



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 28  
Number 03  
March 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

MARCH SPEAKER: CARA BLACK

## Writing a Mystery Series or Stand-Alone

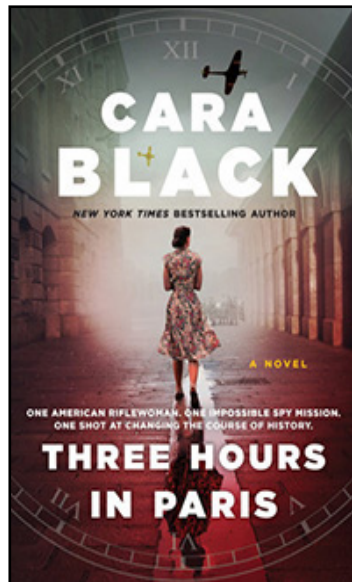
by Jamal Khan



they notice the subtle hints dropped that, while initially unnoticed, now make the conclusion appear all but inevitable. In our dinner meeting on March 9, Cara Black will guide us through the writing of a mystery.

Cara Black is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 19 books in the *Private Investigator Aimée Leduc* series, which is set in Paris. Cara has received multiple nominations for the Anthony and Macavity Awards, a *Washington Post* Book World Book of the Year citation, the Médaille de la Ville de Paris – the Paris City Medal, which is awarded in recognition of contribution to international culture – and invitations to be the Guest of Honor at conferences such as the Paris Polar Crime Festival and Left Coast Crime. With more than 400,000 books in print, the *Aimée Leduc* series has been translated into German, Norwegian, Japanese, French, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew.

A good mystery unspools much like the weaving of a spider's web: gradually yet consistently, appearing haphazard in the initial stages, and culminating in a dazzling whole that ties together all loose ends in supremely satisfying fashion. The genre that achieved its modern manifestation in the work of Edgar Allan Poe has introduced the world to some of the most famous fictional characters in literature, from Sherlock Holmes to Hercule Poirot. A mystery's twists and turns keep the reader hooked. When the climactic discovery is made, it upends expectations. Yet, if readers go back,



Where: China Stix - Authentic Cuisine inspired by Mandarin, Szechuan, & Taiwanese

2110 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95050

When: Monday March 9, at 6pm; talk begins at 7:30pm

Admission: \$30 for members, \$35 for nonmembers.

Cost of admission includes dinner

FEBRUARY RECAP: LISA MENDELMAN

## Meeting Recap

by Bill Baldwin

It is both a pleasure and a challenge to summarize Lisa Mendelman's presentation at our February dinner meeting. It is a pleasure because Lisa gifted us with so many ideas and so much information! It is a challenge because her talk was so rich, a bit academic, and not entirely what I was expecting – nor, perhaps, what it appeared to be.

I admit it: I expected "Sex Scenes, More or Less" to deal with how to write sex scenes that would not make readers cringe. I thought she might reference D. H. Lawrence or the Violet Quill writers, for example. "Omit those anatomical details!" But she began with a challenge: To write a sentence about sex without mentioning sex, and a sentence about love without mentioning love. We then set our masterpieces aside for later in the program.

Then Lisa proceeded to the core of the talk, based largely on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the 1925 novel by Anita Loos. Mendelman sees this as a key to how women writers dealt with the changes transforming American society in the years following World War I. The culture had already been changing, of course, as it moved from the more genteel and restrictive nineteenth century into the more industrial and free-wheeling twentieth.

Writing about sexuality and relationships in the earlier era reflected the Cult of True Womanhood. While strong feelings might be acknowledged by references to gasps and fainting, a woman's place in society was severely limited. The first decades of the new century brought the Progressive Era, the Women's Suffrage Movement and

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# Between the Lines

Edie Matthews



## Friends

She had a haircut like Moe of the Three Stooges, when I first noticed her in Freshman English. A 4-foot-11 bashful butterball, she stuttered and stared at the floor, attempting to answer the teacher's question.

I'd just returned to the area, and registered at Santa Clara High in the middle of the year. Previously, I'd attended William A. Wilson, the local intermediate school, so I'd already established a flurry of friends and hung out with the popular crowd.

"Can you believe her brother is Gary?" whispered the girl behind me.

"Who?" I asked.

Someone passed me a wallet-size picture, but I didn't recognize him. Later I learned they had gone to the Catholic school.

I didn't pay much attention to her, even though we had two classes together. However, it turned out we lived a block apart, and one fateful day, I walked down her street. I thought I recognized her in the distance. A chunky girl in colorful-striped pants that reminded me of a clown. Since I'm nearsighted and only wore my glasses in class, I was unsure it was her and started to cross the street.

"Hey, it's me, Edna," she said, chasing after me. "Boy, you're stuck-up."

I did my best to soothe her feelings and explain about my poor eyesight.

"I live there," she said, pointing to a tidy pink house. "Right there."

