D. LaRoche): *To adopt 3/2/2011 minutes.*  
Unanimous.

### OFFICER'S REPORTS

#### President's report — B. Baldwin

- Kelly Harrison is interested in having her class attend the next meeting. Should special student rates be reinstated?
- Review the current dinner meeting format.
- Openings for the upcoming Leadership Retreat.
- September retreat, other workshops planned for the year.
- Jack London Award nominee
- Election Committee for upcoming election

#### Vice-President's report — C. Seymour

Upcoming programs:

- 4/12: David Rasch of Central Coast on writer's block.
- 5/10: Alice LaPlante, author of "Making of a Story" (which Edie Matthews terms "a terrific book about writing fiction") and a textbook version titled "Method and the Madness" will explain some fine points of point-of-view, notably the element of "reliability." She has taught at Stanford and San Francisco State and recently was a co-producer/panelist for David Henry Sterry's Pitchapalooza at Kepler's
- 6/14: Zoe Carter, on the repercussions attendant to

memoirs, such as libel and invasion-of-privacy charges, why publishers won't defend you, who should vet your book, whether pseudonyms provide protection, etc.

#### Treasurer's Report as of March 31, 2011 — R. Burns

Mar 8, General Meeting Summary: 41, [42, 48] attendees; 40, [40, 36]members; 1, [2, 12] guests; Net Profit = -\$79; Speaker: Nora Profit = \$100; Lookout Bar & Grill = \$714; Cookies = \$28. SBW Assets Balance: \$17,345; [\$20,476; \$23,667]. Assets are down a little due to payment on Sep retreat; also dues have not started coming in for 2011/12.

Long & Short Fiction Workshop by Margaret Lucke on Mar 19 had 26 registrants, one of which didn't show. Lookout received \$540 for continental breakfast and sandwich lunch. Lucke received \$210, 50% of the net profit.

General meeting ticket prices increased to \$18 for members; \$22 for guests. The Sep Retreat nominally would cost minimum fee, about \$8,300. \$2,910.60 of that was paid up-front on Mar 7.

Learning Center, Mark Twain DVD Series:

Attendance: Mar 1 was 6; Mar 15 was 4. Lessons 21 & 22 to be shown Apr 5, final Lessons 23 & 24 on Apr 19. Please join us at Westmont.

#### Secretary's Report — S. Halloran

Office and committee reports need to be emailed *previous* to the day of the board meeting. Thanks.

#### Central Board — D. LaRoche

- To have our logo and claim to beginnings—which they also claim as theirs—removed from the California Writers Coalition website, California Writer's *Club* executives have decided to hire a lawyer and initiate a suit. A motion to

*completed minutes online*

## View from the Board

by Sylvia Halloran

Eight of us — president Bill Baldwin, vice-president Colin Seymour, treasurer Richard Burns, secretary Sylvia Halloran, membership chair Marge Johnson, Central Board liaison Dave LaRoche, hospitality chair Danita Craft and webmaster Ric Scott — met in Sunnyvale Wednesday night, April 6, 2011. Officers' reports had been emailed to board members prior to the meeting. Main topics for the evening were:

- Upcoming retreats and conferences
- Price adjustments for general meetings
- Selection of the Jack London award recipient
- Upcoming elections
- Member reactions to changes in the general meetings.

Passed motions included:

- Approval of 3/2/11 minutes. (Burns/LaRoche)
- Allowance of Kelly Harrison's students to be admitted to our May general meeting at member price. (LaRoche/Seymour)
- Payment of registration fee for anyone [including non-board members] who attends Leadership Conference May 7. (LaRoche/Johnson)

The predominant timbre of the meeting emphasized strengthening club membership through increased opportunities for member participation and contribution. Meeting attendance and enjoyment — in addition to top-notch speakers and workshop leaders at meetings, retreats and conferences — promise increased success. Upcoming elections offer members additional options to become more involved in the club. As in all things, the value received from SBW membership is proportionate to the effort dedicated to it. WT

## Help Wanted

Are you looking for a way to get more involved in SBW? How about helping out our Workshop Chair?

If you'd like to assist with getting workshops organized for the club, please contact Nina Amir.

She needs one or two enthusiastic helpers who can produce flyers using MS Word (or any other program of your liking), send out emails, produce short write-ups on upcoming workshops, and make sure appropriate people get workshop flyers to distribute.

This is a great way to volunteer for SBW, and the job only takes a few hours every month or so.

