



*South Bay*  
**WRITERS**

Silicon Valley's Premier Writing Group



## June 2026 Newsletter

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June is a love song written by nature." — Patience Strong

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### WELCOME TO THE JUNE NEWS --

- **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**
  - **JUNE 13 MEETING**
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### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS 2026/27 DUE JULY 1st

by Tonya McQuade (membership@southbaywriters.com)

As a member of South Bay Writers, you also enjoy full membership in the statewide California Writers Club which together confers many benefits for writers:

- Reduced rate to attend monthly meetings with expert speakers, build your craft, and network with other writers;
- Opportunity to participate in writing critique groups to hone your writing skills, hold each other accountable, and receive helpful feedback on your writing;
- Option to attend special members-only social events to enjoy food and fun, as well as develop your writing friendships and connections;
- Chance to participate in members-only writing contests and contribute to members-only anthologies (some hosted by other branches);
- Stay informed about events, speakers, and workshops through regular email updates and newsletters.

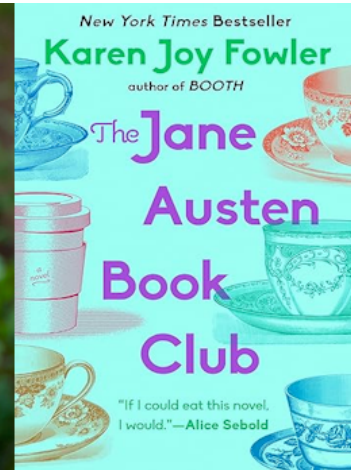
**Payment options:** At the meeting with cash, check, or credit card (\$45 for renewals; \$65 for new members) or online with PayPal (\$47 at ([southbaywriters.com](https://southbaywriters.com))); or mail a check to CWC-South Bay Writers; PO Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055. New members only must [submit an online application](#).

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# June 13 Meeting: Acclaimed Author Karen Joy Fowler on the Importance of Settings in Novels

By Shari Clare

The South Bay Writers club is honored to welcome a world-renowned writer as our June speaker. Karen Joy Fowler is the award-winning author of eight novels and three short story collections. During her remarkable career, she has



taught writing all over the world, and was a co-founder of the prestigious James Tiptree, Jr. Award for science fiction. She now extends her generosity in helping her fellow writers learn to create extraordinary settings during her presentation “Where Am I and When Did I Get Here?”

You are invited to join us in a unique learning experience featuring Karen Joy Fowler, an exceptionally talented author whose ingenious novels and short stories thoroughly embed readers into the world she creates.

[Click here for the detailed preview of Karen Joy Fowler](#)

- When: **Saturday, June 13, 2026 at 10:30 am**
- Where: **Saratoga Senior Center, 19655 Allendale Ave, Saratoga CA**
- Admission: **Members \$10, Non-members \$15**

Pay at the door or in advance at our website: [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)



## President's Message

### Welcome to June!

I was truly sorry to miss our May meeting with Lita Kurth, a writer, teacher, and author, whom I greatly respect but a family trip took precedence. The trip to the Northeast had been delayed from last year with the early arrival of our first grandchild in 2025. The trip was fantastic involving a deep dive into family history with my Daly cousins. We discovered more about how my father's family adapted to the untimely death of my grandfather from typhoid fever in 1924 and in another case a hidden early marriage during WWII. Ancestry is very helpful for discovering long since

forgotten public records but it does take time and often some luck to find these nuggets.

Speaking of nuggets, one of our newer members reached out to me recently to find out if we had a group of published authors who could give them advice on self-publishing tools for formatting and other steps towards self-publishing. I was able to refer some members but it occurred to me that this is something other members would be interested in, too. I know that our prolific critique groups are helping members get their writing ready for publication but I'm wondering if it makes sense to have a special interest group around self-publishing. Please let us know at [info@southbaywriters.com](mailto:info@southbaywriters.com) if you would either like to receive more self-publishing information or if you are an experienced self-published author and can lend some advice.

South Bay Writers is also pleased to be a sponsor of the 2026 **San Jose Book Festival** coming up on September 12. We will have a table there where members can sell their books. If you are interested in selling your books or working at the table during the festival, please keep an eye out for sign-ups. We have 2-hour shifts available from 10-5pm and sign-ups list will be available at meetings and online, first come first served. Our normally scheduled September meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month) will be postponed to later in the September.

