



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 20  
Number 2  
February 2012

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

## FEBRUARY SPEAKERS

### LABOR OF LOVE?

## Valentine's night panel will examine profit motive in our writing obsession

By Colin Seymour

Payoffs! Who said anything about payoffs?

That was pretty much my response several months ago when a fellow SBW member complained that he had joined the club to become an honest-to-gosh, royalties-collecting writer. So why hadn't his ship come in?

A few weeks later, a member e-mailed me to complain that our dinner speakers all are portrayed as successful, and yet the subject of profit is mysteriously omitted from all the conversations.

So credit two SBW members for generating the topic of our February 14 dinner meeting, which is intended to determine whether we are really professional writers or whether our authorship is primarily a Labor of Love.

Five published authors in our midst, including former *San Jose Mercury News* restaurant critic Sheila Himmel, will be divulging whether they or any of us can expect the reading public to show us the money.



Himmel figured to make a bundle when her book was published in 2009. At the same time that Himmel, who is built like a marathon runner, was gorging herself at every restaurant she pleased within an hour's drive, her teenage daughter was experiencing an eating disorder.

Mother and daughter developed the book project together. By then, the *Mercury News* had displayed this story prominently. Clearly there were two built-in audiences, via Himmel's *Mercury News* platform and the eating-disorder interest group.

But there was no follow-up on the book's commercial success or lack thereof, and therein lies our story.

Accompanying Himmel on our panel will be four SBW-affiliated authors, a couple of whom you've no doubt been dying to ask how much money their books have accrued.

Robert Balmanno has published two books and is hard at work on a third in his *Blessings of Gaia* quartet and definitely has a following in his genre. He's willing to divulge both how his first book has done and how his second book is doing.

*Continued on page 6*

## JANUARY RECAP

### Who's Telling This Story?

By Edie Matthews

At the January 10<sup>th</sup> South Bay Writers meeting, fifty attendees sat engaged as Alice LaPlante eloquently explained point of view (POV).

Before starting her PowerPoint presentation, she defined POV as "the intelligence telling the story – the glue that pulls scenes together."

Next, she clarified the difference between "scene" and "narration." Scene is dialogue and anything you can see – visual and sensory details like gestures, furniture, sunsets, sounds, or smells. Narration, on the other hand, is everything else: opinion, thoughts, explanation, or flashbacks.

LaPlante does not believe in the adage, "Show, don't tell." She says you must do both. Showing is the "scene," and telling is the "narration." She also makes a distinction between the author and the narrator. The author creates the story; whereas, the narrator tells the story. This may sound confusing, but consider, you have one author, but you may have several characters narrating the story.

As most writers know, there are basically three different POVs: first person, second person, and third person. However, LaPlante described how each POV has a number of subcategories and gave examples of each type.

A classic example of first person observer is F. Scott Fitzgerald's narrator, Nick Carraway, in *The Great Gatsby*, while Amy Hempel's *In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson Is Buried* uses first person involved: "I told her insects fly through rain, missing every drop, never getting wet. I told her the shape of the moon is like a banana . . ."

*Continued on page 6*

**Winners of the *WritersTalk* Challenge Contest will be announced.**

# President's Challenge

by Bill Baldwin  
President, South Bay Writers

## Let's Go!

Sitting here on the verge of big new projects, I'm wondering, "Why am I so reluctant to actually *begin*? What is this writer's block that holds me back?

Why can't I just *start*?" Do you feel that way, too?

In my case, the thing is, I'm an obsessive re-writer. So, no matter *what* I write as my first draft, I know I'll always improve it. So, why hesitate to begin?

Maybe we could all resolve, as we plunge deeper into 2012, to simply *write more down!*

Speaking of rewriting, I've always said it helps to read your piece out loud. Of course, this grows out of my own background. I've been facilitating our open mics for over ten years, and I've always enjoyed spoken word recordings. But it's true: you notice things when you're reading out loud that you might not notice just sitting at your desk reading to yourself.

Being a fan of Jack Kerouac (who himself was a fan of jazz), I've enjoyed listening to the two audio recordings of *On the Road* available from the Sunnyvale library. Hearing different interpretations of a text can provide new perspectives. In the case of *On the Road*, I also stumbled on an audio recording of the original "scroll" version in a used bookstore a month ago. Listening to *that*, I noticed some of the changes that went into the final version. Which illustrates how I might want to rewrite or change my own stuff.

By the way, for you French fans out there, I've also discovered via Amazon that someone has recorded Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* in its entirety, in French. You can buy it for around \$650, on 110 CDs. One customer review raves about it! If I had 150 hours to listen and thought I'd understand the French well enough, and had \$650 to blow . . . I might just get it.

This is a bit of what *I've* been up to as we roll into 2012. Of course, I attended the January dinner meeting and our two January open mics. What have *you* been doing? What can we help you with? What adventures of South Bay Writers shall we create and share in 2012?

WT

## INSIDE:

Lee: Year of the Dragon	4	Amyx: My Last Words	8
Accolades	5	Matthews: Pound Out News	9
Wyman: <i>Views of Morgan Hill</i>	5	Diamond: How get that way?	10
Oleas: <i>Primrose in November</i>	5	Mulenburg: My Writing Studio	10
View from the Board	7	Terse on Verse	11
Deutsch: Ask the expert	7	Burns: Which is the First?	11
Breithaupt: There and Back	8	Contest Corner	13



## California Writers Club South Bay Branch

### 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—Dick Amyx and Andrea Galvacs

Central Board Rep, Norcal Rep—Dave La Roche  
dalaroche@comcast.net

### 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

Networking—Vacant  
networking@southbaywriters.com

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin

Publishing Mentors—Nina Amir (workshops);  
Marjorie Johnson (membership);  
Graham Flower, physicsnerd1@gmail.com;  
David Breithaupt, dlblmb@comcast.net;  
Dave La Roche, dalaroche@comcast.net

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

Marjorie Johnson  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com  
408 243-2098

### Contributing Editors

Rita Beach  
Pat Bustamante  
Carolyn Donnell  
Andrea Galvacs  
Victoria M. Johnson  
Karen Llewellyn  
Colin Seymour

### 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

### Guest Columns

*Almost Anything Goes* (300 words)

### News Items (400 words)

### Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Creative Works

Short Fiction (1500 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 per column inch. 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:** 200

Copyright © 2010 California Writers Club South Bay Branch.

by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

Editor



## When to wear your what-if hat

Always wear your what-if hat when you read your morning newspaper. The *San Jose Mercury News* published several stories recently that interested me as a writer.

On January 4 the Business Section ran the article, "I Spy: A cloak in time, a computer cover-up." The story, about actual research in which scientists alter the speed of light beams and obscure split-second data, could be used in a science fiction piece or in a story involving computer hackers or high-tech bank robbery.

Researchers from Cornell University, in a paper published in the journal *Nature*, reported that they took a stream of light and shifted it through a lens, causing some beams to travel faster and others slower. When the stream passed through a second lens, no one watching it would know that the light pulse had taken place.

Think temporal void, where events can happen without being observed. Your what-if hat comes up with mind control from observing the unseen stream; computer data stolen without a trace; or even how to build an invisibility cloak.

On January 7, an article in the *Mercury News* discussed how to trace the history of your house. Who lived there before you? When was your house built and by whom? According to neighborhood legend, someone committed suicide by jumping from the upper story window of our house.

