



WRITERSTALK

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July 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

JULY SPEAKER: ZOOM MEETING WITH COURTNEY MAUM

Before and After the Book Deal

by Jamal Khan

You are nearing the completion of your manuscript. The countless hours you've poured into your passion project are finally bearing fruit. You feel ready to share your masterpiece with the world. But rather than the beginning of the end, your last writerly touches are the end of the beginning. You must now land a deal, a rigorous endeavor that demands equal dedication. And even after signing on the dotted line, you must promote your work across a dizzying array of venues and platforms. Daunting? Yes. Worth it? Absolutely. In our Zoom meeting on Saturday, July 18th, Courtney Maum will share the secrets that got her past each of these important stages.

Courtney Maum is the author of the novels *Costalegre* (a Goop Book Club pick and one of *Glamour* magazine's top books of the decade), *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You* and *Touch* (a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and NPR Best-Book-of-the-Year selection), and the handbook *Before and After the Book Deal: A writer's guide to finishing, publishing, promoting, and surviving your first book*.

Courtney's writing has been widely published in such outlets as the *New York Times* and *O, the Oprah Magazine*, and her short story, *This is Not Your Fault*, was turned into an Audible Original at Amazon. On the screenwriting front, she won the Audi Talent Award at The Cannes Film Festival in 2011 and the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2015. Courtney is the founder of the collaborative retreat program, The Cabins, and she also has a writing-advice newsletter, "Get Published, Stay Published," that you can sign up for at CourtneyMaum.com.



BEFORE AND AFTER THE BOOK DEAL

A Writer's Guide to

- ✓ FINISHING
- ✓ PUBLISHING
- ✓ PROMOTING
- ✓ and SURVIVING

Your First Book
COURTNEY MAUM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Zoom Zoom Zoom!

by Edie Matthews

Like Marco Polo, we are in uncharted territory. But thanks to technology, South Bay Writers will hold its first Zoom meeting and feature Courtney Maum, author of *Before and After the Book Deal*. It will be on Saturday, July 18th, at 10 a.m.

Though this meeting will take place on the weekend (like our workshops), the earlier time slot gives us an opportunity to book speakers who live on the East Coast. So we are reaching out. Hopefully, potential speakers are eager to interact with others after being cooped up for the past several months.

The Zoom account will accommodate 100 viewers. Since we have been getting around 50+ attendees to our meetings at China Stix, I believe we can welcome non-members. However, if we exceed 100, members will receive priority. Consequently, we encourage members to renew their membership and non-members to join South Bay Writers. Also, remember, my friends, you cannot be published in *WritersTalk* or enter any upcoming contests unless you are a paid member.

Now, booking speakers on Zoom opens the entire country to us. New York agents who may need a break from reading submissions will be eager to speak directly to writers and share their wisdom.

Authors who need a break from slaving over their current bestseller will have a chance to chat with their fans—or in some cases generate new fans.

Hmm, I think I'll reach for the stars and contact Stephen King, James Lee Burke, Michael Connelly, Margaret Atwood, Janet Fitch. Any other suggestions?

When:
Saturday, July 18th at 10 a.m.
Where:
Zoom online platform
(details forthcoming)

Continued on Page 2

Between the Lines

Edie Matthews



Zoom Zoom Zoom (cont.)

I've seen Stephen King appear on a number of TV shows the past couple of months. He's very chatty. Obviously, he's eager for social interaction. Did I ever mention I visited his house in Bangor, Maine?

We were returning from a vacation in Canada and driving through Maine. We stopped for gas before continuing onto the airport in New Hampshire. It occurred to me that Bangor was where King lived.

I considered: What do I have to lose? The attendant looked like a throwback to the Fifties. He wore a cap and uniform. I wondered if he knew who King was, and if he did, would he give us directions? When I approached him, I saw he had a pierced eyebrow and pierced lip—very Stephen Kingesque.

"Yeah, he lives right up the street." He pointed. "You can't miss his house. It's got a wrought iron gate shaped like a spiderweb and iron bats perched on either side."

The Victorian house was set back on the property. It had a corner tower and was painted barn red. Someone had just finished taking photos. We parked and snapped a few pictures, gazing over the fence, hoping to catch a glimpse of the occupant. No luck. We had no sooner finished and another carload of fans arrived with their cameras.

Let's go Hollywood too. I am going to contact famed showbiz agency William Morris. Hmm, checking the website, I see the literary division is called William Morris Endeavor. The head of the division is Jennifer Rudolph Walsh. She's represented a slew of bestselling authors like Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Alice Munro, *The View from Castle Rock*; Jeannette Walls, *The Glass Castle*. Walsh lives in Manhattan. No problem—we can interact with her on Zoom—and if she's unavailable, we would settle for one of the other agents.

Maybe something good will come from this pandemic.

Wow, the sky's the limit!

— WT

WRITER QUOTES TO CHEW ON:

"As a writer, I'm more interested in what people tell themselves happened rather than what actually happened."

— Kazuo Ishiguro

"We need myths to get by. We need story; otherwise the tremendous randomness of experience overwhelms us. Story is what penetrates."

— Robert Coover

"In the end, fiction is the craft of telling truth through lies."

— Lauren Groff

California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
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, 2021. 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.

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

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Words in Pictures

If you were hoping for a long editorial from me this issue, alas: wait for next month! For July I'm showcasing the artistic work of long-time SBW member Madeline (Maddy) McEwen, whose doodles always brighten our issues. We cannot have our potluck BBQ this month, but we can (albeit wistfully) chuckle at some potluck humor.

Check page 14 for another comic series, introduced by SBW member Ken Roberge!

