



WRITERSTALK

Volume 26
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May 2018

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

MAY SPEAKER: MARY JO IGNOFFO

Nonfiction That Reads Like a Novel

by Jamal Khan

Whether you are writing historical fiction, a biography, an investigative piece, or a fictional work that draws upon research to bolster authenticity, you will benefit from learning literary techniques that draw the reader in and make the important interesting. Mary Jo Ignoffo's passion for history and story-telling has led her to author six books that provide in-depth and original looks at fascinating moments in history. Her latest, *La Verdad: A Witness to the Salvadoran Martyrs* (2014), fuses oral history interviews with historical commentary to tell the story of a Salvadoran woman whose steadfast commitment to the truth changed history in both El Salvador and the United States. In our upcoming dinner meeting, Mary will explain how she weaves the myriad threads of conflicting accounts and sprawling transcripts into a satisfying narrative whole.

Mary's biography of the rifle heiress Sarah Winchester, in the words of Gary Kurutz of the California State Library, "finally sets the record straight on one of the most fascinating and misunderstood women in California history." And her *Gold Rush Politics* was the California State Senate's commemorative book in honor of California's Sesquicentennial. Mary's articles or book reviews have appeared in the *Mercury News*, *Santa Clara Magazine*, *The Californian*, and *California History*. She teaches history at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.



Where: Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Ave,
San Jose, CA 95132

When: Monday, May 14 at 6pm; talk begins at
7:30pm

Admission: \$15 for members, \$20 for non-
members. Includes \$10 credit for dinner.

APRIL SPEAKER RECAP: VALERIE FRANKEL

Valerie Frankel Shows Us How It's Done!

by Bill Baldwin

Valerie Estelle Frankel, the speaker at our April dinner meeting (and author of over sixty books), broke the task of producing a successful book into four steps.

- Step 1: Concept. What do you have to say that is new and exciting? Decide which specific concept you currently want to devote your time to.
- Step 2 – Write the Book. There are various ways of doing this. If you are writing a nonfiction book, remember there are tricks you can use to speed up and facilitate your writing. For example, you can use block quotes to easily bring in background material (and expand your word count!). If you are amenable, you can use "speed writing" to accomplish much in a short time. This does not work for everyone; but it works for you, go for it! You may be able to produce a book-length manuscript in a very short time (especially if you type fast and work on it for eight or ten hours a day)! After you have your draft, polish it; then convert the file into a pdf.
- Step 3 – Publish Book. Valerie discussed at length the process of using CreateSpace to publish your book. As far as the text, CreateSpace provides templates for your book based on a selection of standard sizes. CreateSpace also provides cover templates which

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Between the Lines

Edie Matthews

President, South Bay Writers



Stories In Your Closet

I had to empty the basement closet after a frazzled rod collapsed, spilling an avalanche of clothes. First, I was amazed at the overflow of outfits compressed into the tight space. (There should be an award for this skill.) With a deep sigh, I began sorting the garments—which led to a trip down memory lane.

Some items were well worn. Others were never worn. What was I thinking when I purchased that red silk femme fatale with the jagged hemline? I think I visualized a show-stopping entrance at a Hollywood party.

How long since I fit into the silky turquoise dress worn to my class reunion? Should I get rid of it? No way! What if I lose weight? (Ah, hope springs eternal.)

Oh my gosh, the ritzy *Dynasty* dress with puffy sleeves worn to my son's wedding. Eat your heart out, Joan Collins. I looked fabulous and have the pictures to prove it.

The Bicentennial colonial costume! Betsy Ross would approve. I made it for a role in a play. Wow, I was energetic in those days.

My first trip to New York I wore this white lace blouse. It looked stunning under a black velvet jacket—and drew admiring glances—even in the subway a handsome fellow spoke to my husband but kept staring at me. Here's the blouse. Hmm, where's the jacket?

I'll never forget this green satin dress with a ruffled skirt made for my daughter's prom. "Mom, I don't want to look like the other kids!" I made sure of that by mixing two patterns. Definitely a "labor of love."

Check out these power suits! I'll never forget my days as a tech writer. Macy's received a percentage of my paycheck back then. I was making up for a childhood of wearing hand-me-downs from who knows where (since I have three brothers).

I used to have some lovely sweaters from high school—yes, high school—paid for with my hard-earned babysitting money. But my teenage daughter (who believed my clothes were her clothes) discovered the cache and wore them to school. Truth be told, I was flattered.

Though, that's not the strangest story. My youngest daughter had no patience for shopping—too busy playing on the basketball team. Despite my reminders to go buy a dress, the night before graduation she still hadn't gone shopping. "You can wear something of mine," I suggested, showing her a variety of possibilities.

"I want to wear your pink lace dress, Mom."

What? I'm not exactly a pink lace kind of gal. Then she dug it out. Low and behold, crammed in the spare bedroom closet—a pink frothy confection that I'd worn as a bridesmaid. (Are you kidding me, this frilly frock will get a second chance? Hal-lujah!)

Next morning, she wore it to the 8th grade breakfast and garnered loads of compliments.

One snooty mother interrogated me. "Yesterday, Michele told us she had nothing to wear."

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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. Renewal dues are \$45 for membership through June 30, 2018. Dual membership, \$25; student membership, \$20. New member, \$65. Contact Membership Chair at a meeting or sign up online at southbaywriters.com or send a check to CWC-South Bay Writers, P O Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055.

WritersTalk

The monthly newsletter of South Bay Writers, the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club

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Deadline

Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.

Submissions

SBW encourages writers at all levels of expertise to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. All submissions should be sent to the above email address in the form of text or an attached MS Word file (sorry, no hard copy submissions can be accepted). Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. Use Times New Roman 12-font; no tabs; no colors; no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files, with separate instructions for placement in the submission if placement is important.

All submissions will be copyedited. Titles and headlines subject to change. Managing Editor reserves the right to selection.

Suggested word limits (less is more):

Member Achievement / News (200 words)

News Items (400 words)

In My Opinion (300 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

Creative Works

Short Fiction/Memoir (1200-1800 words)

Poetry (200 words)

Essay/Nonfiction (1000 words)

Reprints

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.

Announcements

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.

Advertisements

Advertising of workshops, conferences, and events is accepted from other branches of California Writers Club. We cannot accept political advertising of any kind. *WritersTalk* does not accept unpaid advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Advertise in CWC Bulletin or in the Literary Review. See Page 14.

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J. K. McDole Managing Editor



The Little Things

A few years ago, I was reviewing a short story with a my critique group. We had settled in our local Starbucks, where regular meetings were pursued with coffee and pastries, and the time had come to go over my submitted piece.

