



WritersTalk

A South Bay Branch
Writers Club Monthly

Volume 14, Issue 1 - January 2006 Non-member subscription \$20 per year

Page 1

South Bay Writers present their January Writing Workshop *How to Write a Book in a Week*

Of course, no one is expected to actually write a finished book in a week. But this fabulous workshop *will* help you discover whether a book is in your future, what you might write best, how and when you might approach your writing, and how to deal positively with fears and self-doubt. If you have the interest, think you might like to author a book or have started and seem blocked, April Kihlstrom is eminently qualified to show you the way. In this workshop, you will learn in a week how to complete a first draft, and how to:



April Kihlstrom

- Establish a positive mental attitude.
- Set aside time and *ensure it's available*.
- Prepare with appropriate foods and reasonable rest periods.
- Shut out those dastardly distractions.
- Send your inner critic on a much earned holiday.
- Write, write, write... no editing.

You will learn how to discard old barriers, take a fresh look at your destination, and find new interest and energy in pursuing it.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

HOLIDAY BASH 2005

Recap by Una Daly

Many South Bay members gathered for the annual holiday party at Betty Auchard's beautiful home in Los Gatos on December 14th. Entering her well-lit home, we dropped our exchange gifts under the tree and grabbed a plate. The potluck was varied as usual, and reflecting club preferences the dessert table was stacked high with chocolate and pecan tart, and even some "virgin cherries" from the Martian Alps. Baked brie with garlic and cranberries made a delectable side dish. Highlights on the main meal table were fried chicken wings and wonderful spinach lasagna created by our own Jeannine McVeigh.

For a writing club, it was an extroverted crowd with lots of



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

WIN AWARDS AND RECOGNITION WITH YOUR SHORT FICTION, POETRY, MEMOIR, ESSAY.

*** See insert on p 12 for "WritersTalk Challenge" and our masthead for submittal information ***

A Look Ahead:

Jan 6&13 Open Mic, see p15
Jan 18 Board of Directors Meeting—at Susan Mueller's

Jan 22 Kihlstrom Workshop—Lookout Restaurant
Jan 23 Editors Mtg, Orchard Valley Coffee, 7:30 pm

In this Issue:

Bash Recap-Daly p1,9 et al.	<i>Neighbor's Horse-Johnson</i> p5
Prez's Prowlings p2	Nippers Nits p6
Itch p3	Accolades-Mutz p6
<i>No Block-Mueller</i> p3	<i>The Chronicle-Hammonds</i> p7
<i>7 Essential-Richomme</i> p4	Levine's Beat p8
	<i>Kerouac-Bill Brisko</i> p8

President's Prowling— by Bill Baldwin



Write Your Bliss

I am tempted to try to figure out how well-known writers worked. But is the information available? And is it even important? Isn't the main task to figure out how *I* work?

I think of other types of art. I think of visual artists continually sketching what they see around them. I imagine Mozart thinking of music faster than he could write it down. And then

Jack Kerouac, typing on his long roll of teletype paper – like Mozart, the ideas came too fast – he had to run all the time to keep up with them.

There's a stereotype that writers always carry notebooks. They're continually jotting down ideas, descriptions, proto-poems.

But it's so much work – just to write things down! You have to enjoy it – you have to learn to enjoy it! Maybe you have to find the type of stuff you *enjoy* writing down *ad nauseam*!

Maybe you're a classically-trained musician who realizes you love jazz. Or vice versa. Perhaps what you really like will surprise. Maybe you've been resisting it. But find it. Accept it. Throw yourself into it. Write something you can enjoy – a lot! **WB**

HOMELAND

by
Donna Poppenhagen

You hear my whisper in the wind, feel my soft, strong pull
upon your soul. When the sun glows warm against the morning sky,
you catch your breath; sweet memory of me. In your dreams the gate
still swings on rusty hinges; the ancient elm
once again sweeps the sky. You hear my song.
I call you back

With each footstep on dusty ground you remember
it was I who taught you to run unafraid, to seek
without recoiling, to dance against the darkness.
It was I who listened to your laughter. And when your tears
soaked into me, I poured them into blossoms. You bloomed.
And then, you went away.
You will not return; I know that now.
Your heart lies solid someplace else.
But still, I call you back.