I encourage all of you to come to our digital meeting via Zoom on July 18! Club elections will still happen this year, also following in a digital format; big thanks to Dave LaRoche for keeping us on track per our by-laws and rules. It will be a delight to see your faces again, in person or on a screen! — WT



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View from the Board

by Marjorie Johnson



Marjorie Johnson
SBW Secretary

Greetings, my friends, and write on!

We haven't seen each other since February, but guess what? Your \$45 renewals are due, even if you joined this spring, except for new member Wen Chang, who paid \$65 in April, and dual members, who owe \$25.

In these Covid times, the best way to pay is by PayPal on our website southbaywriters.com. Or, you can send a check for \$45 to

CWC South Bay Writers

P. O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055.

Obviously, you cannot pay by cash at a meeting.

A **caveat**: If your name is not on the credit card or the check used to pay your dues, we don't know who you are. So, if you use a company credit card or check, please give us your name.

The online payment option is much preferred because then your dues go directly to our treasurer, Trenton Myers. I am the P. O. Box gofer gal; if you send a check to our P. O. box, I will see that Trenton gets it, but the process will be slow because, with SIP, I never see him.

I hope you are taking advantage of this time for writing. Our president, Edie Matthews, has a line on a speaker from New York; we may be able to see him/her on Zoom. Other than that, with no board meetings, I haven't much to report to you. — WT

FICTION

The Ghost of Old Aggie Washburn

By Mary Miller Chiao

"Jimmy Wilson here, with the Las Pulgas News. We got a tip about some ghosts in the cemetery. I'm phoning to find out what's going on."

"Ghosts? Where are you getting your information?" replied the funeral director of the Eternally Here Cemetery.

"It's all over Facebook. Some boys from the high school freaked out last night. Didn't go to school today. They claimed something tried to attack them."

Jimmy heard the man sigh. "Some of our neighborhood kids have overactive imaginations. They jump the fence after dark and sneak around scaring themselves. I've a good mind to put barbed wire on top."

"But is there any truth to the gossip? This isn't the first time we've heard these stories."

"This is an historical cemetery. People have been buried here since the early 1800s. There've been rumors of strange goings-on for decades. I, myself, have heard moaning, but, of course, that could have been a grieving relative. Why don't you come by and I'll give you a tour. Business is slow right now, and an article in your newspaper might bring us more clients."

"I can come right over with our photographer."

Jimmy drove the newspaper's Chevy Tahoe down the country road to the cemetery. Smiling faces of wrought iron angels stared at him when he passed through the ornate gates. A large banner secured by bungee straps to poles flapped in the wind.

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Elections by Electronics

We, South Bay Writers, function according to bylaws, which direct an election of board officers at our June meeting. However, our bylaws did not anticipate the Covid-19 – nor did we.

As a stand-in-place-of, the following will be done, satisfying both the need and the unusual environment.

As of this date through the end of June, nominations will be open for the offices of:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Member at Large (2)

You may nominate yourself or any other member assuming they are agreeable.

Send your nomination to me, Dave LaRoche, dalaroche@comcast.net.

A simple "I (*your name*) nominate (*name of nominee*) for the office of (*name office*) to serve through the fiscal year 2020-21."

Shortly after the end of June, you will receive a ballot with instructions on how to vote.

As a matter of interest, those currently occupying the offices are willing to stand for another year and their names will appear on the ballot.

Thanks,
Dave LaRoche
Nor Cal Representative



DUES ARE DUE!

It's that time again. Hello! Your membership in South Bay Writers expired on June 30, 2020. That's the day that the fiscal year ends for the California Writers Club. Don't let that be the day that your membership in SBW ends, forever, or lapses, causing an extra \$20 reinstatement.

Dues are \$45 per year (except for dual members, who owe \$25.)

Painless payments can be made at our website, southbaywriters.com.

Or, if you prefer, write a check for \$45 and mail it to:

CWC South Bay Writers

P O Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055.

Derek Hyde's Spooky Scavenger Hunt

by E. Michael Lunsford

Following his debut novel, *Derek Hyde Knows Spooky When He Sees It*, E. Michael Lunsford is happy to announce Book 2 in the Derek Hyde series of quirky paranormal novels for Middle Grade, to be published by INTense Publications in July. To find this book on Amazon, just search for Derek Hyde. —WT



Member News

by Marjorie Johnson

Penny Cole has had two pieces accepted by the CWC Tri-Valley Writers for their anthology: a short memoir, "Christmas Gifts Galore," and a poem, "I Am Old."

A note from Maddy McEwen: I just wanted to let you know that my story "Benevolent Dictatorship" is due to be published in the *Low Down Dirty Anthology Volume II* on the Fourth of July (because the stories are about voting). And yes, of course it is both funny (British humor) and light-hearted.

From Linda Borloff:

"My thriller novella, *The Remnant*, just went up on Amazon and other sites, with warm thanks to my publisher Jennifer Connor at BTGN for believing in my writing!

My latest short stories are at Scarlet Leaf Review: "The Big Bash"

<https://www.scarletleafreview.com/short-stories21/category/linda-boroff>

Parhelion: "Jack's Head"

<https://parhelionliterary.com/linda-boroff/>

and my memoir, "A Life In Five Buicks," is upcoming this month in Biostories:

<https://biostories.com/>

My story, "Dead Weight" will appear in the 10th annual issue of Adanna Literary Journal later this year.

<http://adannajournal.blogspot.com/>

A collection of linked stories, *All I Can Take of You*, will come out in July with Adelaide Press!

Let's hear from you. Your good news cheers everyone. Send your writing news/triumphs to me at marjohnson@mac.com. —WT

FICTION

One Last Thing

by Marty Sorensen

"One last thing," said Neil. "You really want to do this, don't you Estelle? I really like you, because not many women want to fly. It doesn't hurt that you're good looking. I just want to make sure you know what you're doing. OK?"

