



WritersTalk


Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

Volume 31
Number 12
December 2023




The December Bash

December 10, 2023
Sunday
5:00-8:00PM

 **Potluck:** Please bring a dish to share according to the last name.

- A-G Main Dish
- H-R Dessert or Appetizer
- S-Z Salad or Side Dish

 **Gift Exchange:** If you'd like to participate, bring a wrapped gift valued between \$12-20.

 **Lottery Game:** Enjoy a new game and win the lottery!

 **RSVP:** pres@southbaywriters.com for location. (Members only & significant other/guests.)

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View from the Board

by Chris Weilert

Edie Matthews, President

The November speaker is Laurie Ann Doyle presenting at our new location, Maker Nexus in Sunnyvale. We're excited about our new home.

The January speaker will be Andrew Benzie, the topic will be "Promoting Your Book."

February 2024 we will have Eleanor Vincent, topic "Memoir.

A future booking and don't miss will be renowned author, Tobias Wolfe, coming in 2024.

Marjorie Johnson, MRMS

Will be the interim newsletter editor in January.

Alice Wu, Treasurer

Alice is the official treasurer taking over for Jack London Award Winner, Trent Myers.

Bill Baldwin, Open Mics continue on the first and third Fridays. (Zoom)

Recent Open Mic stats:

October 6 – 9 readers

October 20 – 10 readers

November 3 – 7 readers

December 2023

We are still doing all our open mics via Zoom. Please contact Bill to set up your opportunity to read your work.

Central Board:

We met on October 22 in Oakland. Trenton was awarded the Jack London Award (congratulations Trenton!)

We have 1725 members.

We may produce an innovative Literary Review this year: a coffee-table book with selections of 300 words or less.

We have formed a working committee to develop a replacement for MRMS.

The Board voted to delete Article V of our by-laws.

Bob Isbill from the Inland Empire Branch has published a book of our governing documents which is available for interested members.

The Board is looking for a DEI (Diversity-Equity-Inclusion) coordinator.

Nor Cal:

The Berkeley branch will serve as CWC liaison to the San Francisco Writers Conference in February.

Inga Silva, Membership: As of October 31st, we have 91 members, 2 lifetime members and 2 students. Inga has stepped back in to do membership. She is hoping someone new will volunteer.

Carolyn Donnell: Facebook/Contests/Markets – makes the newsletter calendar and takes pictures of our events.

Una Daly, Web Editor:

The website was updated with speaker info and WritersTalk.

Looking to update past issues of WritersTalk.

Brigitte Doss-Johnson, Newsletter Editor

She has produced the newsletter this year since February. December will be her last one. She built a template on Google Docs. Using InDesign is limiting for collaboration because no one has the expensive Adobe product.

Open Discussion:

Accommodations of the Maker Nexus. We will arrive early to review our setup needs.

The next board meeting will be on December 4, 2023, 7:00PM on Zoom. SBW members are always welcome at Board meetings. To attend a board meeting, send an email to Edie Matthews at pres@southbaywriters.com.

President's Message

by Edie Matthews



Christmas Traditions

We're putting on a show!

For a number of years, we escaped the dreary winter and traveled to Phoenix for Christmas. The weather was warm and sunny, but best of all, my youngest daughter and her family, including three young children, lived there. Occasionally, other California family members joined us, including my other daughter and her young son from New Mexico.

In addition to pitching in making pies, my specialty—and teaching my granddaughters the secret to pie crust, I planned some festivities starring the children.

On Christmas Eve, a crowd of family and friends filled the house and the children put on a performance that we had rehearsed. I always selected something humorous that I knew well or had performed in.

One year we did a one-act melodrama, *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*, by Muriel and Richard Eldridge. The cast included the lighthouse keeper, mother, daughter, villain, and the doctor. No set was required. But we did need a minimum of costumes and props.

First, we created a cardboard paddle and a large boat with a rope, so it could be slung over your shoulder. The doctor wore a top hat and had a bag filled with tools. The mother had a mixing bowl, wooden spoon and apron. Her husband wore a fisherman's cap.

There's a narrator, so no one needed to memorize lines. After the characters are introduced to the audience, the lighthouse keeper climbs up to light the beam. He mimics ascending the steps by walking around in a

circle three times. After he lights it, he reverses directions, three circles down.

This routine is established several times until the villain comes and attacks the lighthouse keeper.

Since her husband doesn't return for dinner, his wife climbs the stairs to check on him. Immediately she runs down and gets her daughter. They both climb back up the stairs. Then the mother sends her daughter for help. The daughter runs downstairs, puts on the cardboard boat, and paddles across the stage for the doctor. The two get in the boat, paddle back across the stage, and climb up the lighthouse.

