



WRITERS TALK

Volume 32
Number 05
May 2024

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

May Speaker:
Emily Jiang

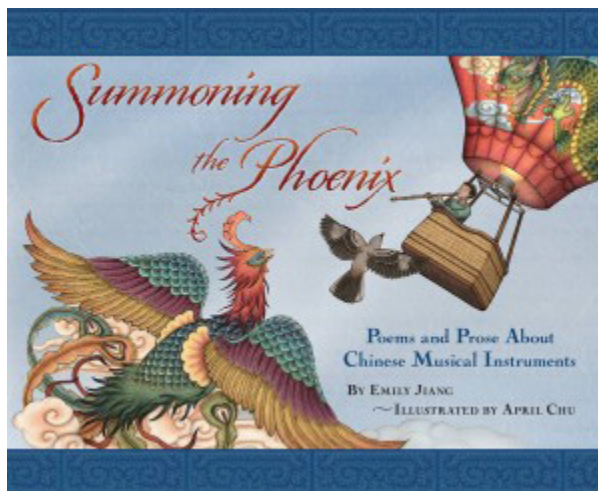
The ABC's of Picture Books



We all grew up on picture books. We enjoyed the illustrations before we learned how to read the words. Only years later did we realize that crafting the latter requires as much painstaking skill as drawing the former. Brevity brings forth brilliance. The seamless juxtaposition of word and image showcases even greater talent. Graphic novels have been nominated for the Booker Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, and the National Book Award. During our meeting on May 11th, Emily Jiang will provide us with essential writing and publishing tips for picture books of all kinds.

Emily Jiang is an author, composer, poet, and speaker. She is the author of *Summoning the Phoenix: Poems & Prose about Chinese Musical Instruments*, illustrated by April Chu and published by Shen's Books, an imprint of Lee & Low Books. Her work won "Best Book of the Year" from the Chinese American Librarian Association, a "Eureka! Honor for Excellence in Nonfiction" from the California Reading Association, and was among the "Best Children's Books of the Year" at *Kirkus Reviews* and *The Huffington Post*.

Emily is the author of *Paper Presents*, which won first place in the *Palo Alto Weekly's* Short Story Contest. Her poem, "First Eclipse: Chang-O & the Jade Hare" was published in *Uncanny Magazine*. You can find out more about Emily at www.emilyjiang.com.



- **What: Emily Jiang - Writing a Children's Picture Book**
- **When: Saturday, May 11, at 10:30AM**
- **Where: Maker Nexus, 1330 Orleans Drive, Sunnyvale**
- **Admission: \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers**

Map and directions to Maker Nexus on back cover

April Recap: Mary Gottschalk

It's All Writing : What works? What doesn't? Bill Baldwin

At our April meeting, Mary Gottschalk, long-time journalist, shared her insights on writing, beginning with how to begin a piece: the "Opening," the "Lead-In."

"The first snake caught me in the shower." Give the reader something that keeps them reading! Grab the reader's attention from the get-go and don't let it go; pull them into the story and keep them there!

If you are fond of famous opening sentences, you can riff off those: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that an overly friendly writer must be in search of material."

Keep a notebook with you at all times—you'll be surprised how much there is to hear and to notice, that might inspire a good opening sentence.

Once you've got the story going, figure out how you want to tell it. Ask yourself how you would tell it to a friend: what are the main points? What occurs to you may not be chronological—that's okay. Think about what you want to get across, then rearrange the incidents to create a flow and to emphasize what you feel is important.

To highlight character traits and economic background, consider using cultural references: details of dress or cuisine, and brand names. Use the internet to research background and details.

If you plan to interview people as part of your research, do basic research on them first! Gottschalk has interviewed many celebrities, including Jay Leno, George Carlin, Yoko Ono, and Esther Williams. You may be interviewing

(Continued on page 4)

Between the Lines

Edie Matthews

President, South Bay Writers

Heartbreak

In 1978, the young man led me through the cemetery showing me available plots. "This one has a tree next to it. That one has a bush." We glanced at each other, realizing the ridiculousness of the statement. It wouldn't make a difference to my dad now, would it? But it would make it easier for us to locate his headstone. Several days prior, we had learned that my father had died. While two of my brothers, Ed and Pat, drove to Los Angeles to claim the body, I was making funeral arrangements. My parents were legally separated, so it fell to me. I wanted my dad buried nearby, not 400 miles away. I learned they would fly the body here for \$100.

When Ed returned home with my dad's belongings, I searched through them. I believed I had sent him a Father's Day card the previous month, but wasn't certain. Relieved, I finally found it. Inside was a note saying how I loved and missed him.

In 1985, my mother was in a senior center in Lawrence, Kansas, near my brother Pat. When she collapsed, Pat was called and he took her to emergency. Unbeknownst to us, she had terminal breast cancer; her lungs filled with fluid. The doctor drained the fluid, saving her.

She came back to California to live with me (for the third time). I set up a bedroom and a portable toilet. But after a few weeks, her strength returned, and one day she said, "You can get rid of that thing."

I took her to see an oncologist. I told him I wasn't going to force my mother to endure any radical treatment, and hoped there was an alternative. My mother had always been suspicious of doctors. If they knew you were poor, she believed they'd give you the "black bottle." The doctor prescribed a medication that cost \$350 a month, a pricey sum at the time. My mother didn't like the effects and after three months, she opted to stop taking it.

