



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 28  
Number 06  
June 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

## Gather Round

by J. K. McDole

Every summer I look forward to the South Bay Writers' annual barbecue and party. The first time I attended, the invitation assigned me the task of bringing a side dish, so I toted along a big red crockery of stuffed squash. I had preened over this dish, sourcing the vegetables and herbs all from my backyard garden, laboring for hours to make sure it looked as appetizing as it smelled. I wanted to make a good impression as both a writer and a friend—someone who, despite the mayhem of scheduling a modern life, could show up to the party with something warm and comfortingly homemade.

It wasn't my first time attending a party thrown by writers. Once, I went to an extremely awkward casual dinner for a creative writing class, hosted at the home of one of my English professors. I was one of the few undergrads: a tender, uncombed twenty-year-old with about as much fashion sense as I had emotional control. My classmate Josh, a law student from rural Alabama, carpooled us there in his Honda Civic. He looked a bit like Harry Potter, and he wrote a lot of uncomfortably intimate poetry about the body of Christ.

"How do writers decorate?" I asked on the drive over, ignoring how Josh never used his turn signals. "Do you think he's got a lot of bookshelves?"

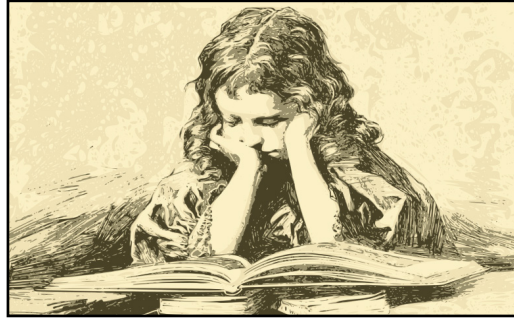
"You're really cute," said Josh, and as he parked by the curb I felt like he was saying *cute* as a euphemistic way of saying *dumb*.

The house was unimpressive, a squattish green two-story mired in a lush, unmowed lawn. We knocked (there was no doorbell). The professor answered and greeted us booming; he was a warm, doughy fellow with thick bifocals and a ragged Southern drawl. "Make sure y'all take off them shoes."

He ushered us sock-footed into a parlor with mustard-yellow carpet. We turned out to be slightly late, as several classmates were already there, idling around the dinner table with wine glasses in hand. None of the chairs were from the same set; our classmates, rather appropriately, looked equally mismatched—nervous, slow to socialize.

"Food's ready," brayed a voice from the kitchen, which belonged to a woman whose small face did not match its volume and brass. "I'm Jeanne," she said, doling out crushing handshakes. "Henry and I aren't married, so *please* don't refer to me as his wife."

We ate stewed beef, mashed potatoes, and garlic fries flanked by grilled asparagus. The dinner was supposed to be potluck, but few students followed through, and the ones who did brought hasty, thoughtless offerings, like they scrounged it together last-minute. Julie, who was majoring in psychology, brought an oversugared chocolate pie. My friend Curtis made some kind of salad consisting primarily of pasta, mayo, and fat green olives. There was a bottle of Jack Daniels from Rob, our grad student and class drunk, who had recently gotten banned from the local college tavern for sleeping with the bartender's wife. I forgot to bring something and felt bad about it. Why hadn't I swung by Walmart and picked up a clamshell of chocolate chip cookies or something?



*I've read this like five times now...*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## A Topsy-Turvy Time

by Edie Matthews

Every 75 to 76 years, Halley's Comet comes sailing by the Earth. It's news. Some people travel to distant parts of the globe to catch a glimpse of the phenomenon. Others don't pay much attention to it. That's fine. It doesn't cause any problems.

Pandemics are also cyclical, occurring about every 100 years or so. The problem is, they're not benign. In 1918 the Spanish Flu infected an estimated one-third of the global population, killing millions.

A number of movies have been made about pandemics. The two most prominent are *Contagion* (2011) and *Outbreak* (1995). I didn't see either—it's not my kind of film. I would have been interested if it had been historical.

The first "modern flu" pandemic was the Russian Flu (also called the Asiatic Flu). It occurred in 1889 and infected 40% of the world. At the time, my grandfather was a child in Poland, and he lost both of his parents to what was then referred to as influenza.

In those days, hundreds of thousands of immigrants were coming to America. Consequently, it only took 70 days for the Russian Flu to spread to the US. An estimated million people died worldwide.

In 1892, three years after the outbreak, Ellis Island was established to deal with the influx of immigrants. (During the industrialization and urbanization, 1880 to 1920, twenty million people emigrated to the US.) Five-hundred employees worked on the island, including doctors and nurses. Inspectors checked papers and scrutinized each person. Anyone who appeared sick or mentally incompetent was deemed unfit, and they were deported back to their home country.

*Continued on Page 3*

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# Between the Lines

Edie Matthews



## A Topsy-Turvy Time (cont.)

We have been fortunate that we haven't been struck for so long. We do have a flu season from May to October, and every year there are victims who die, usually the vulnerable and elderly. But most casualties are avoided with inoculations or overcome with good health care.

Yet, there have been pandemics in other countries. SARS in 2003 shut down China. Africa has had outbreaks of Ebola since 1976. In 2014, during a reoccurring attack of Ebola, President Obama sent the Army Corp of Engineers to West Africa. They built a hospital and provided medical care to contain the virus. Only two cases were diagnosed in the US. Neither person died.