I'm not sure I want to know more, but such information could form the kernel of a story about a haunted house, a domestic dispute or a scandal, or become part of a nonfiction article about how history affects the value of real estate.

As a third example, the same newspaper on January 4 published a book review disguised as a news story, "New book looks to the past," with a 4 by 7 inch picture of the author and 16 column-inches of text. You find out how the author got a review from the *Mercury* when you read the picture's caption: "Thomas Procter's book *The Discovery Machine* follows two Los Gatos High School ninth-graders who discover a way to travel back in time. The book includes contributions from Los Gatos High students, staff and alumni." As an aside, the book was published in Los Gatos as well, by Robertson Publishing.

"I've always been fascinated by what if," Procter said. "We take everything in life for granted. Today's kids play with all these machines, and they have no concept of original thought. So, the premise of the book is giving credit to where original inventions come from." He says his book is based upon fact with some "literary license" in describing some of the historical situations.

The *Mercury* found Procter's book "fun just for the premise with local color adding lots of interest." By now, your what-if hat should be vibrating with how to turn your book review into a news story.

Starting with the next time you read your morning paper, take time to play "what if?" with at least one intriguing news item.

Now that you've read the newspaper with me and I have shared how I stockpile snippets and odds and ends, where do *you* go for writing ideas? *WritersTalk* would welcome an article on what inspired your current story, book, or project. **WT**

# Year of the Dragon

## Happy New Year Gung Hay Fat Choy

By Valerie Lee

Author of *The Jade Rubies*

According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the Year of the Dragon begins at the stroke of midnight on January 22, 2012, when the Dragon ascends the throne that the agile Rabbit will vacate.

The Dragon is usually portrayed in movies as the gruesome, torch-throwing fire creature of medieval imagination, but the Chinese see the ferocious dragon as the genius of strength and goodness, worshipped as the divine ruler of lakes, rivers, and seas, thereby powerful yet gentle enough to summon rains to the earth.

Each year is assigned an animal in a 12-year cycle. Asian people believe that persons have characteristics of animals that ruled the year of their birth, just as astrologists believe that people born under a certain sign of the Western zodiac will have common traits.

Among the animals in the Chinese zodiac, the Dragon is respected by the Chinese as the King of Animals and is considered to be lucky, wise, dynamic, and energetic. Those born in 1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, and 2000 are honest, generous, intelligent, and patient and can influence and control others. Usually attractive with real charisma, they never have trouble with the opposite sex since they are extroverts, and their opinions and ideas are worth listening to. Dragons tend to stay single a long time because they are loners and thrive in isolation. They have definite ideas about their ideal mates and their exacting standards often make for disappointments. When they do settle down, they should consider someone born either in the Year of the Rat, Monkey, Snake or Rooster, but they can also be compatible with someone born in the Year of the Tiger or the Horse.

Spring festival, or Chinese New Year, has been celebrated for at least 3,000 years. In Asian Culture, this is the biggest holiday of the year, even bigger than Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving. It is a time to enjoy, relax, eat, dress up, and be with family and friends.

During the two-week Chinese New Year celebration, meats, fruits, fish, vegetables and noodles will all be consumed because what you eat at your first meal each day will determine your good fortune, health, wealth, and happiness.

Many Chinese-American families like to make special holiday foods. They spare no expense and are lavish with assortments of exotic dishes: eggs transform into "silver ingots;" mushrooms are "opportunities;" chicken is a "phoenix," and a pork dish becomes "golden coins." Poultry signifies family unity; oranges and tangerines mean wealth and good fortune, while pork provides happiness. A steamed fish means that all good things will last forever.

One of their specialties is a hairy-looking seaweed called "fat choy," savored as much for its name as for its flavor. The two words, in Cantonese, sound like "to prosper," so their most popular New Year's dish is fat choy, also called jai or monks food since it is meatless. This dish originated with Buddhist monks who begged for food door-to-door and were given meager portions of vegetables, but being inventive cooks, they came up with this vegetarian dish. During this time I find myself thinking about one of my favorite dishes.

### Bak Jam Gai

(White Velvet chicken)

- 1 whole fryer
- 2 Tbsp. dry sherry
- 2 Tbsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. Chinese sesame oil
- Slice of ginger

Submerge chicken in large pot of boiling water after adding salt, slices of ginger and sherry. Place lid on pot and boil for 20 – 30 minutes. Turn off flame. Allow chicken to cook in the heated water for another half hour. Remove chicken and rub with sesame oil. Chop chicken into neat little pieces and place evenly on dish.

Serve with the following ingredients in a small dish: 1 large minced ginger, 4 Tbsp. sesame oil, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. white pepper. You can use the broth and toss in some frozen peas, gung choy, or napa cabbage. *Bon appétit.*

Parents, grandparents, and friends will be honored with gifts such as oranges, candy, nuts, or pastries. This period

promotes benevolence, reunions and family unity, as well as remembrance and homage to deceased ancestors.

In 2012, the Year of the Dragon will be full of surprises. People will throw caution to the winds and be full of ambition and energy for colossal, overambitious, and daring projects. It would be wise to be cautious and not overestimate our potentials in this combustible year.

During Dragon years, fortunes as well as disasters will come in massive waves. This could be a year of violent acts of nature. Tempers will flare throughout the world with everyone staging real or imaginary revolts against restrictions. The mighty Dragon will affect us all. **WT**

---

## Write Retro?

By Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
California Writers Club PR Chair  
[pr@calwriters.org](mailto:pr@calwriters.org)

I just got back from CES 2012 in Las Vegas, the annual Consumer Electronics Show dedicated to unveiling the newest in breakthrough technology.

Year after year, we see the results in the tools of our trade. When was the last time you used a typewriter? A mimeograph machine? Carbon paper? Probably rarely, if ever, after you got your computer. And now PCs seem destined to fall by the wayside. The same applies to writing in general. We blog. We tweet. We publish online. But when was the last time you wrote a Letter to the Editor of your local print newspaper?

Let's not dismiss that particular approach quite yet. It still represents an effective PR strategy. Suppose, for instance, your branch just lost its meeting room. Try penning a Letter to the Editor. Address your dilemma and the larger threat to nonprofits when they can no longer find or afford a place to convene. Include a plug for your branch and its value to the local creative community. In so doing, you promote the CWC while possibly attracting new members and hearing from a church, school or lodge that has a venue for you.

By all means keep blogging, tweeting and publishing online. Invest in solar power for your Kindle. But then go retro with a Letter to the Editor. The response might surprise you. **WT**



# Accolades

By Andrea Galvacs

Last year took a long time to go away, but the wait was worth it for many members of the South Bay Writers Club. Just count the number of happy people's names appearing in this issue!

Last month **Betty Auchard** gave a speech on her newest book, *The Home of the Friendless*, at the Willow Glen Senior Center writing class, at the Singles Club of St. Lucy's Catholic Church, at the Los Gatos-Saratoga chapter of the AAUW and the Fremont Area CWC. This book, as well as her previous one, *Dancing in my Nightgown* are now available in ebook format. **Betty** has posted many of her stories with illustrations at [bettyauchard.com/blog](http://bettyauchard.com/blog)

**Pat Bustamante's** poem "Visits and Gifts" will be published in the winter issue of the quarterly magazine *Song of the San Joaquin*, to appear February 4.