After examining the patient, the doctor insists they carry the father downstairs. Once they are below, the doctor opens his medical bag. It's filled with hardware tools. Each time he takes one out (saw, hammer, screw driver, etc.), he displays it to the audience with relish, and to the horror of the mother and daughter. It's a raucous procedure as the doctor operates, removing a variety of items from the lighthouse keeper, including a rubber chicken. He shows off his finds to the women and the audience. Finally, the lighthouse keeper is revived. It ends with the daughter marrying the doctor. Silly? Yes, but the kids loved it and the adults laughed heartily.

Over the years, we performed other routines. Once we recreated Sid Caesar and Imogene Coco's sketch of the European clock with life-size figures that goes bonkers. (It's on Youtube.)

I once read that Jacqueline Kennedy had her children do a Christmas performance. I believe it was more religious. I doubt they ever performed *The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter*.

Wishing everyone a fabulous holiday filled with joy and laughter and look forward to seeing you in 2024!

Member News

by Marjorie Johnson



Writing this column does my soul good. I love seeing you succeed.

Carolyn Donnell received this in her email regarding two of her poems: "Congratulations! "Where is the Green" and "Minnesota Autumn" have been chosen for publication in *Echoes of the Wild*. Expected publication of the anthology is by December 2023. You will be contacted once the book is published with ordering information. Thank you so much for your interest and submission for the book. It is an honor to include your work." Stacy Savage, Editor of *Echoes of the Wild*.

Reena Kapoor's sci-fi story, "Interstellar Sympathies – Who Needs Those?!" has been published in the *One Universe to the Left* Anthology by the Redwood Writers (November 17). (Editor: This was no mean feat. Redwood Writers is the largest branch of the California Writers Club; they are known to edit and choose carefully.)

Audry Lynch, writer and author of everything Steinbeck, was delighted to be in Monterey to greet the arrival of the *Western Flyer* when it returned to its home port on Saturday, November 2, something that had not happened in 75 years. You would have to know Audry to understand her passion for writing about Steinbeck. If you want to know anything about him, just ask Audry.

Audry's book, *With Steinbeck in the Sea of Cortez: A Memoir of the Steinbeck/Ricketts Expedition* by Sparky Enea and Audry Lynch, explains it all. Here is an abridged description from Amazon: "In 1940, John Steinbeck, newly famous from the publication of *Grapes of Wrath*, spent the spring collecting marine specimens with Edward Ricketts and five others aboard a 76-foot purse seiner called the

Western Flyer. Their destination was the Sea of Cortez. Also, along on this famous expedition were Steinbeck's wife, Carol; Captain Tony Berry; Tex, the engineer; and two crew members, Sparky Enea and Tiny Colletto. ... Read the true tales of Cannery Row, Doc Ricketts and the *Western Flyer*'s rambunctious Baja Adventure. ... Here is the real story of the enduring legend, John Steinbeck, recounting



those wild and heady days as he and the rest of the crew of the *Western Flyer* made literary history."

Kelly Miller published her eighth book (October 24), *The Trouble with Friends*, a Regency variation of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*.

Congratulations, Kelly—you're almost as prolific as Stephen King!



To have your writing news appear here, send email to membernews@southbaywriters.com. Hope to hear from you soon.

Les Prose

by Kendad



Memoirs

Holiday Hustle Bustle

by Edie Matthews

Christmas downtown Los Angeles was like fairyland. Silver garland, twinkling lights, and red stars crisscross the boulevards. Lively carols play and bells ding-a-ling drawing crowds to department store windows.

Festive scenes show an angel atop a Christmas tree and a train circling below. Stockings hang across the mantle with a nativity display above. A jovial Santa Claus opens his red sack filled with toys.

We line up to sit on Santa's knee, revealing our heart's desire, and nod yes, I've been good—mostly. A bulb flashes, and an elf awards us a candy cane.



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The Joy of Christmas and our Toys

by Chris Weilert

Most of us can remember a gift we got as a kid during the holidays, and there are those you don't want to. The first two that remain vivid in my mind are the games "Rock Em Sock Em Robots" and Electric Football. I recall these gifts because of the images of my family and the stories that involve these toys.