"Sure," she said. "I don't mind you asking. Let's go." She touched top of his arm lightly. She suddenly began to feel a tightening in her abdomen, hesitated, and looked up at him. Neil put his hand on the small of her back and pushed her gently towards the airplane. They walked around the wing, and moved back into the fuselage. There was a high stepping ladder. He motioned to her to step up on the ladder towards the wing. As she stepped on the wing, he was right behind her, showing her how to climb in the cockpit.

When they were both settled in, he reached over. She thought for one moment he was going to touch her breast, but he learned down into the corner and pulled up a leather strap over her lap and buckled her in. He smiled. He reached down in front of him and pulled out a set of goggles, and gave them to her.

"Don't expect this to do much for your hair."

She laughed nervously and pulled the goggles around her head and tightened the strap. He then pulled his own goggles on, and suddenly gave a long high whistle. His two friends came

running over from the other hangar. One pulled the stepladder away from the plane, the other got into a small truck, drove it over to a position in front of the plane. When it was hitched up, he drove the truck slowly out of the hangar and on to the concrete in front of the runway. He got out of the truck, unhitched the plane, and drove away. Neil waved, patted Estelle on the shoulder, and started the engine.

With a roar, the propeller started turning, and a blast of air almost took her breath away. The plane was shaking and her feet felt like they were resting on a jackhammer. Her hair was lifted straight back behind her, and the wind whirled strongly around her neck. She managed a brave smile as they taxied down to the end of the runway. He did not look at her, and he did not talk. There was only the deep roar and the wind.

Neil taxied the plane in a short circle and waited at the end of the runway. He looked all around him. Estelle watched the cars moving slowly by on the road, and a few people parked at the edge of the runway in hopes of catching a glimpse of airplanes taking off and landing. She watched his hand push forward with the throttle, felt the whole plane shudder and wave from side to side as the noise, impossibly, became even louder.

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South Bay Writers Club July BBQs

2015

2014



2013



2012

2011



South Bay Writers Club July BBQs

2019 (August)



2018



2017



2016



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.

LOCAL AND OTHER

CWC BRANCH RESOURCES

- The Literary Nest - a local online publication.
Current theme for June 2020 - Sonnet (Shakespearean or Italian)
Deadline June 15, 2020
See details at:
<https://theliterarynest.com/>
Also visual art in high res .jpeg, .gif, or .png format to theliterarynest@gmail.com.
- 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.

- AWP Association of Writers and Writing Programs
<https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers/>
- West Trade Review Reading period Apr. 1st -Jan. 2nd Original and unpublished works of fiction, poetry, and photography by both new and established writers/artists. Our Kelly Harrison is an associate editor and she say right now is a time to get a good read.
<http://www.westtradereview.com/submissionguidelines.html>

RESOURCES FOR POETS:

- Annual Rattle Poetry Prize.
Deadline July 15.
\$15,000 for a single poem to be published in the winter issue. Ten finalists will also receive \$500 each and publication, and be eligible for the \$5,000 Readers' Choice Award, to be selected by subscriber and entrant vote.
Entry fee is a one-year subscription to Rattle (or a one-year extension for subscribers) at the regular \$25 rate.
<https://www.rattle.com/prize/about/>
- Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Prize
2020 - Three prizes: \$1,000, \$500, \$250. Deadline 15 August 2020.
Five finalists published in 2020 Red Wheelbarrow.
Submit up to 3 unpublished poems in a single manuscript.
<https://redwheelbarrow.submit-table.com/submit/164706/red-wheelbarrow-poetry-prize-2020>
- 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/>
- Winning Writers - Tom Howard/John H. Reid Poetry Contest - Submission period: April 15-September

30 Total prizes: \$8,000 Accepts published and unpublished work.

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

- Poets & Writers
Lists poetry and other contests.
https://www.pw.org/blogs/prize_reporter
Also lists over twelve hundred literary magazines. https://www.pw.org/literary_magazines
- 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/>
- Authors Publish - Poetry Manuscript Publishers No Reading Fees
<https://www.authorspublish.com>
- Trish Hopkinson blog
<https://trishhopkinson.com/where-to-submit-reprints/>
- Ace World Pub Submission Lists
<https://aceworldpub.com.ng/category/latest-opportunities/>
- Poetry Foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org>
- Electric Lit: - Free or Cheap Resources for Emerging Writers
<https://electricliterature.com/free-or-cheap-resources-for-emerging-writers/>

OTHER CONTESTS AND SUBMISSIONS

- 24-Hour Short Story Contest: start time is Saturday, July 11th, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. CST. You have 24 hours to write and submit an original short story based on a prompt.
<https://24hourshortstorycontest.com/>
- 2020 Frontier Industry Prize! \$3000 prize. 2nd/3rd place \$200 / \$100. Publication on Frontier Poetry. Fee \$20. Deadline July 19th.
<https://www.frontierpoetry.com/poetry-awards/>

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One Last Thing

Continued from Page 5

The plane moved slowly ahead, then picked up speed, and bounced faster and faster down the runway, and they were moving faster than the cars on the street, and seemed to become independent of the ground, then as Neil pulled back, the nose lifted up. Estelle screamed as she felt the first draft of air under the plane and it moved slightly to the side. She looked straight ahead and saw nothing but blue sky, which frightened her even more, then turned to look down, just as another draft of air lowered the plane for a second, then picked it up and moved it higher.

She realized for the first time that they were moving forward in the air, and the cars on the ground got smaller and looked like they moved slowly, and she saw the end of the land and Puget Sound out to her right. The plane turned on its side and moved to the right and she thought she was going to fall out. She grabbed the edge of the cockpit with both hands.