Don't forget that June is our **ANNUAL BRANCH ELECTIONS**. As you know, we elect our board officers at the June meeting (**Saturday, JUNE 13, 2026**). These are the folks that you entrust to run the branch and provide leadership for all South Bay Writers activities. There are opportunities for all SBW members to attend board meetings or just reach out to our **SBW leadership team** with input on branch activities.

Finally, let's take time to express **GRATITUDE** for all the work the board and committee chairs do. Much of it is not visible but makes it possible for the branch to have a website, newsletter, social media, monthly meetings, open mics, social events, membership enrollment, press releases, board minutes, photography, etc. not to mention ensuring that our branch finances are tracked and reported.

**Una T Daly** (president & interim editor)

**SAVE-the-DATE:**  
**Sunday, July 12, 3-6pm**  
**SBW Members BBQ**

Join fellow South Bay Writers for our **annual summer potluck BBQ** at Edie and Jim Matthew's home in Santa Clara. Club provides meat and drinks ... More details coming soon ...



All members paid thru 2026-27 will be entered into a raffle to win free meetings for remainder of 2026!! You do not need to be present at BBQ to win.

• **The June 19 Open Mic** will be take place at Barnes & Noble on Stevens Creek & San Tomas at 7pm due to library closure. Let Bill know if you're coming: wabaldwin@aol.com. Start time is 7pm.

- The board passed a motion to be a sponsor of the 2026 San Jose Book Festival taking place on Sept 12 at Eastridge Mall. Members will have an opportunity to attend and sell their books.
- The board passed a motion to provide funding for the migration of the South Bay Writers website from HostGator to Square Space. Targeting late summer/early fall.
- Membership has been growing and now stands at 115 members.
- PR for Karen Joy Fowler speaker meeting on June 13 will go out to usual news outlets including San Jose Mercury & Outlook.

[Read the full notes here](#)

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## May Speaker Recap: Writing Memoir in Flashes

Bill Baldwin

It was delightful to welcome Lita Kurth to our May meeting. Lita has a long association with South Bay Writers, stretching back to our East of Eden Conferences in the early 2000s. She has written extensively about flash fiction, including how to utilize it in memoirs. She shared her wisdom and experience this Saturday morning.



Lita brought copies of her book *Writing Memoir in Flashes*, but spoke mostly of Flash Fiction itself, and the actual methodology of writing it.

What *is* “Flash Fiction?” Lita explained that it can be defined various ways. The point, however, is that it is *short*. You can define it as being less than a *thousand words*, less than a *hundred words*, *exactly* a hundred words. Different publishers may define it differently, but in all cases it is *short*.

Flash Fiction restricts you to a very limited time-frame. The point and challenge is to produce an emotional effect *quickly*. You don’t have much time! You need to make an impression via *fresh language or perspective*.

Lita led us through two exercises: one for individuals, one for teams.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Thanks, Lita for making this clear; and helping us to *make every word count!*

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### Deadline Sprint by Loureen Murphy

Left hand death-gripping the pen, I pushed out the last paragraphs of my story. With no time for a once-over, I stapled its pages to the cover sheet and slipped it in the envelope. Minutes till postmark deadline and several miles of freeway lay between home and the post office on that Friday evening. Though GPS indicated I'd have time to spare, I gunned it a little.



Hitting your mental brakes right now? I don't blame you. A handwritten manuscript and GPS seem unlikely, anachronistic partners in a time-fractured tale,.

Let me back up a bit. A few months prior, a fellow writer let me know of a contest he was entering. So I prepared a poem in one category, a hundred-word piece in another. But somehow three seemed right. On re-reading the prompt, I'd dismissed one intriguing possibility when I learned they wanted fiction. Thus fizzled the local history piece I'd contemplated.

But as deadline approached, the topic still niggled. The first requirement: Root a story in any time period, and include one character teaching another how to grow apples via any method. My dad's old Western Garden Book and blogged advice from today's apple experts provided the "how to" for that story element. The second stipulation, the twist—handwrite it all, including drafts. So a week before the mailing deadline, I pulled out a legal pad and wrote a couple of pages with a rather petulant little MC to start. Though my critique group members disliked her, I let the child sit for two days.