The Rock Em Sock Em Robots, a toy I desperately wanted, appeared under the tree Christmas morning. I couldn't believe my eyes. This particular toy got television airplay with the most obnoxious commercial, which aired during kid programs. RESE Robots were plastic molded and included a boxing ring with robots who threw punches based on your ability to push the buttons on a control handle. Of course, this was a controller without electricity or battery power, and you needed to provide the movement with your hands and thumbs. If you delivered the right punch to the other robot's jaw, his head would pop up with a buzzing noise. This is the extent of the game. You and another kid would try to shuffle your robot around to get in the knockout.

This toy provided hours of fun, sore thumbs, and mayhem. What kind of mayhem? The older kids around the house and neighborhood took liberty over my game. Even though these boys were well past the recommended ages listed on the box, they got fixated on playing with this thing with intensity and enthusiasm, unlike any of their own games. The makers of this toy were on to something, a taste of violence absorbed into children's toys. My parents thought of the Robots as a sports-related game that the whole family would enjoy. How the times felt innocent and free from political correctness.

The other toy, "Electric Football," which my brother and I shared, had to be the most illogical game ever invented. How this thing would ever represent football baffles me. It was essentially a flat piece of green painted metal representing the field, which included some vibrating mechanism underneath, making the

plastic players move around. If you turned the knob on the device, the intensity of the vibration increased; therefore, the men would scurry around more. You couldn't control which direction the men would go making it so unreal. It should have been called Electric Confusion. We spent hours playing this frustrating game, but somehow it lasted long enough on the market to warrant new and improved versions.

My parents, bless their soul, they meant well and tried to buy us toys and games considered fun, and everybody wanted to play. I laugh at how these types of sports-related toys have morphed into video games that require little thinking. This is one thing I believe separates these generations of toys. But then again, videos take less room in the landfill when they get tossed away. I look on the internet for my old toys, and I laugh to see how well they are documented in halls of pop culture history. I remember those times with fondness. Happy Holidays!

The Hundred Demons

by Marjorie Johnson

My sixth-grade teacher (1950) challenged us with "The Hundred Demons," words difficult to spell. I was amused that the list included "misspelled." I remember a few others: chaos; embarrass; mischievous; hypocrisy; desiccate; and weird. She told us a story about each one and we wrote sentences using the new words.

I thought I'd share the list with my friends in South Bay Writers. When I asked my good friend Google, I found at least a dozen such lists. So, I cannot say the hundred demons. I decided to concentrate on words that appear on several lists.

Many of the words appearing on Google's lists were questions of grammar rather than spelling, such as "it's," short for it is. Note that the possessive pronoun "its" has no apostrophe. Or, more grammar, is it laid or layed? The answer again depends upon context. Or, maybe a typo: weird versus wired.

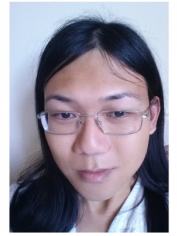
Some words on the new lists are homonyms. Is it queue (form a line) or cue (give a prompt to)? Or, is it their, they're, or there? Does it take double letters: parallel, accommodate, broccoli? Or perhaps it's a medical or scientific word with Greek origins: hemorrhage, diaphragm, psychology?

Now that we have Artificial Intelligence and SpellChecker, I'd like to remind you that humans program computers. That's why it's important for us to teach our children spelling and grammar, and multiplication tables, and how to memorize a poem. We need to teach English—writing and critical reading, sans help from Artificial Intelligence robots such as ChatGPT. Humans have the imagination that no robotic AI can replicate. We need to challenge our young'uns to write, NOT leaning on AI, and to read NOT believing everything they read on Facebook.

Maybe a young person will fix that annoying auto-checker that changes my cell phone messages completely. However, it will take a long time to get a chatbot to answer the telephone intelligently. For example, Comcast wouldn't let me handle business because I wasn't the "primary account owner." When I told the bot that my husband had been dead for seven years, it said, "I'm sorry for your loss" but still wouldn't allow me to access my account or to speak to a real person.

