



WritersTalk

A South Bay Branch
Writers Club Monthly

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Firoozeh Dumas

In September—Firoozeh Dumas

By Edie Matthews

"I woke up my spouse laughing," is a frequent comment to Firoozeh Dumas about her hilarious memoir, *Funny in Farsi*. So it's not surprising the book is currently a finalist for the Thurber Humor Award.

"I come from a family with a rich, storytelling tradition," said Firoozeh (pronounced fee-rooh-say) in a telephone interview from Los Angeles, where she was visiting her parents. She was born in Abadan, Iran and moved

to Whittier, California at the age of seven. She grew up listening to her father, a former Fulbright Scholar, recount the many colorful stories of his life. He first came to the US with his family as a representative for the National Iranian Oil Company. Right away he fell in love with the American culture, especially Disneyland, and once was a contestant on the game show, *Bowling for Dollars*.

Firoozeh is married to a Frenchman, who she met while they were both students at UC Berkeley. In 2001, she began writing *Funny in Farsi* because she wanted her two children to know her stories. When her youngest child started kindergarten, she joined a writing group. To her delight in 2002, Random House bought the book after reading the first 70 pages. Luckily, Firoozeh had inherited the gift for story telling.

You may have heard her commentaries on National Public Radio. After her readings, listeners often told her she should be a stand-up comic; however, Firoozeh had no interest and initially even turned down an offer from TheatreWorks in Mountain View to create a new show. Finally, after much prodding, she acquiesced. She collaborated with director David Ford, writing all new material and earlier this year, she performed a one-woman show called "Laughing Without an Accent". The two sold-out shows were fol-

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Celebrating Betty Auchard

by Jackie Mutz

One of the first things you notice about Betty when meeting her are her eyes: intense, vibrant pools of blue-green enhanced by her brilliant smile.

I was drawn to her immediately; she exudes a warmth and vivaciousness that transcends into her writing; no small accomplishment for any writer.



Betty Auchard

For those of us who have not had the pleasure of Betty's acquaintance, she is an artist, the gracious hostess of CWC's annual Holiday party, a lively Active member of our South Bay branch, and the published author of her first book, *Dancing in My Nightgown: The Rhythms of Widowhood*.

Dancing in My Nightgown is a

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WRITERSTALK WANTS YOUR CREATIVE PRODUCT—SHORT FICTION, POETRY, MEMOIR, ESSAY.

*** Get involved and give a gift to our readers. See our masthead for submittal information ***

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President's Prowling— by Bill Baldwin



React...

I told a friend of mine yesterday, I'm coming over to the point of view that, for a writer, *any* writing and *any* reading is helpful. No matter how much you loathe something you are reading, no matter how inadequate you feel about something you've just written – it can be a useful experience.

Anything you read or write is useful because doing it makes you aware of one way of saying something, one way of communicating. And the goal is to communicate.

You may be appalled by someone's inability to communicate. You may be stunned by an ability to carry a reader forward with a point of view or a mood. Think about why something carries you along or doesn't. It's just as they say: "Write, write, write...read, read, read." Very useful advice.

Don't be afraid of disliking something, regardless of who wrote it (or liking it). Give credit where you feel it is due. Pay attention. Listen to the words that you read...or write. Share words with others, and share the words of others.

See the words.

Central Board News —Dave LaRoche

As all CWC members know (at least suspect) ours is a state-wide club and we (SouthBay) are one of fourteen branches. Each branch elects and sends to State one representative. This collection of reps, the Central Board, meets and conducts business quarterly. Our representative is Bob Garfinkle, the gregarious stalwart who carries the mic about at our monthly get-togethers. The following is a very brief rundown on State business during their meeting, July 17.

Election held: Continuing and new Officers are:

- Barbara Truax: State president
- Camille Gavin: Secretary
- Dave Cunningham: Vice-president
- Martha Clark Scala: Treasurer (SF Peninsula).
- Member-at-Large: Dave George (Berkeley).

In other action:

- "Affiliate" renamed "Supporting" with full fees to the State
- "50% plus one" (Active class over remaining) rule was tabled
- Potential new branches: San Diego, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Los Angeles, and Gold Coast.
- *Uniformity and sanity* forecasted, re branch financial reporting
- Eliminated the "non-resident" membership category.
- \$1,000 grant to Sue Oksanen (Young Writers of the Peninsula) held pending formation of a new 501C(3) organization.
- Approved a plan to establish a CWC scholarship fund.
- Truax to inaugurate "boot camp" for branch officers.

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

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Unless otherwise noted above, our email address is
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Join Up

We have a membership category that fits you, dues are \$45 per year plus a *one-time* \$20 initiation fee.

