



August Speaker: Heather Haven

Adventures in Becoming a Published Author

Shari Clare



Publishing a novel can be an elusive dream, even for the most dedicated of writers. Although Heather Haven always had a passion for writing, her journey to the publication of her first novel contains as many twists and turns as one of the 18 published mysteries she now has under her belt.

Starting out in Florida, with a long stint in New York City as an actress, seamstress, and writer of pretty much everything except novels, Heather acquired a husband and moved with him to California. There she began living a different sort of dream, at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, working as a faculty recruiter.

But Heather never gave up on her original dream of becoming a published author. In her spare time, she put everything she had into completing a sensational cozy mystery, hoping that publication offers would start to roll in. Little did she know that she would face the time-consuming and difficult challenge of capturing the attention of a traditional publisher. Unafraid of being non-traditional, Heather boldly went her own way and self-published, a practice that was looked down upon in the bad old days of the 20th century.

Fortunately, we live in a more enlightened time, where self-publishing can lead to fame and fortune, and sometimes a future on television. In fact, you might soon find adaptations of Heather's murder mysteries on one of the major cable networks known for its cozy "killer" content.

Join us to hear Heather's hilarious adventures through her publication journey, that, in the manner of her witty mystery novels, lead to an unpredictable ending.



- **What: Heather Haven - Getting Published**
- **When: Saturday, August 10, 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

Article

Recap: BayCon 2024

Joe-Ming Cheng

BayCon 2024 delivered an exciting array of activities and events for 550 attendees. The opening ceremony featured the chair, board members, special guest writer Ryka Aoki, and Hollywood film singer Bonnie Gordon.

In total, the event featured 247 in-depth sessions. Among these, I attended 22 panels, focusing on: Writer Rights, Contracts, AI, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics); Imagination and Creative Development; and Entertainment, Art, and Games.

Game rooms showcased machines from the 70s and 80s alongside the latest computer games, catering to a wide range of gaming enthusiasts. Continuous showings of Japanese animated movies provided entertainment, with dedicated rest and movie areas for children and young people. The staff dressed in themed uniforms, complete with medals and designated ranks such as captain, officer, and soldier, with Star Wars characters patrolling as well.

"Your Writerly Rights" and "Can We Survive AI Assisted Disinformation?" explored the legal and ethical challenges writers face in the digital age. A lawyer noted that AI-generated parts are not copyrightable. Panels like "Legal System Differences" and "Space Manufacturing" provided insights into how varying legal frameworks and technological advancements impact writers' and creators' space. Additionally, sessions such as "How STEM Changed Japan" and the "Women/Non-Binary in STEM Professional" highlighted the significant contributions and challenges faced by women in STEM fields.

"Finding the Perfect Writing Group" and "Worst First Page" offered practi-

(Continued on page 4)

Finding Our Groove

Una Daly

President, South Bay Writers

As I begin as your new President, I've been reflecting on "who we are at the South Bay Writer's club" and what new directions we might explore. For most organizations, this begins with creating or revisiting their mission. Merriam Webster defines mission as "something that states the purpose or goal of a business or organization ... emphasizing its ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of the community."

The statewide California Writers' Club site (calwriters.org) describes our mission this way:

"Do you live to write? Write for a living? Whether you're a published author or 'just always wanted to write,' there's a place for you ... (We) include writers of all levels and interests. Our mission is to educate writers of all abilities in the craft of writing and the marketing of their work."

That exemplifies a club that I'd want to join and thankfully you and I are already members! But as I visit with some of the 22 branch presidents throughout our state, I see similarities but also differences in approaches that reflect each branch's membership and region.

As the South Bay Writers' board plans for the upcoming 2024-25 year, I want to invite you to help us expand the CWC mission to reflect our Silicon Valley region and membership. Let's brainstorm to find learning opportunities and activities that engage and grow an even more diverse membership, with varied backgrounds and interests. In addition to our fun social events (summer BBQ, holiday party), our club learning opportunities currently include:

- Monthly meetings featuring dynamic speakers on the craft of writing, marketing, and publishing but what other topics and speakers might we attract to expand our vision?
- All members are invited to submit to WritersTalk, our monthly newsletter. Along with member contributions, it contains club news and calendar information. Quarterly,



it also features low-stakes writing contests to energize and get our creative juices flowing. Are there other ways the monthly newsletter can inspire and embolden?