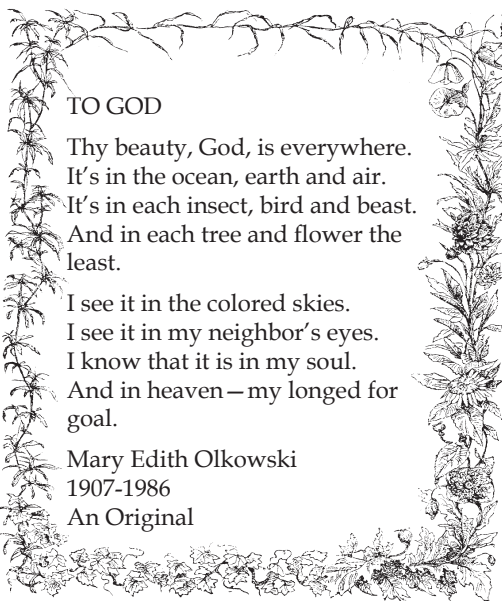


She lived with me for over a year in a split-level house that had stairs at every turn. Six weeks before she passed away, she lived at Ed's house on one level. She was planning to go with my sister-in-law to Fatima in Portugal, hoping for a miracle cure. However, before that happened, she was hospitalized. I brought her a luxurious bouquet in a cream-colored vase, shaped like a swan. She loved it. She was gone within a week.

When my brother asked me about funeral arrangements, I said, "I do not want 'Beloved Mother' on the gravestone. She was more than 'Beloved.'" She described herself as an "original."

My brother called me later and reminded me of a poem that she had written. "Perfect," I said. I knew my mother would be pleased.

On her gravestone it says:



TO GOD

Thy beauty, God, is everywhere.
It's in the ocean, earth and air.
It's in each insect, bird and beast.
And in each tree and flower the least.

I see it in the colored skies.
I see it in my neighbor's eyes.
I know that it is in my soul.
And in heaven—my longed for goal.

Mary Edith Olkowski
1907-1986
An Original

— WT

California Writers Club

South Bay Branch

www.southbaywriters.com

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

Members-at-Large—

Alfred Jan,

member-at-large2@southbaywriters.com

(2nd Member at Large—VACANT)

Central Board Rep—Bill Baldwin

WABaldwin@aol.com

NorCal Rep—Bill Baldwin

WABaldwin@aol.com

SBW Committee Chairs

Programs—Jamal Khan

vp@southbaywriters.com

Publicity and Public Relations—VACANT

Facebook Admin—Carolyn Donnell

facebook@southbaywriters.com

Hospitality—VACANT

Membership—Shari Clare

membership@southbaywriters.com

MRMS Admin (Member Roster)—Marjorie Johnson

mrms@southbaywriters.com

Member News—Marjorie Johnson

membernews@southbaywriters.com

Newsletter Editor—Tina Glasner

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin

WABaldwin@aol.com

Web Editor & Web Master—Una Daly

webeditor@southbaywriters.com

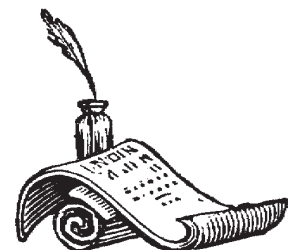
SBW Mission

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

Join Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Note: California Writers Club uses a fiscal year that runs from July 1 through June 30 each year. 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



WritersTalk

is the monthly newsletter of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club.

Managing Editor—Tina Glasner

Contributing Editors

Carolyn Donnell
Marjorie Johnson
Marty Sorensen

Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in WritersTalk. Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. The Managing Editor decides which submissions to publish, and submissions may be copyedited for clarity or brevity.

Short Fiction (1000 words)

Memoir (1000 words)

Poetry (300 words)

Essay (1000 words)

Electronic submissions should be attached MS Word files, sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. Use Times New Roman 12-font, no tabs, no colors, no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files, with placement notes as needed.

Authors retain all rights to their work. WritersTalk gratefully acknowledges the authors' permission to publish their submissions here. For any reprint, contact individual authors for permission.

Submission deadline is the 20th of the month. Submit to: newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Member Achievement and News

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.

Advertising of workshops, conferences, and events is accepted from other Branches of California Writers Club. Because California Writers Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, WritersTalk does not accept advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Also, we cannot accept political advertising of any kind. Submit to: membernews@southbaywriters.com

Change of Address: Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com, or you can edit your own entry in the member's roster (MRMS).

Trademarks and Copyright

The California Writers Club logo is a registered trademark® of the California Writers Club. All other trademarks, logos, and brand names appearing in this newsletter are the property of their respective owners.

Copyright © 2024 California Writers Club South Bay Branch (South Bay Writers).

Tina Glasner
Managing Editor



Finding My Way To A Career

Who has ever heard of the Wiggly Block test? In the testing room, I see a 3-D wooden puzzle placed before me, and then taken apart and a timer set. What was I doing with a child's toy? However, by the third trial I was completing it quickly. Wiggly Block tests for the ability to visualize how a structure fits together. Turns out I have an aptitude for designing, building, or even

repairing. This was only one of the aptitudes measured at the [Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation](http://www.johnsonoconnor.com).