From then on, she greeted me in class like a long-lost friend. She kept coaxing me to come over to her house. Eventually, I did and we became buddies.

Kids at school didn't understand. "What are you doing with her?"

I described her personality and sense of humor. I introduced her to the in-crowd. It wasn't long before they recognized her qualities, and she became the court jester who made us laugh.

Behind her back though, people could be mean. On the day of the prom, someone started a rumor that she had trouble lacing up her corset. I knew for a fact, she didn't wear a corset.

Still, with her humor and sweetness, she won people over. In our senior year she ran for Student Body Council and was overwhelmingly elected.

Thanks to our proximity, her "other" brother and I fell in love and married. I chose her to be Maid of Honor, and she went from being my friend to becoming my sister-in-law.

One day she said sorrowfully, "I'll never have children."

"What are you talking about?" I said. "You're like a second mother to my kids."

And she was. My four children loved Aunt Edna. She spoiled them, helped them, and never disciplined them. By far, she was their favorite aunt. She doted on them at birthdays and celebrated the holidays with us, and despite the mischief they got into, she never tattled.

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California Writers Club  
South Bay Branch  
[www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

### SBW Officers

President—Edie Matthews  
[pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com)  
Vice President—Jamal Khan  
[vp@southbaywriters.com](mailto:vp@southbaywriters.com)  
Secretary—Marjorie Johnson  
[secretary@southbaywriters.com](mailto:secretary@southbaywriters.com)  
Treasurer—Trenton Myers  
[treasurer@southbaywriters.com](mailto:treasurer@southbaywriters.com)  
Member-at-Large1—Tatyana Grinenko  
[member-at-large-1@southbaywriters.com](mailto:member-at-large-1@southbaywriters.com)  
Member-at-Large2—Alfred Jan  
[member-at-large-2@southbaywriters.com](mailto:member-at-large-2@southbaywriters.com)

### SBW Representatives

Central Board—Bill Baldwin  
[WABaldwin@aol.com](mailto:WABaldwin@aol.com)  
NorCal—Dave LaRoche  
[policies@southbaywriters.com](mailto:policies@southbaywriters.com)

### SBW Committee Chairs

Bylaws/Policy&Procedures—Dave LaRoche  
[policies@southbaywriters.com](mailto:policies@southbaywriters.com)  
Hospitality—Janet Patey  
[hospitality@southbaywriters.com](mailto:hospitality@southbaywriters.com)  
Membership—Inga Silva  
[membership@southbaywriters.com](mailto:membership@southbaywriters.com)  
MRMS Admin—Dick Amyx  
[mrms@southbaywriters.com](mailto:mrms@southbaywriters.com)  
Newsletter—J. K. McDole  
[newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)  
Programs, Workshops—Jamal Khan  
[vp@southbaywriters.com](mailto:vp@southbaywriters.com)  
Publicity and Public Relations—Tatyana Grinenko  
[pr@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pr@southbaywriters.com)  
Web Master—Dick Amyx (Interim)  
[webmaster@southbaywriters.com](mailto:webmaster@southbaywriters.com)  
Web Editor—Tatyana Grinenko  
[webeditor@southbaywriters.com](mailto:webeditor@southbaywriters.com)  
Member News—Marjorie Johnson  
[membernews@southbaywriters.com](mailto:membernews@southbaywriters.com)

### SBW Events

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin  
[WABaldwin@aol.com](mailto:WABaldwin@aol.com)

### 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, 2020. Dual membership, \$25; student membership, \$20. New member, \$65. Contact Membership Chair at a meeting or sign up online at [southbaywriters.com](http://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

email: newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Managing Editor

J. K. McDole

### Contributing Editors

Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

Carolyn Donnell

Marty Sorenson

Mary Miller Chiao

DeWayne Mason

### 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.

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

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## I'm Bringing With Me ...

Writing wisdom finds you in the wildest of places. I lead a kindergarten den in our local Cub Scout pack, which goes on group campouts up in the Santa Cruz mountains. On our most recent trip, nestled in the lordly redwoods, we had breakfast on a boisterous morning in October with a throng of excited young scouts. The kids ate by the campfire ring; the adults, adjusting to the lack of cell service and phone alarms, sipped their first morning cups. When you go camping with kids, everything begets both a sense of ritual and fun. The kindergarteners were thrilled about morning marshmallow roasting; the older scouts—fourth and fifth graders, a mix of boys and girls—began to clamor for campfire activities. I thought, *excellent*: this is something I'm good at. I jumped right in to offer them an alphabet game.

"Let's play 'I'm Going on a Trip,'" I announced, "where I'm bringing something with me that begins with the letter 'A.' The next person has to bring something with the letter 'B,' and after them, 'C.'" That's how the game works: you go around each person at the campfire, gathering up these alphabetical items, until we've reached the end of the alphabet.

