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RSVP to PR@SOUTHBAYWRITERS.COM for Edie's address

RENEWAL TIME IS NOW

Payment options:

- At the meeting OR BBQ with cash, check, or credit card (\$45 for renewals; \$65 for new members) or mail a check to:

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PO BOX 3254,
SANTA CLARA, CA 95055**

- **Pay online with PayPal (\$47)**
- New members only, [submit an online application](#).



President's Message

Happy July 4th (250 years young!!)

Just a quick note this month to let you know that our board of directors was unanimously re-elected and we're delighted to announce that Yvette Van Doren has joined us as board secretary. Congratulations to Yvette, a retire educator and administrator. Although our wonderful secretary Annie Nguyen is stepping down, she is going to continue helping with social media. Congratulations to Annie who is headed off to UC Berkeley this fall to pursue her degree in English.

Visit our Leadership Page to See All Board Members

- **Poetry Center San José : Twelfth Annual Poetry Festival**

The small press fair will held on **Sunday, August 23, 10:00am to 2:00pm**, set up at **9:00 am** under the beautiful oak tree in front of the Edwin Markham House (near Empire Fire House) in San Jose History Park. Each press, literary magazine, and author will read from an amplified microphone for 3-5 minutes. Open Mic and tables are available for free.

To participate, please respond by **Saturday, July 18th** to sanjosecenterpoetryliterature@gmail.com. Include the name of your representative, email address, contact phone number, and website.

- **San Jose Book Festival at Eastridge Center**

South Bay Writers is pleased to sponsor a table at the [San Jose Book Festival](#) on **Saturday, September 12**. Members can meet with publishing professionals and/or sell their books. Sign-up for 2-hour table shifts available from 10-5pm, by contacting vp@southbaywriters.com

Our normally scheduled September meeting (2nd Saturday of the month) will be postponed to Saturday, September 19

Self-Publishing Interest Group

A dozen members have joined the self-publishing interest group and are actively sharing tools and tips on best practices for self-publishing their manuscripts. [Join today if you need more information or want to share your expertise.](#)

Best Regards,

Una T Daly (president & interim editor)

Notes from the Board

- **The Board met on June 27** for our annual brainstorming at Edie's house (thank you again Edie!). Thank you to Ryan for leading the session on emerging themes for 2026/27. Please share your ideas with us.
 - Comraderie and Support
 - Skill building
 - Genre-based activities
 - Networking (local & public)
 - **Saturday, August 8, 10:15am** at the Saratoga Senior Center, join us for our monthly speaker meeting with [Bruce Overby](#), a technical writer and award winning short story writer and novelist. The topic is a favorite of Bruce's on creating meaningful dialogue.
 - **Come early (by 10am) for New Member Orientation.** All membes are welcome but especially those who have joined in 2026.
 - **Website migration and redesign is underway.** Thank you to Hal Schoolcraft, Kalpana Krishnamurthy, and Ryan Davis-Marsh for taking this on. Targeting mid-September for launch and volunteers most welcome.
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June Speaker Recap: The Importance of Setting in Novels

Bill Baldwin

We were honored to host Karen Joy Fowler, author of *The Jane Austen Book Club*, at our June gathering, and hear her wisdom on "The Importance of Setting in

Novels.”

She cautioned us, at various points, to take experts’ advice (even her own?) with a grain of salt. Fellow authors’ advice can be helpful—but *know when to ignore it!* “Advice can ruin a beautiful poem,” she cautioned (more examples to follow!).

As for Setting, it is important: it evokes a place and time. You can fret over Character and Plot, but don’t forget the *Setting!*



To establish the atmosphere of a scene, try to invoke *all five senses*. Keep in mind, in developing your plot, where various events might happen.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Thanks, Karen! It was a delight to meet you and hear your wisdom!

Member Contribution



Page Turners (for beginning novel or memoir writers)

Ken Roberge

Earning praise is arguably the utmost goal beyond lucrative paydays.

“It’s a real page turner.”

“I couldn’t put the book down.”

“Looking forward to the next book release.”

The most engaging authors write with tempo and fluidity. But others, not so much. I present what I believe to be two great examples.

Walter Isaacson’s *Benjamin Franklin – An American Life*: The 1.8-pound paperback covers 586 pages because the researchers loaded it with their darlings. Despite some storytelling, to me, the grueling, unrelenting fact-dumps and verbose phrasing made the book read more like a technical manual. Benjamin Franklin is one of the most intelligent and prolific human beings ever. This made quitting the book halfway through that much harder. A few years later, I enjoyed the masterful Ken Burns documentary.

