



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 23  
Number 12  
December 2015

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2015 / 4:00 PM

## SOUTH BAY WRITERS HOSTS ANNUAL HOLIDAY BASH

Break out your crock-pot and baking dishes, and don't forget to buy that quirky mechanical Santa Claus! South Bay Writers will host its annual Holiday Bash & White Elephant Gift Exchange in San Jose on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 4 p.m. This year's potluck caps a year of insightful monthly speakers and celebrates the *esprit de corps* of its club members.

### WHO'S INVITED

South Bay Writers members and their guests.

### POTLUCK DETAILS

Attendees should bring a dish according to the first letter of their last name. The club will provide beverages, including wine.

A - E:	Appetizer	J - P:	Main Dish
F - I:	Salad or Side Dish	Q - Z:	Dessert

### GIFT EXCHANGE

The event will feature a "White Elephant Gift Exchange." Members wishing to participate should bring a wrapped gift valued at \$20.00 maximum.

### RSVP FOR ADDRESS

The potluck event will be held in San Jose at the home of SBW member and Hospitality Director Carole Taub. Please RSVP to Carole at [HolidayBash@southbaywriters.com](mailto:HolidayBash@southbaywriters.com) for event address. Include the name of the dish you plan to contribute.

### JANUARY 2016 GENERAL MEETING & SPEAKER SERIES

SBW's monthly General Meeting & Speaker Series **will not be held** in December: **No December regular meeting.** The club's new Speaker Series season kicks off the New Year on Monday, January 11, 2016. The series is held the second Monday of every month except July and December. — WT

RECAP: MICHAEL BRACKEN WORKSHOP

## Building Saleable Short Fiction

by Chess Desalls

November's association with National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) doesn't mean short story writing should step aside. For some writers, crafting short fiction leads to publication and recognition; or better yet, their stories pay the bills. This month, SBW welcomed an opportunity to practice writing shorter works that can be submitted to magazines and anthologies.

Prolific writer and editor, Michael Bracken, presented an all-day workshop on how to pen short fiction quickly and for profit. The goal, he said, "is to learn to write fast, solid, and publishable fiction." His presentation highlighted the sweet spots for saleable short stories, including recommendations for character building, scene construction, and word counts that lead to success.

Bracken provided a roadmap of the building blocks of short story writing, with a focus on plot, characterization, setting, and dialogue. In doing so, he disclosed his secrets to writing stories that attract editors and engage readers. His hands-on approach allowed for interactive discovery of how to create themes and characters that are interesting, believable, and relatable. In addition to building the stories, Bracken provided tips on how to market them to editors.

SBW members practiced building frameworks for short stories by brainstorming scenarios and writing opening scenes that followed Bracken's methods. "Every story needs to have one event that changes the life of your main character," said Bracken.

*Continued on Page 6*

# President's Perspective

by Patrick McQueen  
President, South Bay Writers

## Criticism



Respectful people will find considerate ways to communicate honest feedback, hopefully delivering it in a way that builds you up and encourages more from you. However, criticism can be painful and destructive, even when communicated with the best intentions. Whether the criticism is constructive or not, I constantly remind myself that people talk about those things in which they are most interested.

The subtext of all criticism is interest.

Faced with criticism, I often evaluate the feedback open-mindedly with someone I respect. If the feedback has merit, I tend to hear the constructive aspects of it more clearly when discussing it with an ally.

When representing anything for which I want to foster interest, I have to be careful not to criticize. Most audiences are going to have at least one critic. I don't want to be that critic. I have to let someone else do that while I enjoy myself with those who also enjoy the experience.

Self-criticism is not such a different beast if I think of my internal dialogue as a relationship I have with myself. As I said above, those who respect me will find considerate ways to communicate honest feedback. I see it as my responsibility to model for others the level of respect I deserve by giving myself honest feedback in considerate ways.

I have learned to value honest and critical feedback from the monthly dinner meetings, the bi-monthly open mics, and a feedback group I attend regularly. If you are not yet plugged into a group in which you receive regular respectful feedback for your writing, I encourage you to check out the calendar of awesome meet-ups and events listed at the back of this edition of *WritersTalk*. (Ed: See Critique, Page 7.)

If you are anything like me, you are happiest when surrounded by respectful people who build you up with honest, encouraging, and empowering feedback. — WT



Full moonlight on frost.  
Fir forests glitter for miles.  
Sparkling fairyland.  
— Stephen C. Wetlesen

California Writers Club  
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www.southbaywriters.com

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### SBW Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

### Join Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Dual membership: \$25. Contact Membership Chair, Sally Milnor, or sign up online at southbaywriters.com





## WritersTalk

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

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### Contributing Editors

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Pat Bustamante  
Chess Desalls  
Carolyn Donnell  
Linda Judd  
Sally Milnor  
Karen Sundback

### Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. All submissions will be copyedited. The Managing Editor decides which submissions to publish.

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month.

Suggested word limits are not absolute; shorter preferred. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. Use Times New Roman 12-font; no tabs; no colors; no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files.

**Anything Goes—Almost** (300 words)

**News Items** (400 words)

**Letters to the Editor** (300 words)

### Creative Works

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

### Member Achievement and News:

newsletter@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 and is published free of charge.

Advertising of workshops, conferences, and events is accepted from other Branches of California Writers Club. Because California Writers Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, *WritersTalk* is not accepting advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Also, we cannot accept political advertising of any kind.

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### Our Mission

Encouraging writers at all levels of expertise to hone their skills in the craft of writing

**Change of Address:** Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com or use MRMS

**Circulation:** 200

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# Words from the Editor

by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson  
Managing Editor



## Classic Writing Books 1: *Plotto*

In October, *WritersTalk* prepared you for the SBW November 14 workshop on writing the short story by directing you to the May/June *Writer's Digest* articles on that topic, as well as listing many markets and contests for your stories. If you missed those references, October 2015 *WritersTalk* is archived on our website, southbaywriters.com, along with other back issues stretching back to 2006. (While you are there, note our cool cumulative index. Thank you, Dick Amyx and Carolyn Donnell.)

Our October speaker, Joshua Mohr, in discussing the relationship between plot and character, said that they transcend separateness. Because your protagonist will affect, alter, and mutate all your plot points based on her specific responses to these stimuli, it's not necessarily helpful to think of plot and character as separate concerns.

Some authors say it's all plot: outline your story and the rest falls into line. In fact, William Wallace Cook in *Plotto: The Master Book of All Plots* (1928) provides numerous example situations that writers can shape into workable plot outlines. Cook is said to have influenced many writers, including Alfred Hitchcock and Erle Stanley Gardner, writer of the Perry Mason books. Until recently, hardcover editions of *Plotto* sold for hundreds of dollars. This classic guide for creative writers, out of print since 1941, is now available as an ebook for less than \$5.