Neil reached over and touched her thigh. She looked over and saw him smiling as he gave her the thumbs up. She turned and looked out again and felt her heart up in her throat as she saw that she was looking straight down over ships being loaded with cargo on the waterfront. The plane righted itself, and she began to see the magnificent beauty of Lake Washington off in the distance, and Mount Rainier rising in majestic whiteness in the distance, as if on a canvas with a blue sky background.

Another small downdraft brought her back to her position in the cockpit and awareness that her stomach had begun to tighten and her throat was dry. The noise was unrelenting. The plane had leveled out, and they flew East towards the mountain. She looked down again and saw what seemed like endless forests amid the lakes. She looked all around and was surprised how much of Seattle was made up of green trees interspersed with roadways and buildings.

All of a sudden, Neil turned the plane completely upside down. Estelle screamed, but couldn't even hear herself scream. What was above them had changed from blue to dark green, the sky was now below them, and she thought they would sink right into it as they moved faster, and another draft of air

lifted them up, when the plane turned right side up quickly without warning. She felt relief, but a growing anger and fear of having no control.

She felt completely foolish at being in this situation. She did not feel like Amelia Earhart or Beryl Markham, and knew she would never want to be like them. No beautiful view was worth this much noise and isolation and sickness. She looked over at Neil and wanted to slap his face. He pointed downwards and ahead as he pushed nose of the plane at a gentle slope. She saw the runway ahead of them and for a last couple of minutes forgot her fear and anger as she became aware of the slow and easy descent.

She jumped up a bit in her seat when the tires touched down and she heard the screech, and the noise of the plane let up a little. They taxied back over to the hangar, Neil turned the plane around to position it for flight again, and he turned off the engine.

The men came running over, one with a stepladder, who jumped up on the wing and helped Estelle out of the cockpit and on to the ground. She stood there a moment, dazed, her ears still buzzing with the roar of the engine, her legs shaking, a pain in her abdomen. She took off her goggles and ran her fingers through her hair, and felt Neil's arms around her. She pushed him back, threw the goggles and gloves at him, imagined for an instant that she might kick him in the groin, then walked out of the hangar and in between the two buildings to the other side where her car was parked. She got in, put her hands on the steering wheel, and laid her head against it. She was startled to feel a strong hand on her shoulder.

She looked up, and just as she moved her face upwards, Neil leaned down, touched his lips to hers, put his hand on the back of her head and held her tightly.

"Amelia Earhart had to fly upside down sometimes, sweetheart," he said.

She jerked her head away, turned the key in the ignition, gunned the motor, and started off down towards the street. —WT

MEMOIR

First Memories

by DeWayne Mason

My earliest memory, though hazy, is of idling away idling away on a porch and peering across the street at dilapidated gray buildings, in what I later learned was "downtown" Weir, Kansas. Another, more lucid, is of playing in the dusty yard of our Des Moines, Iowa, farmhouse; seeing my dark-haired stepmother, Dorothy Jean, storm out the backdoor; and watching her chase a pig that had escaped its pen. What's intriguing, however, is that none of my early memories include my dad, Dale.

At age four, while living with my growing family in Independence, Missouri, I remember tugging on Mom's skirt as she washed dishes and her saying, "Go get your crayons, DeWayne, and draw Mom a pretty picture. You're so good at art. I bet you're gonna be a great artist" (or do I recall her telling me that story). Either way, she made similar comments when I was five, while I played catch with Dad: "You're good at catching and throwing," and "When you grow up, you'll probably be a major leaguer."

In fifth grade, she coaxed me to craft stories and read them to her and my siblings. Once, after I wrote a long baseball story about a big-league game, she said, "Go get some cardboard and brass brads and make it into a book." After covering the cardboard with red construction paper, I used magic markers to add a picture and title to the front. I kept that story for years.

Mom struggled to divvy up time between Dad, chores, and her children, especially after having a fifth child—a sixth counting me, her stepchild from Dad's previous marriage. But she excelled at nurturing my rambunctious nature—a trait candidly noted on my first kindergarten report card. Mom was my champion. Her messages, unlike many of Dad's, inspired me to pursue my dreams.

As I look back, I feel fortunate to have had so many great supporters—an unlikely friend, especially, and several teachers, coaches, and others who communicated high expectations of me. There are times, however, when I wonder if more nuanced, discerning, and realistic messages would have better prepared me for life's challenges. —WT

The Ghost of Old Aggie Washburn

Continued from Page 4

It proclaimed the two hundredth year of the Eternally Here family and pictured California pioneers standing beside their Conestoga wagon.

Jimmy hoped this story would be so big readership in the Las Pulgas News would triple, and he could ask for a raise. Maybe the company could afford a new SUV. The rusty and dented twenty-year-old Chevy had over two hundred thousand miles.

Jimmy had graduated from San Jose State with a journalism degree the previous June, and he considered himself lucky to get this job. It helped that his Uncle Joe owned the biggest solar panel company in California and advertised daily in the Las Pulgas News.

Uncle Joe's addiction to Facebook had paid off. He'd called Jimmy's mother this morning to tell her about the cemetery news. "Tell Jimmy," he said, and she'd immediately relayed the information to her son.

Jimmy knew it wouldn't be long before the editor realized his true worth and promoted him to the top reporter position. He glanced in the mirror. In spite of a pimple forming on his chin, he looked hot with his new buzz cut.

Sitting beside him on the passenger seat of the Tahoe was Perky Mildoo, the first female photographer for the paper. They were the same age, but she had been working at the Las Pulgas News for five years. None of the other reporters liked her because she bossed them around, but they couldn't get rid of her because of the union. Built like a Humvee, Perky could easily heave heavy camera equipment into the back of the Chevy. Jimmy was sure she could pick him up and throw him in too if she got mad enough. So far, she hadn't tried to bully him, but he needed to be careful that she didn't. He clenched his jaw. This was his story, and he would not let her take control. He parked across from the funeral home and got out.