- The South Bay branch website promotes upcoming club events and contains archived and indexed newsletters back to 2017. It's also where you can join or renew your membership online. How else might it support our members?
- Two monthly open mics, currently held online, are open to members and newcomers alike. It's a great opportunity to read your work aloud and hear from other writers. Have you tried one?
- Throughout the year book festivals are held in the Bay Area. Now that most of us are able to attend in-person events again, should the club be active at these events?

Please fill out a brief Member Survey to share your ideas on how we can continue to build and expand our amazing club together!!!

All those who submit a survey will be entered into a raffle at the August and September monthly meetings.

Go to bit.ly/sbw2425, or use the QR code below to access the survey. — WT



California Writers Club

South Bay Branch

www.southbaywriters.com

Executive Committee

President—Una Daly
pres@southbaywriters.com

Vice President—Shari Clare
vp@southbaywriters.com

Secretary—Chris Weilert
secretary@southbaywriters.com

Treasurer—Alice Wu
treasurer@southbaywriters.com

Members-at-Large—
(1st Member at Large—VACANT)
2nd Member at Large—Alfred Jan,
member-at-large2@southbaywriters.com

Central Board Rep—Bill Baldwin
WABaldwin@aol.com

NorCal Rep—Bill Baldwin
WABaldwin@aol.com

SBW Committee Chairs

Programs—Shari Clare
vp@southbaywriters.com

Publicity and Public Relations—Edie Matthews
pr@southbaywriters.com

Facebook Admin—Carolyn Donnell
facebook@southbaywriters.com

Hospitality—Edie Matthews

Membership—VACANT

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—Joe-Ming Cheng
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

Copy Editors

Bill Baldwin
 Carolyn Donnell
 Marjorie Johnson
 Tonya McQuade
 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 MS Word files. Use a plain font, no tabs, no extra spaces or returns, no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files, with placement notes as desired.

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).

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Tina Glasner
 Managing Editor

Creative Juices

In the “Dot-Com Bust” period, 2002, I was laid off as a tech writer. I went back to school. At ITT Technical Institute, my Multimedia degree focused on graphic design and animation. Turns out, I’d always wanted to major in Art.



The juice label pictured was an Illustrator assignment to “create a fictional product.” I started out by copying some standard bits from a Gatorade label. As for the product name, I like puns. It turned out the teacher most loved how I ventured outside the borders.



For animation class, the assignment was to design a “nonhuman character.” My singing starfish started out as a simple pillow shape. For my first video, starfish Blanche (my middle name) sang “I’m in Love With a Big Blue Frog,” one of my favorite Peter, Paul and Mary songs (“that’s P H R O G!”). I was so

shy about my voice that I recorded in an empty classroom. After that, of course I had to make a frog! Blue Frog is crude, but the instructor loved Blanche’s new pearls (where is her neck?). In my capstone project video, the starfish and the frog, voiced by my son Lyle, duetted on “The Rainbow Connection,” along with kazoo, played by my son Vince.

So, I overcame my reticence to sing in public, and now karaoke is a favorite activity. Sometimes my sons join me. And I also, along the way, overcame my reticence to call myself an artist. —WT



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cal advice for writers. Panels like “Best Books in the Genre in the Last Three Years” and “Adding Your Own Magic to the Place You Love,” discussed observations and innovations in literature. “The Art of Scripting,” “Beta Readers and Critique Groups,” and “Writing a Book – Sequel” noted the advantages and disadvantages of sequels, often suggesting that an independent book is a preferred choice. The panel on “Willy Wonka Book Adaptation” delved into the fun and rewards of adapting classic works for new audiences.

As for entertainment, art, and games, highlights included the “Masquerade,” where attendees showcased their creative costumes, and the “Bonnie Gordon Concert,” a memorable Hollywood movie musical performance. The “Celtic/Medieval Music Jam” brought together BayCon members’ musical and dance talent. The Team Space Mission Center was a standout feature, with a large-scale replica of a real command room in a heavily-armed spaceship, with instructors dressed in French Napoleonic officer coats. The hallway featured various booths, including a display on historical European Martial Arts and a Star Trek booth.



