



South Bay
WRITERS

Silicon Valley's Premier Writing Group



April 2026 Newsletter

"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

— **Rachel Carson, Silent Spring**

WELCOME TO THE APRIL NEWS --

- ELECTION NEWS
 - CENTRAL BOARD NEWS
 - WRITE-IN INVITATION
 - APRIL MEETING
 - PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
 - MARCH RECAP
 - MEMBER NEWS
 - UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS
-

ELECTION 2026/27 NEWS

Would you like to serve in a leadership role at South Bay Writers? Now is the time to learn more about the fun folks who guide our ship and plan activities. Elections for new officeres take place in June. Join the [South Bay Writers' leadership team](#).

[USE THIS FORM TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

CENTRAL BOARD NEWS

Our central board is busy at work developing a new CALWRITERS.ORG website and MEMBERS Database Tool for roll-out this year.

A final decision on **2026/27 membership renewal fees** will be made in APRIL. Share your thoughts with the branch leadership on how these funds should be used.

INVITATION TO A WRITE-IN

Shari Clare, our SBW VP, is inviting members to attend a write-in (similar to to "shut up and write") event at her home on **Tuesday, April 7 at 10:30 a.m.** she will provide

coffee/tea, and space for club members to work for up to an hour, then share their progress. This event is free of charge; it's simply an opportunity to do some writing in a quiet environment in the company of other writers.

"To attend, please send an email to vp@southbaywriters.com and you will receive a confirmation with the address. I hope to see you there!"



Saturday, April 11" Creating memorable main characters and their sidekicks with Peggy Townsend

The South Bay Writers club welcomes Peggy Townsend as our April speaker. An award-winning journalist and novelist, Peggy will talk to us about how she creates memorable main characters and their sidekicks, a topic that is equally applicable in both fiction and memoir.

In addition to her novels and the stories she wrote for the Santa Cruz Sentinel, her work has appeared in publications that include Catamaran literary magazine, Santa Cruz Noir, The Boston Globe Magazine, Memoir, and the San Francisco Chronicle. Peggy's latest novel, "The Botanist's Assistant," has a fascinating assortment of memorable characters, including a reclusive protagonist who becomes a reluctant sleuth in order to solve the murder of her beloved mentor. Regardless of your writing genre, you will not want to miss her entertaining and informative presentation on "How to Write Memorable Characters and Their Sidekicks."

When: **Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 10:30 am**

Where: **Saratoga Senior Center, 19655 Allendale Ave, Saratoga CA**

Admission: **Members \$10, Non-members \$15**

Pay in at the door or in advance at our website: southbaywriters.com



President's Message

Welcome to April!

We are still looking for a Newsletter Editor to take on this fun job and bring their unique creative vision to the South Bay Writers' monthly communication.

Elections

In June, we will elect our new board members for 2026-27. Fill out the **INTEREST FORM** and we will get in touch with you about leadership opportunities.

Mosaic Project at SASCC

Lorraine Gabbert, Yvette Van Doren, and I have been participating in the Senior Community Art Project (MOSAIC) at our partner organization, SASCC where the club meets monthly. At the last project meeting we listened to popular songs from the 1960s and 70s i.e. Creedence Clearwater Revival, John & Yoko Ono, David Bowie, etc and doodled the feelings that the music evoked using pastel crayons. It was very relaxing and an opportunity to socialize with others that live nearby.

National Poetry Month (30th Anniversary)

For myself and others who write and/or appreciate poetry, this is a month of inspiration and renewal. If you count yourself in that camp and haven't signed up for Poem-A-Day at poets.org, I highly recommend it. You will receive a free poem everyday from diverse and interesting poets from the last few hundred years. You can also read their biographies.

Poetry's the way that I enter into the things that I've always been scared to enter into. And sometimes poetry is also the way that I exit the things that have always held me back.