"I like the main character," said one of my group members, "but I'm having trouble with some of her scenes. I don't understand why the protagonist goes into her kitchen and eats the basil leaf fresh off the plant just before she has to go out to meet her boyfriend to break up with him. It didn't seem to fit. What was the significance there?"

"Well," I said, "she's doing it to calm down her stomach."

Several of the group murmured, looking at me. "To calm her stomach?" one asked.

"Yeah. A leaf of fresh basil off her *abuela's* basil plant. It's good for your stomach, and she's got major nerves about what she's leaving the house to go do."

"Oh," the group member said. "I didn't know people did that."

I jotted down some notes on my notepad to hide my surprise. Had she never heard of that before: eating basil to settle your stomach? Was that just a cultural thing I picked up from growing up in a household where *everyone* did that?

"It just reads like a distraction," the group member continued. "I thought maybe you were going for life-changing imagery, like turning over a new leaf with the breakup, but I didn't think it followed through with her swallowing the leaf."

"Do you think I should cut that part out?" I asked.

The group murmured again. One of the reviewers pursed his lips.

"I don't know," he said. "I think it tells us a lot about her, now that we know the context."

"But it has to connect to the reader," another one added. "If they don't know about basil leaves and stomachaches, they're not going to get it."

The critique went on, but I went home from the meeting with that parting thought running loops in my brain. Not only was I considering how to create stronger empathetic links in the imagery of my writing, but I was also wondering: How many other little things like the basil leaf had I put in my writing over the years without stopping to consider the context? How many literature pieces had I read and loved because of a spot detail, minutiae, or a character's lovingly-worded idiosyncracies?

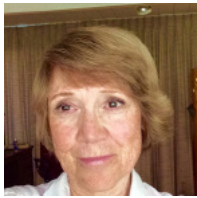
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View from the Board

by Karen Sundback



Karen Sundback
SBW Secretary

The April 3 meeting was held at President Edie Matthews' home.

- Dave LaRoche volunteered to head the nominating committee. While most of our present

members are excited about continuing for the next cycle, a few are regrettably unable to continue. If you are interested in promoting good writing and enjoy the idea of learning the inner workings of the Club, please consider joining the board. A new board needs to be assembled by June 30, 2018.

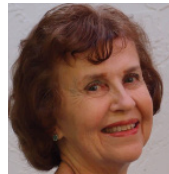
- Anthology. The *Dollar Bill Anthology* is available on Kindle. Access it on Amazon, Anthology name is: *Series 1963 A: An Anthology of California Writers Kindle Edition*. Since Dave LaRoche brought it to fruition, he has been named the author. The paperback is still in the works, but the release date is imminent.
- *WritersTalk* Challenge Contest. The board approved a budget and a new leader for the Challenge. Marjorie Johnson has agreed to head the contest. Sharpen your pencils and fire up your laptops for the new round of contest.
- Website. A note to our readers: if ever you misplace your hard copy of *WritersTalk*, our web editor, Tatyana Grinenko, keeps our website (<http://southbaywriters.com/>) current with the most up-to-date information. Check it out!

The next meeting of the SBW Board will be Tuesday, May 8, 2018 at 7 pm at the home of President Edie Matthews.

— WT

New Members

by Sally A. Milnor



Sally Milnor

We hope you will check the June issue of *WritersTalk* and get a glimpse at all our wonderful new members. We encourage our new members to introduce themselves to the club and send us your brief biography to share! — WT

Member News

by Marjorie Johnson

Penny Cole writes, "I was privileged to be invited to the Lunch with the Authors Panel, a Brandeis Alumni event April 26. Then I will be showing/selling my books at the Villages Art in the Park on Saturday April 28.) Three of my pieces have been accepted for inclusion in the 2018 Tri-Valley Writers Anthology. I will also be at Barnes and Noble with the SF Peninsula Writers on June 3 for a book sale."

Janet Patey's short story, "The Mystical Riverbed," won first place in a writing contest from the California Women's Club. The California Women's Club has several different districts; Janet is part of Santa Clara Women's Club. Entries from each district are judged statewide. Janet's club gets kudos because she came in first statewide.

From Kathleen Gonzalez: "Casanova is in San Francisco! Actually, an exhibit on his life and influences during the 18th century is currently on display at the Legion of Honor Museum, titled "Casanova: The Seduction of Europe." I learned that the curator, Frederick Ilchman, used my book *Casanova's Venice: A Walking Guide* as he developed the show; he told me that he walked Venice with my book in hand to learn more about Casanova's life. My book is listed in the exhibit's catalogue bibliography. The museum bookstore is also selling Laurence Bergreen's recent biography titled *Casanova: The World of a Seductive Genius*, where my book is also listed in the bibliography and I'm noted in the acknowledgements page. Casanova's Venice is the Ital-

ian edition of my self-published book *Seductive Venice: In Casanova's Venice* – interesting to note that I used this title before everyone else decided that Venice was so seductive! I hope you get to see the show, which runs till May 28, before it moves to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts."

Valerie Estelle Frankel's writing year has been slowed by bigger books, but she's produced new titles from McFarland: *Women in Doctor Who: Damsels, Feminists and Monsters* (Feb) and *The Women of Orphan Black: Faces of the Feminist Spectrum* (April). Further, *Star Wars Meets the Eras of Feminism* has just gone to a new publisher and she's wrapping up the anthology *Fan Phenomenon: Harry Potter*. On with writing!

Several great fantasy conventions are coming for writers: Memorial Day weekend is the long-running literary Baycon in San Mateo. In early June, there's San Francisco Comic-Con at Oakland Convention Center. And mid-August, the San Jose Convention center will be hosting the World SciFi Fantasy Convention, known for the masses of sci-fi and fantasy publishers who host parties there. They're currently taking applications to speak at <http://www.worldcon76.org>

Fourth Wave Feminism in Science Fiction & Fantasy: Valerie Frankel is issuing an open call for essays (tell your friends!). This anthology is seeking to define the new kinds of heroines that science fiction/fantasy films and television are producing between 2012 and right now. This is planned as a McFarland published anthology. Though the term is imperfect, these heroines will be described as fourth wave feminist – the authors in the collection can be the trendsetters who help define the term. Deadline for proposals May 31 (roughly 300 words, optional bio or CV) to [valerie at calithwain.com](mailto:valerie@calithwain.com) using subject: FOURTH WAVE SUBMISSION.

Mary Pacifico Curtis is thrilled to announce the publication of her second chapbook, *The White Tree Quartet*. As the title eponymously suggests, the book contains four poem cycles on the

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Stories In Your Closet

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"We found something last night," I said. (No way was I going to spill the beans.)