In previous decades before vaccinations, families with small pox or other contagious deceases were quarantined to protect the population. But it was only infected families who were confined.

Now we are living in a surreal time. Everyone is affected. When will it end? It's frustrating that we have no experience for comparison. A good portion of the citizens are asked to shelter-in-place and wear a mask. Many are impatient for the country to get back to "normal." Others are desperate to get back to work. It does no good to protest at the capital with an assault rifle or stomp your foot and yell, "Enough already!"

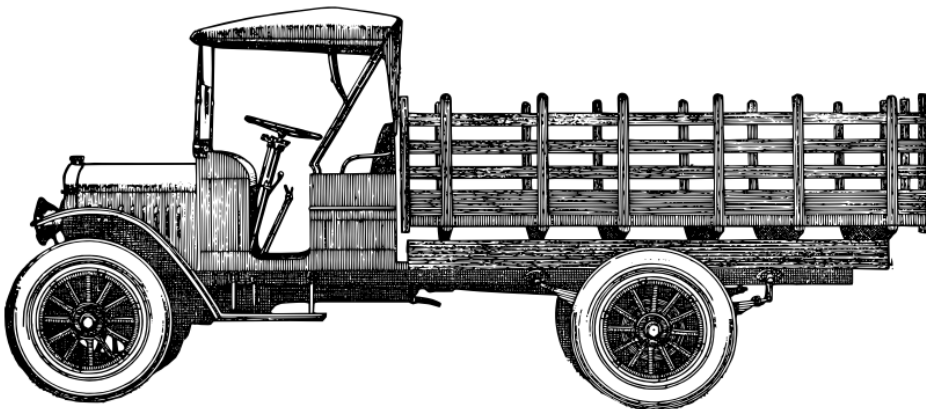
As a writer, I wonder how this experience will affect stories, TV shows, and movies. Will someone take advantage of the situation and attempt to rob Fort Knox? Or will most be content to have the time off to relax, plant a garden, or complete a novel? I pray good judgment prevails.

I have faith that once we overcome COVID-19, the country will swiftly recover. Americans are hardworking and resilient.

In the meantime, my friends, stay positive and takes notes!

Missing everyone and looking forward to scheduling a meeting as soon as it's safe.

— WT



California Writers Club  
South Bay Branch  
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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, 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

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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

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

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## Gather Round (cont.)

After dinner, the conversation proliferated. We argued about football, current events, poets, and politics. I blurted out (a bit drunkenly) that I thought William Carlos Williams was an asshole, a sentiment that no one understood. "He stole plums from someone's icebox!" I explained. "How would you feel if someone robbed stuff from your fridge and, instead of saying 'sorry', they just wrote you a tiny poem?"

"Asparagus makes your pee smell funny," said Clyde, apropos of nothing. He was an English grad student, and made a lot of similar non-sequitur comments in class.

"So we moved here from New Hampshire," Jeanne offered, trying to change the subject, "and it's been a real shock. Never had to be around so many freakin' Republicans in my life."

"Nothing wrong with that," said Josh, who was slurring after three glasses of pinot grigio. His voice was scathingly smug, ripe with red-blooded Alabama. "Don't be narrow-minded. We're lots of good people. Try challenging your personal views."

"Here's my personal view," Rob cut in, sluicing Jack Daniels into a flowery coffee mug. "You're a weirdo."

Josh hiccupped. "Hey, man, she already said she wasn't married, so she's clearly not your type."

"Ha! At least I don't wanna bone Jesus."

Things escalated. Punches were nearly thrown. Jeanne and the professor intervened, and the party ended about as nervously as it had began. I had to catch a ride home with Julie, who said that our class was proof that all men were worthless.

"And Jeanne looked like a high-schooler," she said, also forgetting to use her turn signals. "Makes you wonder how she and Henry met. Like, maybe an affair, or when he was her professor up in New York or wherever. Ugh!" Julie gnawed on her thumb. She always seemed mysterious to me; she was in her thirties, had two teenage sons, and wrote these vague, unrelatable horror stories about neglected children who dug up ancient, cursed jars.

"Are all writers like this?" I asked. "So" — I searched for the right word — "messy?"

"Everyone's like that," she sighed. "You're young, but you'll eventually figure it out. After all," she gave me a knowing look as she pulled into my apartment parking lot, "the messier you are, the more you got to write."

There were no more dinners after that. I fell out of touch with everyone in the class and moved away after graduating. But I still think about that party sometimes, and wonder if there'll never be another one like it. Our SBW gatherings are a lot tamer; for that, I'll admit, I'm sometimes glad. — *WT*

## INSIDE

View from the Board: M. Johnson	4	Off the Shelf: E. Matthews	10
Book Announcement: D. LaRoche	4	I Never Promised...: E. Preston	11
Online Class: V. Johnson	4	Literary Podcasts and Blogs	13
The Professor: M. Dickerson	5	Calendar	15
June Meetings Past: C. Donnell	6-7		
Contests and Markets: C. Donnell	8		
Organizing a...: M. Johnson	9		
Cartoons: M. McEwen	9		
Trapped in the Toilet: B. Auchard	10		



## View from the Board

by Marjorie Johnson



Marjorie Johnson  
SBW Secretary

The South Bay Writers Board, is of course, still sheltering in place. This is not a new idea.

Quarantine began in Venice.

During the 14th century, ships arriving in Venice from plague-infected ports were required to sit at anchor for forty days before landing at the dock. This practice, called quarantine, was derived from the Italian words quaranta giorni, forty days.