Star Wars characters

The panelists for “Can We Survive AI Assisted Disinformation?” included an author, a theoretical physicist, a senior software engineer, and a space shuttle fuel system engineering and policy expert. Disinformation and infringement may not stem from the intrinsic nature

of AI but rather from its usage. As an IC, hardware system, algorithm developer and researcher for forty years, I noted that the use of AI dates back to the LISP AI (List Processing programming language) that was developed from the 60s through the 80s, In 1991, I developed unsupervised learning AI, fine-tuning my compression algorithm proposal. I emphasized that when these AI projects were undertaken, there were no malicious intentions, only a goal to achieve the most effective results with less effort. We discussed cases where AI applications manipulate users’ emotions. I noted that MIT and other research institutes have conducted formal research on affective computing, focusing on seven basic emotions, for nearly 20 years. These computer models can emulate perception and emotion to a reasonably good degree, and the intent was never to cause harm.

The panelists for “The Art of Scripting” included Kurtcu Wonda, Ed. D., author of the 34th episode of Star Trek “A Matter of Honor,” from the television series Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Mathew B. Davison, actor and

television series director. Davison told us that for TV series, scene writers gather dynamically to edit the script. They can shoot 50 scenes a week; a weekly 30-minute program is manageable, but a 60-minute program could be challenging (a 60-minute episode usually takes 40-60 scenes). Davison also described what it’s like to be in the writers’ room: TV series writers’ rooms are where ideas are broken, and showrunners, producers, and writers work together to create the story for a television series. The walls are covered with 3x5 cards. Wonda discussed the process of submitting scripts to TV series, noting that Star Trek had an open script submission policy, allowing anyone to send in an episode they wrote, whether they were represented by an agent or not. Someone on the Voyager staff would read all these scripts, looking for either a good story idea or a good writer.



Bonnie Gordon

The panel on “Legal Systems - Fictional and Real,” was also a fascinating discussion, led by David Friedman, Law Professor at Santa Clara University and son of Milton Friedman, and Frog Jones, Author and Public Defender. The panelists discussed the diversity and origins of legal systems. For example, Sunni Islamic law has four schools of jurisprudence, each established based on varying sources of power, enforcement capabilities, and methods of dispute resolution. In 1066, when William the Conqueror landed in England, Saxon law governed the existing English population, while Norman law was imposed on the new Norman settlers. Friedman added an interesting hypothetical scenario: in a space city, an owner might offer extremely high wages to recruit workers from Earth. However, if these workers decide to leave, they might discover that they owe their lifetime earnings to the owner. Jones emphasized that, once again, the source of power and enforcement are crucial in determining the applicable legal system. — WT

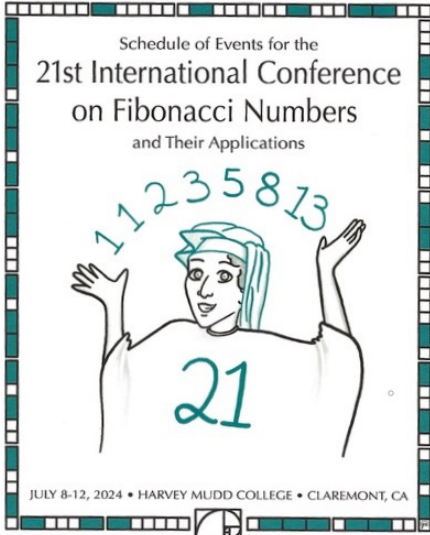


The Italian Martial Arts Fencing Society allows Joe-Ming to sit at their table

Member News

Marjorie Johnson

I, **Marjorie Bicknell Johnson**, attended a magical conference, the *21st International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and Their Applications*, this summer at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. The cover page of the schedule of events featured a juggler with the first terms of the Fibonacci sequence: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 in the air and 21 below on his shirt. The juggler set the tone.



There were 86 registered attendees, of which 16 were remote. We had speakers from Bahrain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Panama, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, the UK, and the USA. There were 60 talks given, of which 11 were virtual. Talks ranged from number theoretic considerations to growth patterns of plants applied

to cancer research. We heard about mathematics in art and music and the Golden Ratio in geometry and life.

My work and the work of others were recognized with Fibonacci T-shirts. I was also presented a golden rectangle pendant and thanked for my 62 years of service. I also participated in a chat reflecting upon the history of the association.