In 1984 I was here to test and learn how my skills could be used in a career. My BA earned in 1976 was in German Literature. I had had no practical career plans for using German, and then I'd gotten married and started a family. In Santa Rosa CA the streets weren't teeming with Germans hoping I'd aid them with my skills, so I'd taken clerical positions: payroll, accounts payable, typing, filing. I'd tried accounting courses, but they didn't hold my interest — so I'd drop out. My pattern: A new job would excite me for a few weeks, then awful boredom would set in. If more college was the answer, which course of study would be worth paying for? I didn't want to risk more fruitless time or funds. In the pages of *Ms Magazine* I learned about Johnson O'Connor. Even so, it took me about nine months to be desperate enough to make an appointment in San Francisco, the nearest testing center, for two days of evaluation, and pay the required fee.

The Foundation is not a job placement agency or a counselling service. Their creed is that each individual possesses a unique assortment of aptitudes, and each is happiest in a profession that maximises those talents. They've developed their own set of aptitudes (yes, the Wiggly Block), and you really don't know what a test is testing for, or what constitutes "well done," so you can't cheat. Perhaps best of all, they've evaluated seemingly bazillions of professions and broken these down to their respective aptitudes. No need to know what it's really like to be a plumber, or a brain surgeon, or a company CEO. They know, and give you their unbiased opinions. They're nonprofit; no one pays them a fee whether you take their advice or not.

Life changing! The reason for my boredom was that I have a group of strong skills, not just the math and number checking called for in clerical occupations. So, I needed a career with variety that exercised more of my various aptitudes. To find out what they sug-

gested, and how it led me to writing, editing, and design — stay tuned. It's still not a snap of the fingers to change a career path! — WT



INSIDE

Member News: M. Johnson	4	Off the Shelf Cartoon: E. Matthews	8
Board Report: C. Weilert	5	Contests and Markets: C. Donnell	9
Gratitude, a Limerick: S. Clare	5	Where & What: B. Baldwin	10
Letter to the Editor	5	My Generation: C. Weilert	10
Facebook Groups	5	What You Say: B. Baldwin	11
Photos Apr 13 Meeting	6-7	Les Prose Cartoon: K. Roberge	11
Prayer & Hope: T. Glasner	8	George Carlin Fun Book Titles	11

(Continued from page 1)

them about coin collecting – but it’s best to be familiar with their more well-known accomplishments as well! During the actual interview, get the information you want upfront. Save any awkward or unpleasant questions for last, in case your subject abruptly terminates the interview!

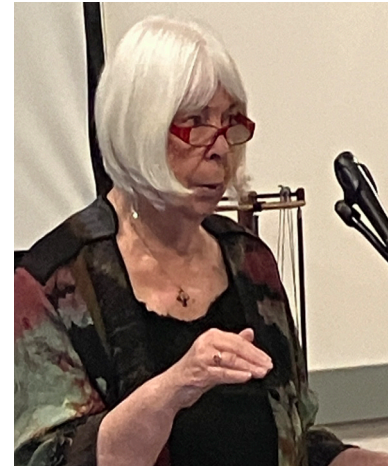
As you move from writing to editing, print out what you’ve written, so that you can make copious margin notes, and cut up and rearrange sections.

Read your stuff out loud, note any awkward passages, and aim for a smooth

flow. Remember the basics: remove unnecessary words, don’t overuse synonyms, favor active over passive voice, avoid clichés.

Don’t overwork yourself: take breaks – give your brain a rest. Save serious proofreading for the end.

Take this advice, and watch your writing improve! – WT



Mary Gottschalk

Member News

Marjorie Johnson

Marjorie Bicknell Johnson: *Research Gate* reported that my article with Co-authors Richard Sarsfield and V. E. Hoggatt Jr., “A Generalization of Wythoff’s Game,” reached 200 reads on March 24. Research Gate allows scientific writers to find others working on similar subjects.

In fact, “reads” is important for writers. This month, **Arlene Miller**, The Grammar Diva at bigwords.com, discusses “Read anything good lately?” on her blog. She’s been blogging weekly on writing for at least 15 years, and I recommend checking her out. Arlene has been a past speaker for South Bay Writers. I checked it out by going to the WritersTalk cumulative index (that Carolyn Donnell keeps current every month) on the SBW website. I clicked on title and got an alphabetized list; the total index has more than 5000 entries. Then I put Arlene Miller into the search box – voila. You can read about her on page 1, *WritersTalk February 2014*, on the SBW website under back issues. I invite you to check out our WritersTalk cumulative index.

I received my complimentary copy of *And I Saw Sequences of Petals and Leaves: My Life as the One They Call Fibonacci*, by **Daniele C. Struppa**, a charming piece of creative nonfiction. I think I told you that I was an early reader of this work. Also, he used my husband’s portrait photo of Fibonacci’s statue. Unfortunately, the font he used is 8-pt or smaller, and the references smaller yet, making reading difficult. Worse, the paragraphs are long and without spacing between them, making pages unattractive to a potential reader. (Think no white space.) The front cover is lovely, but the back cover copy, white on a green background, uses too small a font and not enough contrast for me to read it without a magnifying glass. I mention these things because these days many authors self-publish their books. What’s the point? For example, our submissions to WritersTalk are supposed to be in 12-pt font. Leftover almost from the days of Gutenberg, the size of a point is 1/72 of an inch, so that 12-pt type is 1/6 of an inch high, slightly larger than 1/8 of an inch, which you can find

on your ruler, if you still have one. Printers also use 12-point paper, which has a thickness of 12 thousandths of an inch, or 0.012. I guess these days talk of fractions and inches seems out-of-date, to be replaced by pixels.