In 1943, my mother and baby sister were quarantined for two months, the entire time that I was in the hospital with polio. That disease had a way of returning every summer until Jonas Salk made a vaccine in 1955, the work of two-and-a-half years.

We have already sheltered-in-place for longer than forty days. "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November. All the rest have thirty-one, excepting February alone. ..." But in 2020, April had thirty-thousand.

When will the 2020 quarantine end?

Of course, no one knows. What I do know is how much I miss my friends in South Bay Writers. And, I miss hearing your writing news. We all could use some good news. Please send items for Member News to me at marjohnson@mac.com Note that I have, not so cleverly, smashed Marjorie and Johnson together to form the address; be sure to check your keyboarding. — WT

### NEW ONLINE CLASS:

## FLASH FICTION BOOTCAMP

by SBW member Victoria Johnson

"Come learn how to create very short stories, also known as short shorts and flash or sudden fiction. Flash stories have all the elements of fiction but are condensed to as few as 100 words and cap at 1,000 words! Discover how to free your creativity to write your own flash pieces. For beginning writers or pros, this is a fun and motivating class that will help you improve your storytelling skills. Write new pieces each week based on the topics introduced and prompts to get your creative juices flowing. By the end of the session you'll have at least 12 new stories written."

**This is a LIVE class offered on Zoom.**

**Meets four Wednesdays:**

**June 10, 17, 24,**

**and July 1 at 5:00pm - 6:30pm.**

Check out the link to enroll and get more info:

<https://victoriaMjohnson.com/online-class-flash-fiction-bootcamp>

### BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

## The Arkansas Rose

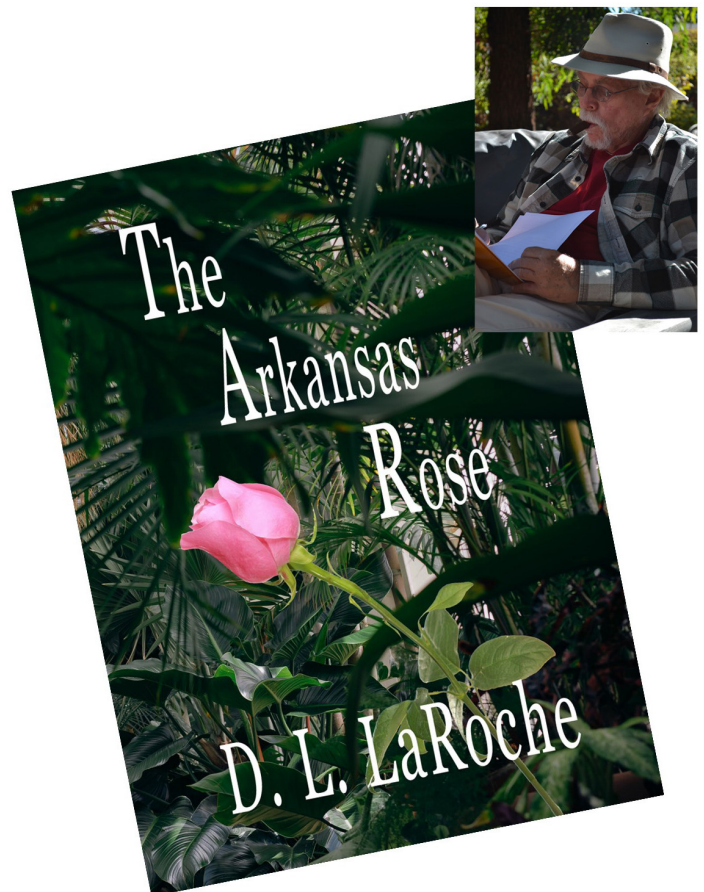
by Dave LaRoche

Want some extra-good member news this month? Check out this synopsis of our very own Dave LaRoche's recently published novel – and, if you've got room in your reading list for a fellow SBW member's book – get yourself a copy and let us know what you think!

Synopsis from the author:

Mid-life folks of significant means, north-Arkansas temperament, and a curious yearning for adventure, fund and follow a beautiful young geologist into the depths of Africa in search of rose colored diamonds--the hardest of hard and flawless. Do they encounter a tyrant president general who will skim like a mafia boss, the wilds of the jungle and its disinterested four-legged inhabitants, a knucklehead Red who is wanted for all sorts of crime but is good with the natives, a substitute for Woodbridge Chardonnay that has the look and flavor of monkey piss?

Our know-it-all author, D. L. LaRoche, has exhaled its essence like the smoke from a good cigar in this riveting exposé. We are proud of him. He has finally, finally written enough to publish. — WT



# The Professor

by Marcela Dickerson

Doctor Luigi Bonatti went down the marble staircase of the large old house he had inherited from his parents. It was located in a quiet narrow cobblestone street in Rome.

He never was up so early in the morning, at five-thirty to be exact; and he was very sleepy. Now, at 42, he was just starting to realize that besides his knowledge of medicine and especially pediatrics he knew very little about life in general.

Yesterday had been an exciting day. He had brought his firstborn, Angelo, from the clinic, but Angelo did not allow him to get a wink of sleep. He had fussed and cried, and ate and slept; Luigi was shaken out of his routine by the sudden change in what was his "organized" life.

Coffee would be the temporary fix, he thought, as he was to teach a class at the faculty at 8:30. However, on second thought, despite all the disruption he was happy.