CWC's 2024 Ekphrastic Book is Published

Roger C. Lubeck, CWC President



Vision & Verse: A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry was published on 7/11/2024. The regular retail price is \$35.00. Your

purchase may make our new book a # 1 release.

Our thanks to our judges, the member artists, and our member authors for this wonderful new publication.

Click on this link to go to the book on [Amazon](#). — WT

Wednesday morning, we heard topics that included "How Vast is Music? Exploring Musical Chromesthesia and the 'Scale Space' with the Fibonacci Sequence," "The Fibonacci Game Show," and "Lessons that Really Count: The Fibonacci Edition." As an additional treat, Art Benjamin, outgoing Association President, presented a magic show, then we made an excursion to the world-famous Magic Castle in Los Angeles.

The conference ended with the induction of the incoming President of the Association, Steven Miller. The *Fibonacci Quarterly Journal* will have a new publisher, Taylor and Francis, and new editor, Anitha Srinivasan. We incorporated in 1963 when we began publication; I was there from the beginning. I have attended 19 of these conferences. There is no way to choose the "best" one!

Our next international conference will be in Istanbul in 2026. More information is on our website www.mathstat.dal.ca/fibonacci.

Tonya McQuade also has exciting news to report. In June, she was interviewed by *Emerging Civil War* Co-Founder and Editor in Chief Chris Mackowski about her new book *A State Divided: The Civil War Letters of James Calaway Hale and Benjamin Petree of Andrew County, Missouri*, now available on Amazon. The two discuss how the book came about, the process and challenges of transcribing letters, the value of researching family history, how the war played out in Missouri, and how Hale and Petree experienced that war. The podcast interview is now up on the *Emerging Civil War* website. Here's the link if you want to give it a listen: [Emerging Civil War Podcast - A State Divided](#).

Joe-Ming Cheng, or JMC for short, submitted his publicity layout (below) that he used at *BayCon 2024*. Thanks, JMC!

If you would like to share your writing news, send an email to membernews@southbaywriters.com — WT

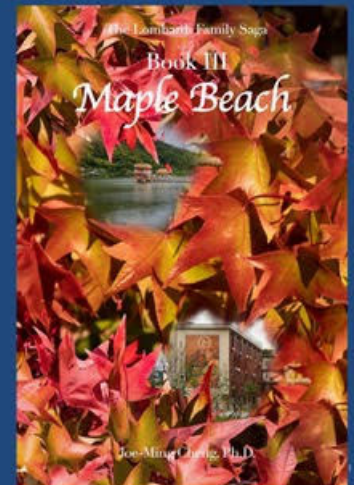
Joe-Ming Cheng – author of three contemporary fiction books in the suspense, thriller, and myth genres based on historical facts, and currently working on three children's books. Each book has a presentable storyboard in PowerPoint. JMC has 40 years of experience in IC, hardware, algorithm development, and litigation. He is ranked among the world's top data compression scientists, with IBM generating \$2.4 billion in products based on his data compression patents. JMC has a keen interest in birds and wetlands, frequently leading wetland tours and bird rescue missions. He studied at CYU, UCSB, ETH, and UCSC, earning an MS in Medical Electronics and a Ph.D. in Computer Engineering.

Dr. Cheng published a mathematical theorem:

"Net crossing theorem and its application" Cheng & Soroke



Contributions to binary adaptive-coding, sliding window hardware compression, Huffman coding redundancy bounds, and hybrid... by Joe-Ming Cheng
Print on Demand (Paperback)
Currently unavailable.



SBW July 21: Potluck Barbeque

*Photos by Edie Matthews and
Carolyn Donnell*



Photos continued

A cartoon illustration of a man with grey hair, wearing a white shirt and a red tie, sitting at a desk. He is holding a black mobile phone to his ear. A speech bubble above him says "I could hardly keep up." Below the illustration, there is a nameplate that reads "Les Prose" and "with special guest - Wally LeFly". At the bottom of the cartoon, there is a text box that reads "Kendad" and "I searched the Web for a cheap and healthy commuter plan. It suggested I brachiante."

I could hardly keep up.

Les Prose
with special guest - Wally LeFly

Kendad

"I searched the Web for a cheap and healthy commuter plan. It suggested I brachiante."

A Neo-Traditionalist Wedding

Marty Sorensen

I ingress.