— Maryhilda Obasiota Ibe

Publishing, Publishing, Publishing

The SBW publishing panel moderated last month by VP, Shari Clare, featured 4 of our own seasoned authors and covered information ranging from how to choose a publisher to reading the fine print of a publishing contract. Read more in the recap by Bill Baldwin later in this newsletter.

I also attended an interesting talk at the SF Peninsula Writers featuring Sibylline Press (small press) who publishes the work of brilliant women over 50 exclusively. The press was founded by veterans of the publishing industry who detected a gap in this demographic and have found this is a very creative and vibrant author segment. Their approach is somewhat different from a traditional small press in that there is a collaborative marketing strategy (for a fee) that is built into the contract they sign with their selected authors. Sibylline Press is looking for work that is relevant and compelling in the following genres: fiction, narrative nonfiction/memoir, and Romance, and Business.

This **Saturday, April 4, 12-4** enjoy a **Free Book Faire and Publishing event** at the Riconada Library in Palo Alto. There will be four featured publishers, panels on choosing your story form, publishing with small presses, and author talks. Member Vanessa McLaren-Wray is moderating the panel on Small Publishing in a Big Universe with authors.

Opportunity to Sell Your Books?

The San Francisco Peninsula Writers (our sister CWC branch) is planning a Book Fair (date to be decided) for published authors to sell their books. They have graciously invited South Bay Writers to join them. Please reply to pres@southbaywriters.com if you are interested in being added to the list.

Historical Fiction Critique Group

Are you working on writing historical fiction? If so, the Historical Fiction Critique Group is open to new members. The group typically meets on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7 p.m. on Zoom to discuss writing techniques and share thoughts and suggestions about each other's writing. Let Tonya McQuade know if you are interested. You can email her at Tmcq1966@gmail.com.

Happy Reading and Writing!

Una T Daly (president & interim editor)

P.S. WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A NEWSLETTER EDITOR, TRAINING AVAILABLE



March 14 Publishing Panel Recap

with Bill Baldwin

Our March panel, moderated by vice-president *Shari Clare*, showcased local published authors sharing their experiences with the publishing industry.

- ***Vanessa MacLauren-Wray has worked with small traditional presses.***
- ***Robyn (R. L.) King has been self-publishing since 2015.***
- ***Alfred Jan has been publishing collections of 1930s and 1940s detective stories, using hybrid publishing, as well as print-on-demand and reprint publishers.***
- ***Carmela Dutra works with an agent, and her books have been traditionally published.***
- ***David Bartell, unfortunately, was unable to attend due to illness.***

The discussion focused on the three main types of publishing.

• ***Traditional publishing:*** You submit your book to an agent who then represents you and tries to sell it to an established publisher. You may have to query many agents before one accepts you. Once the book is sold, the publisher will then provide editing services, formatting, cover design, and publication, and promotion. Traditional publishers are notoriously slow, often taking years between accepting a book and getting it on the shelf. They are trying to move faster and wrap things up in

a few months. Submissions once could be done only by mail; now they can often be done online.

- **Self-publishing:** You use a service such as Amazon Kindle Direct. You are completely responsible for all the aspects of the publication: editing, formatting, cover design, publication, distribution, and publicity. This method is good for authors who want total control over their work. Before you self-publish, learn what it involves. Self-publishing takes work! You need to understand formatting, text editing, cover design, publicity, and so on.

- **Hybrid publishing:** Authors pay for publishing costs—often thousands of dollars—in exchange for professional editorial, design, and distribution services. Reputable hybrid publishers vet submissions and, unlike vanity presses, make significant revenue from book sales.

When deciding on a publication method, it's good to keep several precautions in mind:

- With a vanity press, the author pays for someone to publish their book. This can be expensive, and though they may charge you for editing and cover design, that does not guarantee the results will be of professional quality.
- Some publishing contracts may be ill-advised because some publishers will exploit you. Some agents are dishonest. A good resource is Writers Beware (writerbeware.blog).
- Even large publishers might not do much publicity for you. You may need to do your own outreach to bookstores.
- You can get published without spending any money. However, be careful when signing a contract.