*Plotto* has 1852 situations and almost 3000 elements, which can be combined into a vast variety of plots. The *Plotto* method is like applying Henry Ford's assembly line to writing novels. It's based upon the emergence of a story line out of a core theme or master-plot, and the view that external stimuli spawn emotional feelings which, in turn, trigger responses and generate conflict. According to the introduction to the revised edition, "Despite the datedness of many of its conflicts, *Plotto* remains an exceptionally valuable source of inspiration for the creative writer."

Whether you start with plot or character or theme, what's really important is to start. November's NaNoWriMo (nanowrimo.org) gave you that opportunity. Begin by making a Christmas present to yourself. The classic book *Plotto* is available on Amazon, as well as the best writing book on my bookshelf, *On Writing* by Stephen King.

Happy Holidays! — WT

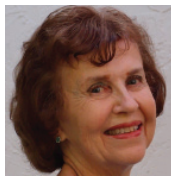
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## New Members

by Sally A. Milnor

I am very pleased to introduce our newest member:



Sally Milnor

**Marilyn Horn-Fahey** has returned to our Club after a three-year hiatus. She writes both fiction and non-fiction. On her membership questionnaire, she says the stories in her head won't leave

her alone until she writes them down. Marilyn has had five short stories published this year, and two of her creative nonfiction pieces will be published by the end of this year. In addition to her writing, she enjoys vintage trailers, Hawaiian music, and dystopian science fiction. Marilyn's website is <http://marilynhornwriting.weebly.com>.

**Welcome back, Marilyn:** We hope your membership brings you inspiration and enjoyment. Thank you for rejoining our Club.

**And to all of our South Bay Writers:** We appreciate and need your continuing presence and support. Thank you for helping to keep our Club flourishing.

**Happy Holidays to All,** and a wonderful and prosperous New Year. --WT



## Member News

*WritersTalk Staff*

**Carolyn Donnell's** first novel, *Blood Will Tell*, is finally in print, available on Amazon and Smashwords.

**Mark Gelineaux** and **Joe King** announce that their third novella, *Best Left in the Shadows*, is now on Amazon. They are releasing a novella every month!

**David Zeltzer's** poems "the ancient wheelchair gang," "she sweetly murmurs," "melt the poured titanium," "day one weather," and "eat the lion heart" have been published in October, 2015, in Vol. 7 of the U.K. print journal *Fur-Lined Ghettos*, at <http://fur-linedghettos.weekly.com/issues.html> --WT

## View from the Board

by Sheena Arora



Sheena Arora  
Contributing Editor

On Wednesday, November 4, ten South Bay Writers board members met in Santa Clara: President Patrick McQueen, Vice-President Jenni Everidge, Secretary Sherrie Johnson, Treasurer Bill Baldwin, Members-at-Large Robyn King and Sheena Arora, Hospitality Chair Carole Taub, Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson, and Membership Chair Sally Milnor. Carolyn Donnell also participated.

President McQueen's pet project of developing a SBW club anthology is taking shape. Right now, he plans to produce it electronically. Check South Bay Writers website [www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com) for writing prompts. The submission deadline is March 31, 2016, for the first prompt: the dollar bill.

**Future plans:** While joining South Bay Writers or renewing club membership, SBW club members will be able to opt to receive the newsletter *WritersTalk* either in print or via email. President Patrick McQueen is checking this out with the state level California Writers Club.

SBW board members extend a big fat THANK YOU to our Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson and her husband Frank Johnson for opening their hearts and home to us. For the past three years, they not only hosted SBW board meetings but also treated us to world famous cookies. We will miss them. And of course we will miss the cookies!

Remember the holiday party December 13 at the home of Hospitality Chair Carole Taub. Details on **page 1**. RSVP for address to Carole Taub at [hospitality@southbaywriters.com](mailto:hospitality@southbaywriters.com).

We are exhausted from eating cookies and drinking coffee, so the SBW board members will take a break during December. We promise to get back to business in January. Plan now and join us in January; we hope to see new faces. Until then happy holidays and have fun writing. --WT

## Breaking News From David George, President, CWC Central Board

Hear ye, hear ye! The **deadline** for submitting your great stories and poems to our 2016 edition of the CWC *Literary Review* has officially been extended to midnight, **Dec. 31, 2015**. Submission guidelines on the CWC State website, [calwriters.org](http://calwriters.org), reflect this new deadline. --WT



A dozen winners of "writerly" prizes at the SBW NaNoWriMo Write-In on November 9  
Photo by Carolyn Donnell

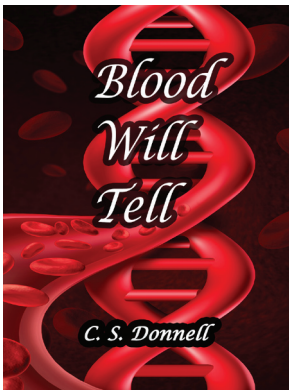


## Book Announcements



### *Echoes of Winter* by Chess Desalls

On November 27, the short story, “Wrapped in the Past,” by Chess Desalls released as part of an anthology of holiday and winter-themed stories for young adult readers. In Chess’ story, Shirlyn Hall travels back in time to ancient Persia where she meets the three magi who follow the Star of Bethlehem. After a mishap threatens to send her ride home without her, the youngest of the magi exhibits a hidden talent that leaves an impression on his elders and on Shirlyn’s heart. But his silhouette will forget they ever met, unless she leaves a reminder that comes with a heavy price.



### *Blood Will Tell* by C. S. Donnell

Carolyn Donnell (writing as C. S. Donnell) announces her first novel, *Blood Will Tell*. Family ties. A good thing, right? Not if you come from Amy’s family. Amy escapes her gilded cage only to find herself alone. One by one, everyone disappears from her life. Eighteen years of futile searching end when a letter arrives and leads her through a maze of shifting identities, kidnapping and attempted murder. Will she find the answers in time? Available on Amazon and Smashwords.



### *Best Left in the Shadows* by Mark Gelineau and Joe King

Mark Gelineau and Joe King announce that their third novella, *Best Left in the Shadows*, is now available on Amazon. Their website is [gelineauandking.com](http://gelineauandking.com).

A Highside girl is beaten. Murdered. Her body is found on a Lowside dock. A magistrate comes looking for answers, for justice.

Alys trades and sells secrets among the gangs and factions of Lowside. She is a daughter of the underworld, bold, cunning, and free. When an old lover asks for help, she agrees—for a price. Together, they travel into the dark heart of the underworld in search of a killer.