Same old same old, that's boring. We need a new traditional wedding. Sure, if you're going to get married by a guru in a cave in the Himalayas, knock yourself out. But the usual church wedding needs to be fixed. And the major changes need to come from the mystic mists of romantic history.

Let's start with the bride. In our new wedding, she's up at the altar with her bridesmaids, and the groom is outside waiting to get in. The bride is not just standing there with her pretty bouquet, she's following the earliest fairy tales (the mystic mists). So she's lying on her back and feigning sleep, with her left arm raised delicately so that her hand rests on her forehead, like a pre-Raphaelite painting. Behind her is the grand choir, ready to sing out majestically when she wakes, singing maybe the Saint-Saëns "Great C chord," or perhaps something from Beethoven's "Ninth."



The groom comes into the church when he hears Pachelbel's "Canon in D."

I digress. The composer is German, and his name is pronounced *POCK Ell Bell*, not *pockulbel*.

I ingress again. The groom is preceded down the aisle by the ring bearer, a boy. It's not going to be one of those cute flower girls because he is carrying a purple pillow and on the pillow is not a ring, but a big ol' frog. When the duo arrives at the altar, the boy knows what's going on, too, and so he just takes the frog on up to the bride and she, having one eye open, sees these huge froggy lips suddenly appear, so she screams. The bridesmaids all scream and scramble, and the choir, thinking it's happening, erupts into Hallelujah!

The frog then jumps up onto a bridesmaid and the boy chases after it, and the bride then gets up and grabs the groom by the hand and drags him out the church door, past the waiting Rolls-Royce and onto the street, where she insists they elope on the city bus.

And the father of the bride turns to the mother and says, "Wow! Think how much we just saved on the reception."

Now, those of you who try this new-old way of matrimonial bliss with your own variations, don't forget to send a note to Member News.

I egress.

The End – WT



The CWC User's Manual Has Landed

Bob Isbill, CWC Publicity and Public Relations (excerpted from the CWC Spring Bulletin 2024)

We are proud to announce that the *CWC User's Manual* has been revised, updated, and is now in publication.

For example, if you want to know "What does a 'member at large' do?" see page 40.

Per Bob: "What I'm trying to do is pull together into one resource all the information available in the Policies and Procedures, on the CWC website, in the minutes, within the MRMS database, or from any other documents. CWC volunteers have recorded a lot of facts, and I am grateful for that. I do not want to rewrite or duplicate what they have already done, but when necessary, I have generated the missing information, either from my own knowledge, with the assistance of others, or using AI. I then assembled that information so that a member can hold it in his or her hand and have the answers readily available."

The book will be available on Amazon. Any profits will be given back to the California Writers Club. A free version is available on the [California Writers Club website](https://www.californiawritersclub.com), available for download to anyone wanting the book.

Editors note: Bob Isbill passed away June 21, 2024. At the time of his passing, Bob was the Director of Publicity and Public Relations for the California Writers Club and the Programs and Publicity Chair for the High Desert Branch. Bob was the recipient of the Jack London Service Award in 2009 and the recipient of the Ina Coolbrith Award in 2017. – WT



Off the Shelf – Edie Matthews



"I told you we needed more bird seed!"

You're Never Too Old to Write a Book

Kevin T. Johns, Writing Coach (reprinted from the CWC Spring Bulletin 2024)

A topic that comes up surprisingly often with the clients that I work with, as well as with potential clients and people that I have consultation calls with, is the idea of being “too old to write.” You would not believe how often people come to me and say, “Kevin, I think I might just be too old to do this. I might be too old to write a book.” I’ve had people from the ages of 30 to 70 say this to me, and my response to this fear that you’re too old to write is that it’s much more likely someone is too young to write a book than it is that they’re too old to write it.

Some people tend to think of becoming an author as something like being a professional sports athlete or a model or a pop star or something. Yes, if you are hoping to be a football star in your 40s, I hate to tell you, but it probably ain’t happening. If you’re in your 60s, and you’re still holding on to that dream of becoming the next Britney Spears or Madonna or whatever the latest pop sensation is, it’s probably not going to happen. While there are careers where the chances of hitting it big do decline with age, I don’t think writing is one of them.

In fact, I would argue that long-form fiction writing, in particular, is a skill set that really takes many years to develop and perfect. That’s not just many years of developing and perfecting your writing, but also many years of living life. ...it’s much more likely someone is too young to write a book ...