Contact our Membership Chair
Diana Richomme

Meet New Member and Contributing Editor— Andrea Galvacs

By Una Daly

“My very first literary achievement was an essay that I wrote in honor of Mother's Day in the third grade and which I had to read to the whole school. I don't remember whether I got a standing ovation or not, but I like to think I did,” says Andrea Galvacs, new CWC Southbay member and the latest addition to our newsletter staff. She heard about the club while taking a writing class from Edie Matthews.

Andrea had hoped to become a news reporter while attending high school in Buenos Aires, Argentina where she and her family settled



Andrea Galvacs

after leaving Hungary. Upon completing her degree as a National Public

Translator, English-Hungarian-Spanish, she immigrated to the United States in 1963. She married shortly thereafter and had two daughters before becoming a court interpreter. “I discovered my love for the English Language but the only time I found to write was to send zillions of letters to newspapers and magazines.” Some were published in *Time Magazine* and the *San Jose Mercury News*.

The book that most influenced An-

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Editors Itch

AN EYBROW TWITCH
A TORRID AFFAIR
A CIVIL WAR
THE END OF TIME
A PRAYER...

This month I sit, pen in hand, pondering... no "Itch" to scratch, no tale to tell—momentarily worried and then it occurs to me: I am a writer and totally in charge. As a writer I have everything. I am a creator, a god (no disrespect) with a blank world at my fingertips.

Though, as I look around me and into our media—a mirror, if arguably distorted—I see big needs, hard attitudes and entrenched dispositions. I see people with boundaries... boundaries imposed by limitations... limitations defined by often humilatingly unfulfilled aspirations. And I see an s-load of struggle—nuanced and obvious.

I see a struggle for power and authority; another rung, a broader reach—faster and richer. On another stage, I see a desperate search for tranquility, harmony, placidity, silence or to be absolutely alone. I see people needing love from a parent or a child, a pass from their sexy new neighbor next door. I see others wanting acceptance and admiration; to be seen as superior, maybe virtuous, not to mention attractive—nice bum, big pecks or good boobs and shapely legs sans cellulite. I see everyone working hard to be better and better or somebody else.

Now, back to my original point. As writer I easily make a world, staff it with characters, create situations and execute any outcome I choose. I set it up and make it work. My characters find what I deem they shall find and, I submit, so do I—no struggle, not a tad. I experience no set backs, bad decisions or compromises and I kowtow to no one. As a writer, I always succeed. The world I create, its scenes, its evolution, suspense and surprise are mine alone to plan and control. I am omnipotent—no boundaries, no humiliation (though there is the editor).

So what do I need with the currency that is ordinarily thought to lead to fulfillment—wealth, standing, a genuflecting public (and the struggle that precedes)? Those hard-sought, elusive (I think contagious) aspirations are easily right here at the end of my pen... for I am a writer.

WritersTalk

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

WritersTalk Staff

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Dave LaRoche (408) 729-3941

Contributing Editors

Una Daly
Jackie Mutz
Andrea Galvacs

Submittals are invited:

Guest Columns

— *Almost Anything Goes*
Regular Columns
to Una Daly

News Items

Literary Work
Announcements and Advertisement
Letters to Ed—*In My Opinion*
to Dave LaRoche

Submit to an editor as an attachment to email by the 16th of the month preceding publication.

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or

writerstalk@comcast.net

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Contact Dave LaRoche

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(Dumas from page 1)

lowed by a benefit performance for the Palo Alto Children's Library, which raised \$20,000. Now TheatreWorks is planning a longer run of *Laughing Without an Accent* for their 2006 season.

Firoozeh was mainly motivated to perform to promote her memoir. Even though she had a major publisher—and *Funny in Farsi* has been on the best-seller's lists, San Francisco Chronicle and Los Angeles Times—she had no idea how difficult it was to get a book nationally distributed.

"The biggest misconception is that once you're with a publisher, you have a team of marketing people behind you." In reality, the PR person helps for about two months, and then the responsibility falls on the author's shoulders. Part of her problem has been when you do something really original—a funny biography by a Middle Eastern woman—they don't know how to market it. In some stores she has found her book stocked in the sociology section.

Despite the obstacles, her work has received substantial recognition. Jimmy Carter called the book, "A humorous and introspective chronicle of a life filled with love—of family, country and heritage." Orange County Reads One Book selected *Funny in Farsi* as its book of the year for 2004, as did the City of Whittier in 2005. Also, *Funny in Farsi* is used in many junior high, high schools and universities and is now on the California Recommended Reading List.