Later, I told my friend (the bride) I was able to re-purpose the dress.

"That's why I chose it," she said.

The next time I'm imagining how to attire my protagonist, I need to peruse my own bodacious bounty. And if I ever decide to write an autobiography — this is the place to stir up memories.

What drives me crazy though is not only my finery, but my children's duds are stored in my house — nice items too — that I have no room for but hesitate to toss out.

I need to box them. Maybe gift wrap and delivery them on their birthday. Surprise!

Yes, that's the ticket — then next on the list is to clear out the colossal collection of trophies.

But wait, there's the silver chalice awarded to me for public speaking, and the golden runner for completing a marathon, and the softball trophy for winning the league. Now there's a story to tell ... — WT

Valerie Frankel Shows Us How It's Done

Continued from Page 1

enable you to create a cover easily. As you are assembling your book, you have the option to ignore warnings the system may give you — much flexibility here! When you encounter difficulties, the CreateSpace hotline is very helpful.

Advantages of CreateSpace? You set the price of your book — and you make more money per book than you would with traditional publishers. You can also specify your distribution channels.

For EBooks, you can use Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) or Smashwords (it uses doc files). For audio books you can use acx.com.

- Step 4 – Promoting Your Book. Try to get reviews early on. Examine the Amazon Top 100, find appropriate magazines, look for book blogs. Tie your book to events such as holidays and conferences. If necessary, get a temporary sales permit. Promote your works using social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Join Facebook groups, consider Facebook ads. Determine the appropriate audiences to target, then produce flyers, samples, etc. Consider the Goodreads "Giveaway" function. Go to fairs and conventions — arrange speaking engagements! — to promote your book in person.

A lot of useful information! This was not an evening to miss!

For more valuable info (and two free eBooks!), check out vefrankel.com and Valerie's page on smashwords.com. —

Member News

Continued from Page 4

theme of otherness. Parthenia Hicks, Poet Laureate Emerita of Los Gatos, calls *The White Tree Quartet* "A cohesive collection from a fine poet." *The White Tree Quartet*, as well as Curtis's earlier *Between Rooms* were published by WordTech Communications Turning Point imprint. Both books are available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and the publisher's web site: <https://www.turningpointbooks.com/curtis-tree.html>

Please share your writing accomplishments and triumphs by sending a note to membernews@southbaywriters.com, now managed by Marjorie Johnson. We hope to hear from you. — WT

And You Think Great America is Thrilling

by Dave LaRoche

Excitement, laughs and surprise, along with gastronomic refreshment will greet you at a South Bay Writers Board meeting — enjoyment and gratification while moving the club forward. One might surmise, if never attending, that these meetings are dreary, a good waste of time, but that's far from the truth. Our Board is a collaborative whirligig wherein everyone has a seat and a say. Not only are you heard, but people listen, and when the Board acts, it moves in a concerted fashion.

We join South Bay Writers because we feel there is something to gain. We engage. We listen to speakers, attend a workshop, and hobnob with others seeking enrichment along writing lines. Often we get it. Sometimes we don't, and with disappointment comes a need to correct, to enhance, to include more value. We want our investment — time and some cash — to be "worth it."

The vision, plans, and their execution are generated at Board meetings. The Club, in effect, is the Board as it interprets and acts on tradition and mission. You . . . we can be a part of that as we speak our piece, influence and guide the club to a better experience that increases the value of membership.

So, I invite you to run for an office. Join in the fun. Be a part of the focus on club events and activities. The Board is a cooperative team, each member helping the other in decisions on which path we will take. We have a map. It's called history. Our vision evolves from our mission established over one hundred years ago by a handful of erudite writers who met in a park in Oakland.

If you've come this far, go a little farther and send me an email with the office you'd have so that you can share your ideas. dalaroche@comcast.net — WT

South Bay Writers April 2018



The Little Things

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Here are a few of my favorite 'little things' that either I wove into a draft, or that fellow writing peers have told me about.

- A protagonist with a fixation on ice cream. She tells her first boyfriend about nightmares where she wakes up crying and chewing on her hand, having been dreaming of licking an ice cream cone. The reason for her fixation: growing up in a low-income family with very little to spare. Treats were a rarity, especially ice cream. As a teenager, she ensures her first after-school job will be at an ice cream store.
- A secondary character who has the bad habit of mimicking the accents and speech patterns of people he meets. While his reasons for doing so are innocent – English is not his first language, and in an effort to sound more confident when speaking he would mimic dialogue from popular TV shows and films – he offends the protagonist, who initially believes he is being intentionally insensitive.
- An antagonist with a marked discomfort around teeth. Though they brush four times a day and floss after every meal, they cannot stand images or discussion of teeth. Dentist appointments become huge to-dos, as they are both obsessing over preventing any kind of dental procedure while also dreading an event that will focus on all things toothy. Their fixation on teeth seems to have no explanation, which confuses and irritates the protagonist, and thus chanced at irritating the reader, who may have wanted more concrete reasoning for such an aversion.
- A flat secondary character who yields heavily to superstition. Her supernatural worries are blown off through most of the narrative until a tense restaurant scene in which she scolds the protagonist for stirring her glass of iced tea with a knife. "Stir with a knife and you stir strife," says the secondary character. The protagonist laughs and asks, "do you avoid sidewalk cracks, too?" These words come back to haunt them both after the next climactic story point: a sudden earthquake that shatters the street outside.

Like the basil leaf, I and my peers drew their inspiration for these traits from real-life experiences, individuals in our lives or similar stories. The challenge lies in making sure the quirks and idiosyncracies can be explained in a way that rationalizes the character and their motives to the reader.

And, sometimes, subtlety pays off. Many of these inspirations were individuals who were a bit larger-than-life; while I always cherished that kind of person for how easily they could lend to inspiration, I tried to remember there's some virtue in keeping some characters, well, *small*. – WT

South Bay Writers Election: June 11

by Dave LaRoche

Offices to be filled and a brief of opportunities available are:

PRESIDENT: charts the course and steers the ship.

- Plans and runs meetings
- Appoints chairs
- Oversees activities and events
- Writes monthly column for *WritersTalk*
- Maintains the SBW Branch within the province set forth by the CWC Central Board

VICE PRESIDENT: integrates into local writer/publisher network (terrific opportunity).

- Secures meeting speakers and workshop facilitators
- Writes speaker and workshop announcement column for *WritersTalk* and provides text for webpage, meetup, and email announcements
- Assists/stands-in for President

SECRETARY: maintains our business history.

- Records and publishes Board meeting minutes
- Provides awareness – when memory fails – of past decisions.

TREASURER: manages money.