## Got Book?

If you are a member of South Bay Writers who has a published book, send a jpg of the cover and a descriptive paragraph to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). We will publish your book announcement. Also, be sure to join the SBW group on Goodreads and ask to be interviewed by SBW TalkBooks. It’s easy: establish your Goodreads account and then join our group; the administrator lets members in.

You may also publish your photo and biography in our “Members Gallery” on the South Bay Writers Web site at <http://southbaywriters.com/wordpress/>. Go to the menu bar and click “Members.” In the drop-down menu, click “Update Biography” and enter your information. If you have any questions, contact Web Editor Kimberly Malanczuk at [WebEditor@southbaywriters.com](mailto:WebEditor@southbaywriters.com). — WT

## Posts: SBW Authors

by Linda Judd

**Featured:** Valerie Estelle Frankel

**Book:** *A Girl’s Guide to The Heroine’s Journey*

**Blog:** [ChessDesalls.wordpress.com/interviews/](http://ChessDesalls.wordpress.com/interviews/)

**SBW TalkBooks Interview Excerpt:**

**Q:** How did you become interested in mythology?

**A:** When younger than five, I was telling folktales on the playground, and literally all my life. At age five I knew that Cinderella, and the stories that Disney had tackled, were boring ones that everyone knew and I wanted something more exotic. So I was reading all those books that have titles like *Scottish Folk Tales* or *Chinese Fairytales*. That’s the area of the kid’s library that I would head down.

**Q:** Amazon says you have written 38 books!! How have you found time for that? Do you write every day, like a full time job? If so, how do you keep up your enthusiasm?

**A:** I do write every day as a full time job. All right, here’s my day: I like to get up at 8 a.m.; I lie there and promise myself junk food and caffeine if I cross the room and go to the computer and start typing things. That really works. Occasionally, I am excited about continuing wherever I stopped the night before and remind myself of that. But mostly my first thought is, “Junk food and caffeine are by the computer.” I write for a few hours. After maybe three hours, I’m desperate for a break because my back and my eyes are sore. So I’ll read a book for research or watch TV, ride my exercise bike, or get out for a few hours of tutoring, grocery shopping, or library books. Then more writing. Even if I get back home at 9 pm or later, I’ll write on the computer for an hour or three. And that’s my day.

And then the next day I get up and do it all again. This adds up to roughly ten books a year. Part of my secret is that nonfiction is easier to do than fiction.

**Read more online.** Here is the short link: <http://wp.me/p4xhkL-mV> as well as a direct interview link: <https://chessdesalls.wordpress.com/2015/11/16/sbw-talkbooks-interview-of-valerie-estelle-frankel/> — WT



## Michael Bracken Workshop

### Building Saleable Short Fiction

*Continued from Page 1*

Bracken called this turning point the inciting incident. From there, he explained how to turn that moment into an assortment of storytelling opportunities, each reflecting the ways in which the characters and the world around them might react and deal with the proposed conflict.

Some of Bracken's techniques varied by genre, which was well suited to the variety of genres represented among the attending group of writers. Not that the genre barrier stifled members' rise to the challenge. "We can write anything from any prompt based on our life's experiences," said Bracken. His advice proved true, because that's what the workshop attendees did.

To learn more about Bracken's writing and upcoming workshops, visit his website at [CrimeFictionWriter.com](http://CrimeFictionWriter.com). — WT



**l to r: Michael Bracken with Andrew MacRea, Editor/Publisher, Darkhorse Books**  
—Photos by Carolyn Donnell



## NaNoWriMo Write-In

*by Chess Desalls (Collage by Carolyn Donnell)*

November is National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), and SBW members did what they love to do, which is to write. NaNoWriMo is a month-long event in which participants write a novel of 50,000 words in thirty days. On November 9, South Bay Writers participated in a NaNoWriMo write-in.

Our VP, Jenni Everidge, described the event as a community building project, giving members the option of working on their novel or anything else they wanted to write. A murmur of laptops and pen to notebook ensued. "It's really great to see such an impressive turnout," she said.

The prompts included the One Dollar Bill writing prompt featured on the club's website. (See WT Page 7.) Take a look and get inspired. — WT



# Critique Groups: Swapping, Feedback, Respect

by Marjorie Johnson

South Bay Writers President Patrick McQueen discusses criticism in this month's President's Perspective. Criticism, used constructively, is an important tool in a writer's arsenal. Writers need readers — that means, writers need to know how their writing affects readers. Are your words clear? Do they convey what you thought you were saying? Do you capture your reader?

You need a critique group made up of other writers who share their writings, give you feedback, and make suggestions on what you wrote. However, that only works if you have mutual respect.

Where do you find such a group? Get acquainted with other writers at SBW dinner meetings and at open mics. Ask who would like to be in a critique group. Meet with two or three like-minded folk and agree upon rules for how to review work and decide upon a meeting place and time. Sometimes that works out, and sometimes it doesn't, but that is how most groups form.

*WritersTalk* cannot direct you to a critique group. There are books and articles that can help you to get the most out of your critique group. Here is one such resource.

## Excerpted from:

*The Writing & Critique Group Survival Guide*, a Writer's Digest book by Becky Levine, available on Amazon.

You've heard horror stories about writers whose work has been trashed in a critique group, and also stories about critiquers who have had their work dismissed, scoffed at, ignored. Obviously, neither of these scenarios make anyone happy. The missing ingredient is respect.

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

Here are a few tips for being a respectful critiquer and writer.

## When You Critique:

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

## When You Receive a Critique:

- Listen. Don't argue. Don't interrupt. Save questions until

## Off the Shelf — Edie Matthews



"Mom, do these need batteries?"

you've heard what all the critiquers have to say.

- Never tell the critiquer he's wrong. Your critique partner has put serious time and energy into his feedback, and dismissing those ideas is the equivalent of dismissing all that work.
- Give serious consideration to the feedback you receive, especially when you sit down to revise. No, you don't have to make every change that your critique partners suggest — the final yes and no belong to you. However, take a close look at **all** the comments.

## Your critique group is a community:

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

## Start the New Year Write

by Maddy McEwen

Start the New Year with this chance to edit and catch errors.

Dear editor,

I am writing to inform you that I shall no longer require your services because you consistently fail to notice the different between my squinting modifiers and my dangling modifiers. Also your spelling is as atrocious as mine. I need someone with all the skills I lack not somebody with more.

Plus your current rate of 5 cents per page are outrageous. I'd be bankrupt if I paid you what I owe. Hence my new year resolution is to shun all editorial assistants and forge my own way solo.

I have put your invoice in the shredder where it belongs along with all the other superfluous paper in my life. Good riddance!!!