Beside me, one of the scouts—a fifth-grader with mousy hair and bright blue eyes—was skewering a marshmallow to be roasted. "I'm bringing the *Andromeda Strain*," he mused. "It's a science-fiction book. You probably haven't heard of it."

I balked. Was an eleven-year-old really insinuating that I had never heard of Michael Crichton? This could not stand. "Are you bringing *Airframe*, too?" I asked, instantly earning from him a look of surprise. "That's a pretty good one by the same author, though it's a little more fiction than sci-fi."

"Sure," he said, brightening; I saw in his face the classic look of *cool, a grown-up who knows what I'm talking about*. "When we get to 'J,' we can bring *Jurassic Park*."

"And 'C' can be *Congo*," I agreed. "'S' for *Sphere*."

I have to admit: he knew his Crichton. We kept chatting about books even as the game played on. Eventually, some other scouts picked up on our conversation and drew closer, chiming in with their own favorite books, comics, and films.

It's been a long time since I was in fifth grade. I still remember it clearly: that soft, vulnerable space between childhood and teenager, when your horizons are still expanding from roots that have already dug deep. It's important for children to connect with reliable older individuals. As they teeter on the precipice of adolescence, they crave new validation and acceptance from their peers, and not everyone gives it fairly. Intelligence, while ultimately an asset, can be isolating. The "smart" kid runs the risk of being the "weird" kid, too.

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# View from the Board

by Marjorie Johnson



Marjorie Johnson  
SBW Secretary

Partly cloudy with a chance of sunshine....

The SBW Board did not meet in February due to a death in President Edie Matthews' family. Be sure to check your email or [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com) for event updates.

The SBW election is sneaking up on us. According to SBW bylaws, officers for fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 will be nominated at the May meeting and voting will take place in June. Please take a hard look at yourself; are you the talented person we need to serve on our board? It's OK to nominate yourself. Or, if you know a qualified person who's too humble to nominate himself, you could nominate him. (Note that him is the old-fashioned generic for person, much preferred to the clumsy him/her by octogenarians such as me.)

Also, since no one sent news of writing accomplishments to me by February 15, I did not write the "Member News" column. You're missing out on a chance for sunshine/fame in *WritersTalk*.

As to the SBW Board, the next scheduled meeting will be 7 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, and the next dinner meeting Monday, March 9.

## NorCal Writers

by Dave LaRoche

Ahh, the NorCal Group. Who the hell are they, anyway? Is it actually a group, or is it only LaRoche blabbing on at the Board gatherings, somewhat less into a mic at our branch meetings. I can hardly understand him anyway, that gravelly voice, and his humor—sheeze! Well, what can you expect from people growing shorter, both feet in the... well, you know where. And, we know, when your feet are there, the rest is soon to follow.

Okay, the NorCal Group.... Once I've been bludgeoned around with a thing, I tend to give it attention, especially if I think the bludgeoning will stop. So, I looked into it. They have a website, and you know what? It ain't half bad—found a lot of useful tips while there, I mean straight from the shoulder stuff, and nobody is selling. I liked that and looked a little further.

There's a calendar on the site. You remember how they said when we joined this club that other branches were open to us just as if we belonged. And, we thought, "whoopee." But then it meant close to nothing because we didn't know

where or when or what. Well, this NorCal site has a calendar that's kept current, and you can see who is speaking about what, where, and what time in all fourteen Northern California branches. And, that's cool. I may not cotton to South Bay's speaker next month, but Fremont's program is enticing.

I'm getting interested now. I'm a curious sort and like to learn, and the more I know, the curious-er I get. So I looked into the Group itself. It's a regional collection of northern branches founded years ago by said branches to assist in organization and practices and to enhance inter-branch communications. There's a parallel group in the south. These regional groups are recognized and funded by the Central Board—that is, they have an official status within the club. Given the age of CWC, over a century, and its recent growth throughout the state, this is an excellent approach to improving cohesion among the expanding collection of branches. Well, that's what it sounded like to me.

Well, good so far, but what do they actually do? I always ask this often embar-

## Friends

Continued from Page 2

Though she was active her whole life, playing softball and even running a half-marathon, her weight, smoking, and the years of inhaling chemicals in a print shop did their damage. Last week she died surrounded by family and friends.

Her funeral drew 200 people. Mourners from both sides of the family and friends from every aspect of her life: work, neighbors, high school, the senior center, etc.. The eulogies revealed her tenacity, kindness, and generosity.

Now I write this heartbroken. Where is my good friend who shared so many teenage adventures—cruising First Street, sneaking into the Moonlight drive-in, speaking G-language?

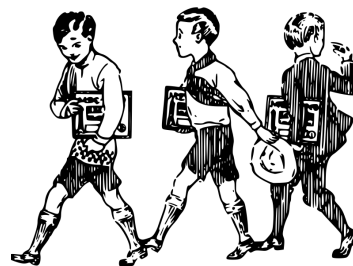
*American Bandstand* played the hits and I taught her how to do the mashed potatoes.