Although Firoozeh grew up in a different culture, she learned early on that people are the same. "It's unfortunate that people are fearful of those from other countries because we share a universality," said the author. "Family dynamics are family dynamics."

Join us at the September CWC meeting, when Firoozeh Dumas discusses her experiences as a writer and marketer of *Funny in Farsi*. EM

Lookout Bar & Grill
605 Macara Ave., Sunnyvale
(Sunnyvale Golf Course)
6 PM, Wed., Sept. 14
Members \$15, Guests \$18 (includes Dinner)

Note:
Whatever Happened to ...
 will return in October

August Meeting Recap —by Dave LaRoche

On a warm summer night in August, sixty-seven hearty South Bay writers threw competing plans out the window and connected in Sunnyvale to exchange their culinary appetites for "Lookout" cuisine and share creative ideas for the pen.

In addition to our exciting speaker (more on her later) there were twenty-seven guests—three of which smartly decided to join—reported our treasurer and stand-in hospitality gal, Vicki Miller. And a good idea it was as our Program Chair, Edie Matthews, announced the upcoming five months:

September – Firoozeh Dumas relates humorous and poignant anecdotes

October – Halloween dress-up and Donna Levin

November – Joel Ben Izzy and his hat humor

December – Christmas Party

January – Workshop, April Kihlstron: *How to Write Your Novel in a Week*.

Cathy Bauer, as raffle chair, sold about 150 tickets, netting the Club a record \$124 (less any favors she might throw at her son for heisting his stereo, one of a number of spiffy prizes given away). Not to worry, says persuasive and charming Cathy, *much* of this stuff is donated. (Did we notice her son scowling?) Among other prizes were a Backgammon set and a copy of the Da Vinci Code ("Code" in the event your opponent is ponderously slow); "Dancing..." with slippers and bath salts for the newly



liberated princess, Jack Hasling's *Welcome to the Dunes* packaged with wine and a cooler—ah, words and drinks, a harmonizing pair; "Writing Essentials" including reference book, briefcase, book

light and an assortment of pens that would work even if you were writing in dark outer space (as some of us are). Three for Cathy!!!

At eight, when most everyone had quieted their rumbling appetites, exchanged what was on their minds for what was on the minds of others, and put away a share

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(Meeting Recap from page 4)

of the brownies baked by our Cathy Bauer (truly southern grace); our guest speaker, Jas Lonngquist, took the podium to increase our screenplay acumen—how to write them and how to replace them with money.

A CWC member for 12 years, and graciously extolling the support she received through her association with South Bay, she began an academic-like review of producing and selling a screenplay. Her success, she said, was due to visibility derived in a large part through competitions she entered and often won. And with over thirty screenplays and 90 videos into production not to mention assorted other writings in option, one might conclude her method is worthy.

Jas emphasized repeatedly that her road to success was paved with competitions and awards and as she talked, I likened her experience to the proverbial snowball rolling down the mountain; picking up momentum and size with each revolution—write, compete, win and be recognized, sell; write, compete, win and...

Her keystones are structure and format, related to product; and career strategy and perseverance, related to promotion. The ability to deal casually with rejection is also imperative, she conveyed.

Some facts: between 40 and 50,000 screenplays are registered every year. Only 1200 are sold but often bring \$500K, \$1M and more to the writer. As a comparison, 10,000 novels are sold annually. Many screenplays are “spec’ed deals”, written without a contract and pitched to the producer; however, the majority are requested and most of those writers are al-

ready under contract or with business relationships. A screenplay may be purchased by a studio and set on a shelf for a decade or more. Some of those collecting dust may be picked up by another studio, staffed and produced—a “turnaround” (no additional money to the writer, she pointed out, as when your screenplay is sold,

so goes its ownership). The largest single source for screenplays is the novel and so Jas thinks it prudent for novelists to become familiar with screenplay-writing and, in fact, said if she were a novelist the very first thing she would do upon finishing a book would be write the screenplay.

Once sold, your screenplay may be rewritten. Sole credit to you sustains only if not rewritten more than 30% after which you share with the re-writer and if enough change, minimal-to-no credit at all—only the original money. While it’s nice to see your screenplay unaltered, produced and performed, the writer’s job is really done when the sale is made. (You can see more about script sales at hollywoodreporter.com)

Marketing your product was emphasized. Know your producers and their needs and go directly to them, she advised. Network! Get into the market and uncover its nuances and promote, promote, promote. A large part of success is believing... adopt the notion that you are good—the best—then go out and tell it like you believe it to be and, with a few credits and your earlier wins, those you address will *believe* it as well.