- Collects and disburses funds – Dues, Fees, sales/ meeting costs, State dues, speakers
- Accounts for and reports cash flows and advises on money matters
- Reports financial activity to the CWC Central Board

MEMBER AT LARGE (2): no specific portfolio.

- Reflects membership views (suggestions/complaints) in Board meetings
- May assist with specific tasks

– WT



Caveat Emptor

by *Terrele Schumake*

It's a story that repeats itself each year. When the early days of spring appear, I am seized with the dream of a beautiful array of flowers in the front yard and a small vegetable garden in the back yard. I guess it is true that "hope springs eternal."

This past Sunday, I went to Home Depot to buy a new shower rod. After sixteen years of use, the old one was covered with streaks of rust. The sole purpose of the trip was to replace the shower rod. That is all you want to do at Home Depot, I cautioned myself.

Of course, Home Depot had a huge display of healthy green vegetable plants in front. I remembered that vegetable plants become hard to find as the days of spring pass because the stores do not replenish their stock. I decided to buy some tomato plants, a cucumber plant and a large Italian Oregano plant. I think I should mention that the last time I planted a vegetable garden, I got zero vegetables. Even the zucchini failed to bear fruit. I did have a display of blossoms on each plant. It was a summer that had a lot of cool, cloudy days and there was a lack of bees to pollinate the plants. I did find information on the Internet about a way to manually pollinate the plants, but that sounded too tedious and time-consuming to try. Inside the store, an invisible force took over and propelled me straight to the garden section. I couldn't resist buying a purple Columbine and some orange and yellow zinnias.

Caveat 2: Sunday's adventure reminded me of the time that I ordered some plants from a nursery in Michigan. The ad for the nursery on the back cover of the Sunday magazine displayed a variety of unusual, brilliant flowers splashed over a yard-sized plot. There was also a picture of a tree that could produce four different kinds of fruit.

A sidebar explained that the buyer would get fifty free plants with an order totaling a certain amount. I was so excited as I waited for my order. Visions of the neighbors admiring the prettiest yard on the street danced through my

mind.

One day, I came home from work to find a box on the porch about the size of the one banks send with a supply of checks. "How did they get all those plants into that tiny box?" I asked myself in amazement. The first sheet inside the box reported that the nursery had run out of the free plants. Beneath that was what looked like three large bunches of wilted parsley. There was no way to distinguish each variety from the other. "Your plants may look tired, but plant them anyway," the instructions read. There is no word to describe how disappointed I felt as I put the box on the kitchen counter. I was not sure what I was going to do with that box and its contents.

A day or two later, my daughter Keira and her friend Stephanie came into the kitchen. They were both twelve years old. Stephanie looked in the box and started to read aloud, "Your plants may look tired, but..."

Suddenly, I knew what I was going to do. "Those plants are exhausted!" I snapped. I sealed the box and returned the plants to the Michigan nursery. A few weeks later, I got my refund.

Caveat 3: Along the same vein, my Aunt Eleanor in Pittsburgh ordered a tomato tree from an out-of-state nursery. She followed the instructions exactly for the two years it would take for the tree to produce the juicy bumper crop shown in the ad. Would you believe that the tomato tree up and died just after the two-year period?

For several years, the Michigan nursery sent me glossy ads for magnificent colorful plants. I threw them all in the trash. What you see in the picture is not always what you get. —WT

Ketchup & Eggs

by *Helen Vanderberg*

Anne flinched as Dwight drew the bow across the violin's strings.

"Is it supposed to sound like that?" she asked.

The white area around Dwight's mouth told her.

More screeching, twanging pizzicato. Ann glanced at the snowy apple-tree branches at eye level through the attic window. Sighed. Too late, too cold to walk this close to the border. What were her choices? She couldn't leave the kids, the boy was asleep, the girl would want to lie down in their bedroom. Another hour before she finished her math homework.

Flashing before Anne's eyes was the pose Dwight had taken. Why not try a portrait to distract herself?

'Five and dime artist' he had called her. Well indeed, that's exactly what she had been when her greatest ambition had been to make a few bucks painting the signs at the local Woolworth's. Big splosy lettering on shelf-paper to make a few bucks to augment the miserable paycheck. But it hadn't stopped there.

Quickly she set up the easel and a small canvas board, got out the paint kit and started mixing. A few quick strokes and she had the figure outlined. He could stop the dreadful racket and she wouldn't notice.

She'd never done a portrait before, found a moving target that kept repeating the same movement.

"Whatcha doing?" he asked, holding a pose.

"Portrait," she muttered.

"What the hell, can't a guy play in his own living-room?"

She thought about enjoying the peace, but that was cruel. If the girl could do her homework under assault. Nah, that was taking advantage, using art as a weapon.

"Go ahead," Anne said. I'll catch it. If I don't like it, I'll scrub it out.

"It stinks," said Dwight. "That oil, with

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Living in a Cabin in Felton

by Kathy Boyd

When I was getting ready for my junior year in the fall of 1970 at UC Santa Cruz, I wanted to live off campus and leave the dorm rooms to the younger students. Janie, one of my friends at college who was a year older, told me that her father wanted to buy a cabin in Felton. Janie could live there during her senior year and her father would sell it after she graduated. Janie was allowed to invite two friends to live with her. She chose me and another woman named Alison.

The cabin was a cute little place in the redwoods off Highway 9 just before the town of Felton. The drive was scenic, winding through the forest in the Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park to our cabin on Madrone Drive. It was about 10 miles from the cabin to the campus and took about 20 minutes. It had a living/dining room and a bedroom loft that held three beds overlooking the first floor. There was a small bathroom. Just inside the back door was a kitchen so tiny that you could touch all the walls when you stood in it. But it had everything we needed. The cabin was furnished so we had only needed to bring our personal items.

I think my 1960 VW bug was our only car so I drove all of us to school and back every day. I was nervous at first on the winding road but soon I became comfortable with it and enjoyed zip-ping around the curves. Then I was the one who became impatient when stuck behind a "Sunday driver" because the road was too narrow for passing.

None of us could cook very well. I had mostly baked when I was growing up and when we lived in the dorms we ate in the cafeteria. We were on our own and clueless. So we learned together. My brother suggested a 48-page book called *The Impoverished Students' Book of Cookery, Drinkery, and Housekeeping* by Jay Rosenberg. It was a lot of fun to read and had some good ideas. One of our favorite meals from it was a tuna casserole with

peas and potato chips in it.