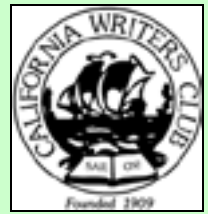




# SOUTH BAY WRITERS PRESENTS:

A Workshop Led by

## Nina Amir



# How to Write a Book *Fast!*

## 4 Ways to Compile & Publish a Manuscript in Record Time

- **Do you want a published product to sell while you build your author platform by speaking?**
- **Do you have tips you'd like to put into a full-length book but no time now to write it?**
- **Would you like to write your book quickly?**
- **Do you have blog content you'd like to recycle into money-making published products?**

If you answered “yes” to even one of these questions, you’ll find the information you need at this workshop.

Learn how to write and publish tip books, booklets (short books or condensed versions of full-length books), blogged books (manuscripts written while blogging), and booked blogs (books created from blog posts). Discover how to repurpose your written material while producing salable products. You’ll leave with outlines, written material, plans, how-to info, and tons of ideas (+promotion tips) for writing a variety of books fast.

### About the presenter:

Nina Amir, Your Inspiration-to-Creation Coach, inspires writers to create the results they desire—published products and careers as writers and authors. An author, journalist, freelance book editor, and writing, blogging and author coach, she has 5 blogs, including *Write Nonfiction NOW* and *How to Blog a Book*, and writes 2 on-line Examiner.com columns. She is the founder of Write Nonfiction in November, a blog and challenge. Find out more about her at [www.NinaAmir.com](http://www.NinaAmir.com). With Nina you...Achieve More Inspired Results!

**June 25, 2011**

**9:00 am - 2:30 pm**

**Lookout Restaurant**

**605 Macara Ave.**

**Sunnyvale, CA 94085**

Registration @ 8:30; workshop begins promptly at 9:00; continental breakfast and lunch included.

**Students w/ID (up to age 25), anytime \$25  
Early Bird (before June 10, 2011)**

CWC members: \$35

Non-members: \$45

**After June 10 and at the door**

CWC members: \$45

Non-members: \$55

*Cancellation Policy:* \$5 fee through midnight 5/20; \$15 fee 5/20 through midnight 6/17; no refunds after midnight 6/17.

**South Bay Writers is a  
non-profit 501c3**

**Register and pay by credit card (Paypal) at [www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)**

**Mail in this portion to:** SBW Workshops, PO Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055.

**Make Check Payable to:** South Bay Writers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ CWC branch (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_  
     \_\_\_\_\_ Early Bird (before 6/10)      \_\_\_\_\_ Regular Registration (after 6/10)      \_\_\_\_\_ Student Registration

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<h1>May '11</h1>		3	4 7-9pm Meetup Palo Alto --- SBW Board Mtg 7:30	5	6 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza	7		
		8	9	10  <h2 style="text-align: center;">Monthly Meeting</h2>	11	12	13	
		15	16	18 7-9pm Meetup Palo Alto	19	20	21 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard	22
		23	24	25	26	27	28 7:30p Open Mic Borders Sunnyvale	29

## Ongoing Critique Groups

### The Arm Wavers

Meets downtown San Jose on Wednesdays  
Contact: Georgia Platts – gplatts@comcast.net

Closed to new members at this time

### Writers' Salon

Meets in Santa Clara  
Contact: Edie Matthews – edie333@sbc-global.net

Closed to new members at this time

### Le Boulanger Writers

Meets at Le Boulanger  
Pruneyard Shopping Center, Campbell  
Contact: Karen Hartley – Sew1Machin@aol.com

All genres; open to all

### Northpoint Critique Group

Meets in Cupertino  
Contact: Valerie Whong – valeriewhong@att.net

Closed to new members at this time

### Our Voices

Meets in Santa Clara  
Meets every other Tuesday  
7:15 p.m to 9:30 p.m.  
Genres: Fiction, nontechnical nonfiction, memoir  
Contact: Dave LaRoche – dalaroche@comcast.net

No openings at this time

### Valley Writers

Meets: Valley Village Retirement Center, Santa Clara  
Mondays 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Contact: Marjorie Johnson – marjohnson89@earthlink.net

All genres; open to all

### New Critique Group forming in Campbell

62. S. San Thomas Aquino

Mondays 6:30pm

Contact: Danita - blue2eternity@gmail.com

## What's a Meetup?

A meetup is a weekly, sometimes twice a week meeting for SBW members and other writers who want to discuss and learn about writing and blogging related topics.