David McCullough's *The Wright Brothers*: The hardcover contains 319 pages with facts woven into the brothers' relentless pursuit to build the first controllable flying machine. Each chapter stayed focused and avoided trivial details unrelated to the storyline. If I had carried no other responsibilities, I would have read this page-turner end to end with only a few breaks to make snacks and brew coffee.

I hope my essays have shown you many important aspects of writing. But, in my view, the essence of writing is more important than the story, subject, or literary mechanism. "Page Turners" are about drama, intrigue, action, suspense, and/or heartfelt stories, and should be written with everything you've got. As the old saying goes—"If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bulls--t.

Trust yourself. In review, if you read sentences that look okay but don't feel quite right, your subconscious mind is telling you to revise them. You'll find that a high percentage of those revisions will improve phrasing and clarity.

It's important to expand your literary repertoire. To take writing seriously. But to do that, you need more than just simple language. It matters little if you use the *be* verb "was" or if you write "he went to the store" instead of "he walked to the store." The top priority is using whatever compels the reader to stick with the story. But be diverse.

I use *Word Hippo's synonyms* to inundate me with similar words. Exposure to such diversity allows me to describe things more accurately or better rephrase something I might not have otherwise. AI Writing Aids help, but I only use them when I'm stuck, and only select phrases that mimic my voice. A published work shouldn't sound like someone else.

Writers with years of experience have a wealth of tricks up their sleeves. The more you expand your phrasing, vary your word choices, and maintain your storyline, the more likely you'll be regarded as Paige Turner instead of Les Prose.

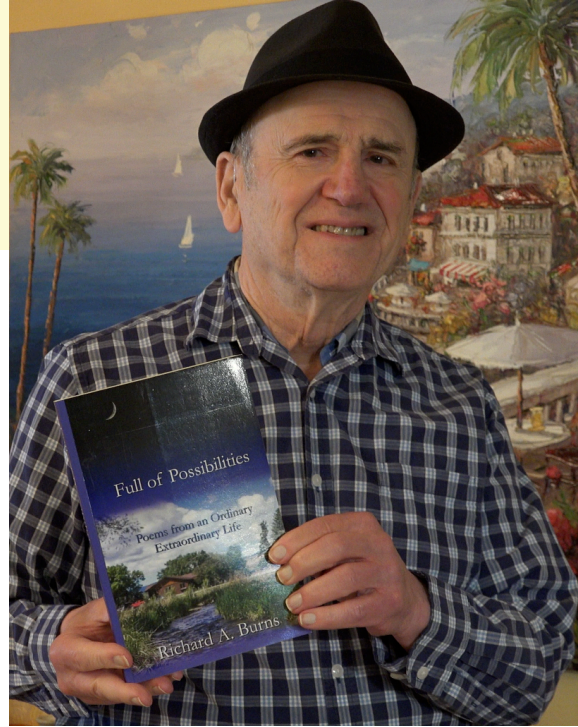
Member News: Richard A. Burns

Richard has published his poetry collection of over 100 of his best poems.

"Some people start reading a poetry book at the beginning. Others flip to the middle. I sometimes begin with the last poem and proceed backward. However you approach it, I hope you'll want to read ***Full of Possibilities - Poems from an Ordinary Extraordinary Life*** by Richard A. Burns. It's my magnum opus — the most polished version of the stories and poems I've carried with me for years. These pieces are brief, compressed, and lyrical, the work of a curious mind that's been paying attention for a long time. In a world of short attention spans, a poem or two can deliver painlessly what a chapter of prose sometimes can't. If you're curious about what I've noticed, wondered about, or had odd ideas about over the years, this collection is a good place to look. Available now on Amazon."

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



Upcoming Contests & Events

- **Poetry Center San José : Twelfth Annual Poetry Festival**

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- **San Jose Book Festival – Sept 12, 2026, 10am-5pm**, Two hour shifts available at the South Bay Writers' table. Reserve your time slots by emailing vp@southbaywriters.com. Read president's column above for more details.
- **[San Jose Women's Club Chill Out & Read: Ice Cream Social and Book Fair](#)** is taking place **August 16th**. Come out and support our local authors.
- **[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](#)**

“The colonies had grown up under constitutions of government so different, there was so great a variety of religions, they were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance, and their intercourse had been so rare, and their knowledge of each other so imperfect, that to unite them in the same principles in theory and the same system of action, was certainly a very difficult enterprise.”

John Adams, 2nd president of the U.S, 1797-1801



Image: Joe-Ming Cheng

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