"Wait here in the truck, Perky. I'm going inside."

"But I could get some pictures."

"Let me talk to the funeral director first." He closed the door and rushed into the building.

Perky didn't want to wait in the Chevy. She got out and leaned against the front hood and thought about her future. She wanted a boyfriend, then marriage and a family. Jimmy wasn't too bad. Actually,

he was nice and kind of cute.

Perky had four cups of coffee that morning, and her bladder felt full. She didn't care what Jimmy said. If she didn't find a bathroom soon, she'd have to squat behind the bushes. Besides, Jimmy would be in some guy's office anyway and wouldn't notice her in the building.

She walked to the front entrance and opened the door to the lobby. The pungent smell of lilies turned her stomach. The walls were painted antique white, and plush red carpeting covered the floor. Black-framed photographs of somber men in dark suits hung on one wall. Judging from the sepia tint and the clothing the subjects wore, some pictures were quite old.

The dark-haired receptionist seemed to type in sync with the background canned organ music, Rock of Ages. She stopped and looked up. Bright red lips that matched the carpeting contrasted with black clothes.

Perky stared. Her eyes widened and steam seemed to come from her nose. She balled her fists and gritted her teeth. It was Candy Williams, the high school prom queen. Candy had been voted the most popular girl in the class and every boy was in love with her.

"Oh my goodness, it's you, Perky. I haven't seen you since we graduated from high school. I guess we don't hang out with the same people. What are you doing now? Oh, you've got a camera. You must be with that cute reporter who's in with my boss."

Candy had been the most popular girl in class. Every boy in school was in love with her.

"So, Candy," Perky forced herself to say, "you're the receptionist here."

"Yes, Perky. I never thought I would work in a cemetery, but it's easy and everyone likes me. I meet lots of people."

Perky thought yeah, I bet those conversations with the guys down under are thrilling, maybe even chilling!

"I've got to use the bathroom before my boyfriend returns." Perky didn't want Candy to get any ideas about Jimmy.

"Oh, is that your boyfriend? He's so cute, Perky."

Perky hurried down the hall to the bathroom. She looked at herself in the mirror. Her face had become red and blotched. Remembering why she was there, she emptied her bladder and flushed the

toilet. She felt the beginning of an angry headache. Seeking release from its grip, she spun the toilet paper holder, guiding the paper round and round the bowl, then, smiling, tossed the round cardboard roll on top. She flushed the toilet and watched the water start to rise. Her head immediately felt better. Not wanting to be around when the bathroom flooded, she hurried back. Candy waited with that same stupid innocent look she always had in high school. Her crimson lips gushed, "let's get together soon, Perky."

"Sure, let's do that. I'll call you. Sorry I can't visit longer." Perky went outside and leaned against the SUV, taking deep breaths to bring her blood pressure down. Something scratched her arm. Looking down, she saw a rock stuck in a dent. She used her fingernail to scrape it out, and then removed the grit from under her nail with her teeth.

She looked up when Jimmy called her name. He waved at her to follow him and a tall thin man she assumed to be the funeral director. They crossed the grounds and climbed a grassy knoll above a section of aged white tombstones, some fallen over. Dressed in a formal black suit and looking like the men in the pictures on the wall inside the building, the funeral director surveyed the graves below as if about to give a sermon to sinners. He proceeded to lecture Jimmy and Perky on the history of the cemetery. After what seemed like hours, they plodded across the grounds, and he pointed out graves of pioneers, politicians, and Silicon Valley CEOs. Jimmy scribbled down every word while she took pictures. They ended the tour in a grove of old apple trees. The trunks were gnarled and twisted. Their branches seemed to reach out like arms to beckon them in.

"What do you think scared the kids last night?" Jimmy asked the funeral director.

"Young man, teenage boys will use any excuse to get out of school. They're probably the ones who started that ridiculous rumor that ghosts here have a party at night."

Jimmy's eyes widened. "Do they?"

"Of course not!"

Jimmy thought hard. "Is there any particular person buried here who you've heard haunts the place?"

The man in black pointed to a weathered gray stone a few yards away. It leaned precariously toward the ground.

Continued on Page 12

THEY CALL THEMSELVES GARDENERS

They call themselves gardeners
but all they do
is chop and grind
and spit and spew

Their noxious machines
with noise and fumes
go cutting the plants
when they're in full bloom

Nothing known but moving parts
no reverence for life
just whirring wheels
overriding peace with strife.

That's not gardening
if you ask me
just need some shears
and two bent knees.

- Carolyn Donnell

A cat is not a dog.
It does not sit
except when it wants
and where.
No fetch unless
it spies a mouse,
an offering unasked
in your lap.
Rollover?
Not on your life
unless to
stick its leg
up in the air
just when you snap
the camera lens.
But then again
no walking
in the snow and rain.
A cat just goes
but only if the box is clean.
A cat is a self-cleaning machine.
No, a dog is definitely not a cat.
Some say thank goodness for that.
Agree or not.
Either way
what you do
it's up to you.

- Carolyn Donnell

Twenty-six years onward, I finally determine

That my father would be proud of me if
he could watch me now

Leading the writing club,
Preparing to publish a novel,
Poems and stories available to the online
world.

(I would have to explain, of course, what
"online" meant!)

When my father died, in 1991,
We didn't even have *email*, really.
He and I didn't!).

We had our differences, he and I.
He suspected I might be a Communist.
I suspected he might be a Fascist.
(He spoke well of Francisco Franco
And how he'd kept the Communists out
of Spain).