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

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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

I Don't Have Writers Block

By Susan Mueller



Several portions of my novel are written and only one tiny piece needs revision. But the whole needs structure, not just some unrelated parts.

The main task is to create an Excel spread sheet with cells for each character and a list of those people's characteristics that need to be demonstrated and integrated into the plot. There are about 15 characters, and a somewhat unresolved plot. Also, there need to be scenes wherein the various characters have interactions with each other that give telltale clues to their own characteristics and to the advancement of the plot. If I start on this spreadsheet right away, I can code all these items such as names 1A-15A and characteristics 1B-15B. Then plot items for these people maybe 1K-15K etc. Then I just need to go along the sheet and write each of these code situations and I will have an excellent, cohesive finished product for an agent.

But first I should tidy up the dining room table so as to have room to work comfortably; my office is too crowded. Maybe I should tidy that up first so I will have a place to put the esteemed finished work.

I will take a short trip now to the back door to let both dogs out and then back in to prevent an interruption of my work. While they are out I will call the dentist and make a routine appointment. I can probably lay out this worksheet before lunch.

The dogs are in and someone is at the door. It is the neighborhood

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



Editors Itch

It's likely the season, so crammed full of activity... glazed looks, people milling—fibrillation. It's distressing and my itch, ordinarily alert and insisting, has moved undercover.

I'm told, by those in-the-know, that this is the time that editors read down their slush piles and I'm wondering if the lull isn't because writers too are drawn into the season's churning, starved for the calm that leads to our product—that we too fibrillate.

I mentioned my "fib" to Karen and she pointed me to Tharp, Twila Tharp and her book, *The Creative Habit*. I browsed.

It seems a wonderful read, but I wanted to extract only the part that cranks up creativity and for that she also thinks "scratching"—hers like the lottery scratch, peeling away to find that winning number.

The ticket is overtly involving yourself in the world you would occupy if you weren't seeking it out, or "scratching". It's the dancer into choreography, the composer in the practice room, the sculptor wandering Rodin or the rock quarry—the travel writer in Tuscany.

"Scratching" is wandering the back alleys of your interest and letting the experience pour over you until you find the "hot notion"... then running like hell to your imagination and tools. Tharp admonishes: look for small, easy to handle ideas; a tiny grain of "hot notion", in an experience that pours over, will grow into that beautiful, finely-sculpted sand castle.

"Scratch" in familiar places, places you enjoy and understand: a provocative read, a talk with your mentor, a long aimless walk. I'm a political junkie and the morning's Op-Ed provides me many hot notions.

Writers stay in shape! Read, review technique, spend time with writers and talk writing. "Scratching", she says, "works better when you're fit."

My best workout is with books and I read them in layers: pleasure first then growth, technique and ideas, structure, character, emotion, vocabulary. I try to stay "fit" so that if scratching in Tuscany, that hot idea pours over me, I'll know what to do with it. DLR

WritersTalk

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— *Almost Anything Goes*

Regular Columns

to Una Daly

News Items

Letters to Ed—*In My Opinion*
to Andrea

Literary Work

Announcements and Advertisements
To Dave

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Contact Dave LaRoche

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(WORKSHOP FROM PAGE 1)

Your writing will take on new pleasure as you progress without inhibitions. It can be an exhilarating trip and this workshop will help chart the way.

"I hope the ideas from my writing workshops encourage writers to write better and faster than they ever have before—and to have fun while doing so!" says Ms Kihlstrom, who is the author of 31 books and with more than 28 years in the publishing industry.