Yours sincerely,

Dusty Keyes

# Resurrection

By Karen Hartley

She loved the sky in Woodside, especially when they walked through their gardens. She loved the clouds. She created stories from the shapes. She saw everything in the clouds: faces, animals, even complete figures. He loved the way she told stories and made creatures from the clouds, and her lilting laughter when she took his hand and moved his finger to outline their forms. One spring day she wore a long green dress and a straw picture hat with a green bow. He wore khakis and a blue chambray shirt. She skipped through the field laughing. Then she took her hat off and waved it at him. He ran to her and they kissed. He loved her. She loved him.

Down the road, their old house stood in a field of heather and white lily of the valley. Dating back to the eighteen hundreds, its plaster and lathe construction still stood proudly. It had a full-length basement, inside which existed a handcrafted wine cellar. They loved the wrap-around porch with its hanging baskets of alyssum and jasmine. The wooden front door with its three small faceted windows enhanced the true craftsman touch.

In the fall of their thirteenth year in the house, a notice came telling them it would be torn down to make way for a road. Unwilling to accept this, they flooded the local and state government with pleas to allow the house to stand. Weeks turned into months with no success. Finally, given no other choice, they moved. There was no flower field at the new place, nowhere for her to run and wave her hat at him. They still loved each other but she fell into despair and he became distant. She grieved for their walks through the flower fields. He grieved for how she had made shapes from the clouds and how she would laugh when she guided his hand to trace the shapes.

Most days they stayed inside and sat quietly in the living room. When she sat by a window, she made sure she would not see any clouds. She couldn't have borne that. Instead, her view was the barren hillside with a single oak tree rising from the topmost knoll. A somber darkness pervaded their days. They knew no words could mend their hearts or soothe their grief over losing that old house, so they remained silent.

One day he retrieved the mail and found

an official looking envelope. It contained a notice with the date when the old house would be razed. He thought it best not to tell her.

He determined to be there on that day. He knew how hard it would be, but decided to ask if the wood might be saved, along with any re-usable trim, doors, and beams. He would pay for storage. He didn't know what he would do with the materials, only that he felt compelled to save them. Though his request surprised the workers, they agreed, and he had no problem making arrangements.

When he returned, he found her still by the window where she'd been when he'd left. There was nothing he could say to comfort her.

A few weeks later, he again went alone to retrieve the mail. Another official document informed them the road would not be built due to a breach of contract. The developer had been sued; litigation would last indefinitely. He felt his heart swell with happiness. No road meant he could rebuild the house and surprise her!

The next week he retained an attorney, who facilitated his repurchase of the land and drew up documents stipulating that it could never again be sold or developed.

He spent every morning with her but left after breakfast, telling her he had resumed his daily workouts. He knew he could bear her grief a bit longer; the new house, rebuilt from the old materials, would fix everything. She would smile again.

Every day he spent long periods away. She sat alone, waiting. She believed he no longer loved her and was running away from her grief. She tried to be more herself for him, but could only think of how losing the house had nearly destroyed her—and for what? She rankled at the lies: no new road. They had been tricked.

He used his knowledge of building and the contacts he'd made working with his father as a crew foreman to move construction along in record time. While the resurrection continued, he replanted the flowers she loved. After only a few weeks, the new house had risen where the previous one had stood and the flower fields had sprung to life again in radiant bloom.

It took him almost as many weeks to convince her to leave their new house. She finally agreed. She began to cry when she realized he was driving back to the site of the old house in Woodside. Why would

he torment her so?

Then she saw the house and the newly planted heather and white lily of the valley.

The next day she bought a new blue dress and a blue ribbon for her hair. He bought new jeans and a new oxford shirt. They ran through the field together. He pulled on her hair ribbon; it flew out like a kite tail. Her golden curls lifted in the breeze. Her laughter filled the air, the happiest sound he'd heard since that awful day.

They rejoiced, looking at their new house. She walked to the newly planted patch of lily of the valley, bent down, touched the soft white petals, and picked a few stems. He snapped off a cluster of heather and brought it to her. She made a bouquet. Then he took her hand and together they held the flowers up to the sky.

The clouds were different, somehow less full and not quite the flawless white they remembered. They heard the temple bells from down the road. It seemed like a sign. They looked into each other's eyes and saw something different there, too. Although their grief had passed, the memory of that devastating time would remain like an old wound, healed, yet always in danger of opening.

They had returned to their house and the flower fields. The resurrection was complete. Yet, in some unspoken place, both understood nothing would ever be the same again. —WT

## Shelf Life —Maddie McEwen



*An award winning self-help book  
from fortune cookie notes  
— nobody needed to know*



# The Dollar Piranha

by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

The math club met after school in my room on alternate Thursdays. For several meetings, we had folded experimental aircraft from *The Great International Paper Airplane Book* from *Scientific American*—not the generic paper airplanes designed to annoy substitute teachers and litter the floor. We discussed their aerodynamic properties.

At the last meeting, we folded some designed by students; one of their aeromissiles did a barrel roll on its trip across the room. For today, I had asked them to bring a crisp, new one-dollar bill.

James pulled out a bill that had been wadded into a compact ball.

"Come on, James. How can you make crisp creases out of that?" I asked.

Red-faced, James answered in a small voice, "I couldn't find a better one."

"Here. I'll trade you." I had twenty new notes for tips for next week's trip. I stuffed his bill into my pocket.

We folded a B-2 bomber out of a dollar bill, and I gave them directions for folding a butterfly and a bird, optional projects for over the holidays.

Friday was a half-day, time I needed to pack for my first trip to South America. I smoothed out James's one, too bulky to fit into my wallet. I ironed it to tame it; it smelled of sweat and hot copper.

In Peru, we trekked into the Andes. We visited Inca ruins where all the rocks had been split perfectly and put together like a huge puzzle, the stones so tightly fitted that I couldn't insert my pocketknife blade between them. Men who carried eighty-pound sacks on their backs hurried past us. Women stood weaving with back strap looms, one end tied to a tree, the other a belt that went around the weaver's back. Farmers at the market arranged potatoes and squashes of every color, size, and description into neat piles. The going rate for taking a picture was a dollar. Everyone wanted *dolares*, not *soles*, Peruvian currency.

At Machu Picchu, I bribed the guard with a dollar bill; he let me go into the ruin at sunrise, hours before it opened for tourists. I viewed the sunrise with three llamas that spit at me when I tried



to pose them for a picture, but they didn't ask for a dollar.

At the cathedral in Cuzco, a painting of the last supper showed Jesus and his disciples dining on roast *cavi* (guinea pig), a local delicacy. The Moche people of ancient Peru worshipped animals and often depicted the guinea pig in their art. The *cavi* is roasted whole and arranged on the platter on its back, its head still retaining ears, eyes, and rodent-teeth. I left a dollar in the offering basket.