Kelly Miller: “I am pleased to announce my 9th book, *The Mysterious Disappearance of Mr. Darcy*, a Regency romance/mystery, was released on March 26, 2024. Also, *The Trouble With Friends*, my light-hearted Regency romance, won 1st Place, Clean Romance, The 2024 Incipere Awards.” Nine books, wow! Congratulations, Kelly.

Audry Lynch, at 90, is still giving us a run for our money. On March 16, 2024, Gamma Omega Chapter, DKG California Area IV, Delta Kappa Gamma Society recognized her with an award for Outstanding Service to the Profession and for Service to the Community. We’re so proud of you, Audry.

Shari Clare wrote on April 13: “Greetings from Bellevue, WA! I am attending the Left Coast Crime 2024 Conference where I met a lot of great writers. One in particular was quite humorous, and I think she would be a great speaker for our club. Her name is Heather Haven and here is a link to her website: [Home - Heather Haven Stories](http://Home-HeatherHavenStories.com).” Thanks for the tip, Shari. Left Coast Crime is an annual convention for mystery fans. The 2025 convention will be held in Denver CO, March 13 – 16.

Please share your writing successes and adventures by sending an email to membernews@southbaywriters.com – WT

View from the Board

Chris Weilert

The South Bay Writers Board met on April 10, zooming at 7 p.m. SBW Board members are listed on page 2 of *WritersTalk* with their emails.

Edie Matthews, President: In June the speaker is Chris Hennessy, "Story-Telling Crossover: How to Use Visual Media in Your Author Platform and Writing Projects." In July we will have no speaker, it is our annual BBQ. The August speaker is TBA. In September, our speaker is bestselling author, Robert Sloan. In October, our speaker is Jill Hedgecock, "Chapter Endings." The November speaker is TBA. In December we will have no speaker, it is our annual holiday party. Our board meetings will continue on the Wednesday evening before the general meeting.

Alice Wu, Treasurer: Alice reported income via the March balance sheet.

Bill Baldwin, Open Mics, Central Board & NorCal Rep: Open Mics continue on first and third Fridays on Zoom, but

Poetry

Gratitude for a Long Marriage

Limerick by Shari Clare

In the 39 years since we wed
So many things still go unsaid
As days and years flow
I think we both know
What a wonderful life we have led
— WT



YOUR NAME HERE!

Submit to *WritersTalk* and let us feature your creativity. We're even open to serializing longer submissions. Also, you're welcome to include accompanying photos or artwork as images. Submission guidelines are on page 3. We'll see you in the pages of WT!

one may return to in-person. Please contact Bill to set up your opportunity to read your work. Recent open mics: March 15th – 3 readers, April 5th – 5 readers. Re the Central Board, nothing to report. Re NorCal, nothing to report. The next NorCal meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 6th.

Carolyn Donnell, Contests & Facebook Admin: Reported that Facebook is working properly. Will research a local and possibly less expensive printer for *WritersTalk*.

Shari Clare, Membership: As of April 10th, we have 96 members, 2 lifetime members, 3 students and 3 dual.

Marjorie Johnson, Member News, MRMS Admin: As Member News Editor, Marge always welcomes member news.

Tina Glasner, Writers Talk Editor: Tina has been making adjustments and fine tuning the newsletter. We have sufficient space for more submissions. There has been a recent shortage of content supplied by our members.

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, May 8, 2024, on Zoom. SBW members are always welcome at Board meetings. To attend, email Edie Matthews. — WT

Letter to the Editor

Mary Gottschalk, April Speaker

I'd like to thank South Bay Writers for your warm, welcoming, and gracious reception at the April 13 meeting.

Jamal Khan's introduction was so nice, I immediately thought he should be the one presenting. It was reassuring that only a couple of people were nodding off, which I'm attributing to the early hour rather than my scintillating anecdotes. For myself, it was especially nice to re-connect with former colleagues and friends.

When Edie Matthews asked me to speak, I was hesitant. Now I'm pleased I did, as you are all kind.

If anyone has a question they didn't ask, you can reach me at mary_gottschalk@sbcglobal.net.

Thank you,

Mary Gottschalk

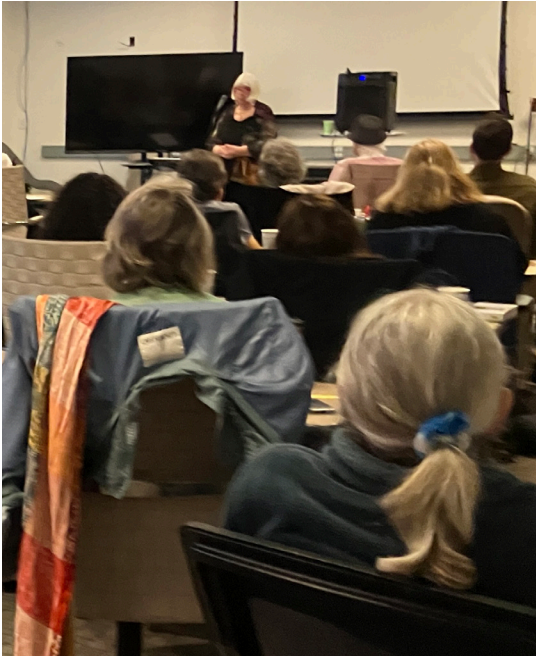
Facebook Groups You Might Find Interesting