I like to say that books entertain, but they also share wisdom. Much of the wisdom that authors share in their books is the type of wisdom that’s gained through life experience, through actually having gone through things. The more triumphs you experience and the more tragedies you endure, the better perspective you’ll have as an author.

Let’s look at someone like Ernest Hemingway. He spent time as an expatriate in France. He spent time as a World War I ambulance driver, and he spent time as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War. Each of these experiences went on to inform books like *The Sun Also Rises*, which is about expatriates, *A Farewell to Arms*, which is about an ambulance driver in a war, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which is again a book about war. Without having lived through genuine life experiences over many decades, Hemingway never could have written those masterpieces.

I look at someone more recent, like Chuck Palahniuk, the author of *Fight Club*. Long before he was an author, he was a member of the Cacophony Society, which is, according to Wikipedia, “An American organization described on their website as a randomly gathered network of Free Spirits united in the pursuit of experiences beyond the pale of mainstream society.”

Now when I think of Palahniuk’s writing – whether it’s *Fight Club*, *Survivor*, *Rant*, or *Haunted* – all of these books are about

people living “beyond the pale of mainstream society,” as the Cacophony Society website describes it.

I understand that the Cacophony Society is thought of as pranksters, and his experiences with that group obviously informed Palahniuk’s writing. For example, in *Survivor*, the characters go into drugstores, and they mix hair dye from different packaging. They’ll move the red hair dye to the blonde hair dye package and the blonde hair dye to the brunette hair dye package just for the anarchistic, prankster spirit of it. That sort of thing happening in *Survivor* clearly comes from the author’s experiences in real life doing these sorts of mischief behaviors as part of that Cacophony Society.

We can also look at someone like my favorite, Virginia Woolf. Virginia Woolf battled mental health for a lot of her life, and at one point, she thought the birds were speaking to her in Greek. Then we go and look at her masterpiece *Mrs. Dalloway*, and at the main character, Septimus Smith, who is dealing with mental health throughout the book, and in fact, at one moment, hears the birds speaking to him in Greek. Again, Virginia Woolf’s life experiences going through suffering with mental health informed the greatest book possibly ever written, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

The point here is that reaching middle age or becoming a senior citizen is no reason at all to give up on your dream of becoming an author. In fact, it’s actually a reason to pursue those dreams more vigorously.

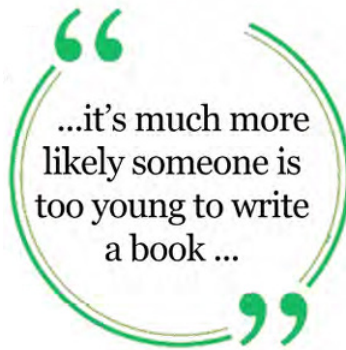
As Malcom Gladwell points out in his *New Yorker* article, “Late Bloomers,” which explores late-blooming painters as well as authors, “The Cézannes of the world bloom late not as a result of some defect in character, or distraction, or lack of ambition, but because the kind of creativity that proceeds through trial and error necessarily takes a long time to come to fruition.”

So many people spend their entire lives wanting to be an author, wanting to write. They get a taste of it when they’re young in high school or university, but then life happens. They get married, and they focus on taking care of their children, or they start a career, and they focus on progressing through their career or building a business. It’s only upon the kids growing up and moving out and finally reaching retirement age that they have the space, the time, and the energy in their lives to dedicate to their writing. And that is okay.

If you do publish later in life, you won’t be alone:

- William S. Burroughs was 39 when his first book, *Queer*, was published.
- Henry Miller debuted with *Tropic of Cancer* at the age of 44.
- Charles Bukowski wrote *Post Office* and became a published novelist at 49 years old.
- Raymond Chandler’s first book, *The Big Sleep*, came out when he was 51.

(Continued on page 10)



(*You're Never Too Old*, continued from page 9)

- Richard Adam's debut effort, *Watership Down*, was published at age 52.
- Frank McCourt was a 66-year-old retiree when he wrote his first novel, *Angela's Ashes*.
- Norman McLean launched an author career at the ripe age of 74 with *A River Runs Through It*.

Age wasn't a factor for any of these authors, and it shouldn't be for you, either. There is even a website, Bloom, dedicated to "authors whose first books were published when they were 40 or older; who bloomed in their own good time."