**Arlyne Diamond, PhD's** book *Leading and Managing a Global Workforce* will be serialized through 2012 in the international magazine *Outsourcing*.

**Carolyn Donnell's** memoir, "Finding Family," was published [writeradvice.com](http://writeradvice.com)

**Valerie Frankel** finished writing *Harry Potter, Still Recruiting an Inside Look at Random*, to be published in summer, 2012 by Zossima Press.

**Marjorie Johnson's** novel, *Jaguar Princess*, has received one of three honorable mentions in the LuckyCinda Publishing 2011 contest for independently published books. **Marjorie's** research paper, "Hexahexaflexagons: A Mathematical Ramble," presented at the meeting of the Fibonacci Association in Morelia, Mexico, July 2010, has been published in the *Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and Their Applications*. The paper includes her short story, "The Fifth Face," published in *WritersTalk*, June 2009.

**Audry Lynch** signed a contract with Mellen Press for the book *Recollections of a Poet's Son: Garth Jeffers Recalls his Father, Robinson Jeffers*.

**Luanne Oleas** published her book *A Primrose in November* in ebook format through Smashwords. She also published a non-fiction article at [TechCom](http://TechCom)

*Manager*, an online newsletter for technical writing department managers. The editor has requested another article for the June, 2012 edition.

**Colin Seymour** temporarily resumed his newspaper career copy-editing the sports section of the *SF Chronicle*. The money and contacts are nice, he says, but the job seriously cuts into his writing time.

**EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!** *WT* will continue publishing your good news, so write to me at [accolades@sbwriters.com](mailto:accolades@sbwriters.com). However, SBW has a new way to announce the successes of those of you attending the dinner meetings. We do not want to miss the opportunity to divulge your good fortune, so be on the alert to hear the announcement at the next meeting on February 14. **WT**

---

## Welcome

*South Bay Writers welcomes new members, the heart of the growth and the future of our organization.*

We invite you, our new members, to send an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) telling us who you are and what writing interests you have.

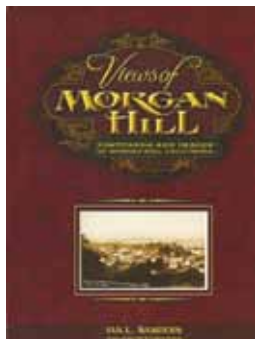
If you have missed out on being included in the New Members column, send us an email. Rita Beach's column will return next month.

---

## Views of Morgan Hill

By Beth Wyman

Beth Wyman announces her second book, *Views of Morgan Hill*, written in collaboration with Ian Sanders. She also has written the book, *Hiram Morgan Hill*. Both books, about the history of Morgan Hill, are available at Book Smart in Morgan Hill. Contact Brad @ [MYBooksmart.com](http://MYBooksmart.com)



## A Primrose in November

by Luanne Oleas

In *A Primrose in November*, romance, revenge, and the meaning of home combine in a story about second chances. It's November 1972 in the less-than-bucolic English countryside. David's relationship with his French girlfriend disintegrates when a pretty Canadian offers him a marriage of convenience. David must not lose focus or a vengeful magistrate will steal Wyndlan, the family farm.

PB was my friend. He and Mrs. PB lived in England. My husband and I lived in California. We would go years without seeing each other. But we shared one of those rich and rare friendships where we could start our conversation again, just where we had left off, as though no time had passed at all. We were sure we would grow old together. When we received the sad news that PB had died from lung cancer, I wanted to shake my fist at the universe. I wanted to shout "No-o-o-o!" from the roof top. But all I could do was melt into the kitchen chair and say, "I thought we had more time."

PB inspired a minor character in my first book, *A Primrose in November*. After I heard the news about him, I pulled the unpublished manuscript out of a drawer and self-published it, thanks to Mark Coker's workshop on epubublishing given to the South Bay Writers Club.

Publication seemed to be one way to keep PB alive, but it wasn't enough. I decided all the proceeds from the sale of the *Primrose* ebook should go to charity. I picked the Lance Armstrong Foundation, LiveSTRONG. It raises money for cancer research, raises cancer awareness, and encourages people to live life to the fullest. More information is available at my blog, <http://blog.luanneoleas.com>

Continued from page 1

## SBW Panel: Labor of love

We know Betty Auchard's memoir about her adjustment to widowhood, *Dancing in My Nightgown*, has been widely acclaimed, and her account of her eccentric childhood in Iowa, *A Home for the Friendless*, has been published amid a noticeable public relations campaign. We know Betty has sold a few hundred books or more, but has she paid back more than she's paid out?

Also on the panel are Victoria M. Johnson, whose credits include self-help books and romance novels (she should write a self-help romance novel) and Marjorie Johnson, the first of whose two novels was a mystery about a stolen airplane.

We'll probably watch the panelists discuss the topic among themselves for about 20 minutes before we open the floor for questions. Please read the short bios the panelists have submitted for this issue of *WritersTalk*, because that might suffice for discussion about how the books came about.

Let's steer them instead toward the expenses of publication, volume of sales, amount of profit, if any, and how the books have been marketed. As I told the panelists, "You don't need to bring anything but candor."

I promised Himmel that our audiences always participate actively. Or was that a warning?

If that doesn't fill an hour or more, we could have Sheila review the Lookout Restaurant dinner array. **WT**

**Sheila Himmel** was the restaurant critic of the *San Jose Mercury News* when her teen-age daughter began suffering from eating disorders. The irony naturally struck editors, who encouraged Sheila to write about it. When Lisa seemed to be getting better, she and Sheila wrote an article that became the kernel for their 2009 book, *Hungry: A Mother and Daughter Fight Anorexia*, published by Penguin.



As restaurant critic, Sheila won a James Beard Award for feature writing and uncovered fraud at a prominent Silicon Valley restaurant by revealing its longtime substitution of pork for veal.

Sheila is now working on a book about hospice care. A *Psychology Today* blogger, she has written for publications from *The New York Times* to *Eating Well* magazine to *IEEE*

*Spectrum: The Magazine of Technology Insiders* and the online magazine *Obit*. She contributes regularly to *Stanford Magazine* and the *Palo Alto Weekly*. Her website is [sheilahimmel.com](http://sheilahimmel.com).

**Robert Balmanno** has published two novels, *September Snow* and *Runes of Iona*, and is working on the third book in his *Blessings of Gaia* quartet, *Embers of the Earth*. *Runes of Iona*, published in 2010, is currently in bookstores with its predecessor, *September Snow*, published in 2006.

Balmanno, a Sunnyvale native, earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science from UC-Santa Barbara and did post-graduate work at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and the University of London, King's College. He served in the Peace Corps (1973-1975) in Dahomey, West Africa. He worked with cattle in a remote region where the New World practices and beliefs of voodoo originated among the Adja forest people of West Africa.



For more than 30 years, he has written fiction, and during the last 25 of those years, he worked as a library specialist at the Sunnyvale Library. His website is [robertbalmanno.com](http://robertbalmanno.com)

*SBW Panelists continue on page 7*



Alice LaPlante —Photo by Dick Amyx

Continued from page 1

## Who's telling . . .

Second person, generally considered a literary novelty, is least used. An example of second person (inverted first person) is Jay McInerney's novel *Bright Lights, Big City*. "You're not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, and you cannot say that the terrain is entirely unfamiliar, although the details are fuzzy."