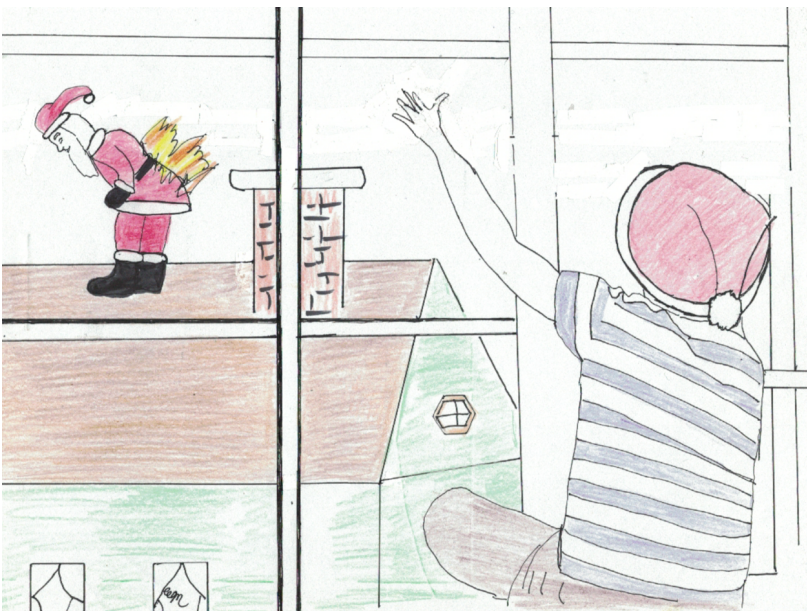
My First Christmas Present

by Alice Wu



My first Christmas present was a calculator. My family just arrived in the United States and we had just encountered this new holiday, and we were trying to get a hang of these new rituals and traditions. However, something must have been lost in translation. On Christmas Eve, my mom hung up a sock. Not a stocking, an ordinary gym sock. I guess because both "stocking" and "sock" translate to the same word in Chinese? On Christmas morning, my mom woke me up and said, "Look at what Santa Claus brought you this morning!" I put my hand inside my gym sock and pulled out a calculator. I looked at her and said, "Is this really from Santa Claus? How did he get in here? We don't even have a chimney." "We have air vents," she said. Oh, so Santa Claus is John McClane?

The whole situation felt weird, because I never believed in Santa Claus, not even as a child, and my mom was treating him as though he were real? I found this whole Santa Claus thing to be puzzling, to say the least. It wasn't like Buddha, who was definitely real. But considering that we were just getting acculturated to American culture, being unable to decode these rituals was nothing unusual.



Off the Shelf

by Edie Matthews

"Wow! There really is a Crisp Kringle!"

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

Members of our Facebook group – South Bay Writers Club-see contest postings and other notifications on the Facebook group.

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.

WRITERS BEWARE site. Check out this website for warnings about contests, submissions, etc.
<https://www.sfw.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/>

Local (Publishers and Editors) and Other CWC Branch RESOURCES: See branches at <https://calwriters.org/cwcbranches/> Some allow all CWC members, others – dual members.

Name	Dead line	URL	Comments
SF/Peninsula Branch.		https://www.cwc-sfpeninsula.org/writers-resources/writing-contests	Lists other resources
Fremont Area Writers		https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers/	See Writers Resources tab
North State Writers		https://www.northstatewriters.com/nsw-anthologies.html	Planning a new anthology soon
The Literary Nest		https://www.theliterarynest.org	Send visual art to theliterarynest@gmail.com
<i>Catamaran Literary Reader</i>		https://www.catamaranliteraryreader.com/	West Coast quarterly literary/visual arts journal

Other Contests and SubmissionS (including sites that list contests.) * = on Facebook

Name	Dead line	URL	Comments
Sequestum Reprints	Dec 15	https://www.sequestum.org/reprints	Reprints issue takes previously published !!
The Masters Review		https://mastersreview.com/chapbook-contest/	Chapbook contest
Chicken Soup For The Soul		https://www.chickensoup.com/story-submissions/submit-your-story/	Ongoing topics
Writer's Digest		https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions	Contests year round. Also classes/webinars
Romance Writers of America		https://www.rwa.org/chapterevents	Lists by month
Red Penguin Books		https://redpenguinbooks.com/open-submissions/	Various ongoing submissions
Driftwoods Press	Jan 15	https://driftwoodpress.submittable.com/submit	Fiction and poetry

Falling Star Magazine	Feb 11	https://falling-star-magazine.com/	Short stories. Some poetry
Water Dragon Publishing		https://waterdragonpublishing.com/2023/07/call-for-submissions-dragon-gems-winter-2024/	Check website for opening date
		SITES THAT LIST OTHER CONTESTS	
The Write Life		https://thewritelife.com/writing-contests/	Lists contests
Winning Writers		https://winningwriters.com/	their contests and others listed
Authors Publish		www.authorspublish.com	Lists many contests, submissions, etc.
Funds for Writers		https://fundsforwriters.com/contests/	Subscribe to hope@chopeclark.com
Trish Hopkinson		https://trishhopkinson.com/	blog
Newpages		https://www.newpages.com/guide-submission-opportunities/big-list-of-writing-contests/	List of writing contests
The Writers College		https://www.thewriterscollege.com/short-story-writing-competitions/	
Freedom With Writing		https://www.freedomwithwriting.com	Lists many resources