I'm sure he approved of Pinochet as
well—

He voted for Nixon and Reagan).

But he'd read Tolstoy and Emerson,
Hawthorne;

Taught me to navigate the stars on a
winter's night;

Taught me to love Tchaikovsky and
South Pacific;

And got me to Japan and Germany
While he served the Red Cross and the
U.S. military.

I owe him a lot; and despite our differences

And despite his issues and questionable
behavior,

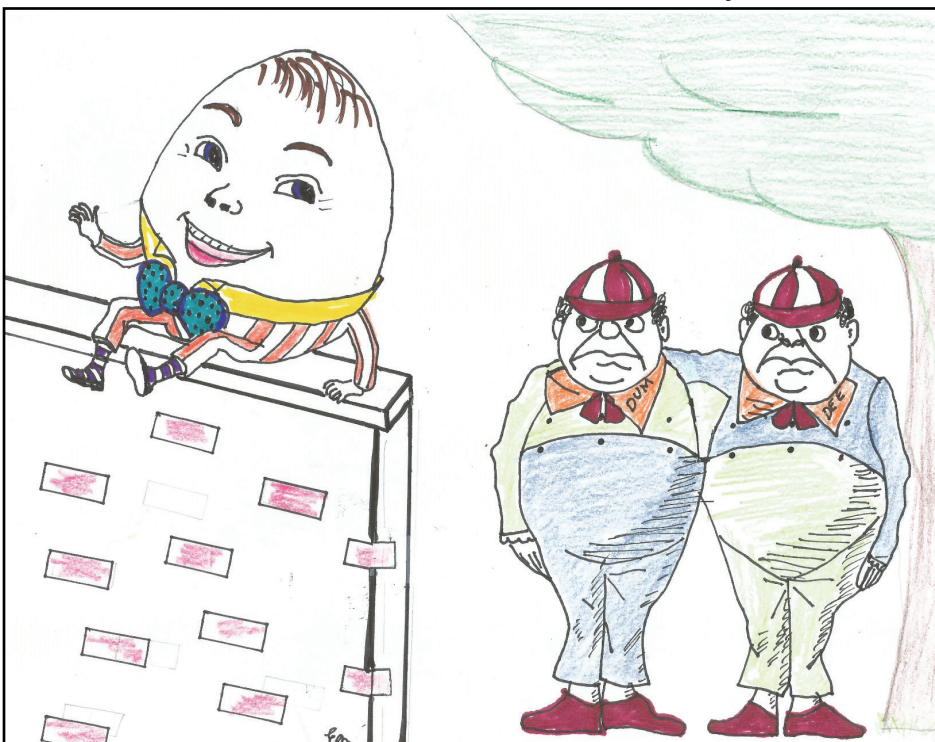
I think we face one another now across
the universe and smile.

If only I'd known him better when he
was still *here*!

- William Baldwin

Off the Shelf

by Edie Matthews



"Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee! Who did your mother name you after?"

"Dad."

Contests and Markets

Continued from Page 8

- **Writer's Digest Personal Essay Awards.**
Their newest contest. Deadline 9/15/20.

Winners of the competition will in May/June 2021 issue. \$2,500, get published in Writer's Digest magazine, and a paid trip to Writer's Digest Conference!

<https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/personal-essay-awards>

- **The Writer Magazine** - They list contests, articles, resources and you can subscribe to their newsletter.

<https://www.writermag.com/contests/>

- **The Write Life: 31 Free Writing Contests: Legitimate competitions with Cash Prizes.**

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

- **Sequestum 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.sequestum.org/submissions>

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

<https://www.bitteroleander.com>

- **Association of Writers and Writing Programs**

<https://www.awpwriter.org/contests/overview>

- **Electric Lit: Free or Cheap Resources for Emerging Writers**

<https://electricliterature.com/free-or-cheap-resources-for-emerging-writers/>

challenge)

- **California Poets**
- **How Writers Write Poetry Community Group**
- **No Fee Calls for Poems**

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Poets & Writers ***

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

- **Mystery Writers of America NorCal Chapter ***

<https://mwanorcal.org/>

- **Women's National Book Association: San Francisco Chapter ***

<https://wnba-sfchapter.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/>

- **New Pages**

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

- **ProWritingAid Writer's Community Facebook group**

- **Writers Post No Fee Call for Submissions Facebook group**

- **No Fee Calls for Poems Facebook group**

- **The Do's and Don'ts of Dialogue 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

- **Authors Publish article**

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

(* = On both the Internet and Facebook.).

— WT

The Ghost of Old Aggie Washburn

Continued from Page 10

"Agatha Washburn lies buried there." Jimmy noted the director's gaunt face and deep-set eyes. "She was known as Old Aggie. You're standing on her land."

Jimmy looked down at his feet.

"She died over one hundred years ago. Nothing remains from her time, except some rusty old wagon wheels that we have in our shed and the few fruit trees you see here. She had an apple orchard, planted the Hauer, a large juicy and sweet variety. People rode their buggies from miles around to buy her pippins."

"Does she walk the grounds at night? Do people hear her moaning?"

"We've heard reports from neighbors in the two-story houses behind our fence. By the light of the golden harvest moon in October, when the pippins ripen, they've looked down from their windows and seen an old woman with a shotgun walking the grounds."

"Wow, we're in October now! That's scary!"

A visitor came to our office a few days ago to report that, as she tended her father's grave, an elderly woman in an old fashioned blue flowered gingham dress wearing a bonnet on her head pointed a rifle at her and told her to get off the property. Naturally, we immediately went out to look, but could see no one."

The funeral director paused for effect, then said, "Excuse me, I have a service to perform."