Before Luisa and Angelo, his life had been boring and empty. This morning he had regretted leaving the bed. Luisa looked like a Madonna, her auburn hair spilling on the pillow, and Angelo was a real angel, cuddling against her. He had cried almost all night. He had great lungs, but he cried so loud and so long that Luigi was afraid that their neighbors had heard him also. No cuddling, walking, feeding, changing diapers, or cooing had calmed him. He had stopped at dawn when it was time to get up.

Dr. Bonatti remembered pacifiers. No, he had recently read an avant-garde article in a French medical journal and he advised both his patients' parents and his medical students that he was against them. Children would stay quiet after eating and a diaper change, especially if they were warm and cuddled.

A cup of coffee in hand he thought about pacifiers. Where was the closest all-night

pharmacy? Only about fifteen minutes away. He decided to stop on his way to the Medical School.

The clerk greeted him cheerfully.

"Good morning, Doctor. Up so early?"

"We brought our baby home, yesterday."

"Congratulations! How can I help you?"

"Do you have pacifiers?"

"Which type?"

He did not want to admit ignorance.

"Which is the most popular?"

"Different babies like different ones. All the ones we have sold pretty well."

"How many types you have?"

"Right now, we have seven different ones. I'll get them for you."

Luigi hid the bag in the trunk of the car. He would not confess his weakness to his students or his patients' parents, but he would not discourage them from using pacifiers either. Doctor Bonatti had discovered after only one sleepless night that his son had already taught him a lesson; and for that, he was grateful. —WT



*Missing everyone yet? We miss you, too!*  
*The SBW gather for last year's August dinner meeting at Holder's Country Inn.*  
*Photo by Carolyn Donnell*

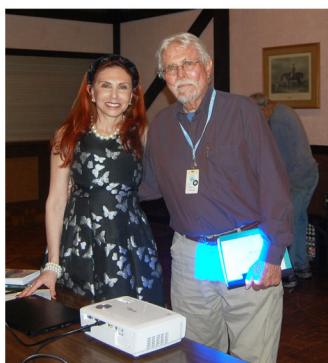


# South Bay Writers June Meeting Memories

2019

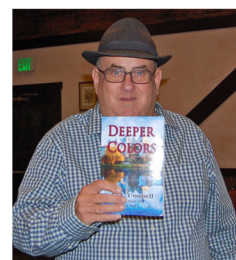


2018



2017

2016



2015





# South Bay Writers June Meeting Memories

2014



2013



2012



2011

2010

2008



# 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](mailto:membernews@southbaywriters.com) and any new stories, poems, articles, etc. to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto: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

- 2020 San Francisco Book Festival has been CANCELLED!!
- 2020 Statewide Anthology Sponsored by the High Desert Branch  
CWC members may submit up to 2 short stories.  
Theme – pandemics .  
Fiction ONLY.  
Deadline June 30, 2020.  
Fee - \$15 each.  
Prizes: 1st \$150, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$50..  
See full guidelines at:  
[https://www.hdcwc.com/uploads/1/6/5/2/16522420/2020\\_anthology\\_2020\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.hdcwc.com/uploads/1/6/5/2/16522420/2020_anthology_2020_guidelines.pdf).
- 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](mailto: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/>

## APRIL WAS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

If you have any new creations, especially from the second half of April that didn't have time to make it into the May issue, please send them to the newsletter email above.

## 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.submittable.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](https://www.pw.org/blogs/prize_reporter)  
Also lists over twelve hundred literary magazines. [https://www.pw.org/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>

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# ESSAY

## Organizing a Critique Group

by Marjorie Johnson

*Editor's Note: This excellent advisory on creating critique groups and circles was printed in our January 2017 issue. Given the Shelter in Place in our area, you might be itching to get a writing group set up via Zoom, Hangouts, or another digital service. Here's some tips to get you started!*

Organizing a critique group isn't easy, but it's doable.

While you are writing a whole month with NaNoWriMo, take the opportunity to meet some people. Come December, you will have a common problem: editing and taming those rough 50,000 words.

Get acquainted over coffee with two or three people. See if they'd like to try meeting to discuss mutual works in progress, a chapter at a time. Then agree to a time and a place and discuss the ground rules.

As writers, we tend to be protective of our work and to be sensitive about what we write. The idea of a group of people finding fault with our novel, short story, or memoir is scary. But when we slave over a piece, we often lose perspective. Reading our pieces aloud to someone else is the one best thing we can do toward editing it. Readers' feedback will help authors find direction and check if their pieces are communicating.

As an example, one critique group of four people met every other week at 6 p.m. Each member hosted a meeting on a ro-

tating schedule with a potluck light meal. They got down to business at 7:00 and tried to finish by 9:00.

Because of time constraints, they limited the piece to be presented to 2,500 words, emailed to the others a week in advance. Each member printed the piece, read it thoroughly, and redlined any grammar, punctuation, or sentence structure corrections, which were not gone over at the meeting. They wrote comments and suggestions on the back of the last page and gave the redlined copy to the author after the discussion. When each author finished reading his/her piece aloud, each member in turn offered comments that focused on plot, character development, believability, emotional impact, and so on.