The topics, places, and times can be discovered in detail at:

<http://www.meetup.com/South-Bay-Writers/>

&

<http://www.meetup.com/Silicon-Valley-Bloggers-and-Writers/>

&

<http://www.meetup.com/nonfiction-writing-concept-to-publication/>

# In Between Monthly Meetings

## May 14

Betty Auchard book signing  
Milpitas Alliance for the Arts Annual  
Author Presentation  
[www.milpitasarts.com](http://www.milpitasarts.com)

## May 14

All-day Blogging and Marketing  
Bootcamp  
<http://bayareablogging.eventbrite.com/?ref=esfb>

## May 20-21

Antelope Valley Christian Writers' Conference  
[www.avwriters.com](http://www.avwriters.com)  
[info@avwriters.com](mailto:info@avwriters.com)

## June 17-19

Crested Butte Writers Conference  
[www.crestedbuttwriters.org](http://www.crestedbuttwriters.org)

## June 30

19th Annual Senior Poets Laureate  
Poetry Competition  
50+ or older  
[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)

## July 1

Scare the Dickens Out of Us  
Ghost Story Writing Contest  
[www.clarklibraryfriends.com](http://www.clarklibraryfriends.com)

## July 6-9

Thriller Fest VI  
[www.thrillerfest.com](http://www.thrillerfest.com)

## July 11-15

Peninsula Writers Branch will host  
Oregon Coast Children's  
Writers Workshop  
[www.occbww.com](http://www.occbww.com)

## July 28-30

Mendocino Coast Writers Conference  
[www.mcwc.org](http://www.mcwc.org)

## July 31

Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing  
Contest  
[www.dreamquestone.com](http://www.dreamquestone.com)

## 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 on the third Sunday of each month, except for July and August, at 1:30 at the Oakland Public Library Main Branch. [cwc-berkeley.com](http://cwc-berkeley.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)

**Fremont:** Meets (except in July, December, and on holiday weekends) from 2-4 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of the month at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. Contact: Richard Scott, [rikscott@yahoo.com](mailto:rikscott@yahoo.com); (510) 791-8639

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

**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)

California Writers Club Annual

# PICNIC

**SATURDAY,  
JULY 30, 2011**

**JOAQUIN MILLER PARK  
OAKLAND**

Make plans now to join your fellow CWC members for an afternoon of food and fellowship in the beautiful and historic park where CWC was born over a century ago. Details will be forthcoming from your Central Board representative. In the meantime, save the date!



# President's Challenge

by Bill Baldwin  
President, South Bay Writers

## "Planning the Future"

As we enter the final months of our CWC year, I'm looking both backwards and forwards. I began my term as president just as we decided, regretfully, not to pursue our 2010 East of Eden Conference. We've accomplished some great dinner programs and some great workshops; but our grand vision is still mostly vision. There is much work to do.

Dave LaRoche gave us a lot to think about with his proposed theme for the 2010 conference: The question "why do we write?" is a profound one. Together with Rik Scott's question from our latest dinner meeting, "what do we get out of SBW?" it prods us to think about why we're here, what we want from the club, and what we can contribute to the club.

Let's review some proposals:

We've built up some funds; we could develop some more ambitious events. Perhaps a yearly event or two, towards the end of the calendar year, and perhaps again in the summer; featuring a big-name guest speaker. The event could include awards for an annual writing contest, with substantial prizes. We originally considered a contest for the years when we were not sponsoring an East of Eden contest. We'd like to have some special events with agents and publishers, especially in the interval before our next conference, to make up for not pursuing East of Eden last year.

We'd like to resume East of Eden itself as soon as it looks feasible. With these events, and East of Eden and/or a smaller conference, and our workshops and dinner events, plus open mics, meetups and so on, we hope we can give you the writing experience you are looking for; and the solutions for "why you write" and "why you have joined SBW."

We need your help, though. We need board members, committee members, volunteers. Together, we can succeed as writers. Let's do it! WT



Bill Baldwin

## Interested in SBW office?

Nominate yourself! See page 15

California Writers Club  
South Bay Branch  
— o —

### Executive Committee

President—Bill Baldwin  
pres@southbaywriters.com  
408 730-9622

Vice President—Colin Seymour  
vp@southbaywriters.com

Secretary—Sylvia Halloran  
secretary@southbaywriters.com

Treasurer—Richard Burns  
treasurer@southbaywriters.com

Members-at-Large—Danita Craft and Vacant

### Central Board Rep

Dave LaRoche

### Directors

Programs—Colin Seymour  
vp@southbaywriters.com

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

Membership—Marjorie Johnson  
membership@southbaywriters.com

Hospitality—Danita Craft  
Networking—Vacant  
networking@southbaywriters.com

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin  
408 730-9622

Meetups - Bill Belew -wcbelow@gmail.com  
408-712-3268

Webmaster—Rik Scott  
webmaster@southbaywriters.com

Workshops—Nina Amir  
workshops@southbaywriters.com

### Join 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

Bill Belew  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com  
408 712-3268