One dollar remained, the one with distinctive crumple marks from James' sweaty hand.

At the airport at Iquitos, I had a long wait for a short flight to Lima. The women's toilet (that's right—one) couldn't be flushed. Only twenty people could sit on the metal benches—I wasn't about to sit on the cement floor that stuck to my shoes. The airport windows had no glass and insects flitted in and out, including moths with eight-inch wingspans.

With nothing to do, I got into the boarding line an hour early. Three boys, younger than my freshman algebra students, hawked souvenirs and called out, "*Un dolare. Dolares!*"

I exchanged James' dollar for a necklace made of red, yellow, and brown seeds and displaying a dried, shrunken, and shellacked piranha—teeth and all!

Back home on Halloween, I wore my three-inch piranha to my algebra class and walked around to let my students touch it. All the freshman boys thought it was cool, but most of the girls shied away.

I showed the piranha to the math club, but they were more interested in Incan architecture, and how, using no mortar, the Inca fitted together those earthquake resistant arches.

I never told James that his dollar bought a dried piranha. —WT

# Dollar Bill Challenge

South Bay Writers challenges you to help us write the life story of a one-dollar bill. Don't miss out on this awesome opportunity to collaborate with your fellow CWC authors!

The first SBW hosted writing prompt is "a one-dollar bill." All you have to do is to write a short story that includes a particular dollar bill: obtain it, use it, and pass it on.

(Prompts are available on southbaywriters.com by clicking on writing prompts or going to <http://southbaywriters.com/wordpress/writing-prompts/>)

With more than 50 submissions, the editors of the anthology will have enough material to compile this dollar bill's story. Your contribution will be both an independent short story credited to you and also serve as a chapter in the overall narrative. Prompt submissions are welcome from any visitor to our website, but only those submitted by paid members of the California Writers Club will be considered for publication in our anthology.

Give us your polished very best work. Submissions must be formatted and edited as though they were being sent to an agent. Submit as an attachment in Text or MS Word, Times New Roman, 12 Font preferred. By submitting, you are providing your permission for SBW to publish your work. Deadline: March 31, 2016. Word count: 1,000 – 2,500 words. Send queries or submissions to [prompts@southbaywriters.com](mailto:prompts@southbaywriters.com). —WT

## Shelf Life —Maddie McEwen



Elf Games: An Unabridged  
Exposé From An Insider



## A Place of Many Elephants

Mud pools bring them  
 They roll in the cool substance  
     Dry dust flies  
 Trunks sway wildly flicking the warm sand over their bodies  
     Trophy hunter  
     Positions himself  
     A shot fires  
     The elephant falls  
 Last breath turns into a rumble of death  
     Eyes void of life  
     The bull has passed  
     The others know  
     Cries of loss echo  
 A march of death begins  
 Their trunks will nudge him  
     A last goodbye  
 In remembrance of the fallen one  
     Zimbabwe buried in gray  
 One hundred and twenty pounds of ivory  
     Each tusk gave  
     An ego was fed  
 – Karen Franzenburg

## Olive Branch

Sunshine comes  
 Hundreds of years gone by and you remain  
 Evergreen branches flow in the gentle breeze  
     Yellow blossoms bloom  
     Bearing your fruit  
     Caressed by caring hands  
     Pressed closely with love  
     Your oil extracts  
 We taste your warm liquid  
     Moist on our lips  
     Some garnish your gift  
     Taking moments to savor  
     Remember the beginning  
 Branches wrapped in the wreath of hope  
     The gift sent  
 – Karen Franzenburg

## The World is a Gift

The night before Christmas we heard something humming  
 And thought we might catch our friend Santa Claus coming.  
 And there on the rooftop we saw plain as day  
 that Santa was driving a new hybrid sleigh!  
 It was shiny and red and was looking so good!  
 It had eight tiny batteries under the hood.  
 With a global positioning system beside him  
 He didn't need Rudolf the Reindeer to guide him.  
 He came down the chimney and trimmed up the tree,  
 Of course with efficiency light bulbs, you see.  
 And good little children like me and like you  
 Are all getting toys that reduce CO 2.  
 He left all the presents and jumped in his sleigh  
 And as he flew off we could all hear him say,  
 "The World is a gift and we want to preserve it  
 The way that our grandchildren rightly deserve it."  
 And so it's our hope that the planet stays green,  
 And this is the Merriest Christmas you've seen!  
 – Jack Hasling

## The Bird Comes Out

Is the smell of the stuffing and carved turkey  
 the magnet that attracts us to the table  
 or the arrival of the mountain of mashed potatoes  
 with Grandma's giblet gravy boated nearby?  
 Perhaps, it's the autumn orange  
 of baked yams, the holiday green of peas  
 that make us all appear at once.  
 My wife brings out hot biscuits and takes  
 her place. Before digging in  
 she says we are each to say  
 one thing we are thankful for.  
 Not this again--my words just slipped out.  
 I receive a withering glance from my wife.  
 The kids eye each other and hold in laughter,  
 We buckle down to the task at hand.  
 Jennie is thankful for no school today,  
 Alex for the music teacher,  
 Shawn, after prodding, mumbles "our free country,"  
 but tempting dishes beckon  
 and some of us can't hide impatience.  
 Little spats spring up between kids,  
 long reaches with no sign of manners,  
 food gets passed in every direction,  
 dropped silverware clatters.  
 Evidently the butter is lost.  
 Honey, could you get the cranberry sauce?  
 While fetching the bowl of glistening fruit,  
 I think how thankful I am that our family,  
 Unique, and barely functional, by the way,  
 still honors togetherness.

– Richard A. Burns





# December Terse on Verse

by Pat Bustamante



Pat Bustamante  
Contributing Editor

## holly days

X  
is  
for  
xmas  
g if t s  
a chill  
season s  
good will  
turn a page  
on calendar  
ah coming hey  
it is look here  
almost new year

— Pat Bustamante

**December: The month of gifts.** The greatest gift of all is that the sun guarantees to give more light again after the shortest day of our year. Our ancestors obviously worried when days kept getting shorter; there must have been a time when the sky was completely blanketed. That also can happen when a visiting comet strikes. All humans die; can suns die? Yes, indeed. Astronomers verify it.

So treasure the month when our days will grow again. I offer you some presents — writing ideas. Have you come close to death?

List your death-defying adventures. When I was five, I pretended to be a WWII paratrooper and jumped off a two-story building. When I was a teenager, I took my first motorcycle ride doing “doughnuts” on traffic-loaded Sunset Blvd. YOW! No helmet, either.

Has anyone close to you planned a suicide? My older sister did that, and at one time I was so desperate I climbed out of a four-story window but decided that would just hurt a lot. My life did get better!