Second person addressing the reader is an old fashioned technique used by Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre*: "Dear reader, I married him." And Angela Carter turned the reader into a character in *The Company of Wolves*: "You are always in danger in the forest, where no people are, for if you stray from the path for one instant, the wolves will eat you." The advantage of second person is that "you" draws the reader in.

Finally, third person has many categories. Third person omniscient ranges from knowing the thoughts and feelings of everyone like God to being like a fly on the wall, merely observing the action. Third person limited means the narrator reveals only the thoughts of one character, while third person close reveals the narrator's inner thoughts.

LaPlante suggested first person and third person narrators should be slightly unreliable because humans are unreliable. Ultimately, the rules of narration are yours to make, keeping in mind that a good narrator can make any story interesting.

If you missed the meeting, email Alice LaPlante at [alice.laplante@gmail.com](mailto:alice.laplante@gmail.com) to request her PowerPoint presentation.

**WT**



# View from the Board

by S. Halloran

Seven of us – president Bill Baldwin, treasurer Richard Burns, secretary Sylvia Halloran, membership secretary and newsletter editor Marjorie Johnson, Central Board-NorCal representative Dave LaRoche, webmaster Richard Scott, and Member-at-large Andrea Galvacs met in Santa Clara Wednesday night, January 4, 2012.

Items for discussion included:

- Survey results that indicated that folks unhappy with the meeting format weren't there to take the survey.
- A possible cost increase for dinner at Lookout Restaurant.
- The need to recruit a new membership chairperson.
- Some difficulties discovered while navigating the webpage.
- A proposal to consider issuing the Anthology in e-book format.
- The NorCal leadership event (open to all!) to be held May 5 at the Lookout and to include lunch and an after-event wine and cheese gathering.
- Fremont Branch's proposal to share event information with SBW on our websites.

We look forward to an enthusiastic, energized year. **WT**

---

## Ask the Expert

by Rick Deutsch

In each issue of *Writer'sTalk*, a list of subject matter experts is listed. We experts tend to have specific expertise in our named disciplines. We've volunteered to help the club's writers who are developing a plot or scene that involves some knowledge of our topic. Maybe the character in your fiction is an outdoorsman; contact me for any real "facts" about hiking or scuba, for example. I can provide you with the information you need to make the story plausible and with "Buzz" words that show you are in tune. Check out the Directory of Experts on page 14. We're here to help!

MrHalfDome@gmail.com

Continued from page 6

## SBW Panelists: Labor of love

**Betty Auchard** is a retired art teacher. Her husband, Denny, who had been a prominent faculty member at San Jose State, died in 1998. That launched her writing career, and she has published two books.



The first was *Dancing in my Nightgown: The Rhythms of Widowhood*, which served as a catharsis for the crisis her husband's death precipitated. That had transformed her into a serious writer by the time the book was published in 2005.

A second memoir, *A Home for the Friendless*, about her eccentric family and bizarre childhood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was published in 2010 by Stephens Press in Las Vegas.

Her stories and essays have been published in the *San Jose Mercury News*, *Today's Senior*, and *Chocolate for a Woman's Soul* series.

The two books are at the forefront, however. She has been busy promoting both and narrating her own audio books. She can discuss how those ventures augment the printed versions and the pros and cons of hiring publicists. Visit the author at [bettyauchard.com](http://bettyauchard.com)

**Marjorie Johnson** is a retired high school teacher whose hobby and passion has been mathematics, especially topics related to the Fibonacci sequence. She has written many mathematical papers and has served on the editorial board of the *Fibonacci Quarterly* since 1963. In 2002, Marjorie joined Edie Matthews' creative writing class to learn how to write a good story, and fiction writing became her new passion.

She is the author of *Bird Watcher: A Novel*, published in 2007 by Infinity Publishing, an Internet-based POD publisher. *Bird Watcher* tells the story of an airplane stolen from Palo Alto Airport, where Marjorie flew aircraft for 20 years. The result is a book that takes the reader on an aerial adventure while solving the mystery of the stolen airplane.

Marjorie also has written the novel *Jaguar Princess*, announced in *WritersTalk* in November. On the panel, she will discuss only her success with *Bird Watcher*. Marjorie's website is [mbicknelljohnson.com](http://mbicknelljohnson.com)



In 2010 **Victoria M. Johnson** sold *Grant Writing 101* to McGraw-Hill and sold her first romance novel, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, to Avalon Books. Both were released in 2011. *Grant Writing 101* came about because friends kept picking her brain about



her grant writing work. She realized there was a need for a book that gave guidance to someone who had no time for formal training and needed simple instruction.

General Publishing Group published her first book, *All I Need To Know In Life I Learned From Romance Novels*, in 1999. Already an avid reader of romance novels, she wrote a book about the wisdom and spirit of romance novels that readers could learn from and use in their own lives.

Victoria recently entered the world of indie publishing with an e-book. *The Substitute Bride* is a romance due out on Smashwords and Amazon at the end of January. She has an Internet radio show and blogs at [VictoriaMJohnson.com](http://VictoriaMJohnson.com)

## There and Back

By David Breithaupt

As a determined writer of fiction, I gather topics. I'm currently enduring a personal situation that warrants savoring for possible fictional use. I had a six-week interlude of continuous amnesia. I've not encountered a similar episode in my 40 years of the practice of Internal Medicine, including treating large numbers of alcoholics who display blackouts as a consequence of raising their blood alcohol level rapidly.

What evolved for me in early October and persisted for six weeks is apparently not uncommon with anyone—addicted to sedatives like alcohol or not—who must endure certain long surgeries requiring powerful anesthetic agents, in my case *propofol*, the same drug that was Michael Jackson's undoing.

The illness started with my thinking I had pneumonia, but tests showed rapidly progressing congestive heart failure.

---

## My Last Words

by Meredy Amyx

*I want my last words to be a question.*

Questions are a vital force. Human curiosity accounts for scientific advances, religion and mythology, great experiments, bold explorations. Wondering, guessing, investigating, and finding out are among life's greatest joys.

Curiosity has also got us into any amount of trouble. Consider Eve. Pandora. Bluebeard's wife. The Elephant's Child. Alice. Positively consider Curious George. How much more fascinating they are than the boring guy who already has the answers. We love the ones with the insatiable hunger even when it leads them astray.

What drives them? Questions, questions—always more and more! I hope I never run out. When I stop asking questions, you'll know for sure I'm dead.

But the instant right before that, let there be one last question on my lips.

Maybe "How?" Maybe "Why?"

Maybe "Now what?"

*I want my last words to be an exclamation.*

When I'm about to embark on my journey to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns, I want the captain to sound the bell just before I leave the shore, in time for me to have a fast look ahead as I board the shining vessel. I want a glimpse, a flash of brilliant insight, an instant of perfect understanding. I want it all to make sense for just that long.

Just long enough for me to pass one last astounding revelation back to the loved ones waiting breathlessly at my bedside for my final utterance.

I want someone close by to hear me say: "Well, what do you know!"

*I want my last words to be swallowed up in hysterical laughter.*

I have a terrible weakness for irreverent humor and downright absurdity. I am subject to attacks of helpless giggling, hooting, and howling of the most unladylike sort. One of those was triggered by a silly slip of the tongue that hit my funnybone so hard, I nearly disgraced myself in public. Now and then my son repeats the expression within my hearing, with predictable result.