### Contributing Editors

Danita Craft  
Lisa Eckstein  
Richard Scott  
Nina Amir  
Victoria M. Johnson  
Jackie Mutz  
Pat Bustamante

### 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

Bill Belew  
111 W. Arques Ave  
Sunnyvale, CA 94085

### Guest Columns

*Sage Advice* (400 words)

### News Items

 (400 words)

### Letters to the Editor

 (300 words)

to Bill Belew  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### 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 with layout.

Authors retain all rights to their works; *WritersTalk* gratefully acknowledges the authors' permission to publish their works here. Contact individual authors for permission to reprint.

**Change of Address:** Send changes of address to the Membership Chair at membership@southbaywriters.com

**Subscriptions:** Nonmember subscriptions are \$20/year; send a check payable to South Bay Writers Club to the Membership Chair.

**Circulation:** 225

Copyright © 2010 California Writers Club South Bay Branch.

# Newseditor

## Thomas Jefferson and I

by Bill Belew



Bill Belew

One of my favorite Thomas Jefferson quotes is, "I find that the harder I work, the luckier I am." Apparently the guy not only could write, but say cool things, as well.

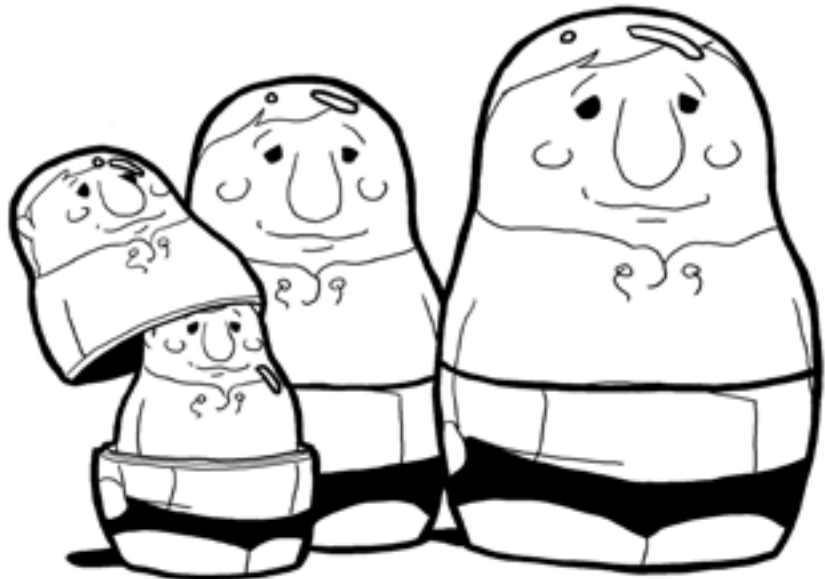
Just this past week, while putting this May newsletter together, one of my sites garnered 780,994 views in just 3 days! Trust me, that's a lot. Imagine almost everyone in San Jose coming by for a visit to your home in just three days. That's what happened

concert pianist (stop me!). He created the *matroshka* image you see below. There's a lesson in the doll in that what you see on the outside is not always (not usually?) indicative of what else you can find on the inside.

We, writers, have a depth to us, don't we? There's more inside us than people see, right? How would they know if we do not put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and hit publish from time to time?

There's a different kind of SBW Writers Contest that is being announced in this edition of WT.

It's a blog novel - an entire novel in a



to me.

I tell people that I have learned the answer to the question, "What is the next hot topic on the Web?"

The answer is, "Nobody knows."

I am not trying to be obnoxious here. The simple truth is that nobody knows and if they tell you they do, they don't. But what I do know is that the harder I try = the more I write, the more likely I am to hit upon a subject that a LOT of people want to read about. That happened AGAIN to me this past week.

You wanna get read? Write a lot. Then do it some more. Then some more.

My son creates the little, sometimes big, images in WT. He is also a graphics design expert not to mention an internationally award-winning classical

250-word blog. Think of it as an elevator pitch going more than two floors. But not more than four. These blog novel submissions will be published at the SBW blog site. And who knows? One or more might just be 'discovered.'