What about a business that died? I once became a partner in a business that ended with a \$200,000 bankruptcy. Happy ending? Tragic ending?

Make a list of your life’s adventures and keep it close. Telling your stories is YOUR gift to the world. — WT



The sundial reminds us that the sun will give us more light in January. Happy Holidays. — WT

## Space Station

Message to NASA:  
if you can’t find aliens,  
manufacture some!

— Stephen C. Wetlesen



## Cantankerous Stan

Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man,  
Emptied our garbage but stole the can.  
I don’t know anyone meaner than  
Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man.

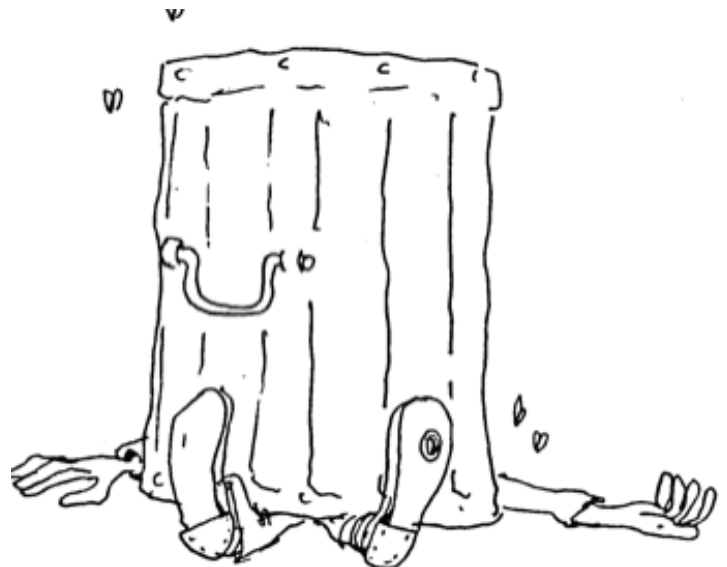
Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man,  
Kicked our dog and away he ran.  
He’s the meanest man in all the land,  
Is Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man.

Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man,  
Leaves a trail of garbage wherever he can.  
I don’t know about you, but I really can’t stand  
Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man.

Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man,  
Insulted Dan and my sister Sue Ann—  
I’d like just five minutes to be in command  
Of Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man.

Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man  
Was attacked one day by a garbage can,  
And we laughed so hard we could hardly stand  
Next to mean old, grouchy old, cranky old Stan,  
Cantankerous Stan the Garbage Man.

— E. Michael Lunsford



# Cabbage Math

by Colin P. Spears, MD

**Nature at its best:** This geometric creation is actually a head of red cabbage. Did you ever think that a half head of a cabbage could be be this beautiful? In addition to the obvious pattern, Sang-Ihn Kang wondered in an email, “Do the different thicknesses of the cabbage have something to do with its Fibonacci relationships?”



red cabbage

The cabbage family has another mathematical member. The romanesco broccoli is green and grows in a most peculiar shape, an example of an approximate fractal in nature. The number of spirals is a Fibonacci number, as reported in *WritersTalk*, August 2012, and in an article on *Wikipedia*.



romanesco broccoli

*Ed. Note:* Dr. Spears grows tiny cotula flowers in his backyard. Counted under a microscope, the florets are arranged in spirals of 34, 55, or 89. His laboratory is devoted to phyllotaxis.



cotula flower

The beautiful arrangement of leaves in some plants, called phyllotaxis, obeys a number of subtle mathematical relationships. For instance, the florets in the head of a sunflower form two oppositely directed spirals: 55 of them clockwise and 34 counterclockwise. Surprisingly, these numbers are consecutive Fibonacci Numbers: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, ... — WT

# A Time To Eat

by Carole Taub

There was an unexpected surplus of food. Bagels with cheese, cinnamon and raisin, onion, poppy seed, and plain were among the mix. Bananas, cookies, fruit platters, even cream cheese. The workshop had gone well, a good eager crowd, and lots of solid information. Attendees were scrambling to jot down every last writing tip, every last *do and don't*, sucking it up like hungry animals.

So many preparations for the event had been thoughtfully planned. I'd set my alarm to go off at 4:30 AM, giving myself enough time to walk Lucy. It was cold, and I could see my breath in the chill. Daylight had barely peaked through as, armed with all of my goodies, I began driving. My hands felt frozen, and I turned up the heat in my yellow Mini. There were only a dusting of cars and a few stragglers roaming the street. They were edgy, homeless.

I arrived at Harry's just before 7AM and went straight to work: setting up tables, adjusting chairs so that they were in perfect order, making sure the coffee was hot, displaying a few pine cones, a pumpkin. The sense of fall was pervasive.

So much food; would everyone be hungry? And was there enough? Closing in on 8:30, people began filtering through the doors, signing in at registration, scoping the tables, curious if they could find just the right seat.

I'd become the likes of a mother hen, making sure her chicks were behaving and eating enough food. And when I saw the attendees march over to *my* buffet I secretly beamed, feeling a wonderful sense of accomplishment. People, smiling, laughing, eating, languidly hung around the food.

Was the food actually appreciated, or were the writers filling their bellies, only biding their time in wait for the day's event?

It was finally *time*, however, and the chatter in the room ceased. The workshop became the focal point. The buffet and any thought of food had taken a back seat. I tried to do the same, take notes, stay focused, but my thoughts were divisive.

I watched, curious about what to do with the surplus food. Skulking around, I monitored the buffet, fussing over it, trying to conceal its remaining abundance. The idlers perused it with great contemplation. And then walked off. There'd been a full lunch following the continental breakfast. And platefuls of cookies, wrapped candies, and more fresh hot coffee.

Smiling writers, satisfied with the workshop, filled up on such subjects as the influence of time, dashes, and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, were not interested in taking any food.

“How about taking some bagels, a few cookies?” I asked. “These bananas are really good.” There were no takers.

I could get home in time to take Lucy to the park, and I had an agenda. I salvaged all the residual food into two brown Safeway grocery bags I'd found in my trunk. I grabbed my coat, secured my pink and red scarf around my neck, jumped into my Mini, and headed back to collect Lucy.

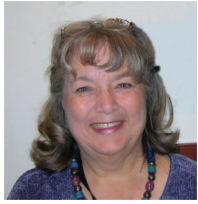
As always she was raring to go. But first we needed to complete a mission; she would be my accomplice.

*Continued on Page 14*



# Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Carolyn Donnell  
Contributing Editor

**Writer's Digest Annual Writing Competition** opened on November 1, 2015 and has a deadline of May 31, 2016. Get busy with your stories. Many categories. See [writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition](http://writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition) for complete rules.