We came up with a rotating plan. One person made the menus for a week and planned the shopping list and then we all hopped in my car. The main grocery store in Felton was a Safeway. Since there was a boycott going on against Safeway and grapes and lettuce, we tried to shop other places or at least hope no one from college saw us there. Since the kitchen in the cabin was so small, only one of us cooked at a time and we all ate the dinner no matter what. The ones who didn't cook did the cleanup.

I found a lot of recipes for chicken. My mother had hardly ever cooked chicken and it wasn't until years later that I found out why. My father had been raised where the fowl in the backyard frequently became the next dinner so he never wanted to eat another bird. But I had discovered chicken, which was cheap and easy to cook. Once I tried a recipe for chicken that called for a clove of fresh garlic. My mother had never cooked with fresh garlic and on the rare occasions when she used garlic, it was always garlic salt. I started to peel away the skin and crush the pieces into little bits. I had done about half of these by the time I gave up. What I didn't realize was that a clove was the little piece inside the garlic bulb and I had already put four in the pot. It was a good thing I stopped, or the dinner would have been too garlicky to eat!

We were a pleasant distance to San Lorenzo River. There was a bend in the river near us with a sandy bank and sometimes we sat there and watched the leaves float by. There were covered bridges nearby, including a famous one at Felton Covered Bridge Park but I don't think we ever went that far.

We had several friendly neighbors. One couple would buy an old house and live in it while they fixed it up, and then sell it and move to another one.

A homeless woman once asked if she could bathe in our backyard. We said okay. She used our hose and bathed with all her clothes on and then left.

We were living the good life, going to school and living with friends among all those beautiful trees. Then in October we heard that a popular eye surgeon, Dr. Victor Ohta, and his family were murdered at their lavish home in Soquel and the bodies were thrown in their pool. That was horrible enough. This was only a little over a year after the Manson family killings in Los Angeles so we were all on edge. Then we heard that the wife's station wagon was found the next day, burned and abandoned in a railroad tunnel near where we lived. We had several uneasy days of checking for strangers out the windows and sticking close to the cabin until we heard they had caught the killer. He was a man who ranted about how the rich abuse the environment and thought the Ohta's home was too opulent. He was arrested in his shack not far from their home. There were several other murders in that year and the few years that followed, enough so that Santa Cruz was called the "Murder Capital of the World."

The worst that happened to us was that we were broken into once. Since we were poor and had few things of value, not much was taken. What I lost was my copy of *The Impoverished Students' Book of Cookery, Drinkery, and Housekeeping* and some cookies I had on a plate.

At Christmas we decided we wanted a Christmas tree but we didn't want to buy one. Still, we were pioneers. We were inventive and we were earthy! So we took home two small branches we found while walking along the river. We tied the trunks together and propped it up in a bucket like a regular tree and decorated it with popcorn and berries.

Janie and Alison and I had a good time living and learning together that year. At the end of the year, Janie graduated and Alison and I went our separate ways. I kept in touch with Janie for a while but I haven't heard from her for years. I will always have (mostly) good memories of living in a cabin in Felton. — WT

Dirty Towel Tricks

by Betty Auchard

My sweet husband was likeable and got along with everyone.

What people didn't know was that he was cautious and never did anything on the spur of the moment. He would never have spoken the words, "Let's just make it up as we go along." He took a chance on nothing and tried new things only if they came highly recommended by those he trusted.

There was no limit to his caution. It spilled over into mundane areas such as buying groceries or eating out. He often compared each item in the grocery bag against our receipt and he never paid a restaurant tab without first checking the math. I fully expected him to write a note on the automatically printed receipt with this message: "Well done, machine." Sometimes he found glaring errors in handwritten bills, and that sort of discovery spurred him on. He did not like people or machines taking advantage or being careless with our money. Whenever I saw him having a serious discussion with a waitress I disappeared into the ladies' room.

Even though it was often embarrassing Denny believed in protecting himself. For a quiet, gentle man, he had a slightly macho side—not in a tough way, but in a stubborn way. I got used to his habits and had my own way of making fun of them behind his back. For example, I played dirty towel tricks.

Denny was fussy about bath towels. He used two each day—one for the top half of his body and the other for the bottom half. His towels took up a lot of space on our racks. I didn't need much space for one towel.

He often said, "Betty, I don't see how you can use the same towel on your whole body."

Each time I replied, "My whole body is clean after I've bathed."

He was also careful about not dropping his towels on the closed toilet seat or, God forbid, on the floor. If one slipped onto either of those surfaces he wouldn't use it until it was laundered again. I protested and said, "Honey, I

just scrubbed the toilet and floor this morning. They are clean."

His answer was always the same, "Well, you don't know for sure, and it doesn't hurt to be careful."

I adored my husband but his fear of germs annoyed me. There was no way to reason with him so I made fun of his phobia privately, though he never knew it. Whenever he was out of town on business, I had my way with his towels and flouted his rules.

After a shower I purposely dried every part of my body with two towels – his – and then I dropped them on the toilet seat and floor before hanging them on his racks to dry. When Denny returned home, unpacked his bags, and took a shower he usually asked, "Betty, are these towels clean?"

"Yep, they sure are."

I got impish pleasure from watching him innocently dry his wet body with towels that had dried every crevice of my own body and then landed on the toilet seat and floor several times.

I was so bad.

I think about Denny a lot these days, and our collection of towels gets used very little. I'm never out of them and they will last for the rest of my life. If Denny were still alive, I would give him all the clean towels he wanted, and I would never, ever play dirty towel tricks on him again.

But I could be wrong. – WT



Ketchup and Eggs

Continued from Page 8

the heater on, you'll blow us up."

Not a bad idea, the way things have been going. She said, "I'll open a window a crack."

"Muummy," the girl said.

"Just a crack, sweetie. I have to paint in oils. That's all I've got."

"You don't have to paint at all," she said from the depths of her math book.

"I do." OtherwiseWhat otherwise? Anne asked herself. I'll have to pack our bags. "Let's give your dad a chance to remember how to play. He's been out in the field for weeks. He deserves a little consideration now he's home."

Dwight looked pleased she was taking up for him.

"Don't get used to it," Ann muttered to herself. She still remembered the incident before he'd left for field training.

A peaceful evening before the snow fell. The Mormon missionaries were back, two of them climbing Frau Brunnhuber's house-proud steps. The first English speakers Anne had seen in months. She'd spent the morning painting her impression of outer space as an abstract. Hot, fiery, the way she thought of planet generation. Just playing around with colors. Dwight had christened it Ketchup & Eggs for the hot colors. But derided her efforts the way he always had as being the work of a five & dime artist.

"If you don't like it, I'll give it away," she said as she had always responded to his cutting remarks.

So when the Mormon missionaries came, admired it, Anne gave it away.