I can't tell you what it is or I will not be able to keep on writing.

When I am lying all calm, dignified, and ancient upon my deathbed, my loving family gathered round to bid me tearful farewell and respectfully awaiting my parting wisdom, I want my son to lean over and whisper that phrase to me.

With any luck at all, I'll be taken with such a paroxysm of giggles that it will tax my heart to bursting and I will have the honor to die laughing.

The questions and the answers all rolled into one. My last words the sum of all I know, my legacy to those I love the best: *ha ha ha ha ha.*

WT

I required open-heart surgery to repair one of my incompetent heart valves—the mitral valve, which had actually leaked without consequence since medical school. I also needed a pacemaker to be implanted to counter the rapidly developing unruly, and life-threatening heartbeat, both rate and rhythm.

Strict bed rest, breathing tubes, mask delivering oxygen under pressure, having secretions constantly suctioned and IV fluids flowing—all mandatory before surgical repair could be done. I apparently needed sedation to tolerate it all. I recall only the earliest efforts.

My family had several conferences with my regular doc and the surgeon. Today, loved ones report I seemed to know them both pre- and post-op, talked with them, bitched about being a patient, but I have no recollection of the days in the acute hospital and only awakened five to six weeks later in a rehab facility. Needless to say, I was astonished at events not filed in my blacked-out brain.

In late November I had to deal with the blank in terms of my own activity and some stunning circumstances in the bigger world beginning in October. The Cardinals won the World Series! Al Davis died. The 49ers led their division. The Occupy phenomenon had taken over. I weighed 125, down from my customary 155. Three months of bills had been paid. A large 30-year collection of pipes and tobacco had disappeared from my den.

My wife and kids and good friends and doctors and physiotherapists have been superb. As of New Years I weigh 136, gathered the morning paper at the top of my steep driveway, and am enjoying increased stamina. I am once again just an old geezer with chronic rheumatoid arthritis who has made an oath to avoid pondering and speaking and bitching about grand themes of life and death. I refuse to speculate whether my amnesia and altered awareness might have been wonderful gifts from my higher power as several close observers noted.

I intend to simply "do what's indicated." I'm convinced I can do this if I have my faculties. At any rate I can be certain from recent experiences that my loved ones and medical team will do so if I don't.

WT



# Pound out the news

by Edie Matthews

Little did I know that standing toe-to-toe trading punches with one of my three brothers would later come in handy in the newsroom. When siblings are brothers, as opposed to sisters, there are significant differences. This is especially true when it comes to disagreements. A sister's weapon of choice is catty remarks, or at worst, she'll scratch you with painted fingernails. Brothers, on the other hand, will confront you with their grievance and slug you. Sometimes they'll slug you first and explain afterwards. In order to survive childhood, I learned early to defend myself.

Furthermore, brothers love to tease. Once they discover your Achilles' heel, they are relentless. They will badger you until you weep, and then call you a crybaby. I quickly found out, the best defense is to ignore them. Completely. Maintain a poker face—no matter how much it angers, stings, or humiliates you.

The day arrived when I got permanent revenge on my brothers. I came home from school one afternoon and right in front of my house was a freshly laid square of sidewalk. How could I resist? I considered, should I write my initials in a little corner, or my name, or draw a picture? No, this was an opportunity. It had to have impact and significance. The muse took over. I proceeded to compose this narrative. "This is the home of the beautiful princess, Edie, and her three ugly brothers: Curly, Larry, and Moe." Later in the day my mother saw the handiwork and tried to scratch it out. Too late, it was a hot day, and the concrete had already hardened.

No doubt about it, being raised with three brothers helped prepare me for the raucous world of radio and television news, a profession dominated by men. One of my first paying jobs was assistant editor in an all-news-all-talk radio station. To protect the mad men employed there, I'll call the station KWAC. This 24-hour news format rumbled along before Ted Turner established CNN. The morning staff included two anchors, an editor, an assistant editor and sometimes two interns from the local university.

We worked in a cramped newsroom that was a beehive of activity—always chaotic.

My position as assistant editor began at 4 a.m. My duties consisted of first erasing a stack of audio cartridges with an electric magnet that resembled a travel iron. Next I transferred 15-20 stories from the UPI's electronic feed. This provided our national and international news, making it sound as if we had reporters all around the world. Once each story was dubbed onto its own cartridge, I typed a label for it and wrote a short introduction for the anchor to read. Something like, "Today the president has announced no new taxes on gasoline. Our correspondent, John Jones in Washington DC, has this report." Then the anchor played the recording.

After the news stories were dubbed, I made the "beat calls" to local law enforcement agencies asking about any recent robberies, accidents, or murders. I also called the morgue to find out if there had been any grizzly deaths. Each morning the coroner would say, "We've got to quit meeting like this." Soon the weatherman and then the business reporter would call me; I'd tape their reports to be played throughout the day.

If need be, I'd make early calls to the mayor or other newsworthy people and do a telephone interview. At the same time I skimmed the local newspaper while monitoring rival radio stations for any stories we may have missed.



The traffic reporter called in every half hour from his helicopter. His calls came over an overhead speaker that blared at us. His voice drowned out everything, including *The Larry King Show*, which ran until we went on the air at 5 a.m.

My job was created for an octopus. But I found if I worked non-stop the first couple of hours, the second half of my shift was manageable. Conversely, if I fell behind, I struggled to keep up the rest of the morning.

As the station's first woman entering this man's domain, I wanted to excel at my duties and not do anything to jeopardize the potential for future female employees. So I made it a point not to notice the ubiquitous cursing used for even the most innocuous situation. No one mislaid a pencil—it was that "son of a bitchin' pencil." No one drank coffee—it was "f\*\*king coffee."

Since newsrooms are filled with tension and deadlines, I assumed the profanity acted as a stress-release valve. What amazed me was how they managed to avoid a slip-up on the air. I worried that one morning someone would say, "Here's that 'f\*\*ker,' Bob Brown in Baltimore, with the 'sh\*\*ty' details." Occasionally, it would dawn on the men that I was a woman, and they'd apologize. Yet a moment later they'd be swearing again. However, I took it as a compliment—I'd become "one of the boys."

Unfortunately, the bulk of KWAC's stress and tension was a direct result of our editor, AKA Genghis Khan. Genghis was a short, stocky tyrant with wire-rim glasses, who liked to work under pressure. In fact, he never missed an opportunity to incite more anxiety. He did this two ways. First he let his work pile up to the last moment, and then raced like a crazy person to catch up. Second, he liked to insult and argue with people.

I managed to get along with Genghis. I ignored his snide remarks like I'd ignored my brothers. At most, I'd shake my head with a disdainful look that said, "Grow up." Since this wasn't the response he sought, he targeted male coworkers. They were eager combatants and vigorously traded verbal insults.

*Continued on page 12*

## How did they get that way?

By ArLyne Diamond

Years ago when I did psychological evaluations for the court, I was often astonished at the horrors of a client's past. It was unbelievable to me that parents could be as cruel and unthinking as so many were. Learning about the past of my clients helped me understand their present predicaments.

As an evaluator I worked backwards, like a detective trying to learn enough about the person I was interviewing to properly diagnose him and make recommendation to the court for disposition or to a therapist for treatment.

As a writer, you often do the same. You introduce your characters in their present and only piece by piece do you reveal information about their past.