"I can't do it," she said.

"Sure you can. Stand on your toes, hold onto the counter, and twist your feet. . . . That's it. Now, let go."

She slipped, "KA-BOOM!"

We smothered giggles, as her Mom yelled from the other room, "Edna Marie!" — WT



rassing question, and here's the NCG response. Each branch sends a representative to the NorCal Group meetings. They bring their questions/issues/successes, and discussion ensues. Sometimes, I've discovered, it ensues and ensues and ensues. Nonetheless, related practices are voiced, and the best, of course, rise to the top and are taken back to the branches. The Group holds a well-attended Leadership Conference every other year (next one likely this October). It also staffs a booth and fosters good feelings about CWC at the San Francisco Writers Conference, and another at the Bay Area Book Fest two-day event. Branches are invited to participate and do. The Group has held weekend write-ins, developed a Publishing Pathways system, and is well represented at Central Board meetings, providing opinions and guidance.

So, check it out. You might find just the kernel of information you need on the website or at another branch's meeting. Did I say there are fourteen scattered around the Bay Area?

<http://cwcnorcalwriters.org/> — WT



## I'm Bringing With Me...

Continued from Page 3

So I did what eleven-year-old me would have wanted, had she been in their shoes: I indulged them. Soon they were bombarding me with their favorites, and I encouraged this bombardment by adding in my own. A kid called out, "Avengers for 'A'?" I shot back, "Captain 'A'-merica was definitely my main hero." "'S' is Stephen King," declared one scout, tugging on his neckerchief. "Did you ever read *Dark Tower*? *IT*? *The Shining*?" When I replied (with some incredulity) that he must really like scary stories, he shrugged and admitted he was terrified of clowns.

Kids are so honest. There's something precious about this bluntness, both to me as a parent and a writer: It's a reminder that the truth, and only the truth, is the core of every narrative. I kept thinking about Anne Lamott and her insight on children's perspectives from her bestselling memoir and writing guide *Bird by Bird*: "When we listened to our intuition when we were small and told the grown-ups what we believed to be true, we were often either corrected, ridiculed, or punished." Clearly, the *Andromeda Strain* Scout still had his intuition, and had yet to be discouraged about speaking it. But what about myself? "So you may have gotten into the habit of doubting the voice that was telling you quite clearly what was really going on," Lamott continues. "It is essential that you get it back."

"You all have very good taste in books and movies," I finally declared to the scouts, who by then had surrounded me in a semi-circle, like a scrutinizing judges. "A lot of your favorites are my favorites, too. It's important to read books AND watch movies. You can get lots of ideas and inspiration from both, and neither books nor movies are better than the other."

"Yeah, well, some movies are just bad," replied Andromeda Scout, eyeing his marshmallow as it warmed up over the fire. "Like, *Alien vs. Predator*. Who even came up with that idea? It seems so ridiculous."

"Kinda," I said, shrugging, appreciating his take. "But, when you think about it a little longer, some of it starts to make sense. It's a story about pitting the most powerful hunter against the universe's perfect organism. The alien is the ideal trophy for the yautja predators. The crossover works out."

"Huh." Andromeda Scout pulled back his marshmallow; it was browned to perfection. Still, he insisted, the ubiquitous crossover was little more than a means for money-grabbing, an opportunity for merchandise. His fellow scouts gasped when he implied that *Star Wars*—beloved fandom to so many youngsters—was most guilty of all, peddling bad content just to sell shinier toys.

I could only laugh. See what I mean about honesty, and the smart kid sometimes being weird? I wonder if Lamott would have indulged them, too.

It stuck with me, this exchange—and now I've decided: that's what I'm bringing with me on my trip through writing. 'H' will be honesty, 'I' will be intuition. I'll think of some other items for the rest of the alphabet later, but those two are for sure. 'M', I know, will be a bag of marshmallows. —WT

## February Recap

Continued from the front page

Prohibition.

But these changes made clearer to woman the double-binds and double-standards of their social situation. And the ambivalence towards feelings, which had existed previously, became more pronounced with the increasing promises held out to women, at the same time that male writers such as Hemingway were developing a cool detached irony.

In the twentieth century interwar era old standards were discarded. Now women were openly drinking, smoking, and sometimes pursuing free love. The ultimate symbol of this, as epitomized in the writings of Anita Loos, was the Flapper.

And now the language of sex and desire changed; or rather, the coding changed; in the writings of Loos, as well as that of Frances Newman (*The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, 1926). The earlier method of "writing about sex" without writing about sex further evolved.

Which brings us full circle to those sentences we wrote at the beginning. What did we learn about "writing sex scenes?" We learned that writing about sex involves writing about feelings (isn't that a surprise!). If you don't want your readers to cringe at the mention of "anatomical details" (but what about D. H. Lawrence?), be sure to link sexuality with feelings, so that the mention of feelings will suggest the underlying sexual fire. Be aware that you can still be "distanced" and ironical—that can even make the sexuality seem like fun!