**Chicken Soup For The Soul** is looking for stories and poems about how you used the power of gratitude to change your own life. The deadline date for story and poem submissions is December 15, 2015. The book will be published during the

summer of 2016. See [chickensoup.com/story-submissions/possible-book-topics](http://chickensoup.com/story-submissions/possible-book-topics)

**Chicken Soup** has many categories, such as stories about teachers and teaching. There isn't a single one of us who doesn't owe something to a teacher. They are the unheralded heroes of society. **Chicken Soup** asks for your stories about the great teachers who changed your life. And if you're a teacher, tell us about the kids who changed yours, who motivated you to keep on teaching, who showed you that it was all worth it. We'd love to share your best advice with other teachers as well—what works, what doesn't, how you stay enthusiastic about your jobs. What advice do you have for your colleagues? Tell us the funny stories too—we know you have lots of those. The deadline for story and poem submissions is June 30, 2016.

**Freedom With Writing** is a website that posts various opportunities with multiple publications for articles, essays, short stories, and tutorials. [freedomwithwriting.com/freedom](http://freedomwithwriting.com/freedom)

**Sci/Fi, Fantasy or Dark Fantasy?** Quarterly contest. For new and amateur writers. Prizes \$1,000, \$750, and \$500 and Grand Prize, \$5,000. Enter online or via snail mail. Details at [writersofthefuture.com/Contest-Rules-Writers/](http://writersofthefuture.com/Contest-Rules-Writers/)

**Blue Mountains Arts biannual poetry card contest.** Deadline: 12/31/15. 1st prize: \$300, 2nd: \$150, 3rd: \$50. It's open worldwide and they prefer non-rhyming poetry. Enter at [sps.com/poetry/index.html](http://sps.com/poetry/index.html) or via snail mail to Blue Mountain Arts Poetry Card Contest, P.O. Box 1007, Dept. E, Boulder, CO 80306.

## 2016 Next Generation Indie Book Awards

Indie book authors and publishers who have a book in English released in 2014, 2015 or 2016 with a 2014, 2015 or 2016 copyright date. Over 70 categories and more than 70 Awards with 70 monetary prizes totaling more than \$10,000. Entry Deadline for the 2016 awards program, February 12, 2016. [www.indiebookawards.com](http://www.indiebookawards.com)

## Women's National Book Association 2015-16 Writing Contest

Submit between September 15, 2015, and January 15, 2016.

- FICTION: Short fiction, novel excerpts, flash fiction; 3,000 words max.
- NONFICTION: Memoir, personal essay, commentary. 2,500 words max.
- POETRY: 3 – 5 pages

Winner announced May 1, 2016; winning entries published in *Bookwoman*, the official publication of the Women's National Book Association. Member submission, \$15; nonmember \$20. See more at [wnba.submittable.com/submit](http://wnba.submittable.com/submit)

If you hear about an intriguing contest, market, or event, please share at [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). —WT

## The Literary Nest

by Pratibha Kelapure, Editor

*The Literary Nest* is an online magazine of literary fiction, poetry, and visual arts. I invite all of you to submit to the next issue to be released in January, 2016. Go to [theliterarynest.com](http://theliterarynest.com) for submission guidelines. While you are there, check out the previous issues. We seek work that is edgy and pushes the boundaries. We appreciate and favor understated elegance in writing. —WT

## 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 – 1200 words

Memoir, 500 – 1200 words

Essay/Nonfiction, 500 – 900 words

Poetry/Haiku

### 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. Judges will not judge a genre in which their work currently appears.

\* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club. —WT

## Shelf Life – Maddie McEwen



Writer's Block Solutions:  
Brenda realized each decoration  
hid a short story.

## Beta Reader Listing

You have finished a writing project. It's had the benefit of critique and careful copy editing. But is it a good read?

Your Beta reader finds story distortion and missing or excessive passages. He looks for that certain appeal that keeps readers turning the pages. The Beta reader does not copyedit—his only interest is story.

To be listed here, send your interest in participation in an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

### Members willing to read:

David Strom: anything  
[dave.strom@gmail.com](mailto:dave.strom@gmail.com)

Dick Yaeger: Fiction, no poetry  
[dyaeger@aol.com](mailto:dyaeger@aol.com)

Jenni Everidge: Fiction  
[everidge.jenni@gmail.com](mailto:everidge.jenni@gmail.com)

Mike Freda: anything; fiction preferred  
[freda.mike@gmail.com](mailto:freda.mike@gmail.com)

Patrick McQueen: any genre  
[droidpat@gmail.com](mailto:droidpat@gmail.com)

Reader and author will establish all of the details between themselves. — WT

## A Time To Eat

*Continued from Page 12*

Driving through the streets, peering left and right, we came across a small group of men, loitering, huddled, trying to keep warm, and attempting to be invisible.

Attempting not to care, I turned right, drove through the parking lot, and moved to the opposite side where they were nestled together. I inched the Mini as close as possible. Turned off the engine. Lowered the passenger side window. They looked at me with trepidation. I tilted my head to the side, looked at them and smiled. "Hi."

"Hey," one of them said, walking real slow over toward the car. His brown jacket frayed, pocket-less, buttoned only halfway up, a dark colored tee-shirt beneath, he hunched over. He looked to be about thirty-five.

Lucy was anxious to greet him, her tail wagging, her paws resting on the window opening. I leaned over, one hand on Lucy's back, the other holding the steering wheel. "Are you hungry? I have food. Would you like some food? It's good."

He nodded his head and smiled.

"Lucy, stay." I got out of the car, opened the trunk. Handed him the two grocery

## 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:** 2:00 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. [cwc-berkeley.com](http://cwc-berkeley.com)

**Central Coast:** 5:30 third Tuesdays, Point Pinos Grill, 77 Asilomar Boulevard, Pacific Grove. [centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

**Fremont Area:** 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 120, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

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

**Mendocino Coast:** 6:00 third Wednesdays, Mendocino Hotel. [writersmendocinocoast.org](http://writersmendocinocoast.org)

**Mount Diablo:** 11:30 second Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. [mtdiablowriters.org](http://mtdiablowriters.org)

**Napa Valley:** 6:30 second Wednesdays, Napa River Inn. [napavalleywriters.net](http://napavalleywriters.net)

**Redwood:** 2:30 first Sundays, Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa, 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org)

**Sacramento:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Cattlemen's Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. [cwcsacramentowriters.org](http://cwcsacramentowriters.org)

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

**Tri-Valley:** 11:30 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.com](http://trivalleywriters.com)

## Children's Book Writers Workshop

We proudly present the fourteenth Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop in Oceanside, Oregon, July 11 – 15, 2016. The course is available for graduate level credit.