After he left, Jimmy sat on a bench nearby and reviewed his notes while Perky took

Continued on Page 13

FACEBOOK POETRY GROUPS

- **Poetry Center San José**
- **Willow Glen Poetry Project**
- **Cupertino Poet Laureate**
- **Santa Clara County Poet Laureate**
- **Los Gatos Poet Laureate**
- **National Poetry Month (poem a day**

The Ghost of Old Aggie Washburn

Continued from Page 12

pictures of Old Aggie's grave. When finished, they returned to the truck and were about to drive off when Perky said she had to use the facilities. She rushed inside the building, hoping the overflowing toilet hadn't yet seeped out into the hall and been noticed. Candy sat at her desk typing away to Nearer My God to Thee. Perky had a momentary vision of Leonardo DiCaprio going down with the Titanic. She pushed it aside. "Candy, let me take your picture. Maybe I can get it in the article Jimmy is writing."

"Oh, Perky, can you really? I would be ever so grateful."

Late that afternoon, Jimmy looked up from his desk at the newspaper and stared out in space, pleased with the story he had written. It had just the right amount of fact and speculation. He glanced at his watch. He had told his mother he would be home early, and she was making his favorite dinner. He'd better hurry. But he hadn't chosen the pictures for the article. At that moment, Perky walked by his desk. "Perky, I've got to run. Here's my story. Can you add the pictures of the front entrance to the cemetery, the pretty grounds, and the grave of Old Aggie? The editor left sick twenty minutes ago, but he has a place in tomorrow's paper. Just hand everything to the print crew."

"Sure thing, Jimmy. I'll do it right now."

The next morning, Jimmy arrived at work positive the editor would be happy with the story. He knocked on his door.

"Come in."

Jimmy smiled widely and entered. "How did you like my cemetery story?"

The editor jumped up from his chair, his apple doll face bright red and contorted. "What the hell possessed you to put in that picture of the receptionist and caption it The Old Ghost? The funeral director called. He's very upset." The editor stared at Jimmy like he was a piece of maggot-covered meat. "Why would you put her picture in this article anyway?"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Well, look at it!"

Jimmy stared at the photograph. The receptionist, her eyes darkened, appeared to float over Agatha Washburn's grave. "There must be some mistake," he gaped.

"You're in big trouble! In fact, you're on probation. Get your butt over to the cemetery right now and do damage con-

trol. Apologize to the director and pick up some roses for the receptionist. And don't come back until you've handled the situation. If I get another call from the cemetery, you're fired."

Jimmy sputtered, "But, I..."

"And you'd better be more careful next time, if there is a next time. Get out."

Jimmy walked out of the office, his chest sunken in and his head hung low. How did that picture get in his article? He looked around for Perky and found her in the office kitchen, a plate of donuts in front of her.

"Perky what happened? The editor just yelled at me. Where did that picture of the receptionist come from?"

"I gave the print crew the right pictures, Jimmy. I don't know what happened."

"The editor went ballistic and wants me to go to the cemetery right away and tell them it was a terrible mistake."

"Gee, Jimmy, I'm sorry the guys screwed up."

"That print crew has gotten me in big trouble. What a mess! Now I've got to face the funeral director and give flowers to that receptionist. What was her name, Candy something?"

Perky stood and put her hands on her hips. "What do you mean give flowers to Candy?" She hesitated. "I'd better come too, Jimmy."

Jimmy's head started to ache. He hoped he wasn't getting a migraine. "Maybe you can help me," he said. "You can drive."

After stopping at a florist shop Jimmy's mother recommended, they returned to the cemetery. The lobby was empty. A piped in version of Take My Life and Let it be echoed through the building. They heard the funeral director's deep voice on the phone in his office. While they waited for him to finish his call, Jimmy held the bouquet and read the bulletin board.

"Hey look at this, Perky. There's a funeral this afternoon for some doctor who performed over twenty thousand colonoscopies. Maybe there's a story here."

"Can't we just leave the flowers on her desk, Jimmy? This place gives me the creeps, and it smells bad."

Jimmy's head throbbed, and Perky wasn't helping. "No, I've got to talk with the funeral director and give the receptionist these flowers. Go wait outside, Perky."

"I want to be here when you talk to

Candy."

"Look, I'm just going to hand this bouquet to her. You don't need to be here for that. Go on outside."

Perky left the building and had an instant appreciation for the fresh air. She walked the short distance to the apple orchard and sat down on the bench beside Old Aggie's grave. Laughing, she closed her eyes and thought about the newspaper picture she had photoshopped. Candy Williams, the Las Pulgas High School prom queen, looked like a haunted raccoon hovering over the grave.

"Ow!" Something hit her head. She opened her eyes. An apple rolled to a stop on the ground. In front of her stood a woman wearing a flowered blue gingham dress, with a bonnet pulled down over her head. The hairs on Perky's neck stood straight up, and she started to shiver.

"I know what you did," said the apparition.

The figure bent over, and Perky saw it reach for a shotgun on the ground.

Perky tore out of the orchard, running at breakneck speed. Footsteps sounded close behind. The faster she ran, the faster the footsteps followed. At last she reached the Chevy. She struggled with the door until it finally opened. She threw herself in and crouched under the dashboard.

"And don't come back," a voice yelled slamming the SUV door shut.

Jimmy hummed as he left the funeral parlor. His headache had disappeared. The director had finally come into the lobby. He told Jimmy that he had been very upset at first, but then the phone started ringing. Callers wanted information about visiting hours, important people buried on the grounds, and whether the cemetery would accept prepayment for services. California's largest ghost tour company wanted to add the cemetery to their route and offered a large monthly fee. They agreed to pay Candy extra to act like Agatha Washburn when the buses drove through.