by Carolyn Donnell

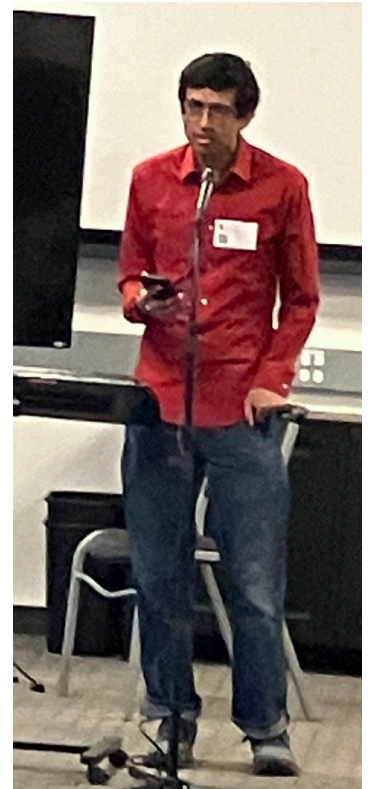
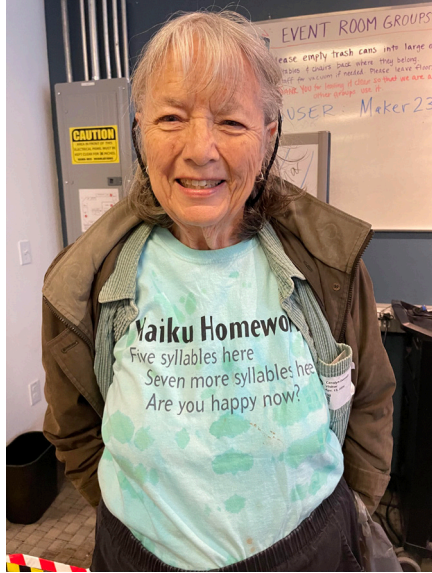
- Anthologies Seeking Submissions
- California Poets
- Cupertino Poet Laureate
- Los Gatos Poet Laureate
- No Fee Calls for Poems
- Open Submission Calls for Short Story Writers
- Playwriting Submissions & Competitions
- Poetry Center San Jose-PCSJ
- Poetry Exchange
- Poetry Lounge
- Santa Clara County Poet Laureate
- The Poetry Salon Online
- Willow Glen Poetry Project

SBW April 13: Mary Gottschalk - It's All Writing

Photos by Carolyn Donnell



Photos by Carolyn Donnell (continued)



Not A Prayer But A Hope

Tina Glasner



I used to wonder why I had no particular faith, although I consider myself Jewish. The god of my fathers is not my god. The god of my fathers is not my father's god. My father could not give me his god, because he did not have one to give.

My father lost nearly all his family in the Holocaust. "I can't believe in God. If there was a god he wouldn't have let such terrible things happen to the innocent," he told me, at age 75.

Hitler failed to eliminate the Jewish people, but the Jewish god is another question. Burned away in the crematory ovens, perhaps he is now only a wraith visiting every surviving Passover table, rather than the prophet, as our ritual pretends. Perhaps it is also he who I sense lingering momentarily in the wisp of smoke as each Hanukkah candle expires.

My father is not a bitter man, nor a sorrowful one. He and my mother together placed their reliance in their own morality and that of others, raising their children without placing the heavy burden of the past's evil upon us. And yet you see why I have no god, and perhaps too much distrust to ever seek one.

Let this be my prayer. Let us wake up every morning and do good deeds without being prompted. Let us be joyful without justification. Let us feed and house the hungry and care for the ill because they are the other side of ourselves, not out of guilt. And let us be ever vigilant to the ascendancy of hate, in all its guises.

Let us beware of all deeds done in the name of any god. A long time ago we were given the knowledge of good and evil. Let that be enough. — WT

Off the Shelf – Edie Matthews



"I'm not sure this is what Robert Frost meant by the 'road less traveled.'"

Membership Renewal - Reminder

Shari Clare

Active members pay \$45, Dual members pay \$25, and Student members pay \$20. For those joining for the first time, or if membership has lapsed, the cost to join or rejoin is \$65.

Membership is valid until June 30, 2025. Note that if you joined this year between January 1 and March 31, you received a discounted rate for the partial year membership and now need to renew at the \$45 rate for the 2024/2025 year.

There are 3 easy ways to renew:

1. Go to southbaywriters.com/join/#submit and choose the Renewal option, then click the Buy Now button to pay online.
2. Write a check to CWC-SOUTH BAY WRITERS, and mail it to South Bay Writers, PO BOX 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055
3. Bring cash or a check to an upcoming meeting and give it to our treasurer, Alice Wu.

The deadline to renew for the 2024/2025 year is June 30th.



Carolyn Donnell
Contributing Editor &
Facebook Admin

Contests and Markets by Carolyn Donnell

Listings are for information only. NO VETTING has been done by our club. Also, if you hear about an interesting new contest, please email me at facebook@southbaywriters.com. The South Bay Writers Facebook members' group is [South Bay Writers Club](#), please join us.

Other tips: You can directly research information online from other branches ([California Writers Club BRANCHES](#)) to see whether they are running contests. Some allow all CWC members, others, just dual members. For more contest information on Facebook, see [Writing Competitions and Contests - Weekly Updates](#). For excellent advice on literary scams, see the [Writer Beware](#) page of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA).