Who is she? I wondered. Then I recognized her as the much younger version of a scene-stealing supporting character in my novella. Once I knew the 11-year-old, I knew much of what followed. I changed the MC's foil from a peer to an older sister and fleshed out some family dynamics. After making the grafting instructions between a grandpa and his grandkid resemble what I hoped was reasonable conversation, I pushed onward. Not in one sitting, not even in one day. I couldn't.

I can write in bursts of maybe 45 minutes. Sometimes longer. Then I go outside with the dog for a while. Or return a phone call. Then I do another burst. "Burst" sounds more powerful than Stop and Start. Fix and Change. Research. Stress Eat. All that. The regular stuff of life, plus meetings, visitors, phone calls, and all, brought me to the dawn of deadline day, April 24.

Still confident I'd wrap it up with hours to spare, I read what I had to my critique group again, this time getting encouragement.

But.

Writing daily journal entries presents no issue, with legibility for others low priority. Despite fine enough penmanship to address wedding invitations now and then, for clarity, I opted for hand-printing, not cursive. Arduous. Slow. The clock, however, had no issue ticking along at its normal pace.

Gauging my remaining time by pages I'd already copied, by 4-something, I realized no way could I finish before the PO closed at 5 p.m. So I got up, walked into the other

room, cried for about three seconds, then picked up the pen again. I committed to finish what I started. Seldom this determined with voluntary efforts, I gave myself freedom to fly. As I did, my tidy printing morphed into wayward arcs and lines as deadline desperation increased.

I dismissed the momentary temptation to cut my losses on the apple story and send in the other two. Then I learned found that my nearby PO didn't close till 5:30. Not enough time. Still, I wrote. My reward for keeping at it? A supportive sibling told me the main PO is open till 7 p.m., even on a Friday. Hot dog!

Half of San Jose's population zipped into or out of parking stalls, while I waited for one to claim. I had 13 minutes to spare when I parked. Then in my haste, I missed the nearby entrance, and walked to a far one. Breathe, I told myself. Breathe. Instead of the antsy queue I anticipated, one customer stood at the counter. A smiling worker waved from the back room and came forward, offering help. To his standard, "How fast do you want it to get there?" I answered, "No rush, but not slow." Truly, I would have paid for Priority, but the contest guidelines said no. My postal friend assured me that he'd already stamped my envelope with April 24, so no one could dispute its on-time status.

Usually after a high pressure run, I'm tapped out. Not this round. After more than a year in caregiving and loss, the exhilaration of finishing a story that had just blossomed a few days prior has endured. I've no idea whether my manuscript was too ragged to qualify for reading. Yes, I'd love a prize. But for me, this paralleled Olympians saying that participating is the win. I won't know outcomes till a few weeks after deadline for the piece you're now reading. Still for me, I have a happy ending, a story I like, and the squirmy-kid fun of awaiting results.

A friend said that abandoning myself to this effort was a sign I'm returning to "normal" life. Perhaps not normal, different. Less tied to perfectionism. More going for the joy.

Image by [Mohamed\\_hassan](#) from [Pixabay](#)

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## DO You Have Any Member News?

If you have writing progress, accolades, publications that you'd like to share in our next newsletter, please send to: [membernews@southbaywriters.com](mailto:membernews@southbaywriters.com)

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## Upcoming Contests & Events

- [San Jose Book Festival](#) – **Sept 12, 2026, 10am-5pm**, Stay tuned for more details on how to participate at June meeting and over email.
- [2026 Catamaran Poetry Prize for West Coast Poets](#) is now open for submissions. **Deadline July 1, 2026**
- [San Jose Women's Club Chill Out & Read: Ice Cream Social and Book Fair](#) is taking applications for author tables. Book Fair takes place **August 16th** and applications are **due June 15th**.

- [Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Prize](#) is now accepting submissions, due July 31st.
  - The Poets & Writers website maintains an extensive database of upcoming contests, grants and awards. [Poets & Writers Writing Contests, Grants & Awards](#)
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***"Juneteenth means freedom for so many people.... it's not a Texas thing, is not a Black thing — it's freedom for everybody."***

Opal Lee

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Image: Joe-Ming Cheng

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