POETRY CONTESTS, SUBMISSIONS, AND RESOURCES

Name	Dead line	URL	Comments
Academy of American Poets	n/a	https://poets.org/academy-american-poets/american-poets-prizes	Lists contests/ submissions
Writing Matters		http://www.randalssanctuary.wordpress.com/2020/08/11/publishers-of-poetry-books-chapbooks/	30 Publishers of Poetry Books & Chapbooks
Up the Staircase Quarterly		https://www.upthestaircase.org/	
Minotaur Books/Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Competition	Dec 15	https://dystopianstories.com/events/minotaur-books-mystery-writers-of-america-first-crime-novel-competition/	
Poets & Writers		https://www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines_87	Lists upcoming deadlines
Poetry Society of America		https://poetrysociety.org/awards	Awards and prizes
The Thimble Magazine		http://www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/	quarterly online journal.
Poetry Foundation		www.poetryfoundation.org	
Crosswinds poetry	Dec 31	https://crosswindspoeetry.com/poetry-contest-submissions/	
Poetry Pacific		www.poetrypacific.blogspot.com/	Published and unpublished.
Everywriter		www.everywritersresource.com/best-poetry-prizes/	
Reedsy		https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/chapbook/how-to-make/	Reputable chapbook contest
Gyroscope		https://www.gyroscopereview.com/welcome/guidelines	4 issues a year
Poetry Soup		https://www.poetrysoup.com/poetry/contests/	

Rattle chapbook prize	Jan 15	https://www.rattle.com/chapbooks/prize/	
The Moth Poetry Prize 2023	Dec 31	https://www.themothmagazine.com/a1-page.asp	
Mslexia Women's Poetry Competition 2023	Dec 4	https://mslexia.co.uk/competitions/	

Facebook pages/Groups (Our Facebook group for members is South Bay Writers Club)

Poetry Center San Jose-PCSJ

Poetry Exchange

Poetry Lounge

Willow Glen Poetry Project

Cupertino Poet Laureate

Santa Clara County Poet Laureate

Los Gatos Poet Laureate

National Poetry Month-write a poem a day challenge

California Poets

The Poetry Salon Online

No Fee Calls for Poems

Calendar

DECEMBER 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 SBW Open Mic 7:30PM	2
3	4 Board Meeting 7:00PM	5	6	7 First Night of Hanukkah	8 Bodhi Day	9
10 SBW Party! 5:00-8:00PM	11	12	13	14	15 Last Night of Hanukkah WritersTalk Deadline	16
17	18	19	20	21 Pancha Ganapati & Winter Solstice	22	23
24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26 Boxing Day First Day of Kwanzaa	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve	2024! Last day of Kwanzaa					

Board and Leaders

Executive Committee

President
Edie Matthews.....pres@southbaywriters.com
Vice President
Jamal Khan.....vp@southbaywriters.com
Secretary
Chris Weilert..secretary@southbaywriters.com
Treasurer
Alice Wu.....treasurer@southbaywriters.com
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NorCal Rep
Bill Baldwin.....WABaldwin@aol.com

Committee Chairs

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Hospitality TBD
Membership
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Marjorie Johnson.....mrms@southbaywriters.com
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Newsletter Editor
TBA
Open Mic
Bill Baldwin.....WABaldwin@aol.com
Web Editor
Una Daly.....webeditor@southbaywriters.com
Web Master TBD

South Bay Writers Mission

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

Join Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Dual membership: \$25. Contact Membership Chair, Inga Silva, or sign up online at southbaywriters.com. Or, send a check to CWC-South Bay Writers, P. O. Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055

Note: California Writers Club uses a fiscal year that runs from July 1 through June 30 each year.

Contribute to WritersTalk

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in WritersTalk.

Submissions are now being accepted on this form:

<https://tinyurl.com/writerstalk>

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month.

Inclusion of graphics are by the discretion of the editor.

Short Fiction (1000 words)

Memoir (1000 words)

Poetry (300 words)

Essay (1000 words)

Send information about your news or achievements to

membernews@southbaywriters.com.

Information should be of interest and value to

writers that does not provide direct economic benefit to its originator and is published free of charge.

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California Writers Club
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Address Correction Requested

January Keynote

Promoting Your Book

Speaker: Andrew Benzie, Publisher, Designer
& founder of Andrew Benzie Books

Save this date!

Saturday, January 13, 2024

10:00AM

Location: Maker Nexus, 1330 Orleans,
Sunnyvale