When we write fiction—romance, mystery, or historical novels—we want our characters to come alive and feel real to our readers. We want to create some sense of who they are now and how they got to be that way, without boring our readers with demographic details.

So, we tempt the readers with tidbits about the past, perhaps through memories, dreams, or introductions made by other characters in the book.

But how do you decide what your character's past should be, and which tidbits to release when and where? Some writers create character timelines; others let their characters emerge as they write.

Whichever you prefer, may I suggest that you create a history for your characters whether you actually use the information or not. There always are reasons that people are who they are today—whether good or bad.

If parents disrespect their children, the consequences are often extreme. Either the children become weak, passive, and unwilling to take risks, or they rebel and test themselves to the extreme.

If parents are too kind and permissive, they create a cotton-candy environment that often leads to overly comfortable children unwilling to do anything to jeopardize their safety and comfort.

Cruel and heartless parents create severe emotional problems—sometimes violence, sometimes extreme passivity.

Incest does terrible things to its victims. They fear their sexuality, and that usually shows by the victim hiding through obesity or dressing in over-sized heavy clothing that hides their bodies. Yet, these same people as adults could use sex as a price to be paid for friendship.

Children raised in very strict religious households, similar to the way Carl Jung was raised, often develop extreme good/bad aspects to their personalities. Jung called these shadows.

Children raised in sexually repressive societies, similar to that which Sigmund Freud studied, become neurotic about their sexual desires. One has only to see the modern play *Spring Awakening* to get a sense of the horrors created by these repressive societies.

However, your character had influences beyond his or her parents. Uncles, aunts, siblings, friends, neighbors and the community itself all contribute to anyone's worldview. So, where was your character raised? Rural, big city, church-going community, other country with different customs and beliefs? You need to know it all.

People see the world differently and relate to the same stimuli differently, based upon their backgrounds. Our assumptions and perceptions of reality often interfere with our seeing reality clearly.

Make your characters come alive by giving them a complex but consistent background. Let me know if you need my help.

WT

---

## My Writing Studio

By Jerry Mulenburg

I'm lucky to have my own private writing studio. It has all the comforts of a small apartment with a small convertible sofa bed, a two burner cooking stove to brew coffee or heat water for tea, a bar sink, and for cold weather, a small thermostat controlled heater. There's a lot of storage for the necessities of living, space for dishes, utensils, and towels, and an actual hanging closet so my tuxedo and my wife's ball gown (neither of which we actually have) do not get wrinkled.

There are lots of windows all around making it light and airy so no artificial light is needed during the day. Through the large main window I can see trees, bushes, birds, and squirrels, and bask in the sunshine or the cool shadows of trees as if I were in a park. At night, strategically located built-in lights provide interior and reading area lighting.

With my laptop perched on a small table and a wireless Internet connection I can surf the Web for research or entertainment. When I sit on the sofa bed and slide the table up, it becomes my workstation—at other times, my dining table. Unlike an apartment or cottage, my studio offers a wide variety of scenery options depending on my desires and the weather. I can even raise the ceiling if I want a screened in opening to catch summer breezes.

Right now it's pouring down rain and I'm enjoying just listening to the patter of the falling rain on the roof. If the weather is bad, I am snug, dry, and warm.

When it's nice outside I can open the doors and windows. Sometimes I lower an awning and sit outside in my lawn chair as I read, write, and sometimes just snooze.

My studio, if you haven't guessed, is my Volkswagen Eurovan camper. It not

only provides economical transportation, it is a refuge and could, if needed, be my home. I didn't buy the VW to drive long distances, or even for camping, although it is superb for both and I use it for these as well for my everyday car. I derive the most pleasure when in it as my writing studio as I am doing now, writing this piece.

When I'm by the ocean I park so I can see the sandy beach and white caps on the blue-green water, dotted by sailboats all the way to the horizon, with sea otters, pelicans, gulls, and an occasional pod of dolphins going by.

Sitting in my driveway writing just for the pleasure of enjoying my writing studio, I feel a little guilty. When the mailman sees me inside I am sure he thinks me a little, or a lot crazy, or at least eccentric. Who else sits in his car in the driveway and writes? Especially in the rain.

WT

# Terse On Verse

By Pat Bustamante

## Feb Is For Fibbing.

I told every relative friend or foe  
Look for me soon on the best-seller list.  
A little exaggerated so:  
My newsletter triumphs?  
N.Y. Times might have missed.

— Pat Bustamante

Be proud of every contribution you make to the literary world, even those you are not convinced are significant in any way. One never knows!

Poetry rides a cusp between fiction and non-fiction, between effect and information. The original purpose of rhyming sounds was as a key to memorizing and passing on important things, before written records existed. A poem was a form of newsletter or encyclopedia. Do poems fib? (Confession time: I am hooked on fibs!)

A poem's emotions should come through as genuine but the experiences described can be imagination run wild.

Oh, fibbing! As a child I told big ones, thrilled to discover that "telling stories" becomes performance art! Funny stories: people love to laugh; even angry parents can manage it. One can get off the hook for misdeeds, get lots of attention when lonely, or be praised for what is basically outrageous — or even all three.

"Narrator lies:" we heard about that at our January meeting. The Unreliable (Narrator) Poet serves up contradictory "facts" to achieve an "AHA!" moment. Satirical or fake bewilderment words underline a premise. Do you get it?

Lying can be good! Not all viewpoints are universally accepted, but a beautiful presentation emphasizes the art. Be artful. (Sounds nicer than, "be a liar.") So enjoy your February days by practicing up on April fooling. That day will come soon enough.

WT

## Rising Orange Moon Haiku

Deep red gibbous orb.  
Dark drive down Palm Avenue.  
I hope for rainstorms.

— Stephen C. Wetlesen

# Which Is the First?

By Richard A. Burns

As the scene fades in, Ellen and Ernest are planning a two day weekend trip to Modesto on either October 31 and November 1 or November 1 and 2. Here's what you'd hear if you eavesdropped on them doing the planning. Ernest is the nearly deaf husband. Ellen is the overly-brief wife. Ellen has the calendar in front of her. Ernest is putting dishes away.

**Ernest:** So, Honey-pie, which is the 1st?

**Ellen:** Yeah.

**Ernest:** No, which one is the 1st?

**Ellen:** Yeah. One is the 1st.

**Ernest:** One is the first!? I know that. Which day is the first?

**Ellen:** November one is the 1st. November two is the 2nd. It almost always goes like that.

**Ernest:** No. Is Saturday on November first?

**Ellen:** You're getting warm.

**Ernest:** I know. I'm starting to sweat.

**Ellen:** The concert is on the 1st. Then we'll stay overnight in a motel.

**Ernest:** Hold it, sweetheart. Right there. Don't go on, please. What day will it be when we wake-up the next day?

**Ellen:** And then it will be Sunday, what else?

**Ernest:** Then Sunday is the 2nd. That means Saturday will be the 1st.

**Ellen:** Well, duh? (Under her breath ... "25,000 comedians are out of work and I get ....") Yes, dear. Surprising as it may seem, November 1st is the day just before November 2nd.