She also noted the writer has only 90—120 minutes to tell the story, one page of script equal one minute of

time and the text space on a page is quite limited by format so it’s not a place to sprinkle unnecessarily. She discussed the three act plot: intro to characters; obstacles, conflict

and learning; new direction and resolution. Movies, she said, need “satisfying” endings, not necessarily happy

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Terse Verse

By Pat Bustamante

September Mourn

Lament the falling summer's
dying ember,
The calendar sheds leaves:
Oct! Nov!
And next, December.
In a playmate's luring pose
You dress in one dried
rose.
But royalties beat roses,
dear September!

This column brings a series of brief grammar lessons by Pat Decker Nipper, a writer, a former English teacher, and a member of CWC...

Nipper's Nits

By Pat Decker Nipper

Lesson 7. The apostrophe

The apostrophe has two main uses: First, it indicates possession: Bush's appointments. And second, it indicates that one or more letters have been omitted from a word, such as contractions and other words: Beggin' your pardon, sir. It can also show, as in years and decades, that the century has been omitted: the class of '56 or the '90s.

Never use an apostrophe to make a word plural. You can, however, use it to indicate the plural of single letters: She received all A's. You can also use an apostrophe with initials, such as degrees like B.S.'s and Ph.D.'s. For plurals of decades, such as the '70s, do not use two apostrophes, as in '70's, or the 1980's. This is incorrect and often misused.

Contact Pat at pat@patdeckernipper.com for comments or questions.



On the Web- by Ro Davis

Back to School with a 10 lb backpack.

throw away from a book burner. In a roomful of writers, you were lucky to get out alive.

Recently, I have seen the number of supporters of digital books grow, but only slightly. The consensus remains that full-length, downloadable texts, especially novels, will never become popular. After all, you can't take the computer into the tub.

(This argument, raised by a San Francisco agent, was dashed in Maui last year when a writer joined him in the hotel hot tub and settled back to read, in a deliberate manner, the latest Grisham on his Palm Pilot.)

The fact is, should we care to face it, many of us are reading more from computer screens than we realize. Emails, Internet news articles, online newsletters, and websites -- the list is too long for this column. As writers, we are constantly reading and rereading our own work from the screen.

Research is the obvious no-brainer, the killer app for e-book technology. I've accumulated a shelf full of books in researching my historical novel. Every time I rifle through these books, searching through my annotations, sticky notes, and colored markers, I wish I had them in electronic form so that I could search the text instantly. Unfortunately, none are available in electronic format. Italian music in the 18th century is not a big enough market.

Enter the really big market: textbooks. All those kids trudging to school with a backpack that rivals what a Marine carries into battle may not have long to suffer. Empire High School near Tucson, Arizona, is handing out Apple iBooks this year instead of 50 pounds of textbooks. The kids no longer have to manage back pain. The school district saves money: hardcopy textbooks are ridiculously expensive and often out of date before they ship.

Other schools have also figured out the advantage of e-books or soon will. The next generations of readers will have none of our qualms about reading books from a computer screen, be it *Biology Today* or *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It might even encourage them to continue reading long after the assignments stop.

See you on the web...

Writers Help'n Writers is a new column devoted to seeking solutions, from the membership at large, to serious questions about writing posed by a member. In an Issue, this one for starters, the question will be stated. Responses are invited and will be printed in the next issue along with the next question(s). As answers come in to the newsletter editor, they will also be forwarded to the questioner—in real time. Both questions and responses may be addressed to

writerstalk@comcast.net

Please keep questions under 150 wds and answers at less than 75; subject, "WHW".

Writers Help'n Writers

Meredy Amyx, a new member, writes: *"What's a good way to structure an index, concordance, or other tool to cross reference one's developing work?"*

I am working on a novel and maintain:

- An ID of all character, including minor, and where they first appear.
- Detailed character information for the principals.
- A genealogy for the major characters' family lines.
- Ongoing notes on research, plot elements, sources used, etc.

Is there a way to structure this information to help avoid continuity errors, track multiple threads, and keep from messing up characteristics and relationships?

I need a database of some kind, but I don't know how to structure it, and I do not want to buy software to do what Bronte and Dostoevsky did perfectly well for themselves. My online searches were unproductive."

Send your ideas to:

writerstalk@comcast.net

and help Meredy with her question.

Looking for Memories...

Any old documents that may assist in the compilation of the South Bay Branch's history. Anyone having related information: dates, events, people, places, remembered vignettes, please contact Clarence L Hammonds, Club Historian at:

clarencehammonds@juno.com

or see me at the next meeting. Any and everything will be helpful. Thank you.