Lisa presented a wonderful talk. I immediately ran off to research Loos and Newman. And be sure to check out Lisa's book, *Modern Sentimentalism: Affect, Irony, and Female Authorship in Interwar America*. Book in hand, any notions I've gotten wrong here can be corrected!

Thanks, Lisa! —WT

## Poetry Page

### Tuolumne Triptych

Doe sees me and steps  
Dappled shadow to soft light  
Our eyes meet, stock still

Raven sits and talks  
Softly to herself, high branch  
And sometimes to me

Icy morning trail  
Camera catches her grace

Lion walks, slowly

—Michael Hahn





# Norton the Cat

by Kathy Boyd

My friend Sue was another children's librarian at San Jose Public Library. We never worked together because at the time, each branch had only one children's librarian. She knew I liked cats but she was a bird person. Then one day in August, 2006 I got a call from her.

"Kathy, I need your help!" Sue said. "A cat had kittens in the yard next door! Can you come get them?"

I have had my hands full over the years with cats that were dumped in my neighborhood or wandered in from somewhere. I didn't want to start my own rescue group and start collecting cats from friends' yards. "I don't know, Sue, I already have enough cats. I can help you trap them, though, but you will need to find a place to take them." I suggested a few cat groups but I knew they were usually full this time of year during the kitten season.

"Can you at least come look? I don't know anything about cats."

So I headed over to "take a look."

Sue lived in a duplex. The other half was vacant at the time and that was where the feral cat had had her kittens. Sue led me around to the gate. The mother cat jumped the fence to get away. "I think the kittens are in there," she said, pointing.

There were four kittens huddled under a bush. I estimated that they were 6 weeks old, just about ready to leave their mother. They were small enough and in a confined area that I was able to catch one and I combed it with the flea comb I had brought. It was covered with fleas. I let it go and came back the next day with my cat carrier.

One was already dead when I returned. I grabbed one of the other three and put it in the carrier. Sue said she would try to get a vet to take it. They reluctantly said okay and I returned to Sue's the next day and put another kitten in the carrier. Sue took it to the same vet and they said, "We will take this one, but NO MORE!"

That left one last kitten, a gray one. I didn't know what I was going to do with this one. I held it and combed it a while, thinking I could tame it and maybe leave it there. The next day, however, I had trouble catching the kitten. It ran off and tried to bury itself in the corner between

the fence and the gate. Then as it turned and ran off, I was able to grab it by the tail and hold it by the scruff of the neck.

"Sue," I yelled over the fence, "bring my carrier! If I let this one go, I will never catch it again!"

Sue hurried over with the carrier and, against my better judgment, I took the kitten home.

I had just read a series of books by Peter Gethers who thought he was a dog person but was given a kitten and fell in love with it. The titles were *The Cat Who Went to Paris*, *The Cat Who Went Abroad: The Further Adventures of Norton*, and *The Cat Who'll Live Forever: The Final Adventures of Norton*. He had named the cat Norton because he wanted to say, "Norton, I'm home!" when returning to his pet. I loved the books and chose that name for my kitten even though I knew he would never travel the world like the cat in the book.

I left him in the carrier with a stuffed toy for at least a week. He was so tiny that there was room in the carrier for a litter box, food, and water. I wanted him isolated at the beginning from my

other cats. I pulled him out of the carrier when I was home to cuddle with him but when he wiggled too much, I quickly put him back in the carrier.

Eventually I introduced him to my other cats and he has become the most loving, well-behaved cat. I'm glad I kept that last kitten! — WT



"I love [cats], they are so nice and selfish. Dogs are TOO good and unselfish. They make me feel uncomfortable. But cats are gloriously human."

— L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*

## Off the Shelf

by Edie Matthews



"Now I'm ready to tackle the first draft!"



# Conferences and Events

## March 2020

by Margie Yee Webb

### Left Coast Crime 2020:

#### Murder's a Beach

March 12-15, 2020, San Diego CA

<http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2020/>

Left Coast Crime is an annual mystery convention for fans of the mystery/crime genre: readers, authors, librarians, bloggers, publishers, editors, agents, and booksellers.

### WNBA SF Pitch-O-Rama PLUS 2020

March 21, 2020, San Francisco CA

<https://wnba-sfchapter.org/pitch-orama-2020/>

Women's National Book Association—San Francisco Chapter presents Pitch-O-Rama PLUS. Pitch to agents and editors. Includes pre-pitch coaching.