When it comes to writing and publishing your first novel, it's never too late.

I've worked for several years as a ghostwriter, and usually, I was ghostwriting books for elderly people with a lifetime of experience that they wanted to share through a book.

One of those people that I wrote for taught me this Chinese proverb that I think is absolutely so wonderful. It's this: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now."

You can't go back in time and start writing that book you never wrote. You can't go back in time and start studying writing the way you should have twenty years ago. There is only now. There is only this moment. Don't worry about your age. When it comes to writing a novel, being older is more of a benefit than it is a hindrance.



Kevin T. Johns has published seven books, including fiction and non-fiction, and has ghostwritten several more. He founded *The Writer's Craft Summit*, and has hosted 200 episodes of *The Writing Coach* podcast (where the above article originally appeared). — WT

the Masters Review

Summer Short Story Award
for New Writers

GUEST JUDGE: COLIN BARRETT

Summer Short Story Award: Awarding \$3,500 + Online Publication

from the Masters Review

Here at The Masters Review, summer is the season for short stories. Since 2016, our *Summer Short Story Award for New Writers* has paired emerging writers with some of the industry's top literary agents. Past winners of this award include Nana Nkweti, Nick Fuller Googins, Katie M. Flynn, Reena Shah, Rachel Cochran, and Claire Boyles, several of whom earned representation from one of our partnered agents as a result of this contest.

We welcome submissions of previously unpublished fiction or creative nonfiction up to 6,000 words. This year's winners will be chosen by the acclaimed Colin Barrett, author of the collections *Young Skins* and *Homesickness*, as well as the new novel *Wild Houses*.

Our contest runs to August 25, 2024, and is open to any writer who has not published a novel or memoir with a major press. The first-place winner of this contest, selected by our guest judge, will receive a \$3,000 grand prize, along with online publication. Second- and third-place winners will receive \$300 and \$200 respectively, along with online publication.

DEADLINE: Sunday, August 25, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. PDT, at mastersreview.com. — WT

2024 AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Open-Mic - 7:30p (see note*)	3
4 SBW Board Yearly Brunch 10a	5	6	7	8	9	10 SBW Meeting 10:30a
11	12	13	14	15 SBW WritersTalk deadline	16 Open-Mic - 7:30p (see note*)	17
18	19	20	21	22 Deadline, 40% off ads in Nov/Dec issue of Poets&Writers magazine	23	24
25 Chill Out & Read Book Fair ; Masters Review deadline (see pg10)	26	27	28	29	30	31

*Open-Mic - Register in advance at southbaywritersopenmic@gmail.com by 5p the Thursday before, and you'll receive a Zoom link on Friday afternoon.

Save The Date: Events and Contests

Name	Date	Comments
West Trade Review	multiple.....	Reading periods: Apr 1 - Aug 1, Aug 15 - Dec 1
California Writers Club Bulletin	Sept 1, Dec 1.....	Submit articles or announcements to the state membership
South Bay Writers September Meeting.....	Sept 14.....	Author Robin Sloan (topic TBD)
Zoetrope Short Fiction Competition	Oct 1.....	Fiction up to 5,000 words, cash prizes & talent representation
Central Coast Writers Conference	Oct 5.....	40th annual conference at Cuesta College, San Luis Obispo
South Bay Writers October Meeting.....	Oct 12.....	Author Jill Hedgecock, on "Chapter Endings"

For excellent advice on literary scams, see the [Writer Beware](#) page of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA). For extensive ratings of self-publishing services, see the [Ratings](#) page of the Alliance of Independent Authors.

Preview of Our September Meeting

Shari Clare

I've been an unabashed fan of Robin Sloan for more than 10 years. How could I resist? Every page of his ingenious novel *Mr. Penumbra's 24 Hour Bookstore* is infused with enthusiasm and love for the written word. Eager to experience more of Robin's exuberant writing, I signed up for his monthly newsletter, where he shares an eclectic assortment of recommendations and resources for both writers and readers. After attending his brilliant conversation with author Kyle Chayka at Shack15 in San Francisco, I spent a few moments chatting with him, and somehow summoned the courage to ask if he would speak to our club. I am beyond excited that he agreed to be the speaker at our September meeting. Look for more details about the remarkable Robin Sloan in the September edition of *WritersTalk*.