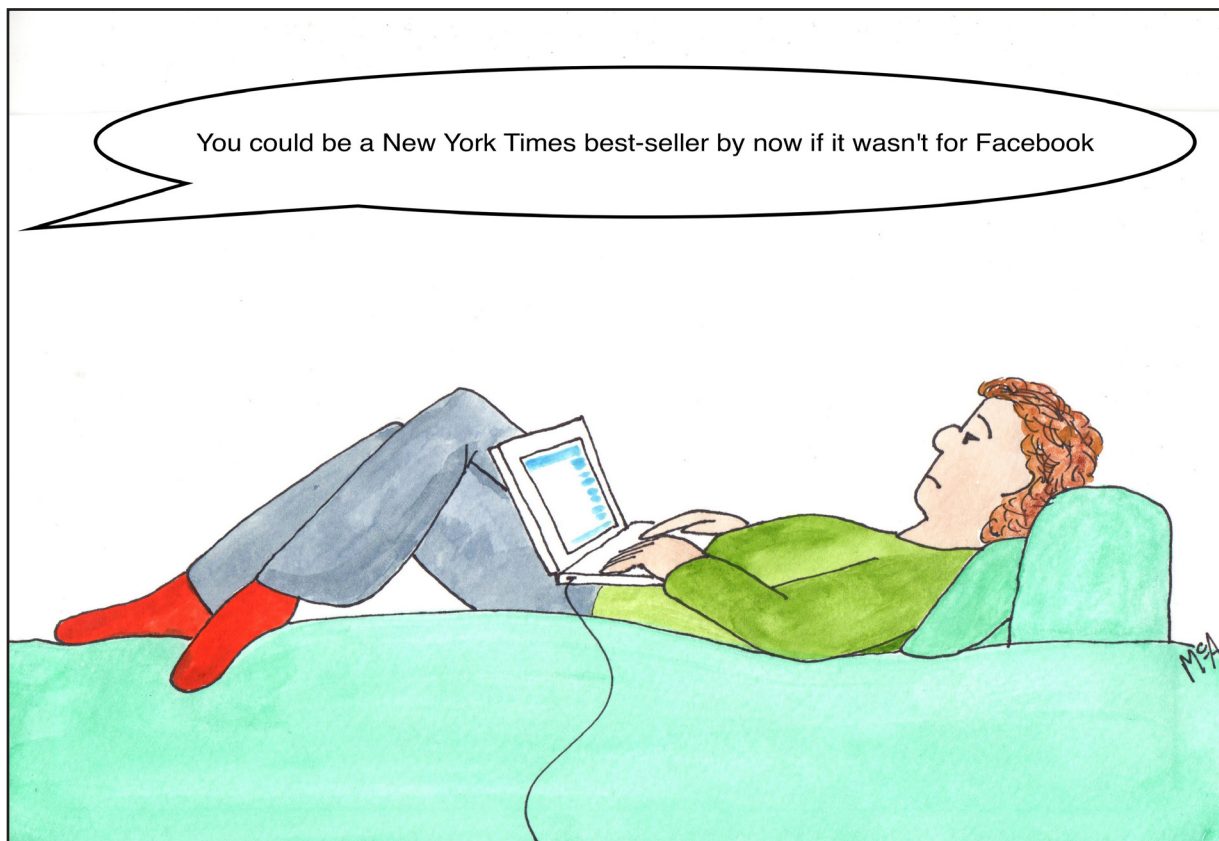
Since the goal of the group is to encourage the author and help improve his or her skills, negative comments must be presented in a positive manner.

Compatibility is one of the most important components of a critique group. Each member must be sincere, open minded, and receptive. Authors who read must not comment or defend their work during the discussion; a simple "thank you" will suffice, and the author can chose which comments "work" for his manuscript later.

Try it—you'll like it. —WT

## Cartoons

by Maddy McEwen



# Trapped in the Toilet

by Betty Auchard

Three years after my husband died, I worked for a company called Eye Spy, which assigned secret diners to eat at various restaurants. Owners signed up for the service to determine which employees did a good job. They provided me with a list of questions to answer, such as how long I waited before the waiter brought water, whether he wore a name tag and explained the specials, and how the food tasted. I had to invite a guy friend to visit the restaurants with me so he could report on the condition of the men's room.

One of my assignments in downtown San Jose served excellent food, but our waiter seemed to be practicing on us. I suspect my date and I were his first customers. We felt sorry for him.

Following the meal, I excused myself to visit the ladies' room. When I tried to leave, I couldn't open the stall door. No matter how hard I pushed, the locking

lever wouldn't budge. I considered crawling under the enclosure, but the opening was too small. I fished my cell phone out of my purse and used it to reach the operator. I asked her to call the restaurant and explain my predicament.

She sounded flustered and said, "Oh, my gosh. I've never gotten a call like this. Are you all right? What's the name of the restaurant and in what city?"

I answered her questions and asked her to stay on the line until I got rescued. She agreed.

A few minutes later, the manager entered and asked, "Is someone in here?"

"Yes, I am locked in the last stall on your left."

"Oh, no. Not again."

I thanked her as graciously as my frazzled nerves allowed, thinking, They should have fixed the dumb door the first time

this happened. I should have said so out loud.

When I returned to the dining room, my date asked, "Where have you been? What happened?"

I said, "I'll explain in the car."

While he drove, I gave him the details of my restroom adventure. He bounced between laughter and anger and said, "They're probably not going to get a positive review from you." He then remembered something else. "Hey, we ordered a salad for two and never got it."

"Oh, my gosh. You're right."