As she would eventually give away this portrait. A horrific reminder of a potentially deadly evening. "One day," she murmured. "One day I'll do the right thing." – WT

John Barleycorn

by Judith Shernock

On the logo of our California Writers Club we see the handsome weathered face of the Oakland born Jack London (1876-1916). I always thought of him as the symbol of adventurous manhood and a talented writer of 'young-adult' fiction. Also I was aware that in the years before communism, London had socialist leanings that became apparent in his book, 'The Iron Heel'.

Then an article appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine titled 'Whiskey and Ink'. This piece featured none other than our own Jack London. It seems, among the array of boozy well-known authors, Jack London's 1913 autobiography, *John Barleycorn*, was the poster boy of alcoholic writers. To quote Gary Greenberg, writer of the article, London saw alcoholism as a moral problem.

"The inability to control desire and thus to direct the course of one's own life... the pathology is political, the surrender of the will to a form of tyranny."

Reading the book *John Barleycorn*, I was blown away by the author's insight and use of language to describe his complex inner world. No more 'nice guy'. Instead a brilliant flawed human being with the mind of a philosopher.

Since J.L. was an addict, let's first explore the meaning of the word 'addiction.'

In ancient Rome an 'addiction' was a debt slave to a creditor. The example for addiction in the O.E.D. is "bishops were implored to addict themselves to a particular flock". In 1789, Thomas Jefferson wrote about the Federalist Party. "Such an addiction is the degradation of free and moral agents."

As the word addiction is used today, it is a substance or activity that leads to a life of too much or never enough. Having worked in the field of substance abuse, I have only great sorrow for addicts. As it is tied to the symbol of CWC, I feel doubly sorrowful.

Jack London's deep and moving autobiography was written in 1913 at age 37, when he was at the height of his successful literary career. Three years later, at forty, he was dead of uremia, caused

by his alcoholism.

Though he never explains where the title of his book comes from, research reveals that the poem was really an ancient drinking song known in 1586 as a true parable about over-indulging. No matter how many people try to kill John Barleycorn, they will all lose the battle and die. Still today, barley is the main ingredient used in making whiskey and beer.

"Mault gave the Miller such a blow

That from his horse he fell full low.

He taught from his Master for to know

You never saw the like, sir."

I reiterate that Jack London was an alcoholic. One who was supremely self-aware and exquisitely exacting in his description of what was happening to him. But he could not stop his use. As time went on, he increased his imbibing more and more each day.

His book begins with the author getting drunk on beer at age five. He is not genetically born with a weakness for alcohol, but gradually develops it over a short, but fruitful, life. The 177- page autobiography is a fascinating read, impossible to put down.

Coming from a world of abject poverty, London managed to overcome innumerable obstacles that will be all

Writers Talking: "No thanks, I'll wait for the movie."



too familiar to those attempting to enter the world of 'well-known authors'. In this tell-all autobiography written in exquisite literary style, we see the full spectrum of Jack London's genius and his weakness. His story told in cold and brutally honest language.

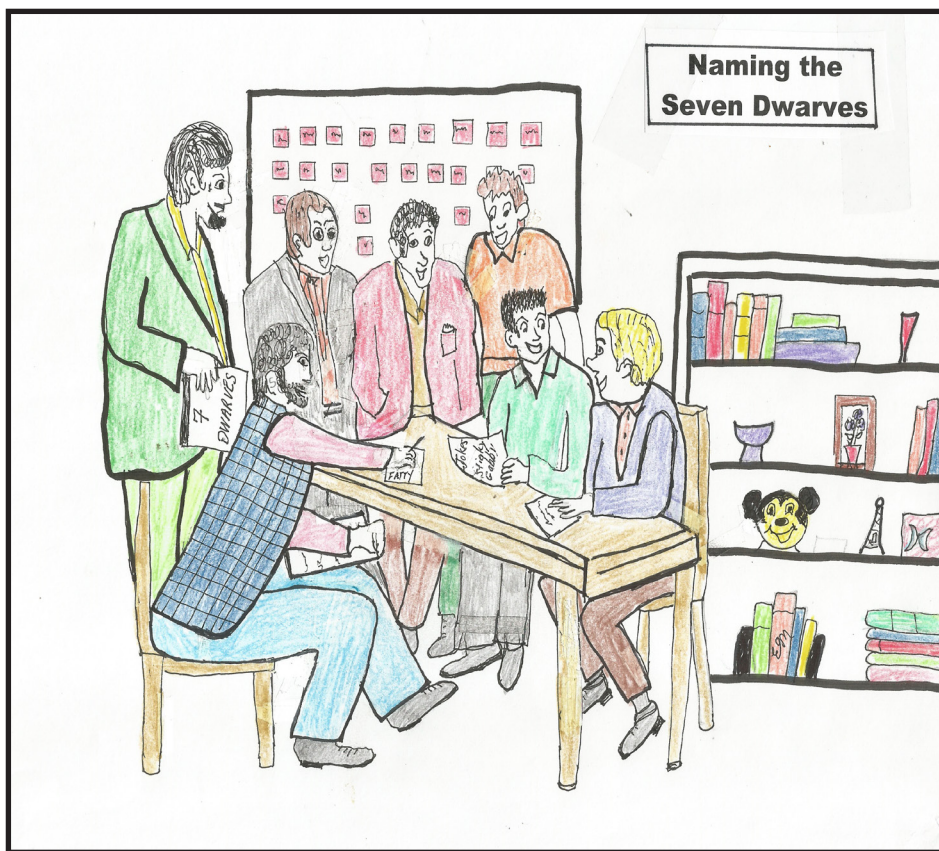
*"John Barleycorn was a hero bold
Of noble enterprise;*

For if you do but taste his blood,

'Twill make your courage rise.'"

Jack London and John Barleycorn became one 'til death did them part. — WT





"Stinky ... Stumpy ... Birdbrain ... Bug-eyes ... Sweaty ... Scratchy ... Blubberbutt ... Blockhead ... Lardass ... Geezer ... Keghead ... Warts ... Moles ... Pimples ... Zits ..."