California Writers Club

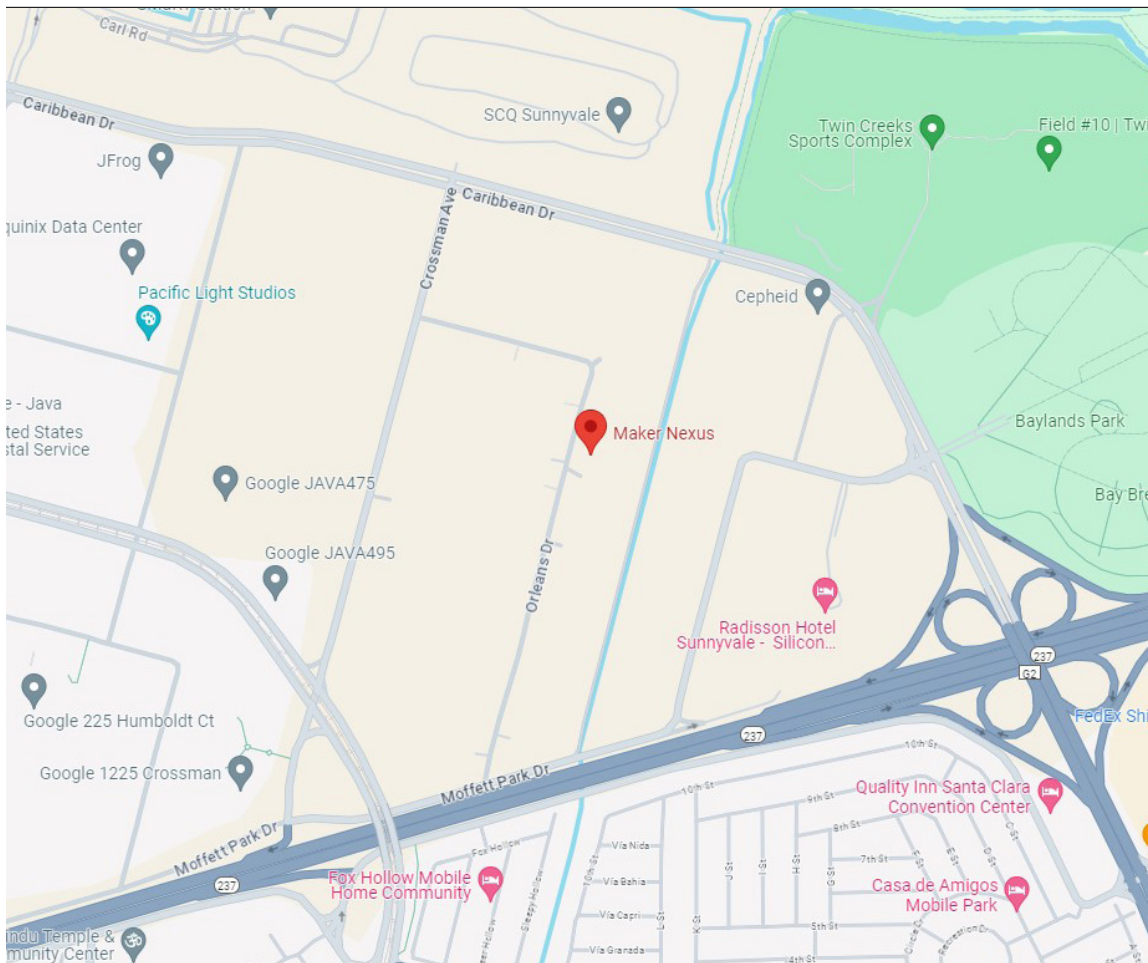
South Bay Branch

P.O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

www.southbaywriters.com

Address Correction Requested



Directions:

Maker Nexus

1330 Orleans Drive
Sunnyvale

From Fair Oaks Ave, go north to Crossman Ave, turn Right. To Baltic Way, turn Right. To Orleans Drive, turn Right.

From Lawrence Expy, go north, name changes to Caribbean Dr. To Crossman Ave, turn Left. To Baltic Way, turn Left. To Orleans Drive, turn Right.

**Saturday, August 10,
10:30 at Maker Nexus**

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

**Heather Haven:
“Getting Published”**