As a personal coach and positive thinker, she believes that *how* we deal with the challenges life throws at us matters as much, in the end, as what is thrown. "I know that positive thinking can't overcome every barrier or challenge we face in life (*or in writing*), but it always affects what the experience does or means to us."

Ms Kihlstrom holds a Masters Degree in Operations Research from Cornell University and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa (scholastic achievement honorary). She is a mother, a writer, a coach and a motivational speaker and, in a day at our workshop, she will show us how to write a first draft in a week or get pretty darn close. Join us on January 22 at the Lookout Restaurant in Sunnyvale and engage with this phenomenal woman. *DLR*

A workshop application is inserted in the center of the newsletter or for questions, call Edie Mathews, Programs Chair at (408) 985-0819 or Susan Mueller at (650) 691-9802

Epicenter Literary Magazine

is "open to a wide variety of styles and subjects and appreciate the non-depressing."

This Riverside-based literary magazine publishes poetry, short stories, essays, and art from all over the world.

For submission guidelines, visit www.epicentermagazine.org/index.htm

"7 ESSENTIAL HABITS OF WORKING WRITERS"

By Diana Richomme



Like parents, can be most persuasive to encouraging others. Stephen King, in *On Writing*, seems so sure I seller, that I keep a to me when I work.

I haven't had the courage to write Stephen a thank you note just yet, but I did exchange some e-mails with Jim Denny, whose tape, *The 7 Essential Habits of a Working Writer*, inspired a poster on my office wall.

Several years ago Jim interviewed a number of published authors to identify universal habits that commonly served as the foundation of their success. That list adorns my corkboard:

1. Write daily (even if it's only 15 minutes).
2. Cultivate the art of solitude amidst distractions.
3. Write quickly and intensely.
4. Set ambitious and achievable goals (3 levels: dreams, projects, and daily word count).
5. Focus (set daily goals on what you plan to do and note what you've completed at the end of the day).
6. Finish what you start. Submit what you finish.
7. Believe you can.

Although easier said than done, the above are completely doable - even with kids, a full-time job or other commitments. And that's just one chapter in Jim Denney's book *Quit Your Day Job - Sleep Late, Do What You Enjoy, and Make a Ton of Money as a Writer*. He must know what he's talking about; he's published over 70 books! While I'm at it, maybe I should ask him for a picture. I'll seat him next to Stephen. With their guidance and confidence, maybe my own 325-page baby will meet the world one day.

"My advice to you is get married: if you find a good wife you'll be happy; if not, you'll become a philosopher. "

- Socrates (470-399 B.C.)

(BLOCK FROM PAGE 3)

Boy Scout selling stuff. I bought some; had to search for the check-book. But that is all finished now and I can get to work.

Now let's see. Shall I name one of the leads Irene or Eileen? Hmm. Irene brings up bad memories for me and Eileen was bouncy girl I knew in third grade, not appropriate for this character. I will have to look through my baby book of 1000 girls' names to fix this. There goes the kitchen timer. Time for lunch.

OK lunch is over and the online solitaire game is calling my name. I'll just play one or two games to rest my brain.

Gosh how time flies. The dogs are barking to go out again. Now back to the writing work. There goes the dryer buzzer. I better fold those so I don't lose writing time by having to iron.

I am back at the spreadsheet having finished folding the laundry and taking some things out of the freezer for dinner.

Now back to Irene, Eileen or some other name. I see Esther and I like that, so that is what it will be. I have to be decisive here or I will never finish. Esther will be 1A. Her characteristics are.... Oh, gotta catch that phone ringing. Might be an agent for my earlier book

"Hello, Yes dear, I can baby sit my precious granddaughter. In half an hour? At your house? I am on my way." I will finish up my spreadsheet tomorrow. *SM*

MY NEIGHBOR THE HORSE

A short short by Marjorie Johnson

My favorite neighbor is blaze on his forehead. I field behind our back day after school--apples, clover--and I stroke his talk to him about every-

Today I am wearing my and I climbed through the because he wouldn't come to the fence. I'm sitting on top of a large chunk of granite enjoying the shade of a cedar tree when I see Charlie and Robin go through the fence on the other side. They don't belong here—trespassing. I'm not trespassing, just visiting my friend the horse.