The full-time instructors include five accomplished children's book authors, two full-time children's editors from major houses, and a full-time children's book agent. Check them out on our website. All instructors are immersed in writing, covering all genres, and they'll spend the week giving their best.

The course is not only lectures, but lots and lots (and lots) of one-on-one with instructors everyday. This course really works for all levels of experience.

If you are ambitious to publish a children's book (or simply adore children's books) this is the workshop for you. You can connect directly with authors, editors, and agents. If you are writing a picture book, check out our online course, [www.publishapicturebook.com](http://www.publishapicturebook.com), also available for graduate credit.

*Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop:* [www.occbww.com](http://www.occbww.com) — WT

bags. "They're heavy."

He didn't seem to know what to say. Kept shaking his head. Kept that smile strapped across his face. It didn't matter; words weren't necessary. The others, appearing uncomfortable, turned away. Then they would sneak a peek, their hands deep inside their pockets. Looking down. Peeking again.

"I'm Jonathon," he said, putting one bag on the ground. He extended his hand.

"I'm Carole." His hand was hard, rough, yet warm. His grip was strong. His skin was the color of honey. His gold tooth glistened.

"Is there a Mr. C-C-Carole?"

I winked. Shook my head.

"Thank you, Carole. Thank you." The warmth and sincerity from his smile filled me up. My agenda was complete. — WT

## SBW Underground by Bill Baldwin

What is this Underground Thing? It's creative minds who refuse to commercialize their work. It's writers and artists unknown because they are "too different." It's writers who refuse to become clichés.

If your interests/perspectives veer a bit off the standard fare, you may want to drop by on some third Tuesday. — WT



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December		1	2	3	4 7:30p Open mic B&N Almaden, San Jose	5
6	7 1:30p Mystery Circle 2p Valley Writers	8	9	10	11	12
13 11A Our Voices  SBW Holiday Bash 4 PM	14 2p Valley Writers	15 7:30 PM SBW UNDERGROUND  Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	16	17 7p Poetry readings Willow Glen Library	18 7:30p Open mic Willow Glen Li- brary, 1157 Min- nesota Ave	19
20	21 2p Valley Writers	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS	26
27 11A Our Voices	28 2p Valley Writers	29	30	31	2015	
Future Flashes January 6, 2016 SBW Board Meeting January 11, 2016 SBW General Meeting at Harry's						

## Ongoing Events

### Critique Groups

#### Our Voices

Meets at Le Boulanger in the Pruneyard in Campbell every other Sunday 10 am. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical nonfiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche at dalaroche@comcast.net

#### Valley Writers

Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center, Winchester Blvd. in Santa Clara, Mondays 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Contact: Marjorie Johnson, marjoriej358@comcast.net

#### Emperor's Mystery Circle

Meets at Emperor Norton's, 7508 Santa Teresa Blvd, San Jose, 1:30 pm., first Mondays. Mystery genre. Contact Pam Oliver-Lyons, polpap@prodigy.net

#### Your Critique Group

For consideration, send information to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### SBW Recommends ...

If you know of a regularly occurring event for writers, send an email to newsletter@southbaywriters.com.

### Open Mics

**South Bay Writers Open Mic:** Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen, first and third Friday evenings. See calendar for schedule. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

### Ongoing discussion groups

**TalkShop:** Discuss topics of interest to writers—challenges, problems, and tips. Meets last Tuesdays, 7 pm. Contact Carole Taub at 777777ps@gmail.com

**SBW Underground:** Come to exchange ideas on non-mainstream art and writing, past and present. Meets at Coffee Society, Stevens Creek Blvd, across from De Anza, 7:30 pm, third Tuesdays. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

See Underground article in Nov. WT.

**TalkBooks:** New SBW discussion group focusing on books written by our SBW members. We will read and discuss books written by SBW members. Meets last Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. For information, send email to newsletter@southbaywriters.

### Poetry Readings

**Poets@Play:** Meets at Markham House History Park, 1650 Senter Rd., San Jose, Second Sundays most months, 1 – 4 pm. poetrycentersanjose.org

**Poetry Center San Jose:** Meets at Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose, Third Thursdays, 7 pm. poetrycentersanjose.org 408-808-3045

**Words Drawing Music:** Ongoing open mic opportunity at Works San Jose, 365 South Market Street, on second Thursdays, 7 to 9 p.m. Information at workssanjose.org

### SF Writers Conference

2016 San Francisco Writers Conference, February 11 – 16, Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. www.SFWriters.org





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

## MAIL TO

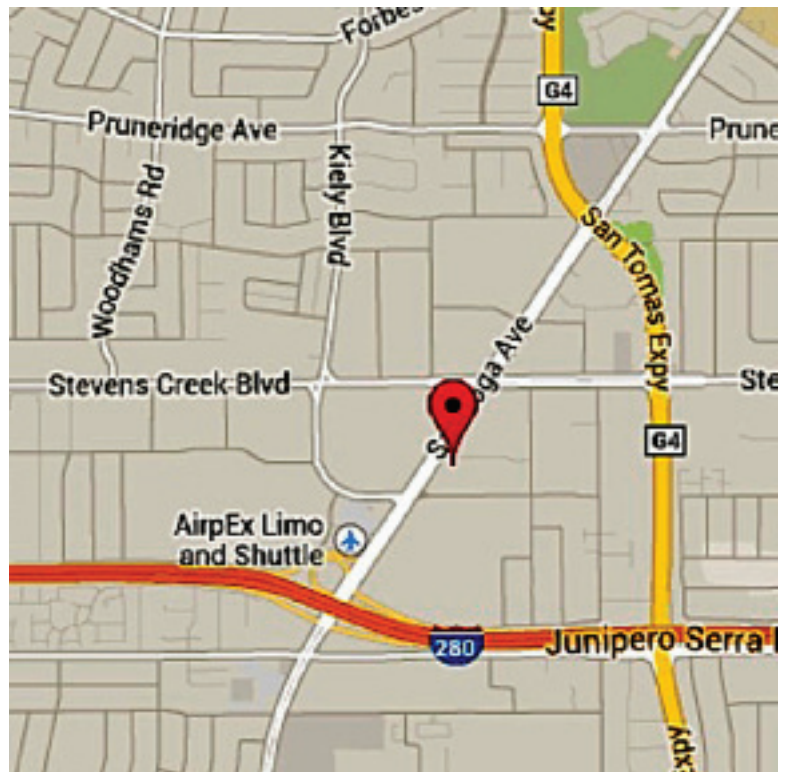
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*WritersTalk* deadline is always  
the 15th of the month.

Regular dinner meetings are  
second Mondays 6 – 9 pm  
except July and December.



### **Harry's Hofbrau**

From Highway 280, take Saratoga Avenue North.  
Harry's is on your right near Stevens Creek Blvd.