(Meeting Recap from page 5)

ones (Sundance Kid). And your antagonist needs to be as strong as your protagonist, maybe stronger, she advised, thus when the protagonist succeeds a great obstacle is overcome leaving film watchers with gut-satisfaction.

Jas went on to underscore the immense degree of importance of presentation, e.g., the physical structure and format of your writing which, unlike a manuscript for a book

or an article, needs to be *perfect* if to be considered at all. She made handouts available as well as software recommendations. Final Draft is intuitive, very helpful and producers are now using it, she added.

Jas Lonngquist gave us her focused and concentrated insight and, in less than an hour, we received practical enlightenment that might have taken years in experience and ed. Thank you Jas for an informative evening (and likely some converts to screen writing).



DLR

(Andrea Galvacs from page 3)

drea's early writing was the *The Diary of Anne Frank*. She started a diary at the age of eleven and continued until high school graduation which has jump started her memoirs. A strong believer in constructive criticism, Andrea is looking for a critique group to join, in addition, to getting her feet wet on the newsletter team.

Andrea will be reporting on newsworthy events, including author readings and open microphone sessions for the CWC Southbay newsletter. Please contact her about newsworthy events that would be of interest to club members. UD

Reminder

JACK LONDON

By Clarence L. Hammonds

Jack London, born John Griffith Chaney, in San Francisco, California (January 12, 1876, died November 22, 1916) was an American author of more than 50 books. He was self-taught early in life and in 1883, at seven years, received a long Victorian novel, *Signa by Ouida* and read all of it. It was about an unschooled Italian girl who achieves fame as an opera composer. This was the start he needed, it was the seed-plot to his writing. Here is one of his quotes: "The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time."

Jack London was a gifted writer of the early 20th century. He was known as a prolific and special writer of all times. His biological father, according to many biographers, was William Chaney, an astrologer, who was a distinguished and likeable person, say the biographers. Jack London did not learn about Chaney being his father until adulthood. In 1897 he wrote to Chaney and received an answer in which Chaney stated, "I was never married to Flora Wellman (Jack's mother) and because I was impotent during the period in which we lived together, I cannot be your father." Whether the marriage between Flora Wellman and William Chaney was legalized is unknown. All records were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake; it was not known what name appeared on Jack's birth certificate. However, Chaney wrote in his memoirs of Jack London's mother, Flora Wellman, as having been his "wife." She signed her name as Florence Wellman Chaney.

Jack London has done much for those who love writing he is an example for all who love to write. Reading about him has inspired me.

1889: London graduated from grammar school and began working twelve to eighteen hours a day at Hickmott's Cannery. The work was too much for him. He borrowed money from his black foster mother, Jennie Prentiss, and bought a sloop (singled-mast sail boat) which he called Razzle-Dazzle. He became an oyster pirate. However, the sloop was damaged beyond repair in an accident, so he became a member of the California Fish Patrol.

1893: He sailed on a schooner Sophia Sutherland, to Japan and on his return to Oakland he found out the country was in the panic of 1893 and there was labor unrest in Oakland. After many awful laborious

jobs, he joined what was known as "Kelly's Industrial Army" and began his 'career' as a tramp.

1894: He was arrested for vagrancy and spent thirty days in the Erie County Penitentiary at Buffalo. In *The Road* (1907), his autobiographical writings, he wrote: "Man-handling was merely one of the very minor unprintable horrors of the Erie County Pen. I say 'unprintable'; and in justice I must also say 'unthinkable'. They were unthinkable to me until I saw them, and I was no spring chicken in the ways of the world and the awful abysses of human degradation. It would take a deep plummet to reach bottom in the Erie County Pen, and I do but skim lightly and facetiously the surface of things as I there saw them."

1895: He met Ina Coolbrith, of the Oakland Public Library who was California's first poet laureate and an important person in San Francisco literary community. After being a hobo, sailor and a member of "Kelly's Army", he returned to Oakland and attended the Oakland High School. He wrote many articles for the high school's magazine, *The Aegis*.

1896: Jack London attended the University of California, cramming courses. However, the next year he was forced to leave because of financial circumstances, and he never graduated.