"I'm glad things worked out," Jimmy said to the director, relieved that the situation had ended well. "Where's Candy? I want to give her these flowers."

"I'll give them to her when she returns," the director responded. "She's out in the apple orchard rehearsing her role." — WT

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: 3:00 third Sundays, 1204 Preservation Park Way, Oakland. 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, 42 Silicon Valley, 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 third Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com

Napa Valley: 7:00 second Wednesdays, Napa Valley Unitarian Church, Napa. napavalley-writers.net

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

Redwood: 2:00 second 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

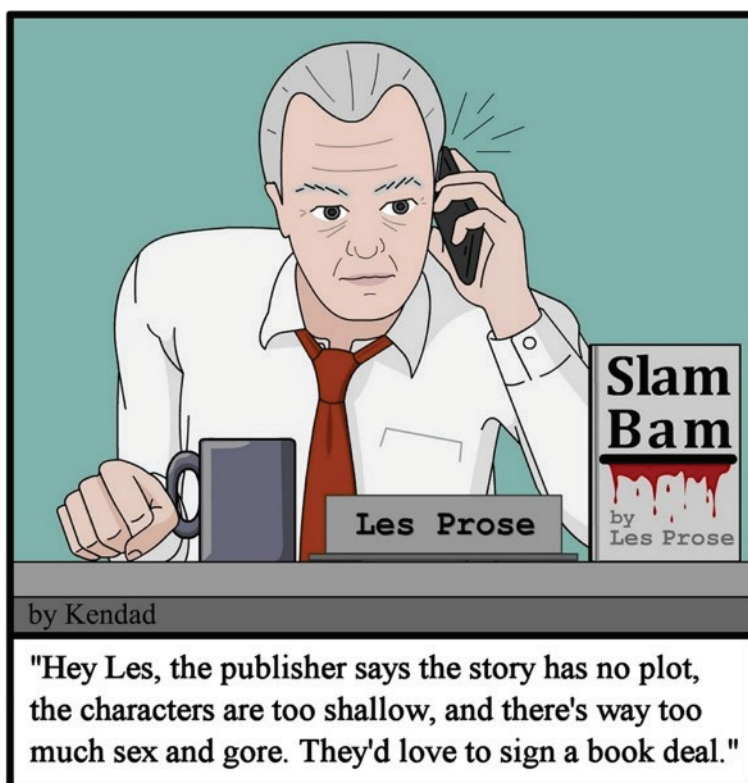
Tri-Valley: 1:30 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.org

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.

Les Prose Comics

by Ken Roberge (Kendad)



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 2020			1	2	3	4
5	6 2p Valley Writers (Zoom) No Dinner Meeting!	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 2p Valley Writers (Zoom)	14	15 DEADLINE: <i>WritersTalk</i> Submission	16	17	18 Zoom Meeting 10 AM
19	20 2p Valley Writers (Zoom)	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 2p Valley Writers (Zoom)	28	29	30	31	

Upcoming Events

DINNER MEETING
July 18 over ZOOM

BOARD MEETING
TBA

Remain at home, keep social distancing,
and STAY HEALTHY, SBW!

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

Valley Writers: Meets at Valley Village Retirement Community, Winchester at Dolores, Santa Clara, Mondays 2 PM. Marjorie Johnson, marjohnson@mac.com

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.

Your Critique Group: Send info to 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

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.

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

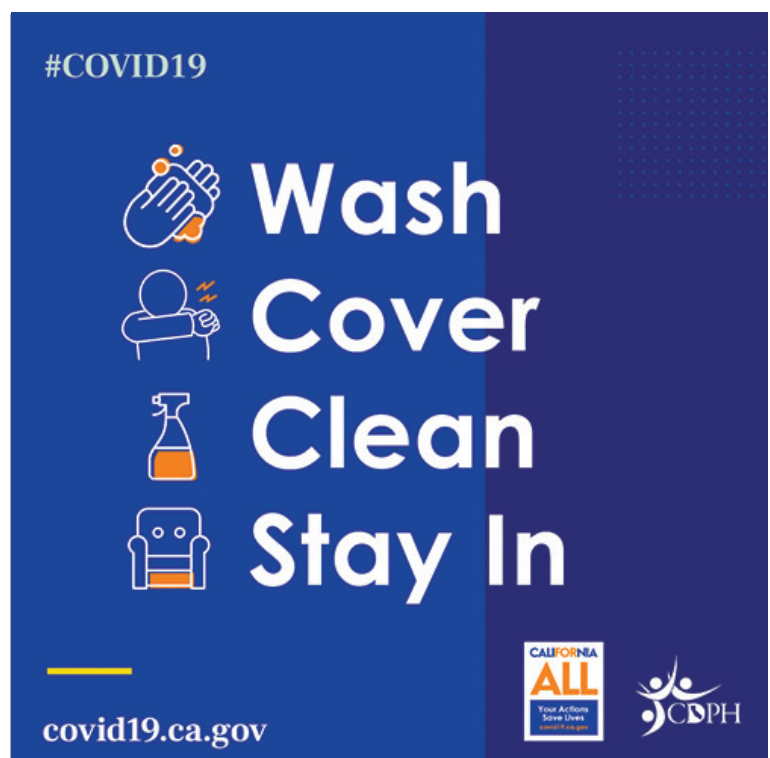
Address Correction Requested

**South Bay Writers
Events and Meetings
ZOOM Meeting: Saturday July 18
10:00 AM
Meeting Details to Follow
(Check Your Email)**

**Before and After
the Book Deal
with
Courtney Maum**

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



Dinner Meetings at China Stix

located at 2110 El Camino Real in Santa Clara

will resume when Shelter in Place is lifted. WRITE ON!