**Ernest:** Four! What happens on November 4th?

**Ellen:** Never mind. I'll just send you an email.

WT



Suzy Paluzzi and Rita St. Claire

## South Bay Writers Dinner Meeting



Betty Auchard and Karen Llewellyn



Una Daly and Valerie Frankel

January 10, 2012

Photos by Dick Amyx



*Continued from page 9*  
**Pounding out the news**

Genghis was merciless when dealing with the interns. He'd yell at them, "Can't you read!" or "Are you stupid?" One time he took an intern's story, wrinkled it into a ball, and threw it against the wall. Then he picked it up, smoothed out the paper, and handed it to the newscaster to read on the air. After listening to the story, Genghis remarked, "Oh, I guess that was all right." Unfortunately, this did not comfort the teary-eyed intern.

Genghis justified his abominable treatment on underlings: "They need to know the realities of a newsroom." I'm sure he convinced many students to switch majors.

I managed to avoid the wrath of Khan until I decided to leave KWAC. Although I wasn't an intern, I was in my final year at the university and having difficulty staying awake in my 2 p.m. class.

Genghis was furious about my resignation. The previous assistant editor, a man, had been incompetent, creating "real" tension in the newsroom. To begin with he couldn't handle the hectic pace, he'd mislabel cartridges, and worse, he'd forget to cue them up, resulting in the unforgivable in radio—"dead air" or silence. So Genghis tried to convince me an actual job in news meant more than a journalism degree. Nevertheless, I valued a college diploma more than this frenzied position—and besides, I wanted to work in television.

My last week, Genghis went on a rampage, intent on making me miserable. I endured his villainy like a mute nun . . . until the final day. He was up to his old tricks, creating havoc by falling behind, scrambling to catch up, aggravating the anchors, insulting the interns, and looking for an excuse to attack me. He soon found one. He took offense at one of the story introductions I'd written.

He stood over my chair shrieking at me, waving his arms like an evil bird trying to fly—calling me "stupid!"

I tried to remain calm and said, "Don't talk to me like that."

He bellowed, "I'll talk to you anyway I want."

"No, you won't," I said, rising from the chair, feeling my patience snap as hot blood coursed through my veins, "because I'll stop you." My mind blanked, and my defense mechanism kicked in—the slug fest with my brothers responded. I grabbed Genghis by his lapels, spun him around, and pinned him against the mailboxes.



Like a cartoon character, his mouth dropped open, and his eyes nearly left their sockets. The fear on his face brought me back. I released Genghis.

One intern sat frozen, the other hid.

Genghis scuttled away like a cowardly dog. "Did you see what she did to me?" he whined to the anchors inside the glass sound booth.

"Get out of here," said one anchor, "we're on the air."

"You deserved it," said the other.

I calmly sat down at my station and went back to work. Inside I was shocked. I couldn't believe my reaction. I'll never work in broadcasting again. My career was over before it got started—all because of this idiot! I imagined the conversation: "But your honor, it was unpremeditated."

Genghis came back to our workstation, lifting his chest like a puffed-up chicken, and said, "Don't you ever touch me again!"

I almost burst out laughing.

With an outstretched arm he pointed to the door and said, "GET OUT!"

I looked him in the eye and responded, "You didn't hire me, and you can't fire me. I'll leave when my shift is over." I turned back to my work. I kept saying to myself: *Don't give him the satisfaction of knowing you're upset.* I breathed deeply and forced myself to concentrate.

Meantime, Genghis sat perspiring and panting loudly. He mumbled, "You're really strong!"

Again, I wanted to laugh. I was taking a weight training class, but my reaction was all adrenalin. The weatherman called and I answered in my sweetest voice, "Hellooo!"

Somehow I managed to get through the rest of the morning. Just before I left, the news director called me into his office. I thought: *Oh no, here it comes—banishment.* However, he proceeded to tell me how much he'd miss me and what a good job I'd done.

I told him it had been a challenge working with Genghis. He agreed. I consoled myself—maybe there was a place for me in broadcasting.

Throughout the day I replayed the incident in my mind over and over. I wrote pages in my journal. I finally concluded that you don't know how you'll react when you're backed in a corner, but I'm glad I defended myself. Most of all, I'm glad I was raised with three brothers.

**WT**



**Betty Auchard and Edie Matthews**  
—Photo by Carolyn Donnell

# Contest Corner

## Contests, conferences and other writer events

by Carolyn Donnell

First and foremost is **South Bay Writers' WritersTalk** Challenge. Twice a year winners are chosen from material published in the newsletter – fiction, memoirs, essay/non-fiction and poetry. You can't win if you don't submit. See rules on this page 13 and congratulate the winners at our February 14 meeting.

Sister CWC branches are featuring contests, conferences and workshops.

**CWC Redwood Writers'** contests include: play contest, deadline 2/29/12; conference prose and poetry contests, 3/15/12; romance contest, 7/15/12; mystery/thriller, 9/15/12; young adult, 7/8/12. See guidelines at [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org). **Redwood Writers'** Next Step Conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 28 at Santa Rosa Junior College.

**Fremont Area Writers** Club will open up writing courses in 2012, starting with *Beginners Guide to Screenwriting* with Jon James Miller at De Vry University, Tuesdays, March 6 – April 24. Contact Geraldine Solon at [gsolon082007@gmail.com](mailto:gsolon082007@gmail.com)

Another activity in the area is Tom Bird's writing retreat, *Write a Book in a Weekend*. The course includes four webinars preceding the retreat, the retreat itself, and four online group sessions afterwards. The Monterey Peninsula Embassy Suites hosts the retreat May 4 – 6. Details at [theauthorsuniversity.com](http://theauthorsuniversity.com)

A crime writing conference is coming to Sacramento. *Left Coast Crime 2012*, March 29 – April 1; featured guests, John Lescroart, Jacqueline Winspear, Harley Jane Kozak, and Noemi Levine. Visit [leftcoastcrime.org/2012/](http://leftcoastcrime.org/2012/) for complete details.

A good contest resource is the *Winning Writers* website. Contests range from poetry to prose, humor to sports. You can sign up for *The Best Free Poetry Contests* newsletter (free) and read contest details at [winningwriters.com](http://winningwriters.com)

Memoir and fiction writers can find contests at [writeradvice.com/markets.html](http://writeradvice.com/markets.html)

More contests with current deadlines are listed below.

971 Short Fiction Contest. Prize \$200 and publication, deadline April 1. See [971menu.com/misc.html](http://971menu.com/misc.html)

Writing It Real Winter 2012. Previously unpublished children's stories for ages 9 to 12. Prize \$100 and phone consultation with Sheila Bender. Deadline March 15. [writingitreal.com/community/current-contest](http://writingitreal.com/community/current-contest)

Another children's story opportunity is the Children's Story Contest Poster to benefit Old School House Arts Centre, Qualicum Beach, British Columbia. Ten stories will be published with a prize of \$200 for the best entry. Deadline March 31. See [ascentaspirations.ca/childrensstorycontest.htm](http://ascentaspirations.ca/childrensstorycontest.htm)

*Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Submission deadlines vary. *Chicken Soup* currently has three titles that are seeking stories. Go to [chickensoup.com/](http://chickensoup.com/)

*The Florida Review* 2012 Editors' Prizes in Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Poetry. Deadline March 17; first prize \$1,000 and publication; entry fee \$15. See [floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/files/editorsaward2012.pdf](http://floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/files/editorsaward2012.pdf)

Third Annual *Gemini Magazine* Short Story Contest. Deadline March 31; grand prize \$1,000 and publication; entry fee \$4. Guidelines at [gemini-magazine.com/contest.html](http://gemini-magazine.com/contest.html) WT

---

## Breaking News: Contests and More from San Mateo

San Mateo County Fair Literary Arts Director Bardi Rosman Koodrin announces that the annual fair and its panoply of writing contests will culminate in a published anthology of entries, *Carry the Light: San Mateo County Literary Anthology, 2012*. Go to [sanmateocountyfair.com](http://sanmateocountyfair.com) and click on competitive exhibits, literary arts

WT

## Calling Poetry Submissions

Los Gatos Poet Laureate, Parthenia M. Hicks, announces the official call for poems about the town of Los Gatos, deadline extended to February 14, 2012.