What are the possibilities of them being discovered? Nobody knows. But I do know that the more submissions there are the more likely the blog will get read AND something that is really good will be found. Makes sense?

Now, it's your turn to show me, show SBW, show the Web what's inside of you. Not just one layer deep, but two or three layers. Call it *matroshka* deep.

Make a difference,  
Bill

WT

## Poet's Page

### TERSE ON VERSE

by Pat Bustamante

First: a little fun with May..

"In May imagination rules.  
The Universe is yours!  
Using writers' trickiest tools  
Show readers through  
Some never-known doors..."

WHEN IT'S NOT:

When is a poem not a poem?  
Go back to early man thumping on  
a log. If you need to hammer a piece  
of wood as in: part of a building...the  
noise is different from a samba-beat on  
a drum.

Drums calling, or any musical instru-  
ment sounding any kind of song (which  
is basically what a poem is) can rouse a  
feeling that one does not get listening to  
prose. Not that prose cannot be "poetic"  
at times. So..how does one tell a "good"  
poem from a "bad" poem? TOTALLY  
subjective.

Since this is a month to honor  
mothers--think back to Mother Goose!  
If there is room for the "4-line corner-  
quote" of a famous poem, it should be:  
There Was An Old Woman Who Lived  
in a Shoe. (And please let us not get  
Childrens Services involved here...)

Who cannot relate to: "...so many  
children I did not know what to do!"  
(Could be only 1.) Hey Moms: our  
collective hats are off to you. It's a hard  
job. Nursery rhymes are often ascribed  
to "Anonymous" but a very real human  
being created the original rhyme. Moth-  
er Goose wanted all the little goslings to  
learn these poems; a great way to learn  
to read. And if you are the author of a  
poem that gets quoted a lot, you know  
you've "got it right."

Those of us who have heads full of  
never-forgotten nursery rhymes: it's  
usually Mom's fault, isn't it? Every  
language in the world has some poetry.  
May your poems be among those mak-  
ing it into all the tomorrows! (And if  
you were Mr. Hallmark, or Ms. Hall-  
mark, how much dough would you  
have--no, let's not go there....) WT

### I Looked Up

by Valerie Lee

I looked up  
He rushed through the crowd  
He was hard to miss and taller than the  
others  
Why haven't I seen him before?

He smiled  
His eyes met mine  
My knees felt weak and  
I blushed

He stopped briefly to talk to someone  
Never once taking his eyes off me  
Suddenly he was inches away  
My heart raced

He reached over  
Extending his hand  
I put mine in his and  
A spark ignited

Then I melted into his  
Sparkling brown eyes  
My heartbeat pounding  
Loudly in my ears

I couldn't move  
I was so drawn by his touch  
I could barely speak  
My heart was beating so

I felt foolish  
But no words were needed  
As I followed him onto the dance floor  
And when he held me tight  
I felt it  
I was home  
And I knew it right away so  
I looked up  
WT

### Get Your Feet Wet

SBW Member-at-Large: a great way to  
gain experience in service to the club.  
Interested? See page 15.

## Search for National Senior Poet Laureate

(Monterey, Calif.--4/25/11)

Entries are being accepted for  
regional winners in the 19th annual  
National Senior Poets Laureate Poetry  
Competition for American poets age 50  
and older.

**Deadline is June 30**

Poets may live anywhere in the world  
as long as they are U. S. citizens. All  
entries must be in English. Wanda Sue  
Parrott of Central Coast Writers branch  
of California Writers Club is co-founder  
and contest administrator.

Winning poems of state senior poets  
laureate will be named in July, follow-  
ing which they advance to final rounds  
of competition from which the winner  
of the 2011 National Senior Poet Laure-  
ate (500) and runner up (\$100) awards  
will be announced Sept. 1.

Winner of the 2010 National Senior  
Poet Laureate Award was Regina Mur-  
ray Brault of Burlington, Vt. Runner  
up was Edward C. Robson of Winston-  
Salem, N. Car. The 2010 winners can be  
seen in Golden Words Anthology, along  
with details about the 2011 Senior Poets  
Laureate Competition at the sponsor's  
website: [www.amykitchenerfdn.org](http://www.amykitchenerfdn.org) WT

## Springing

by Pat Bustamante

The lambs are born, new lambs  
On spring-legs  
All over the farmer's field,  
That flat new-green gamelike square  
Covered in puffs that mimic those in  
busy skies above.  
At the very edge of the flock, one black  
lamb:  
My heart gets such a squeeze.  
I know what it is to be the stand-apart.  
I want that lamb to be worth greater  
love  
Than all the others;  
I turn away while still believing  
Such a thing might be possible. WT

# Seeking Candidates for SBW Office

by *Meredy Amyx*, 2011 Nominating  
Committee Chair

Members of South Bay Writers will cast their votes at the general meeting on June 14th for the six elective officers of the club: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and two members-at-large. As your appointed nominating committee chair, I am now accepting nominations for all positions. Names of known candidates will be announced at the May general meeting, and election statements will be published in the June WritersTalk.