- Though an agent may offer to represent you, there are no standards as to their actual obligations. You should always check out their services on social media to make sure you are working with someone reputable. In deciding whether to pursue traditional publishing, hybrid publishing, or self-publishing, consider the advantages and disadvantages of each.. Assess yourself as well as the manuscript, and decide how much you reasonably ask yourself to do. Also think about what your readers are looking for and how much you can provide for them. Then make your manuscript as good as you can before sending it to an agent or a smaller publication house.

March 14 also happened to be PI DAY as in 3.14159 ... (think back to geometry and the area of a circle). Edie Matthews, our Hospitality Chair, made sure we had some great pie to share. Lemon, Berry, and Apple pie were on hand with fruit and quiche. Thank you Edie!!



Member News

Lisa Scott-Ponce shares that her poem *The Wild Promise of My True Nature* is one of the featured poems on the **NLAPW.org** website (National League of American Pen Women). She was also one of the Pen Women's honorees at their annual Celebrity Luncheon, in recognition for Achievement in Letters.

Patricia Dick received a THIRD PLACE award for a photograph taken while aboard the Cunard Mary II ocean liner in March. Title is "THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTEL" the only hotel building painted PINK in Honolulu, HA and over 100 years old.

Tonya McQuade is excited to announce that her new book, *Frank and Nora's Historic Honeymoon Adventure: A Travelogue through the West with a "Time Travel" Twist*, is now available on Amazon at [THIS LINK](#) or for direct purchase from Tonya (who will be at the April SBW meeting). If you love travel and adventure with some interesting history and "time travel" thrown in, this book is for you!

Sunil Mehta shares that his book *The Compass* is in the final stages of publication and should be out in a few months.

Congratulations to ALL! **If you have Member News you'd like to share, please send it to membernews@southbaywriters.com**

Upcoming Contests & Events

- **Saturday, April 4, 12-4** enjoy a [Free Book Faire and Publishing event](#) at the Riconada Library in Palo Alto.
- National Poetry Writing Month is putting out a prompt-a-day in April for celebrating writing poetry. www.napowrimo.net
- Writers' Digest Poem-A-Day is also sharing prompts for every day in April. <https://www.writersdigest.com/2025-april-pad-challenge-prompts>

- **Live Readings on MOTHERS** sponsored by the House of Writers at San Jose Club House on **April 29, 6-8pm**. You are welcome to submit an online reading of 7 minutes or less to Shanamcleanmoore@gmail.com. You will be notified if your submission is selected to be read live. [Buy Tickets](#)
 - Sequestrum Fables and Romance Submissions due by **April 15**. Fables invites stories that weave magic with purpose, while Romance seeks work which shifts between risk and devotion, friction and fate. Fable submission details are here: <https://sequestrum.org/fable-theme> and Romance submissions are here: <https://sequestrum.org/theme-romance>
 - **San Joaquin Valley Writers Contest** - Submissions due **May 1, 2026**
 - **2026 Catamaran Poetry Prize for West Coast Poets** is now open for submissions. **Deadline July 1, 2026**
 - The Poets & Writers website maintains an extensive database of upcoming contests, grants and awards. [Poets & Writers Writing Contests, Grants & Awards](#)
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Board Updates by Annie Nguyen

March 12

Attendees: Alice, Amanda, Bill, Carolyn, Hal, Joe-Ming, Ryan, Shari, Tonya, Una

Meeting Scheduling

- The board confirmed that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 7 via Zoom. Contact tech@southbaywriters.com to attend.

Website Redesign

- Hal shared an update on the ongoing website redesign project, which is being developed in collaboration with Ryan and Kalpana, with the goal of modernizing the organization's online presence.
- The redesign is focused on improving overall functionality, making the website more user-friendly and easier to update.
- A more detailed presentation outlining the progress of the redesign will be delivered at the April 7 board meeting.