Charlie and Robin are the rowdiest boys in my class. They always torment me and call me The Brain. Just because they are dunces. It's hard enough being a girl, worse a smart girl.

Charlie says, "Hey, look, it's The Brain, sitting on that rock." His brown hair needs combing and his shirt's half pulled out of his dirty jeans. He's repeating fourth grade.

Robin says, "That's all she can do, sit on rocks and read books. She doesn't know how to do nothin'. Bet she couldn't get on that horse, couldn't never ride one 'less it says how in one of them books." He looks as bad as Charlie and needs a bath. Besides that, his English is incorrect.

Charlie says, "Betcha can't get on that horse. Brain can't do nothin'."

I say, "Star, come here, Star." I'm glad I still have half an apple.

Star comes close to the rock and I slip onto his back. He is big—my legs have to stretch way out. He is tall—I couldn't climb up without the rock. I grab his mane with one hand. I have never tried this before.

"See, I can too get on a horse. Bet you can't do it," I say.

Charlie says, "Let's see you ride. Giddy up!" and slaps Star on his butt.

Star takes off down the hill. I bend down; hold onto his mane for dear life. My heart is pounding, I almost can't see, he's running so fast. He's going for the blackberry bramble at the bottom of the hill. I'm scared. I can't let on to Charlie and Robin.

Star stops in the middle of the bramble, just stands there, snorts. I just sit there. It's a long way down, and I'm wearing shorts, for Pete's sake.

"Come on, Star, let's go," I say. I try pulling his mane to the right, towards the pasture. He walks to the grass, puts his head down to eat.

"Good horse," I say. I slip down, jump or fall—get off some way. He just eats grass. *MJ*



a big black horse with a white call him Star and he lives in a fence. I give him treats every carrots, sometimes a bunch of soft nose and pat his neck and thing.

green shorts because it's hot, back barbed wire to feed Star



Don't miss our Feb 8th Speaker, Jill Lublin, author & publicist extraordinaire who will give us: **GUERRILLA PUBLICITY - Practical Strategies to Sell Your Book.**

Jill Lublin is the author of two national best selling books, Guerrilla Publicity (considered the PR bible and is used in university marketing courses) and Networking Magic (which went to #1 at Barnes and Noble). She is a renowned strategist and international speaker. As the CEO of the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

(GUERRILLA FROM PAGE 5)

strategic consulting firm, Promising Promotion, Jill has created successful techniques that implements bottom line results. Jill is founder of GoodNews Media, Inc., a company specializing in positive news. She is currently the host of the nationally syndicated radio show, *Do the Dream*, where she interviews celebrities who have achieved their dreams. Recently she has been featured in the New York Times, Woman's Day, and Entrepreneur Magazine, as well as on ABC, NBC, CBS radio and TV national affiliates. Jill is currently working on her third book, *How to Connect*, and has a new TV show called *The Connecting Minute*.

Mark your calendar!
February 8

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

Nipper's Nits

By Pat Decker Nipper

Lesson 10. Less vs. Fewer

Use "fewer" with plural nouns, and "less" with single items. For example, it is incorrect to say, "I drive less miles now that gasoline is more expensive." The correct sentence is, "I drive fewer miles now."

Items are numbered, not measured, so the correct sign at the supermarket should be: "Express Lane, Ten Items or Fewer," unlike the signs you usually see that read, incorrectly, "Ten Items or Less."

Similarly, if a city is losing population, it has "fewer people," not "less people." If a teacher gives "less homework," the students have "fewer papers" to deal with.