To be continued beginning with 1898 CH

Marin Branch Sponsors Editing For Publication

Presented by Charlotte Cook

Sunday, October 16

InnMarin, 250 Entrada Drive, Novato

\$75 for CWC members; \$90 for nonmembers

Refreshments, lunch and handouts included

Limited to 30 attendees

Send check with name, address, phone number and email to:

Mary Jane Essex, Registration Chair

177 Canal St #10, San Rafael CA 94901

For more info, Email: mjessex@msn.com

Wkshop chair: Barbara Truax, CWCMarin@aol.com

Charlotte Cook holds a MFA in creative writing, is published extensively and has been teaching since 1993. As much as 20% of her students have been published, won contests, and found writing work. She is co-founder of KOMENAR Publishing and has been guest speaker at various and many CWC events including the Jack London Writers Conference,

Kathryn Madison at Willow Glen Books

By Andrea Galvacs

Depending on the author and the book, book signing events can be very entertaining or boring affairs. In the case of Kathryn Madison's, the affair was not only entertaining but informative as well. She regaled the twenty or so people present at Willow Glen Books, on August 11 at 7:00 p.m. with the promotion of her debut novel *Woman's Sigh*,

Wolf's Song. Willow Glen Books is a mallish independent bookstore at 1330 Lincoln Ave., San Jose,

Explaining that she preferred that the audience read the entire book rather than listen to her read from it just a little bit, Kathryn read only one paragraph. Then, she told us the story of how she got started with it fifteen years ago, you could say almost by accident.

Kathryn took her sick dog to the veterinarian who, in idle talk, suggested that she read about wolves. She did, and learned that the behavior of dogs, wolves and humans does not differ all that much. She found this so fascinating that pretty soon she was reading everything she could about wolves and did personal investigation as well.

"... the behavior of dogs, wolves and humans does not differ all that much."

That trip turned out not to be enough to satisfy her curiosity, so she went back many times to see them and learn of their life. Eventually the idea for her book developed and she began writing.

This is how *Woman's Sigh*, *Wolf's Song* was born. The book is about a woman doing her best to recover from a recent divorce, a wolf doing his best to cope with his adverse environment and the similarities in their



Kathryn Madison (L) and Andrea Galvacs

strategies for survival. Published last February by Windstorm Creative, the paperback is available for \$19.99 and found five or six buyers that evening.

Kathryn, a member of California Writers Club, is currently hard at work, twelve chapters into her next book about a killer whale.

Good luck to Kathryn, let's hope her book sells many copies. AG

CWC MEMBERSHIP

Thoughts from Diana Richomme,
Membership Chair

I heard a rumor. Someone whispered that members aren't all considered equal. Go ahead and quote me, *Membership categories don't place a value on you as a member or as a writer. They're there for an entirely different reason.*

So why do we have Active, Associate and Supporting members? Barbara Truax, President of the California Writers Club said it well,

"One of the main purposes of CWC and its branches is to encourage writers toward publication. 'Active' membership has that publication requirement. By encouraging 'Associate' members to obtain 'Active' membership we are fulfilling our mission statement. Recognizing that non-writers also want to be a part of CWC, we have 'Associate Non-Literary Professionals' including agents, book-sellers, illustrators and the like. 'Supporting' membership [formerly 'Affiliate'] is now for our members who are not actively writing, like a significant other... or members who are just getting started. Encouraging those who want to write to attain 'Associate' membership then finally 'Active' status is one of the goals of CWC."

The bottom line is that we ask about where you're at are to help you succeed and so that our speakers and programs reflect the range of interests, genres, and career development of our members. DR

Another Look at Print on Demand

by Jack Hasling

Bookstore buyers seldom have encouraging things to say about POD (Print on Demand). But I think I can make a favorable case, at least for my own publisher, Iceni Books. I know several members of our club who have tried to get their work published through traditional channels with nothing but rejection slips to show for their efforts. It's not enough just to have a good manuscript; you have to have money, fame, or good luck to get your work into print these days. Self-publishing is an alternative but an expensive one. Many of our speakers have told us that it is better to self-publish than use POD if you can afford it. Some of our members have self-published with positive results, but others have spent a bundle and wound up with nothing more than a garage full of books.

The trouble is that POD has a bad reputation, and for good reasons. Most companies who use that printing technology will accept almost any manuscript even without editing. These companies are easily identified by their names: Ex libra, iUniverse, First Books. As a point of clarification, POD is not a new kind of publishing company; it's just a new technology. Printing one book at a time is a cost effective way of putting a book on the market without making a big investment. Recently, Ingram made arrangements with some POD publishers to offer a virtual inventory. When bookstores look for a title on the computer they will find it listed by Ingram the same as any other book. Still, the label "Print on Demand" is a kiss of death.

I have had good luck with Iceni Books, who published my mystery novel, *Welcome to the Dunes*. There are several important reasons: the company is an imprint of Wheatmark and is not recognized as POD. They use the printing technology, but in all other respects are a traditional publisher. Their income is derived from the sale of books, not just the fees paid by authors. They require all authors to use their editing service, and they will not accept a manuscript with more errors than they can correct. They offer the same discount to bookstores as any other publisher, and they have a return policy.