Events and Programming

NorCal Meeting (April 26)

- The board discussed plans for the NorCal Building Better Branches meeting on April 26, with six members from the branch currently confirmed to attend.
- Topics include: branch website management, newsletter development, peer networking opportunities, and strategies for organizing effective meetings.

Membership Policies and Procedures

- The board discussed potential options for new membership fees, including a choice between \$42.50 prorated for the remainder of year or a full \$65 membership valid through

2026/27.

- It was noted that these options must be reviewed to ensure compliance with statewide policies and procedures before being implemented.
- Possible incentives for early membership renewals were considered, including raffles or special offers to be introduced in April as a way to encourage participation.

Financial Updates

- Alice reported that the February meeting had 29 attendees, noting that processing fees from Square and PayPal reduced the net total received.
- The organization is expecting to generate over \$700 in profit from a recent workshop.
- The board discussed the need to clarify procedures for sending membership fees to the state organization, including whether branch payments should be made on a quarterly basis.

Anthology Project

- The submission review process requires at least two approvals or two rejections before a final decision is made, most reviews have been completed.
- The board acknowledged that the acceptance notification process has not been clearly defined and may need further clarification moving forward.

Additional Updates

- The board briefly discussed upcoming branch elections, with an interest form currently circulating among members.

BECOME A SBW LEADER : JOIN OUR BOARD

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do." — Eleanor Roosevelt

President

Conducts the affairs of the branch with the advice and consent of the board in accordance with SBW policies, procedures, and bylaws. This includes: presiding over board and general meetings, appointing committee chairpersons, holds fiduciary responsibility to the branch with the support of the treasurer, seeks out partnerships with external organizations for the benefit of branch membership.

Vice President/Program Chair

Responsibilities include recruiting and scheduling speakers for our general meetings, writing up information about upcoming speakers for both our newsletter and website, introducing and welcoming the speaker at the beginning of each meeting, and providing any additional assistance requested by the club president.

Secretary

Responsible for keeping a record of all board decisions and club actions in the form of minutes of board meetings and other meetings as requested.

Treasurer

Responsible for maintaining accurate records of all financial transactions affecting the branch, and has fiduciary responsibility and liability for the safekeeping of branch funds. Receiving income and paying for expenses is a core activity. Also works closely with the membership chair to keep track of a list of current members.

Members-at-large

Represent interests and concerns of the general membership and communicate those to the board of directors. In addition, one may take on special branch projects.

Membership Chair

The membership chair collects new applications, sends welcome documents, maintains online membership records, attends board meetings, and coordinates with the treasurer on money collected.

Publicity Chair

Writes and distributes press releases about South Bay Writers' activities to both print and online outlets.

Hospitality Chair

Organizes snacks and drinks at monthly meetings with help of other board members. Welcomes guests and answers questions about the club and membership benefits.

WritersTalk Managing Editor

Produces a monthly newsletter that raises members' awareness of the branch activities and connects members to resources and information that aim to help them succeed in their writing career. Newsletters include details of upcoming meetings, board members news, branch contests, articles for professional growth or writing trends, member and other writerly news, a calendar, and features other contributions from members.

CWC/NorCal Representatives

The CWC representative attends central board meetings and is the liaison between SBW's board and the other CWC branches. The NorCal representative attends NorCal meetings and is the liaison between SBW's board and other NorCal branches.

Open Mic Host

Schedules and facilitates the open mics, both online and live. Currently two are hosted per month, on the first and third Fridays.

Facebook/Social Media

Utilize Social Media to share news of club activities and events.

SBW Photographer

Capture photos of member activities for sharing in branch communications.

MRMS Admin

Maintain the current board officers and chairs in the statewide database to facilitate interbranch communications.

Web Editor/Master

The web chair maintains the overall appearance and cohesiveness of the SBW website and oversees the website team. Other duties include: monthly updates, maintenance, and investigation of new platforms to support branch goals.



Thanks to Joe-Ming Cheng for the club photos in the newsletter!!

South Bay Writers-The Silicon Valley Branch of the California Writers Club | PO Box 3254 | Santa Clara, CA
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