### The Author Website: Building a Site That Works with Linda Lee

March 21, 2020, San Francisco CA

<https://www.milibrary.org/events/author-website-building-site-works-mar-21-2020>

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

### WordPress Bootcamp: Creating a WordPress Website and How to Use It with Linda Lee

March 21, 2020, San Francisco CA

<https://www.milibrary.org/events/wordpress-bootcamp-creating-wordpress-website-and-how-use-it-mar-21-2020>

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

### Novel Craft Intensive: Fear, Courage and Coming of Age

March 28, 2020, Corte Madera CA

<https://sfnortheastbay.scbwi.org/events/novel-craft-intensive-fear-courage-and-coming-of-age/>

Presented by Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators – California: San Francisco North and East Bay.

Note: Sign up in advance. No at-the-door admissions.

### The Poetry Workshop

Community of Writers in Squaw Valley

Application Deadline: March 28, 2020

June 20-27, 2020, Squaw Valley

<https://communityofwriters.org/workshops/poetry-workshop/>

"The Poetry Program is founded on the belief that when poets gather in a community to write new poems, each poet may well break through old habits and write something stronger and truer than before."

### The Writers Workshops in Fiction, Nonfiction and Memoir

Community of Writers in Squaw Valley

Application Deadline: March 28, 2020

July 6-13, 2020, Squaw Valley

<https://communityofwriters.org/workshops/writers-workshops/>

"These workshops assist serious writers by exploring the art and craft as well as the business of writing."

### Sacramento Poetry Center Spring Writing Conference

April 4, 2020, Sacramento CA

<http://www.sacramentopoetrycenter.com/>

Sacramento Poetry Center presents their annual conference.

### Our Life Stories Writers' Conference

Note: Registration required by April 8, 2020

April 18, 2020, Sacramento CA

<https://ourlifestories.org/>

"Envisioning Our Lives 20/20 Conference" – a cross-generational memoir conference. The focus of the annual event is the collection and writing of family stories and memoirs.

### SCBWI Spring Spirit 2020

Note: Deadline to register is April 15, 2020

May 2, 2020, Citrus Heights CA

<https://canorthcentral.scbwi.org/events/spring-spirit-2020/>

16th Annual Spring Spirit Conference presented by Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators – California: North/Central

### Belize Writers' Conference

April 25-30, 2020, Jaguar Reef Resort, Belize

<https://www.joeygarcia.com/events/>

"Breathe new life into your writing while building friendships with literary agents, authors, and writers at the third annual Belize Writers' Conference." – WT

### BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

## Mr. Darcy's Perfect Match

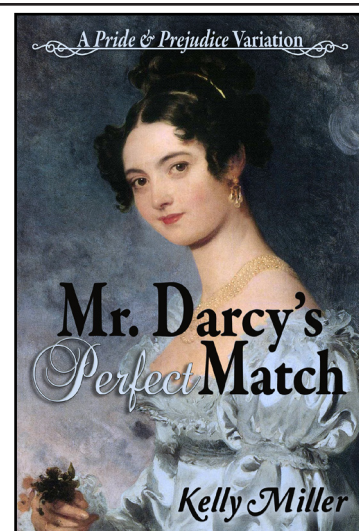
by Kelly Miller

My second book, *Mr. Darcy's Perfect Match: a Pride and Prejudice variation*, was published on January 25th.

When secrets are revealed and a family agenda works against him, can Fitzwilliam Darcy recover his damaged spirits and find happiness?

Following his disastrous proposal to Elizabeth Bennet, Fitzwilliam Darcy returns to London from Kent, broken-hearted and dejected. One bright spot penetrates his sea of despair: his sister, Georgiana, has finally recovered her spirits from the grievous events at Ramsgate the previous summer. She has forged a new friendship with Miss Hester Drake, a lady who appears to be an ideal friend. In fact, Lady Matlock believes Miss Drake is Darcy's perfect match.

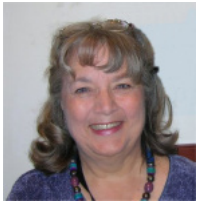
Blogger/reviewer Dee of *Donadee's Corner* wrote: "Exciting, mysterious, romantic and just plain wonderful! The characters are so awesome and you will see them clearly in your mind with all the wonderful descriptions." – WT





# Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Let us know if you have any success with any of the contests listed in Writers Talk. (Or any other contest for that matter.) Send your writing victories to

membernews@southbaywriters.com and any new stories, poems, articles, etc. to newsletter@southbaywriters.com.

You can also check other branches for their current contests, submission, anthology, etc. requests. See a list of other CWC branches at

<https://calwriters.org/cwcbranches/>

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.

## CONTESTS WITH NEARING DEADLINES

### *Writer's Digest* Contests

- <https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/>
- 1. Self-Published Book Awards  
deadline: 04/01/20
- 2. Annual Writing Competition  
deadline: 05/04/20

The Hudson Prize - Black Lawrence Press. Unpublished collection - poems or short stories. New, emerging, and established writers.