Contests (alphabetical order)

Name	Deadline	Comments
13th Annual Kindle Book Awards!	May 1	The KINDLE Book Review.
2025 Int'l Voices Creative Nonfiction	July 1	Vine Leaves Press, per Martha Engber.
Academy of American Poets	n/a	Lists contests/submissions.
Almond Press		Lists many contests.
Authors Publish		Lists contests/submissions.
Catamaran Literary Reader		West Coast quarterly literary/visual arts journal.
Chicken Soup For The Soul		Ongoing topics. See Submit Your Story.
EveryWriter: The Best Poetry Prizes		A blog listing poetry prizes. Also lists other resources for writers.
Freedom With Writing		Lists many resources.
Fremont Area Writers		See Writers Resources tab.
Funds for Writers		Subscribe to Hope Clark's newsletter hope@chopeclark.com .
Gyroscope		4 issues a year.
Newpages		List of writing contests.
North State Writers		See Anthologies. Planning a new anthology soon.
Poetry Foundation		Resources for poets.
Poetry Pacific		Published and unpublished.
Poetry Society of America		Awards/prizes.
Poetry Soup		Free poetry contest and other resources for poets.
Poets & Writers		Upcoming deadlines.
Rattle Poetry Prize	July 15	Entry fee includes 1 year subscription.
Red Penguin Books		Various ongoing submissions.
Reedsy		Chapbook contests.
Romance Writers of America		Lists by month.
SF Book Festival	May 24	See the call for entries.
SF/Peninsula Branch		See writing contests. Lists other resources.
The Literary Nest		Send visual art to theliterarynest@gmail.com .
The Masters Review		Chapbook contest.
The Thimble Magazine		Quarterly online.
The Write Life		Lists contests.
The Writers College		Writing competitions and events.
Tom Howard/John H. Reid	May 1	Fiction & Essay Contest. Winning Writers latest contest.
Trish Hopkinson: A Selfish Poet		a blog.
Up the Staircase Quarterly		Online journal of poetry, art, interviews, and reviews.
Water Dragon Publishing		Check website for date for submissions.
West Trade Review	multiple	Reading periods: Apr 1 - Aug 1, Aug 15 - Dec 1.
Winning Writers		Their contests and others listed.
Writer's Digest	May 6	93rd Annual Writing Competition.

Bay Area Book Festival

Vanessa MacLaren-Wray

Cometary Tales: Writing on the Solar Wind

The Bay Area Book Festival is coming up in June in downtown Berkeley. My publisher is offering a shared space for local indie and self-pub authors to sell their books.

"Small Publishing In a Big Universe," a project of local publisher Paper Angel Press, plans to host a table for small-press and indie authors to sell their books together at the Bay Area Book

Festival's outdoor fair on June 2nd. The shared-space fee covers room for your books, onsite sales support, and online marketing.

The application form contains the details:

spbu-marketplace.com/vendors/application

If you have remaining questions you can reach out to Steven Radecki at spbumarketplace@gmail.com. — WT

Where and What I'm From

Bill Baldwin

I'm from people and places I don't know anymore.
I'm from a first-kiss place I can never return to.
I'm from a first-crush person I can never find again;
High school and colleges I can nearly never visit
Or never visit.
I'm from a fiancée who will never speak to me again.
I'm from one religion which mostly might reject me,
And another that totally affirms me.

I'm from people, though, that I value:
People who write and love and care about one another;
People who speak for justice and the downtrodden.

Memoir

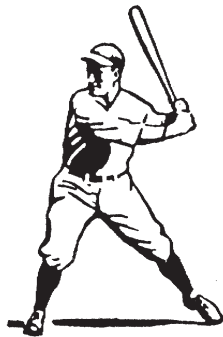
Talking 'Bout My Gen-Gen-Generation

Chris Weilert

As a youngster, I played for five years in Little League Baseball. Dads became coaches who comically attempted to hit us pop flies in the outfield. Their sons always played on the team, which didn't always go over well with the other teammates. These fathers also knew hardly anything about pitching. I recall throwing for so many innings, some of them endless debacles of walking and beaming hitters. I just wished my wiffle ball skills translated into throwing a hardball. In the era of no pitch counts, you pitched until your arm wore out. I threw so many pitches that my right arm grew three inches longer than my left by the time I turned 16. I don't look at this romantically, but how this compares with today, with laughter.

In this day and age of micromanaging, participation trophies, and overzealous parents in the bleachers making fools out of themselves, I have to say, "If only I had played in this era." Everything nowadays is geared toward maximum success and less on joy. So many times while playing I thought about snow cones and chili dogs after the game. In good years we got to go to the pizza parlor and act like wild banshees.

One of the most significant differences I notice is the equipment. The dads in my era would empty the big duffel bag of beat-up equipment, and we went at it. The league handed out this stuff at the beginning of the year and rarely did we receive a new shiny aluminum bat, but instead wooden ones that looked a decade old.



I'm from cold Bavarian landscapes,
Harsh Pennsylvania winters,
Japanese blizzards,
Appalachian miners and Methodist ministers;
Muggy Virginia summers and racial crap.

I'm from different "guy-stuff."

I am made from pasta and dim sum,
From rebellious contrarian Californian Bay folks;
People who aren't afraid to love many of whatever sort,
And who write their lifeblood onto paper.

— WT

Since I had older brothers, I got their hand-me-downs and leftovers, like bats with black electrical tape for a grip and gloves held together with shoestrings. I didn't own my first pair of cleats until I turned 11. Of course, they were used with cardboard inserts.