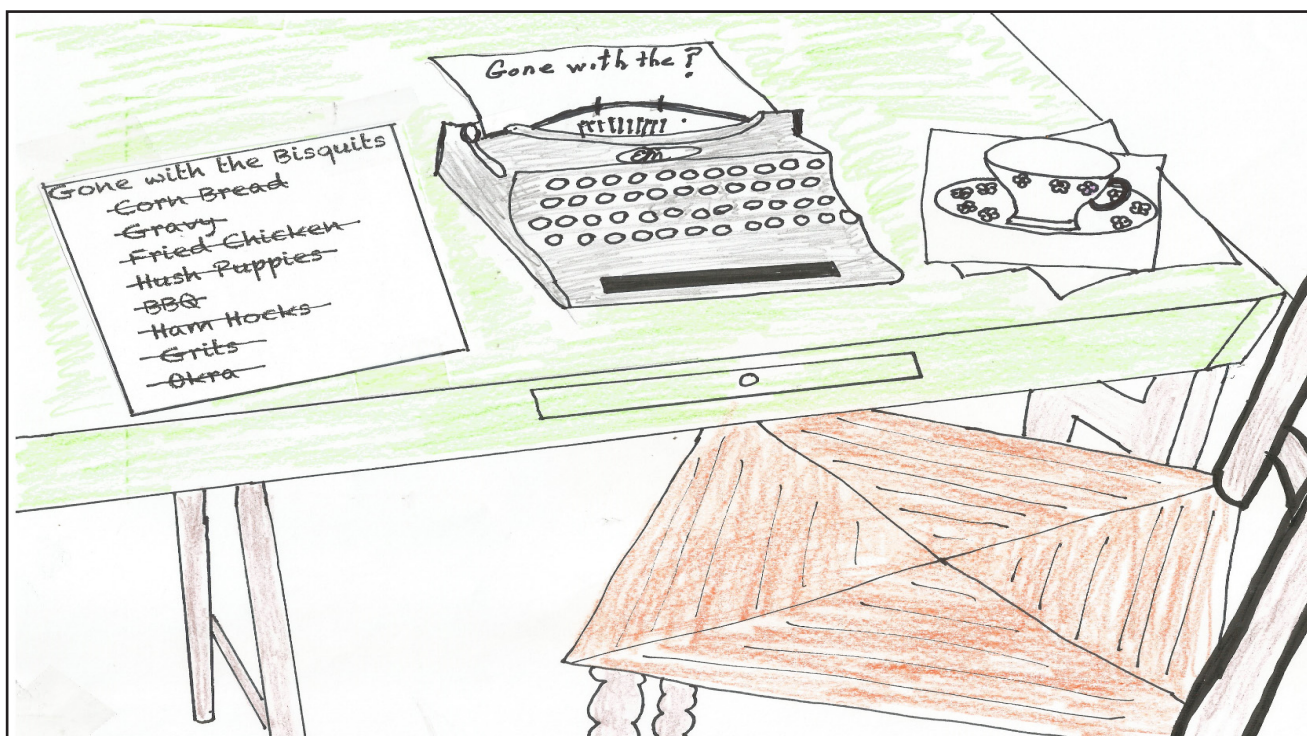
Having customers locked in the same stall on two separate occasions should not have happened. And we should have gotten what we ordered. So, yes, I did give the restaurant a bad review.

But I gave them five stars for the food.

—WT

## Off the Shelf

by Edie Matthews



Margaret Mitchell's Desk



# I Never Promised You a Rose...

by Evelyn Preston

Growing up in Chicago, the only green I ever saw said 'Keep Off,' and real flowers appeared mainly at funerals. In California, you're turned back at the state line unless you know the difference between tuberous and fibrous begonias — which I'd always thought were medical terms. In most of suburbia the only people who don't actually garden are the hired gardeners who march over entire neighborhoods like World War I rejects wearing gas masks and hauling heavy equipment. No matter, the people in my town who recently outlawed this "blow and go" army don't actually want them gone, just quiet, silently raking vs. noisily whirling the earth's crust from their yards to the neighbor's. It's called maintenance.

Creative homeowners, however, prefer the "sow and grow" side of gardening, turning pint-sized properties into mini-back forties. Why nice, clean suburbanites have this compulsion to get back to the land is truly a botanical wonder.

My neighbor's the worst. His plants are better fed than my family, and his flower beds are changed more regularly than our sheets. "With such a lovely yard," I told him, "don't you think you should dump that messy rubbish in the corner?"

"I've been nursing that compost pile for years," he tartly responded. "By the way, your cat potties in my pansies, and your overgrown ivy strangled three prize tomato vines. 'Good fences make good neighbors,' he smirked, "and mine's electric!"

A few years ago, I naively tried to go native, planting in living color and bedding incredible edibles. Besides the cost of a new SUV to haul mulch and manure, I took out a loan for planters, shrubs and sprays. I sowed, hoed, seeded, weeded and collected enough dirt in my pores to start an entire truck farm. "When do we eat, mom?" my kids yelled all summer.