- Deadline - 3/31/20
- <https://blacklawrencepress.com/submissions-and-contests/the-hudson-prize/>

## LOCAL RESOURCES

Redwood Writers current contest 'The Long and Winding Road.' Non-branch members can enter.

- Deadline: 3/27/20 at 9 p.m.
- <https://redwoodwriters.org/beetles-contest/>

2020 San Francisco Book Festival - Call for entries. Annual program celebrating the best books of the spring season.

- Deadline: 6/25/20
- <http://www.sanfranciscobookfestival.com/>

The Literary Nest - A local online publication. Check website for submission period for Winter issue.

- <https://theliterarynest.com/>
- Send visual art in high res .jpeg, .gif, or .png format to [theliterarynest@gmail.com](mailto:theliterarynest@gmail.com)

*Sand Hill Review* - Stories, nonfiction articles, and poems.

- <https://sandhillreview.org/>

*Catamaran Literary Reader* - A West Coast quarterly literary and visual arts journal. Fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and fine art.

- Submissions year-round with a quarterly production cycle.
- Submission fee includes a coupon for a \$14 discount on their website store.
- <https://catamaranliteraryreader.com/>

Fremont Area Writers lists many resources on their page, such as Contest Announcements, Publications Seeking Submissions, Freelance Jobs, Resources for Screenwriters, Genre Organizations, and more.

- <https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers/>

## OTHER CONTESTS AND SUBMISSIONS

*The Writer Magazine* - They list contests, articles, resources and you can subscribe to their newsletter. A free downloadable guide (Winter 2019 Guide to Writing Contests) is available at:

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

*Writer's Digest* 8th Annual Self-Published Book Awards.

- Deadline: 4/1/2020
- <https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/self-published-book-awards>

The Write Life - 31 Free Writing Contests: Legitimate Competitions With Cash Prizes

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

*Sequestrum Literature and Art* - a "competitive, paying market which publishes high-quality short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and visual arts on a rolling basis."

- Previously unpublished - any print or online format.
- Nominal reading fee.
- Can subscribe.
- See link for details.
- <https://www.sequestrum.org/submissions>

*The Bitter Oleander Press* - A Journal of Contemporary International Poetry & Short Fiction

- <https://www.bitteroleander.com>

### Winning Writers

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

Tom Howard/John H. Reid Fiction & Essay Contest - fiction and nonfiction.

- Submission period: October 15-April 30.
- Total prizes: \$5,000.

Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest - Seeks humor poems.

- Submission period: August 15-April 1
- Total prizes: \$2,250.
- No fee! Usually accepts published and unpublished work.

## SOME SITES FOR POETS

*Up The Staircase Quarterly* - Submit 3-6 poems in a single document. Submit up to 10 .jpgs for art. No previously published poetry, but previously published artwork is okay.

- <https://www.upthestaircase.org/>
- Poets & Writers - lists poetry and other contests.

- <https://www.pw.org/grants>

*The Thimble Magazine* - A quarterly online journal.

- <https://www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/>

*Poetry Pacific* - Literary e-zine - 2 issues per year - Spring and Fall.

- Published and unpublished welcome as long as you still have the rights.
- <https://poetrypacific.blogspot.com/>

Continued on Page 9



## Contests and Markets

*Continued from Page 8*

Poets.Org recommends several book and magazine contests.

- <https://poets.org>

Authors Publish - Poetry Manuscript Publishers

- No Reading Fees
- <https://www.authorspublish.com/>

Trish Hopkinson Blog

- <https://trishhopkinson.com/where-to-submit-reprints/>

No Fee Calls for Poems - A Facebook Group that lists contests that don't charge fees

Ace World Pub Submission Lists

- <https://aceworldpub.com.ng/category/latest-opportunities/>

Poetry Society of America

- <https://poetrysociety.org/>

Some Facebook Poetry Groups

Poetry Center San José

Willow Glen Poetry Project

National Poetry Month: write a poem a day challenge

How Writers Write Poetry Community Group

No Fee Calls for Poems

## OTHER RESOURCES

Poets & Writers

- <https://www.pw.org/grants>

MWA NorCal Chapter\* - Mystery Writers of America

- <https://mwanorcal.org/>

The Write Life\*

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

Funds For Writers - Contests, submissions, grants, etc.

- <https://fundsforwriters.com/contests/>

Freedom With Writing\* - submissions, contests, jobs, and more

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

Authors Publish\*

- <http://www.authorspublish.com/>

The Best Writing Contests curated by Reedsy

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

NewPages Classifieds

- <https://www.newpages.com/>

Hidden River Arts

- <https://hiddenriverarts.wordpress.com/>

ProWritingAid Writer's Community Facebook group

The Do's and Don'ts of Dialogue from *The Writer Magazine*.