And now for the biggest and most significant difference between the baseball generations. We played some form of baseball using either a whiffle or tennis ball and hardball all summer long. Sometimes five on five, nine on nine, or one on one. If we hung around inside too long we got told to get our butts out of the house. Kids needed to burn off their energy by not sitting around playing with Legos.

I am probably somewhat jealous and sound like an old curmudgeon. Everything evolves, and sometimes it's not an improvement. Trying to regulate, spruce something up, and make it user-friendly doesn't always make it better. It progresses for the sake of progress. Fast-forward 20 years af-

ter I played organized hardball, and I was now in the city softball league. I was on a rag-tag church team, playing against the non-seculars who were armed with three-hundred-dollar aluminum bats. They bashed so many home runs, the umpire called the game over after five innings. We hadn't kept up with the times. If only they'd used our old duffel bag of beat-up mangled bats, we could have played a fairer ballgame. I'm not bitter – well, maybe just a little.

The above is an excerpt from Chris's book, "Deep Thoughts from a Recliner Quarterback."

— WT



Watch What You Say!

Bill Baldwin

I attended a reception Friday for faculty of Learn-It-All Community College and spent quite a while chatting with our President, Dr. Majors, who, like me, is an opera enthusiast. After I shared a few anecdotes about the two years I spent in Germany, Dr. Majors asked, innocently enough, “So you’re fluent in German?”

My mind screeched to a halt, face melting into a horrified look. What could I answer? My thoughts shot everywhere.

I’d been expanding my Spanish lately by studying Argentine tango. Tango lyrics are often written in a mixture of the Rioplatense dialect, street slang, and something like Pig Latin. I’d asked a Cuban friend for help on one lyric. She’d glanced at the words, then expressed utter bewilderment.

“Tell everyone how the parrot is depopulated?” she asked. “They invited me to a ball game and I had to go swimming?” I later determined that “parrot” was slang for “garret” or “hovel.” Never have figured out the rest.

Teaching English as a Second Language I’d met immigrants from far-off places who’d become enamored with hip hop or beat poetry. “What’s this guy mean when he says ‘I really dig that chick?’” one of them would ask. “I expected him to describe how he buried the hen—but he never even mentioned a shovel!”

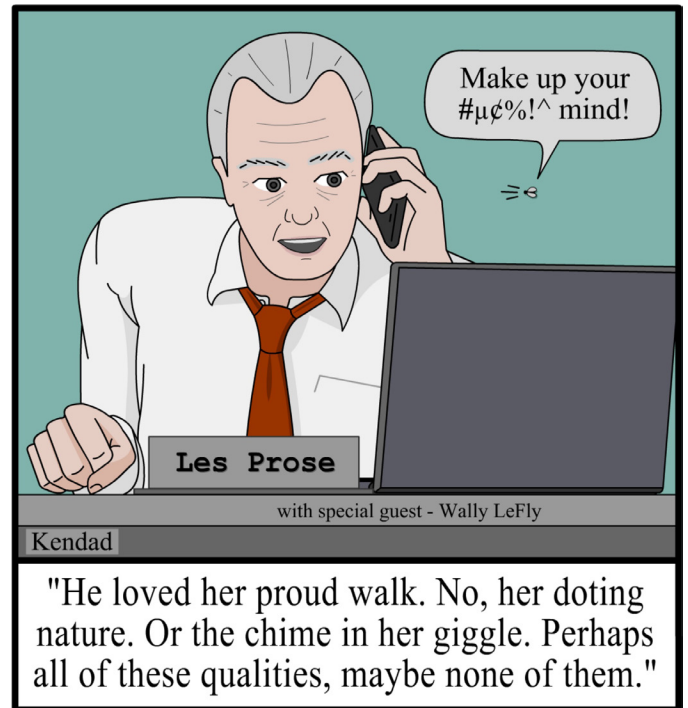
I also remembered, I’m afraid, the disheveled man who latched onto two friends and me one evening in downtown Munich. He proudly showed us an official-looking slip of paper declaring him Persona Non Grata in Yugoslavia. He kept pounding himself on the chest and saying, “Bandito. Bandito.” Finally, in a desperate effort to demonstrate his command of English, he suddenly stopped walking, looked us directly in the eyes, and said: “Fuck you, son-of-a-bitch!” We came to a stunned halt. Paul decided the guy was trying to impress us, smiled, pointed at him, and said firmly: “Very good!” We gave the man the slip (and I don’t mean “lingerie”) shortly thereafter.

In my catatonic moment with Dr. Majors, I also recalled British, Irish, Scottish, and Australian eccentricities, and the UK Spanish recordings I’d used getting ready for a trip to Los Cabos one year. The recorded British voice would say things like: “If your cAAr breaks down, you’re going to have to find a GAARage.” The Castilian voice, meanwhile, would toss out things like: “No conoTHco la THiudad!” or “Conécteme con el serviTHio interurbano!”

I survived the trip.

Continuing to think this through, I asked myself why I knew the word for “pencil” in Russian, Hebrew, Spanish, French, and Japanese. Was the word for pencil really all that useful? Still, I’d spent Christmas Eve at a party that included a German woman, who told me I spoke German quite well. But was I fluent? How can you ever be sure?

So, when I finally snapped out of my stunned catatonia, I smiled at Dr. Majors and replied: “Well, I may have been fluent forty years ago!” And wondered whether the college



might need a German instructor.

At that point, a recent hire walked up. Dr. Majors introduced her as Rebiya, newly arrived from Xinjiang. Rebiya would be teaching Chinese and Russian, and maybe Arabic later.