What I have found most advantageous is their pricing discount. My book is marked to sell at \$15.95, but amazon.com discounts it 32% so the cost is only \$10.85. That makes my book competitive with other mass produced books. When I do a book talk, I don't have to make a profit on my sales. I buy books from

amazon.com, sell them at cost, and collect 20% royalties. As a rule, publishing companies will not pay royalties on books you buy yourself. Wheatmark also has a marketing plan for books that sell more than 2000 copies, which includes promotion and distribution paid for by them. This is generally not available from self-publishing printers. JH

Questions may be directed to Jack at jackhasling@aol.com

Take a Nap —by C. Downey

Kitty Cat
curled up
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Her answer to all life's problems
Take a nap.



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LILLY

A short story by Cathy Bauer

Lilly slammed down a shot of Southern Comfort, her third, while I nursed my tequila sunrise. The deck outside the Paradise Bar and Grill was deserted but for us. Clouds on the horizon thickened, shore birds battled gusts of wind, waves pounded the white sand beach. A storm was heading in from Gulf of Mexico. No one in her right mind would have insisted on going to the island on a day like this.

I was there because of an early morning phone call from a troubled Lilly. "I have to get away. I'm coming to get you and we're going to St. George's." Lilly, my friend, was also my boss and, even though it was Saturday, saying no didn't seem to be an option. I drove, she talked.

Work, she said, was all she had ever known. Lilly had grown up during the Great Depression; money had been scarce. Her earliest memories were of gathering eggs and picking cotton on her family's farm. It was hard feeding ten children, so her father found husbands for his daughters. Lilly became a bride at age twelve. The groom, Tucker Nesmith, was a thirty-five year old farmer who lived a few miles away. A reluctant justice of the peace married them at the county courthouse. It didn't take long for her to discover Tucker's fiery temper, and the young bride quickly learned to submit to her husband. Their first child, a daughter, was born shortly before Lilly's fourteenth birthday. By eighteen she had two daughters and two sons. Even though Lilly's hands were full tending the children, Tucker demanded she help him plow, plant, pick, and preserve the fruits and vegetables they grew. Her work seemed never-ending.

Tucker's health began to deteriorate about the time their first child graduated from high school. Smoking from age ten had taken its toll on his lungs. Emphysema caused his body to weaken, but it fed his temper. Lilly often found herself bruised and bloody as he lashed out in anger at his mortality. The burden of providing for their family fell on her. By day, she worked the farm with help from a hired hand. At night she went to school, leaving the children to look after Tucker. After completing high school, Lilly went on to business school, majored in accounting, and landed a job with the local bank.

For the first time in her life, she tasted the freedom that money can buy. It spurred her on with vigor and a determination to succeed. Lilly made herself indispensable to the vice-president of the bank and upon his retirement, she was rewarded with his job. The farm land was leased out. Their daughters married and sons went off to college. Life was good, with one exception--Tucker. Her husband, now bedridden and hooked to an oxygen tank, required constant care. With the children gone, Lilly had no choice but to

hire a caregiver. Tucker wasn't happy with the arrangement and spent his days cussing, screaming, and demanding attention. Occasionally he would physically attack the person hired to look after him. Some would quit at a moment's notice, while others just failed to show up the next day. By now, the pool of hired help was drying up. Lilly was at her wit's end.

I knew divorce wasn't an option. The code of ethics that allowed her to succeed in the business world came from her personal life: not giving up when the work gets tough; playing fair when others don't; and setting a good example even if it means sacrifice. Lilly had endured Tucker for forty-three years. Leaving him when he was dying would break her own rules.

The wind had picked up, blowing waves of sand across the deck, forcing us inside. Lilly sat, then leaned across the table and looked me straight in the eyes. "Tell me," she said. "Do you think it's wrong to pray for someone to die?"

I had never thought about it before. In Sunday School, along with being taught the difference between right and wrong, I had been instructed in intercessory prayer. Occasionally I'd been asked to pray for someone who was dying, but never for someone to die. Would praying for Lilly's peace of mind mean I was praying for Tucker's demise? Was one right and the other wrong? Instead of giving her an answer, I suggested Lilly have another drink. We ordered fried fish and discussed the weather, politics, and the best way to cook okra. After dinner, we stumbled over to our motel room. As I turned out the lights, I heard Lilly mumbling and wondered if she was praying.

Sunday morning we woke to thunder as the storm made its way onto the island. The conversation from the day before was still on my mind. I asked, "Would you like to go to church and talk to someone?"

Lilly sat quietly for a moment before saying, "No. I think this should just be between me and the Lord." I didn't disagree.