- <https://www.writermag.com/improve-your-writing/fiction/dos-donts-dialogue/>

Here's How Writers Get Stories, Poems, and Novels Published

- <https://writersrelief.com/2018/08/20/heres-how-writers-get-stories-poems-and-novels-published-writers-relief/>

Writer's Digest Workshops

- <https://www.writersonlineworkshops.com/>

Poets & Writers - conferences/residencies

- [https://www.pw.org/conferences\\_and\\_residencies](https://www.pw.org/conferences_and_residencies)

Authors Publish

- <https://www.authorspublish.com/how-to-get-your-writing-published-in-2020/>

*\* On both the Internet and Facebook.*

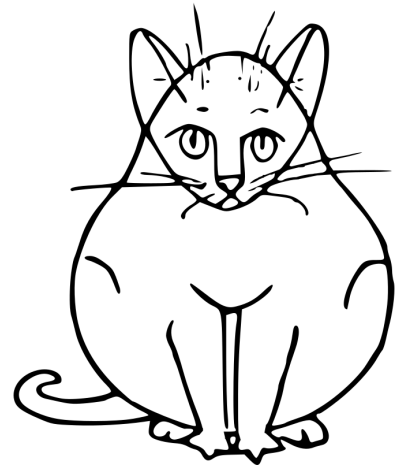
— WT

## Cat versus Comma

*by Marjorie Johnson*

What's the difference between a cat and a comma?

A cat has claws at the ends of its paws. A comma gives a pause after a clause. — WT



### WRITER QUOTES TO CHEW ON

"You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it."

That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence."

— Octavia Butler



"I think all writing is a disease. You can't stop it."

— William Carlos Williams

## WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR WRITING TO THE CWC LITERARY REVIEW?

There's still time! The deadline to submit your piece to the CWC Literary Review has been extended to

**March 31, 2020**

CWC must receive any and all submissions no later than that date, and any payments in the form of a check must be postmarked no later than that date.

Submission is open only to members of the California Writers Club.



# 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](http://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](http://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](http://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:** 3:00 third Sundays, 1204 Preservation Park Way, Oakland. [cwc-berkeley.org](http://cwc-berkeley.org)

**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, 42 Silicon Valley, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

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

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

**Mount Diablo:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. [cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com](http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com)

**Napa Valley:** 7:00 second Wednesdays, Napa Valley Unitarian Church, Napa. [napavalley-writers.net](http://napavalley-writers.net)

**North State:** 6:00 third Mondays, Butte County Library-Chico Branch. [northstatewriters.com](http://northstatewriters.com)

**Redwood:** 2:00 second 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, 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:** 1:30 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.org](http://trivalleywriters.org)

## Wanted: Information on Conferences

Send information on conferences and other events of interest to writers to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) for consideration for inclusion on this page.



February SBW speaker Lisa Mendelman and the "Old-Fashioned Flapper."

Photo by Carolyn Donnell.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 2P Valley Writers	3	4 7P Board Meeting (Edie's House)	5	6 7:00p Open mic: B&N Almaden	7
8 10A Our Voices 1P Poets@Play, Markham House	9 2P Valley Writers 6:00P SBW Dinner China Stix	10 7P Well-RED atWorks	11	12	13	14
15 <b>DEADLINE:</b> <i>WritersTalk</i> Submission	16 2P Valley Writers	17	18	19 7P Third Thursday, Poetry Center	20 7:00p Open mic: Willow Glen	21
22 10A Our Voices	23 2P Valley Writers	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 2P Valley Writers	31	<b>March 2020</b>			

## Upcoming Events

### DINNER MEETING

March 9  
April 13

### BOARD MEETING

March 4  
April 8

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

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

## 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](mailto:dalaroche@comcast.net)

**Valley Writers:** Meets at Valley Village Retirement Community, Winchester at Dolores, Santa Clara, Mondays 2 PM. Marjorie Johnson, [marjoriej358@comcast.net](mailto:marjoriej358@comcast.net)

**Morgan Hill Writers Group:** Meets at the Starbucks on Walnut Grove in Morgan Hill, Tuesdays at 6 pm. Critique group for long and short fiction (any genre). Contact: Vanessa MacLaren-Wray -- [vmacwray@gmail.com](mailto:vmacwray@gmail.com).

**Your Critique Group:** Send info to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

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

### 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](mailto: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.

### SBW Board Meetings

Board meets on Wednesdays, 7 pm, in the week preceding the dinner meeting. Contact Edie Matthews for more information on how you can attend at [pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com).

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.poetrycentersanjose.org)

### SBW Recommends ...

If you know of a regularly occurring event for writers, send an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com).





## California Writers Club

South Bay Branch

P.O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

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

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

### South Bay Writers Regular Dinner Meeting

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Monday, March 9, 2020

China Stix

2110 El Camino Real, Santa Clara

## Writing a Mystery Or a Stand-Alone

with

**Cara Black**

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 Summer BBQ, December, and workshop months



### China Stix

Located at 2110 El Camino Real in Santa Clara.

Accessible from Hwy 82 and San Tomas Expressway.