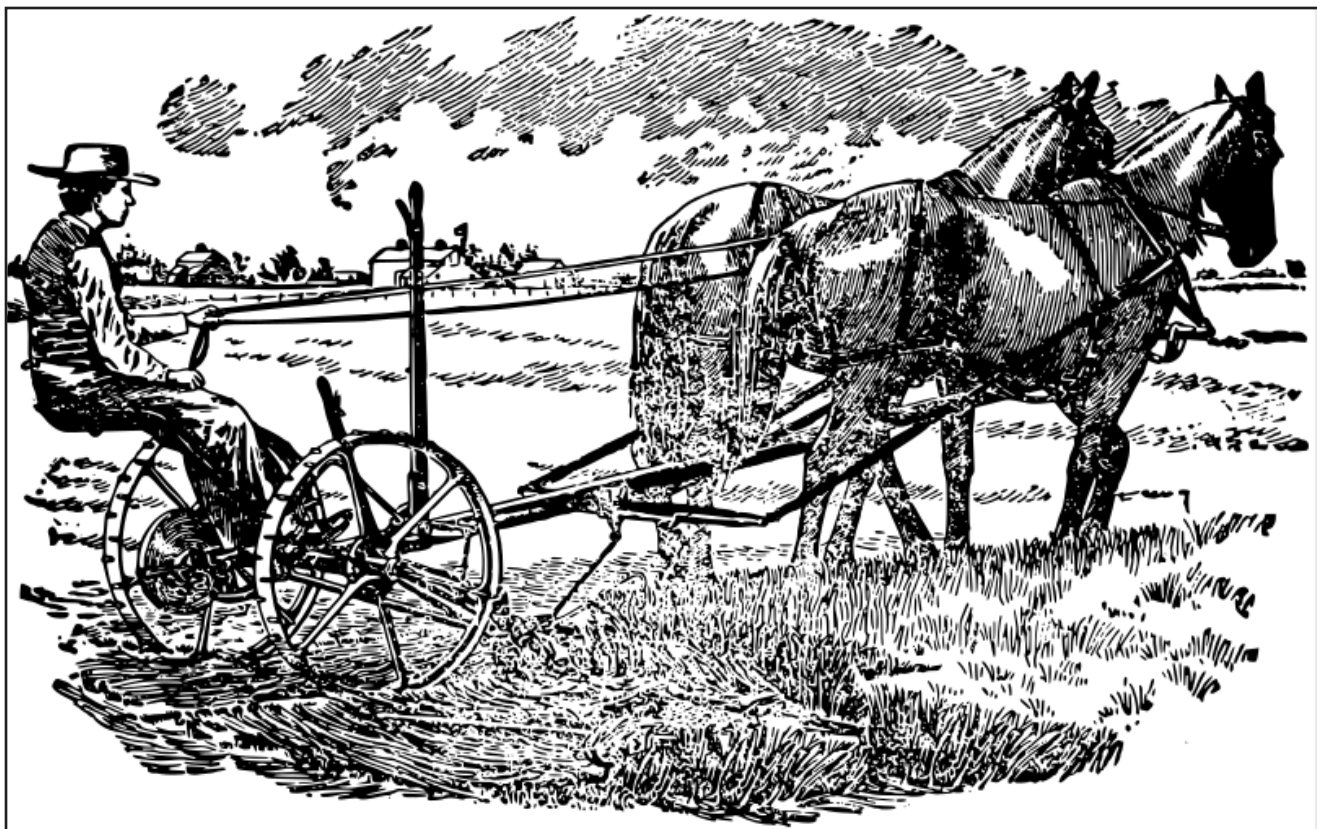
"In August," I snapped, "when the food

grows."

Weeks later, I put on my back brace, stood up straight and invited my neighbor to view the sprouts of my labor. "That's a shade plant," he said with a sigh, uprooting a petrified primrose. "Your stock is in shock and those weeds you just pulled out are next year's asparagus."

All I had left were geranium clippings that bloomed in the garbage cans. The bugs beat me to the vegetables.

However, I've found my niche in the seasonal cycle. At harvest time I receive my neighbor's daily offerings of gross zucchini and those grey turnips I thought were extinct. Incapable of growing a carrot, I'm the lone recipient of organic overflow. If I take the stuff fresh, maybe I won't get it pickled at Christmas. One thing about gardeners — they share! — WT



Day 60 of isolation: "I should make a podcast..."

## Contests and Markets

*Continued from Page 8*

### 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 challenge)
- California Poets
- How Writers Write Poetry Community Group
- No Fee Calls for Poems

### OTHER CONTESTS AND SUBMISSIONS

- Winning Writers: North Street Book Prize, 6th year.

Self-published book can win up to \$5,000 plus expert marketing services. Submit during February 15-June 30.

<https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/north-street-book-prize>

- Writer's Digest Annual Writing Competition

Deadline: June 5, 2020

Grand Prize: \$5,000 in cash, interview in Writer's Digest, paid trip to Writer's Digest Annual Conference, and more.

<https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition>

- New Millennium Writings: POETRY, FICTION, FLASH FICTION, NON-FICTION

\$4,000 IN AWARDS + PUBLICATION (in print and online)

Submission Deadline: June 30, 2020

<https://newmillenniumwritings.submittable.com/submit/160146/50th-new-millennium-writing-awards-2020>

- 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/>

### 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](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





# Literary Blogs and Podcasts

by J.K. McDole

In the absence of conventions and events, here are some more writer-ly podcasts and blogs to check out.

All entries save for the editor's personal recommendations are sourced from The Write Life ([www.thewritelife.com](http://www.thewritelife.com)) and Feedspot ([blog.feedspot.com](http://blog.feedspot.com)).

## Grammar Girl:

### Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing

<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

From *The Write Life*: "Every writer looking to improve their knowledge of the English language should bookmark this podcast. With helpful and insightful tips on grammar and storytelling, Mignon Fogarty's widely popular podcast is sure to help you improve your writing skills."