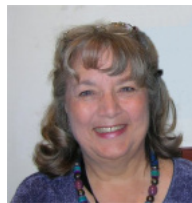
The Wake-Up Comedy

by Richard Burns

The alarm rings.
What the hell is that?
My dear boy, it's not a hostile enemy attack. It's not Armageddon. It's your alarm.
Oh, yeah. I guess you're right.
I punch off the alarm. My heart rate starts to normalize.
Of course, I'm right. Now, get up.
But it's cold outside the covers.
My dear boy, you have to pee. Plus, you have to take your pill,
Is this really my life?
It's a good life. Now get up.
But the covers are so warm.
If you sleep three more hours, it will still be cold.
You always win.
Of course. Up, my boy.
It's too cold.
Damn, you're stubborn. You may wet your bed.
Oh, yeah, there's that. But I'm too sleepy to get up.
[Sigh...] Whatever.
A twinge of pain and I give up, hoist myself to my feet and complete the two scheduled items. I check that the second alarm is set so I won't oversleep.
Whew, that's better. I'm glad you were rough with me so I don't have to change the sheets.
Don't mention it.
I drift off to sweet oblivion. — WT

Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Did you write a poem a day during April - National Poetry Month? Or one a week? Or even just one new poem? If so,

please share with *WritersTalk*. First on the list are two contests you can enter whether the poem is new or old and/or already published (in *WritersTalk* – hint, hint).

Tom Howard/Margaret Reid Poetry Contest

All styles and themes. Submission period: April 15-September 30. Total prizes: \$4,000. Accepts published and unpublished work. Special award for verse that rhymes or has a traditional style.

<https://winningwriters.com/our-contests>

More Poetry Sites

- All Poetry: Community for poets.
<https://allpoetry.com/>
- Poetry Society of America (PSA) contest list.
 - *Single Poems*
https://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/resources/poetry_contest_single_poems/
 - *Poetry Books*
https://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/resources/poetry_contest_single_poems/
- Poetry Nation
<https://www.poetrynation.com/contest/>

Continued on Page 13

More Websites That List Contests

(* = also on FaceBook << = new to list)

- *Writer's Digest**

<http://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions>

- *The Writer Magazine**

<https://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/contests/>

- *The Write Life**

<https://thewritelife.com/writing-contests/>

- *National Association of Memoir Writers**

<http://namw.org/>

- *Freedom With Writing**

<https://www.freedomwithwriting.com/freedom/>

- *Authors Publish**

<https://www.authorspublish.com/>

- *WOW! Women On Writing**

<http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/>

- *Women's Fiction Writers Association**

<http://womensfictionwriters.org/Contests>

- *Funds For Writers*<<

<http://fundsforwriters.com/contests/>

- *Reedsy Writing Competitions in 2018*<<

<https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/>

- *FanStory - contest list*<<

Local Publications Seeking Submissions:

- *Literary Nest*: A local publication. Submissions for summer issue are April 16 – June 30, 2018.

<https://theliterarynest.com>

- *The Red Wheelbarrow* (De Anza/Poetry Center San Jose) Deadline Aug. 15.

<https://redwheelbarrow.submittable.com/submit>

- *Caesura 2018*: Call closes: July 1, 2018 for General Public. July 15, 2018 for PCSJ Members.

<http://www.pcsj.org/caesuracall.html>

- *Sand Hill Review*: Stories, non-fiction articles, and poems.

<https://sandhillreview.org/>

All these listings are for information only. No vetting has been done by South Bay Writers Club. Some contests have been around for a long time and the reputation is known but some are newer. Please read all guidelines carefully before submitting. And please share any experience you have with them, good or bad. – WT

Conferences and Events March 2018

by Margie Yee Webb

Nonfiction Writers Conference

May 2-4, 2018, Online Virtual Conference

<http://nonfictionwritersconference.com/>

8th Annual Nonfiction Writers Conference

Gold Rush Writers Conference

May 4-6, 2018, Mokelumne Hill CA

<http://goldrushwriters.com/>

13th Annual Gold Rush Writers Conference

All About Books Book Festival

May 12, 2018, Paradise CA

<http://chocolatefest.us/events/all-about-books/>

At the 13th Annual Paradise Chocolate Fest – In Collaboration with North State Writers

The Acorn Class: Growing Your Writing Ideas with Victoria Zackheim

May 12, 2018, San Francisco CA

<https://www.milibrary.org/events/acorn-class-growing-your-writing-ideas-may-12-2018>

<https://sfwriters.org/mil-classes>

Class co-sponsored by Mechanics Institute Library and San Francisco Writers Conference/San Francisco Writers Foundation.

Writing Comics and Graphic Novels with Trina Robbins

May 19, 2018, San Francisco CA

<https://www.milibrary.org/events/comics-and-graphic-novels-trina-robbins-may-19-2018>

<https://sfwriters.org/mil-classes>

Class co-sponsored by Mechanics Institute Library and San Francisco Writers Conference/San Francisco Writers Foundation.

Sacramento Black Book Fair

June 1-2, 2018, Sacramento CA

<https://www.sacramentoblackbookfair.com/>

"Fifth Annual Sacramento Black Book Fair"

CWA Writers Conference

June 7-9, 2018, Houston TX

http://catwriters.com/wp_meow/

"Cat Writers' Association Annual Conference & Awards Banquet"

The Literary Stage at San Mateo County Fair

June 9-17, 2018, San Mateo CA

<http://cwc-peninsula.org/the-literary-stage/>

Partnership between San Francisco Peninsula Writers and San Mateo County Fair

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News from the California Writers Club

Ads in CWC Bulletin

by Bob Isbill (760) 221-6367

Want to increase your visibility? Sell your service? Promote your book? Increase speaker engagements? Pump up your web traffic? Or just send a greeting?

Each issue of *The CWC Bulletin*, published three times a year, reaches 2,000 published and aspiring writers in 21 CWC branches throughout the state and is published on www.calwriters.org.

Now we are accepting writing-related advertising from businesses, CWC members, and individuals who wish to reach our target market at reasonable prices. See calwriters.org for details and how to format your ad. —WT

You may advertise in the CWC Literary Review or The CWC Bulletin

Go to www.calwriters.org for details

CWC Around the Bay

Published meeting locations and times for other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you want to attend one of their meetings, first check their websites for details.

Berkeley: 2:00 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. cwc-berkeley.org

Central Coast: 5:30 third Tuesdays, Point Pinos Grill, 77 Asilomar Boulevard, Pacific Grove. centralcoastwriters.org

Fremont Area: 2:00 fourth Saturdays at Round Table Pizza, 37408 Fremont Blvd., Fremont. cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Marin: 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. cwcmarin.com

Mendocino Coast: 6:00 third Thursdays, Mendocino Hotel. writersmendocinocoast.org

Mount Diablo: 11:00 second Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com

Napa Valley: 7:00 second Wednesdays, venue is changing. napavalleywriters.net

North State: 6:00 third Mondays, Butte County Library-Chico Branch. northstatewriters.com

Redwood: 2:30 first Sundays, Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa, 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. redwoodwriters.org

Sacramento: 11:00 third Saturdays, Cattlemen's Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. cwcsacramentowriters.org

San Francisco/Peninsula: 10:00 third Saturdays, Sequoia Yacht Club, Redwood City: check website <http://cwc-peninsula.org/>

San Joaquin Valley Writers: 12:30 second Saturdays, University of Pacific community room

Tri-Valley: 2:00 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.org

Wanted: Information on Conferences

Send information on conferences and other events of interest to writers to newsletter@southbaywriters.com for consideration for inclusion on this page.