We left the island in the middle of the storm. Lilly, so talkative on the way down, sat in silence watching the windshield wipers, perhaps in deep conversation with the Lord.

She didn't mention the trip to me or, as far as I know, to anyone else at work. Sometimes I saw her sitting at her desk with her head bowed and wondered if she was praying.

Two weeks after our trip to the island, Tucker developed pneumonia and passed away in his sleep. When the funeral was over and her children gone, I offered to help clean Tucker's room. Lilly smiled as she declined my offer with, "Thanks, but your prayers were enough."

(Auchard from page 1)

poignant, but humorous telling of her journey of widowhood. The short, engaging stories reflect the numbing grief experience but more importantly, her rebirth and new life. In short vignettes, Betty lets us in the door of her most intimate moments: pain, sadness, tears and laughter. Through her, we experience the highs and lows and the epiphany of her emotional, spiritual and physical (yes, she loves to dance!) journey of self-discovery.

Betty began her writing process immediately after Denny died in July, 1998. She scribbled in the margins of bereavement books at night and by day she “journalled on junk,” tirelessly writing her thoughts on bits of paper, napkins, envelopes, whatever was handy. She saved them in safe places like the junk drawer. This gave way to writing as a way to work through her grief after Denny’s death. She did it to stay afloat, as she said, “grieving people need to talk and writing was like talking to paper.” Writing became her therapy. Little did she know it would blossom into an award-winning book.

Giving birth to *Dancing in My Nightgown* was not only a six-year journey of writing about the sometimes scary, often funny experiences of being single so late in life, but it was also an expensive endeavor. For several years, she has worked with the editor, Sandi Corbitt-Sears, to refine her work; a consultant, Bruce McAllister; and her publisher, Stephens Press in Las Vegas.

Betty, a natural born story-teller and former drama student, has a love affair with her audience. She has been telling her upbeat and inspiring story of the strange new world of a widow for over three years—well before the manuscript was finished. At first, she handled her own PR for obtaining speaking engagements, but after the book was released in March and earned a 2005 Independent Publisher award, Betty had to hire publicists to schedule her programs—and that’s where she sells books. People in her audiences love her as much as she loves them and they exchange considerable energy but they don’t have to be widowed to be fond of these stories. Both men and women have found that *Dancing* gives voice to their personal feelings whether widowed or not. As Betty noted, “I had no idea that speaking to groups about my wacky experiences as an older single woman was going to be as good for them as it was for me.”

Trading “art for a keyboard,” Betty reinvented herself as an accomplished writer, speaker and wannabe

dancer and is open to whatever life will bring next. Look for *Dancing in My Nightgown* at local bookstores, or visit her website at:

www.dancinginmynightgown.com

to order it fast from the publisher. On her website, you will see Betty dancing in her nightgown and find more about her speaking engagements. You may also meet Betty at our September 14 CWC meeting. She will be the one with killer eyes and a vivacious smile. Maybe she will even dance a little if someone provides music with a knock-em-dead beat. JM

Long Story Short Launches Writing School OnLine

by Karen Oliver Llewellyn

Long Story Short, a web site promoting writers and their work, is launching a School of Writing. Registration is open until Sept. 28 for classes beginning Oct. 5 covering nonfiction, fiction, poetry and screenwriting.

Students will post, read and critique one another’s assignments on an interactive board while working closely with an instructor. There will also be weekend intensive workshops. Tuition ranges from \$25-\$100 for most courses, although there may occasionally be special classes for which tuition will be higher.

Courses vary from single lessons, 10-week sessions, and some full-year, once-a-month offerings.

Visit their web site at
www.LssWritingSchool.com

Questions to Karen Llewellyn
kario@rahul.net

ATTENTION all Memoirists

A discussion group is now forming to share ideas on content, structure, techniques, problems of self revelation, and so forth.

Group will meet beginning mid-September or mid-October for three or four times, depending on what the group wants.

Contact Barbara Blair at (408) 954-9720

Announcements Announcements Announcements

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The San Francisco Literary Map is a unique guide to literary landmarks
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General admission: \$15.00.
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Kamiya, Belle Yang, Jerry Harrison for J.T. LeRoy, and Courtney King.**

Music by Jonathan Richman.
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For more information visit: **www.826valencia.org** and **www.litquake.org**

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Open Mic
Sep 2, 7p
Borders, Los Gatos
Sep 16, 7p
B&N in the Pruneyard

WritersTalk Deadline
Sep 16 to an editor

Editors Pow Wow
Sep 26, 10am
Orchard Valley Coffee

**General Membership Meeting—2nd Wednesday
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605 Macara Ave., Sunnyvale
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See Map Below