“I imagine it’s quite an adjustment moving here,” I said.

“Yes. Can you imagine? I’ve never even been to a soccer game! I’ve heard so much about it from my European and South American friends! Hope to see one soon!”

“Whatever floats your boat,” said Dr. Majors, beaming.

Rebiya’s eyes opened wide. This woman, who had spent most of her life not far from the Gobi Desert, exclaimed joyfully: “Do you mean we could all go sailing?”

On a drunken boat? I wondered. And before I could catch myself, I was singing that tango about the parrot... —WT

The George Carlin Book Club: How-To Titles

- How to Turn Your Front Lawn into a Cathouse
- How to Milk a Dog While It’s Sleeping
- How to Lure a Weasel into a Cardboard Box
- How to Get a Tan with a Blow Torch
- How to Style Your Hair with a Bullwhip
- How to Convert an Old Leather Chair into Twelve Pairs of Shoes
- How to Dance with a Swedish Person
- How to Make Two Small Hats out of a Brassiere
- How to Make a Brassiere out of Two Small Hats

From *BrainDroppings* by George Carlin, 1997, pg 44-45 —WT



California Writers Club

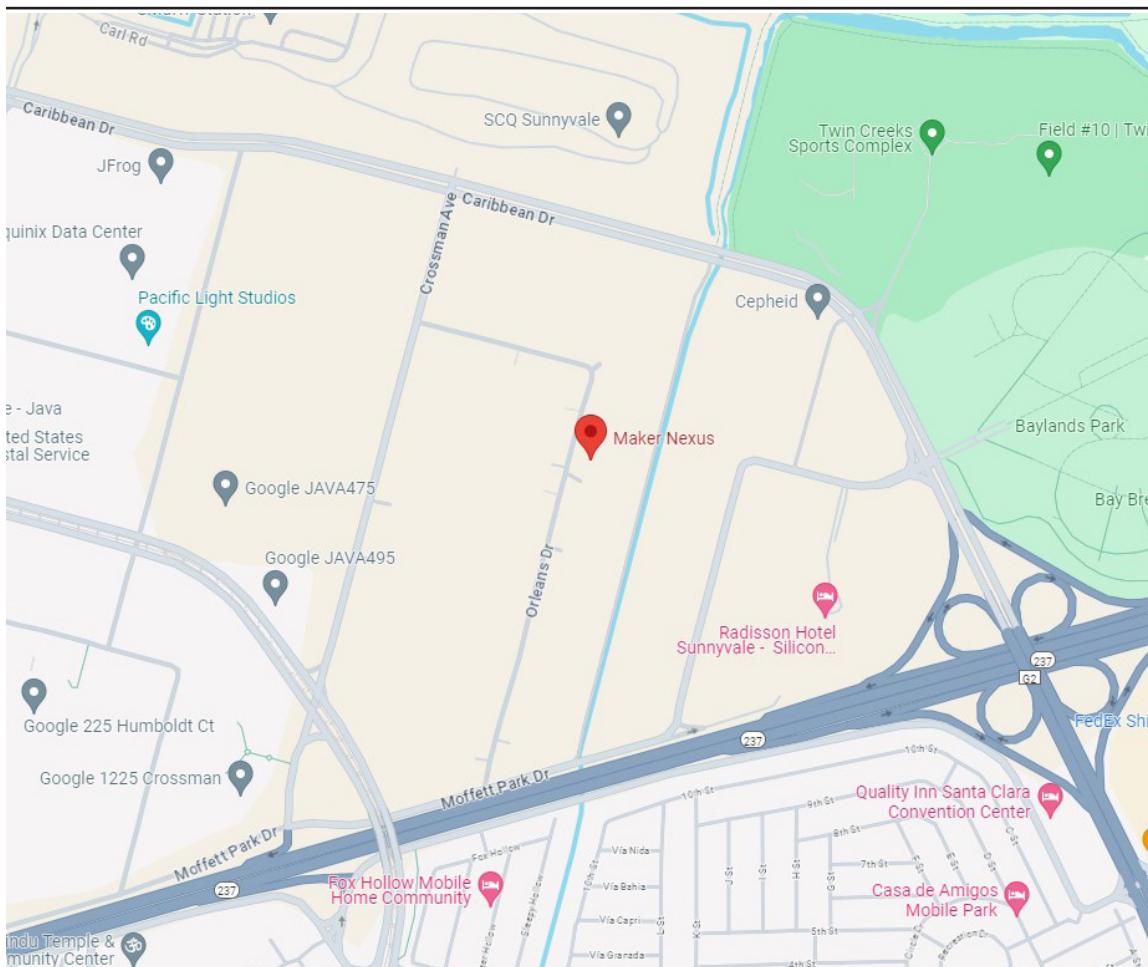
South Bay Branch

P.O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

www.southbaywriters.com

Address Correction Requested



Directions from Santa Clara:

Maker Nexus

1330 Orleans Drive
Sunnyvale

North on Lawrence
Expressway,
Cross Hwy 101,
Name changes to Caribbean
Drive,
Cross Hwy 237.
Left at Crossman Ave,
Left at Baltic Way,
Right at Orleans Dr. to 1330.

**Saturday, May 11,
10:30 at Maker Nexus**

**Come EARLY to
allow for the security
check-in and finding
a good seat**

**Emily Jiang
ABC's of Picture Books**