Conferences and Events

Continued from Page 13

Santa Barbara Writers Conference

June 17-22, 2018, Santa Barbara CA
<http://www.sbwriters.com/>
46th Anniversary — "Inspiring, Connecting, and Believing in Writers since 1972"

Annual Greater Los Angeles Writers Conference

June 22-24, 2018, Los Angeles CA
<http://www.wcwriters.com/aglawc/>
"20th Conference For Writers"

— WT

THE WRITERSTALK CHALLENGE

MEMBERS of SOUTH BAY WRITERS:

Don't forget! Once a year in January, awards will be 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!

Genres:

Fiction: 500 – 1800 words

Memoir: 500 – 1800 words

Essay/Nonfiction: 500 – 1000

Poetry: 20 – 200 words

Judging Periods: Work published in WritersTalk in the preceding the year. 2018 only: Work published in October, 2017 through December, 2018.

Prizes: Two winners will be selected from each genre; first prize, \$100; second, \$50. Judging by WritersTalk contributing editors and other members of CWC.

The first requirement to enter this contest is that you have something published in WritersTalk.

Let's see your creative work!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 7:30P Open mic Barnes&Noble Almaden, San Jose	5
6	7 2P Valley Writers	8 7P Well-RED at Works 7P Board Meeting	9	10	11	12
13 10A Our Voices	14 2P Valley Writers 6:00P SBW Dinner Harry's Hofbrau	15 DEADLINE: Writer- sTalk Submission	16 7:30P Open mic SF Peninsula, Reach and Teach, San Mateo	17 7P Third Thursday, Po- etry Center	18 7:30P Open mic Wil- low Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave	19
20 1P Poets@Play, Markham House	21 2P Valley Writers	22	23	24	25	26
27 10A Our Voices	28 2P Valley Writers	29	30	31	May 2018	

Future Flashes

Future Events:

SBW Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 8 at Edie Matthews' home

May Meeting: May 14 at Harry's Hofbrau

**SBW/CWC Events
appear on this calendar page.**

Ongoing Events

Critique Groups

Our Voices: Meets at Bel Bacio Coffee in San Jose every other Sunday 10 AM. Genres: Fiction, memoir, nontechnical nonfiction. Contact: Dave LaRoche at dalaroche@comcast.net

Valley Writers: Meets at Valley Village Retirement Community, Winchester at Dolores, Santa Clara, Mondays 2 PM. Marjorie Johnson, marjoriej358@comcast.net

Your Critique Group: Send info to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Do you belong to a critique group? Please send details to *WritersTalk*.

SBW Board Meetings

Board meets on Tuesday, 7 PM, in the week preceding the dinner meeting. Contact Edie Matthews for more information on how you can attend at pres@southbaywriters.com.

Open Mics

South Bay Writers Open Mic: Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. First Friday evenings, B&N Almaden. Third Friday evenings, Willow Glen Library or Rosegarden Library. See calendar for schedule. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

CWC SF Peninsula Open Mic: Third Wednesday of every month, 7:30 PM at Reach and Teach, 144 West 25th Ave., San Mateo

Ongoing discussion groups

Facebook Group: Members of South Bay Writers can join our Facebook group—South Bay Writers Club.

**Add your discussion group
here!**

**You may advertise in the
CWC Literary Review or
The CWC Bulletin**

Go to www.calwriters.org for details

Poetry Readings

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

Poetry Center San Jose: Meets Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose, 7 PM Third Thursday, 408-808-3045 www.poetrycentersanjose.org

Well-Red Poetry Reading Series: Second Tuesdays, 7 – 9 pm, at Works San Jose, 365 South Market Street. Featured reader followed by an open mic, if time allows.

www.poetrycentersanjose.org

SBW Recommends ...

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



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

MAIL TO

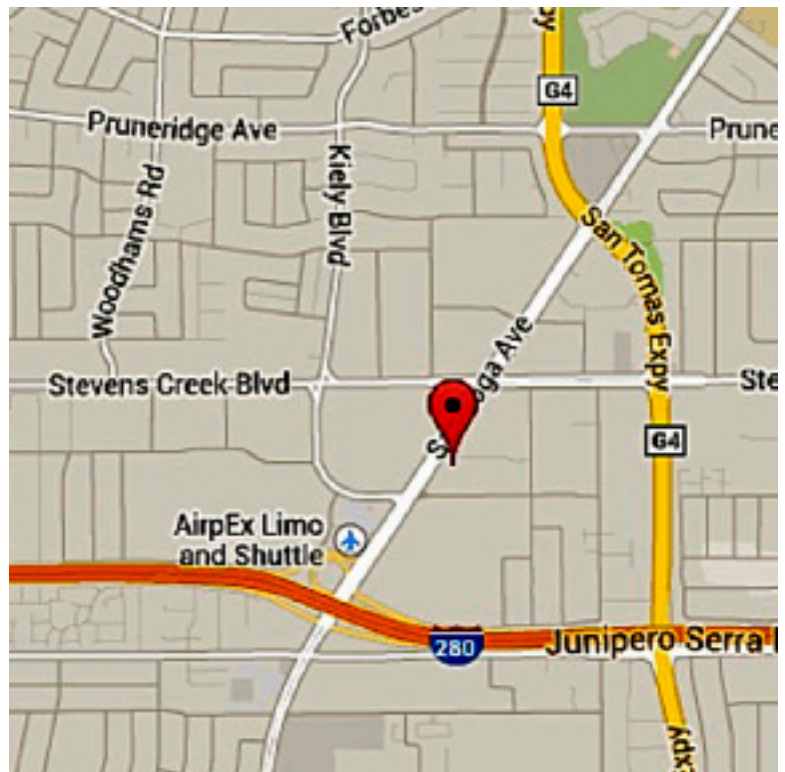
Address Correction Requested

**South Bay Writers
Regular Dinner Meeting
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Monday May 14, 2018
Harry's Hofbrau
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose**

**Nonfiction that Reads Like a
Novel
with
Mary Jo Ignoffo
May 2018 Speaker**

Please send contributions and submissions for *WritersTalk* by or on the 15th of the month!

Regular dinner meetings are second Mondays 6 – 9 PM of every month except July, December, and workshop months



Harry's Hofbrau

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