Guidelines: One poem per person. You do NOT have to be a resident of Los Gatos. Poems must be double-spaced and no longer than four pages. Include your name and contact information.

We will post a selection of poems on the Los Gatos Poet Laureate Facebook page and collect them for possible inclusion in a book in celebration of April as National Poetry Month.

Send your poem to Parthenia M. Hicks, Los Gatos Poet Laureate, PO Box 790, Los Gatos, CA 95031, or email to [parre1@verizon.net](mailto:parre1@verizon.net).

---

## WRITERSTALK Challenge

### What is it?

Twice a year, in February and August, 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, 500 – 1500 words  
Memoir, 500 – 1200 words  
Essay/Nonfiction, 500 – 1200 words  
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. WT

## 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 or to the club post office box and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.*

### **Astrology, Singing**

Sara Aurich  
saraaurich@comcast.net

### **Astronomy, History of Astronomy**

Bob Garfinkle  
ragarf@earthlink.net

### **Banking**

Pam Oliver-Lyons  
polpap@prodigy.net

### **Character Development**

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

### **Counseling/John Steinbeck**

Dr. Audry L. Lynch  
glynych0001@comcast.net

### **Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace**

Jerry Mulenburg  
geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net

### **Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up**

Martha Engber  
marthaengber.com  
marthaengber.blogspot.com

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

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

### **Hospital and Nursing Environment**

Maureen Griswold  
maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net

### **Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/Psychology**

Dave Breithaupt  
dlbmlb@comcast.net

### **Library Science**

Molly Westmoreland  
mulcarend@hotmail.com

### **Marketing and Management**

Suzy Paluzzi, MBA  
jomarch06@yahoo.com

### **Mathematics: Teaching and History/Fibonacci Sequence**

Marjorie Johnson  
marjohnson89@earthlink.net

### **Real Estate, Horses, Remodeling,**

### **Southwest History**

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

### **Profile Writing**

Susan Mueller  
susan\_mueller@yahoo.com

### **Teaching and the Arts**

Betty Auchard  
Btauchard@aol.com

### **Telecommunications Technology**

Allan Cobb  
allancobb@computer.org

### **Television Production**

Woody Horn  
408-266-7040

### **Thanatologist: Counseling for Death, Dying, and Bereavement**

Susan Salluce  
susansalluce@yahoo.com

---

## South Bay Writers Honor Roll

The following members of South Bay Writers have written books that appear on [www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

Betty Auchard  
Dale Aycock  
Robert Balmanno  
David Breithaupt  
Susan Taylor Brown  
June Chen  
Rick Deutsch  
Gary Dow (G Wayne)  
Martha Engber  
Valerie Frankel  
Robert Garfinkle  
Tina Glasner  
Derald Hamilton  
Jack Hasling  
Marjorie Johnson  
Sherri Johnson (Danny Culpepper)  
Victoria M. Johnson  
Susanne Lakin  
Michael Levin  
Audry Lynch  
Tom Mach  
Kathryn Madison  
Sam Marines  
Jana McBurney-Lin  
Luanne Oleas  
Evelyn Preston  
W Craig Reed  
Wilma Reiber  
Reed Stevens  
Anna Thumann  
Wendy Tokunaga  
Mary Tomasi-Dubois  
Valerie Whong (Valerie Lee)  
Beth Wyman

## CWC Around the Bay

These are published meeting locations and times for 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:** 1:30 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. [cwc-berkeley.com](http://cwc-berkeley.com)

**Central Coast:** 5:30 third Tuesdays, Bay Park Hotel, 1425 Munras Avenue, Monterey. [centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

**Fremont:** 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

**Marin:** 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. [cwcmarinwriters.com](http://cwcmarinwriters.com)

**Mount Diablo:** 11:30 second Saturdays, Hungry Hunter, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette (Pleasant Hill Road and Highway 24). [mtdiablowriters.org](http://mtdiablowriters.org)

**Redwood:** 3:00 first Sundays at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org)

**Tri-Valley:** 11:30 third Saturdays, Oasis Grille, 780 Main Street, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.com](http://trivalleywriters.com)

**Sacramento:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento. [sacramento-writers.org](http://sacramento-writers.org)

**San Francisco/Peninsula:** 10:00 third Saturdays, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. [sfpeninsulawriters.com](http://sfpeninsulawriters.com)

---

## Ongoing Critique Groups

### **Le Boulanger Writers**

Meets at Le Boulanger, Pruneyard in Campbell. Karen Hartley – Sew1Machin@aol.com All genres; open to all

### **Our Voices**

Meets in Santa Clara, every other Thursday 7:15 p.m. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical non-fiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche – [dalaroche@comcast.net](mailto:dalaroche@comcast.net)

### **Valley Writers**

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

### **Note:**

Come to a South Bay Writers dinner meeting to look for others who may want to form a critique group in your genre.

## Stay Informed

Sign up for the SBW email list to receive meeting and event announcements. [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 7:30P Open mic Barnes & Noble Almaden, San Jose	4
5	6	7	8 SBW Board meeting 7:30P	9	10	11
12	13	14 6:00P Regular Dinner Meeting, Outlook Inn Sunnyvale	15 Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	16	17 7:30P Open mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	<b>February 2012</b>		
<b>Future Flashes</b>						
March 13 regular meeting						

### Market your book



Giftkone.com is looking for self-published authors with a book to sell. If you are an author, self-published or otherwise, and would like to have another clean, well lit place online to offer your book, e-mail Hank Gray: [manager@giftkone.com](mailto:manager@giftkone.com)

### Your ad could go here

\$7 per column inch for SBW members  
\$10 per inch for nonmembers

### SBW House Sitter

I am a mature, responsible adult seeking house sitting employment so I may write my book. I am a non-smoker and can provide references. Please respond to [lifewriter2012@gmail.com](mailto:lifewriter2012@gmail.com)

### South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10  
At the meeting.  
On the website.  
[southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)

### Poetry Readings

#### Poets@Play

Second Sundays: Check for times  
Markham House History Park  
1650 Senter Rd., San Jose

#### Poetry Center San Jose

Willow Glen Library  
3rd Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.  
1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose

Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dennis Noren at [norcamp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:norcamp@sbcglobal.net)



### South Bay Writers Open Mic

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

Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email [WABaldwin@aol.com](mailto:WABaldwin@aol.com)



**California Writers Club**  
South Bay Branch  
P.O. Box 3254  
Santa Clara, CA 95055  
[www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**Next Monthly Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 14, 6:00 p.m.**

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

**Authors Panel:**  
**Is writing a**  
**Labor of Love?**

*WritersTalk* deadline is always  
the 15th of the month.