## Can't Lit

<https://cantlit.ca/>

From *Feedspot*: "A monthly podcast on all things Canadian and literature. Hosted by Dina Del Bucchia and Jen Sookfong Lee."

## Writing Excuses

<https://writingexcuses.com/>

From *The Write Life*: "Writing Excuses is hosted by a group of writers who provide quick tips for writing techniques. This fast-paced podcast runs about 15 minutes per episode, with the fun tagline "Fifteen minutes long, because you're in a hurry, and we're not that smart." Previous seasons have covered genre and structure, and the most current season (13!) is all about character."

Editor's Note: I like to listen to this one in the car. It'll run you the length of a drive to and from Safeway on El Camino Real.

## StoryCorps

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510200/storycorps>

From *The Write Life*: "In this NPR podcast, hosts gather stories from Americans across the country. Although not a traditional podcast for writers, this podcast offers inspiration for excellent storytelling."

## CraftLit

<https://www.craftlit.com>

From *Feedspot*: "CraftLit is a weekly podcast for people who love, read and curious about classic literature."

## WRITER QUOTES TO CHEW ON

"Hot weather opens the skull of a city, exposing its white brain, and its heart of nerves, which sizzle like the wires inside a lightbulb. And there exudes a sour extra-human smell that makes the very stone seem flesh-alive, webbed and pulsing."

—Truman Capote, *Summer Crossing*

## Lore

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

From the website: "Lore is an award-winning, critically-acclaimed podcast about true life scary stories. Lore exposes the darker side of history, exploring the creatures, people, and places of our wildest nightmares."

Editor's Note: Got writer's block? Stuck on a paragraph? Need some inspiration of the creepier kind? This is your podcast. I had never heard of some of these legends; the ones I HAD heard about contained new details that made the stories even more interesting.

## Anonymous Literature

<https://anchor.fm/anonymous-drama-literature-podcast-series>

From *Feedspot*: "Anonymous Literature is a non-profit international anonymous literary organization for anonymous writers, editors, translators, illustrators and poets. They mostly talk about writing, editing and translating the original anonymous foreign works."

## Novel Conversations

<http://novelconversations.fpp.libsynpro.com/>

From *Feedspot*: "Novel Conversations is a podcast summarizing the world's greatest works of classic literature, in 35 minutes you get the whole story from cover to cover. In each episode, Frank Lavallo hosts two readers and the three of them give their reactions to the story and read their favorite passages along the way."

## A Way with Words

<https://www.waywordradio.org>

From *The Write Life*: This National Public Radio (NPR) program discusses language examined through the lens of history, culture and family. The podcast is rich with detail and exciting storytelling and typically runs for about an hour. You'll hear upbeat conversations about the language of current events, new words and slang, semantics and other topics that will make you go, "Hmm."

Editor's Note: One of my personal favorites and recommendations! If you're a fan of etymology or just want some curious word trivia to chew on throughout your day, try out the first few episodes. —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](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

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### 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)

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### 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.



*SBW Members enjoying a meal at our July 2019 meeting*

*Photo by Carolyn Donnell*



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

## Upcoming Events

**DINNER MEETING**  
TBA

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

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

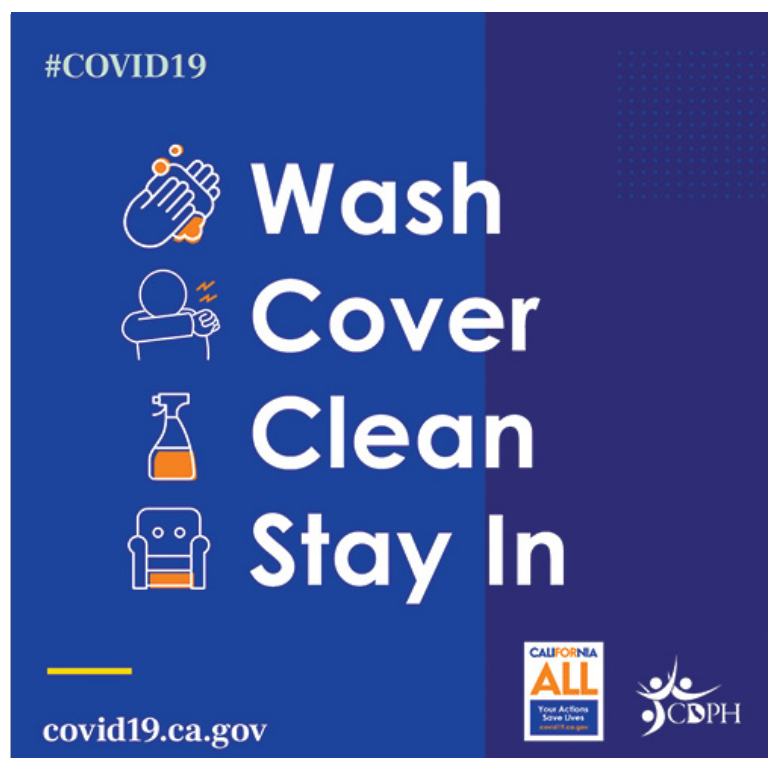
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**South Bay Writers  
Events and Meetings  
have been POSTPONED for June  
due to the Santa Clara County  
Shelter in Place order**

**Upcoming Events  
and Speakers TBA  
Check Your Email  
for Updates!**

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!