## Board Service

Through service as officers of SBW and participation on the Board, members support the club and help guide its activities and events. Work on behalf of the club provides opportunities for learning and exposure in a friendly, collaborative setting. You can gain valuable experience while offering your talents in service to the club for the benefit of all members.

See the summary of officers' duties for descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of elected officers.

## Nominations

You can nominate any member of SBW, including yourself. The nominee must consent to run. If you have someone in mind that you think would make a good officer and Board member, I will welcome your suggestions for possible recruits.

Nominations may also be made from the floor at the June meeting. Nominations close just prior to voting, which takes place in person at the meeting. To place your name or that of another consenting member in nomination for office, send the candidate's name, position for which nominated, statement of consent to nomination, and candidate's contact information to Meredy Amyx by e-mail at [meredy@amyx.org](mailto:meredy@amyx.org), or by phone afternoons and evenings at 408-297-4438.

I have appointed Lisa Eckstein and Suzette Gamero to serve with me as members of the nominating committee. Feel free to speak to them as well as to me about possible candidates.

## Duties of Office

The following unofficial summary of

officers' duties is based on descriptions provided by former SBW President Dave LaRoche. Full details are available upon request.

## Summary of Officers' Duties

President—Leadership, Vision, Policy and Precedence

- Leads the Branch productively and collaboratively.
- Envisions and fosters goals and direction in keeping with governing documents.
- Sets agendas and presides over meetings.
- Makes appointments as needed, with consent of Board.

Vice President—Advice, Programs, Presidential Stand-In

- Advises president and Board in club matters.
- Plans and produces monthly programs, including writeups.
- Assumes the president's duties in his or her absence.

Secretary—Branch Business Records and Activity Prompting

- Records and publishes minutes of official business and tracks progress of action items.
- Archives minutes and official Branch correspondence and transfers archives to successor.
- Ensures Robert's Rules as the guide for conduct of Board meetings.

Treasurer—Finance Management

- Plans club budgets and controls flow of money consistent with plan.
- Establishes and maintains bank and/or investment accounts; receives and deposits revenues.
- Authorizes expenditures and signs checks.
- Performs bookkeeping and financial reporting as required.

Member-at-Large (Two)

- Serves as Board observer and contributor without portfolio.
- Acts as ad hoc members' representative.
- May be a prospective substitute or temporary replacement for a Board appointee.

Responsibilities of All Officers and Chairs

- Attend regular and specially called Board meetings.
- Participate in guiding Branch business.
- Represent the club well among members and in the community.

- Aspire, in all club interests and direction, to fulfill the mission statement:

To assist published, nascent and aspiring writers in the pursuit of their muse and the honing of their craft through conferences, educational workshops, lectures, opportunity alerts and networking; to spread our Branch reputation and credibility through the community so as to be known and solicited as writers. WT

---

## Why I Attend Monthly SBW Meetings

by *Richard Burns*

1) I network. That doesn't come naturally to me at home. Part of that process is I ask other writers questions that I think might help me achieve tight novels, good characters. I do a lot of listening. I'm very self-serving. I try to be generous with my time and mentoring, as well.

2) I attend meetings to get my name recognized by writers, even publishers, agents, movers and shakers in our field. If you were the Treasurer of this club like I am right now, imagine what it's like to hand \$100 out each month to an established author/presenter, and they look me in the eyes and say, "Thank you. Oh, what's your name? Very glad to meet you."

3) I vicariously comb the South Bay Writers audience for possibly compatible people to critique my work in exchange for me critiquing their work.

4) Commiserate with other crazy people with crazy dreams.

5) I'm forever hopeful that I might learn THE secret for surefire creating publishable novels, short stories, and poems, improving day by day, month by month. WT

---



# California Writers Club

South Bay Branch  
P.O. Box 3254  
Santa Clara, CA 95055

## Mail To

### Monthly Meetings

Every Second Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

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

May Speaker  
Alice LaPlante

## Reliable and Unreliable Voices