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

Accolades —by Jackie Mutz

Oh the holidays were upon us, but Accolades is fast becoming a living, breathing testimony to our esteemed writers. Thank you to those who sent in the following:

- Michelle Gabriel has just published *I Never Met A Mandelbread I Didn't Like!* A collection of mandelbread history, recipes and trivia. For ordering information, call (408) 255-1270 or email mjgwrites@yahoo.com.
- Emily Jiang's novel manuscript entitled *Paper Daughter* won 1st Place in the YA Novel Category of the Focus on Writers Competition. *Paper Daughter* also received the Sue Alexander Most Promising New Work Award from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Emily will receive an all expense paid trip to New York to pursue publication of her novel.
- Phyllis Mattsen, who recently published her memoir, *War Orphan in San Francisco*, has received the Pen award from the Santa Clara branch of the National League of American Pen Women. A luncheon, *Hats off to the Arts*, is to take place on February 4, 2006. Please contact Phyllis for further information.
- Jana McBurney-Lin, the immediate past president of the Peninsula CWC branch, has published her novel, *My Half of the Sky*, due for release in May 2006. A fifteen year labor of love, we are happy to congratulate Jana on her accomplishment! Look for an interview with Jana in our February issue of *WritersTalk*.

Quite an accomplishment for our writers, don't you think? A round of applause please. Please email me with any good writing news, however small deserving of recognition. We will put in *Accolades*. Great way to bring in the New Year, which I hope will be a happy and prosperous year for all. JAM



THE CHRONICLE

A History of The California Writers Club South Bay Branch

By Clarence Hammonds, Historian

THE BEGINNING: Sue Lick, President of CWC, South Bay Branch wrote: "This year-1991-92-marks our 82nd year.

Herman Whitaker, George Sterling, Jack London, and Austin Lewis first discussed a literary club in the early 1900s. They met informally for a time, then in 1909 the club was founded with London's friend, Austin Lewis, as its first president. The Club's Bulletin began regular publication in 1913.

During its 82-year history, Club projects have included the publication of anthologies, the planting of many trees honoring major California writers in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park, weekly literary talks at the Golden Gate International Exposition at Treasure Island, and the restoration of Jack London's quarters at Jack London State Park.

The South Bay Branch was chartered in 1987 and in 1991 / 92 had 66 members. Then, and today, Club members hold monthly dinner meetings, each featuring a speaker of some phase of writing or the business of writing. Everyone who is interested in writing and wants to learn more about writing is always welcome to attend

our monthly dinner meetings. If you are interested in being a part of this Branch contact: Bill Baldwin, president at (408) 730-9622 or Edie Matthews, vice president at (408) 985-0819. You may also email:

Diana Richomme, membership chair, at membership@southbaywriters.com.

I am very happy to serve as Historian for California Writers Club (CWC), South Bay Branch. I read over the past records of this branch and can truly say everyone, past and present, is doing a fantastic job or better yet, an extraordinary service.

This being the first of the New Year, I began to think about 2005. I have never told you "officially" thanks for allowing me to serve as Historian. So, Thanks for this opportunity to share with you moments of my fellowship with everyone who is a part of CWC South Bay Branch. It is my desire to help pave the way for the growth of our branch. I feel as though this branch is under the guidance of outstanding leaders and I want to remain a part of this branch.

I have never told you "officially" thanks for allowing me to serve as Historian. So, Thanks for this opportunity to share with you moments of my fellowship...

As I continued reading through the many pages and accounts of previous years I say, everything has been handed down in good shape. So, let us all go forward as one voice working together.

I am looking forward to bringing history with integrity, ambition and fortitude, to CWC, South Bay Branch.

Special Note: If anyone has something of interest, about yourself or something of any kind of history, relating to CWC, email me at, clarence-hammonds@juno.com.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, 2006

For Authors Who Have (published) Books: If you have a book published and are interested in the possibility of selling and signing at the Los Angeles Festival of Books April 29-30, 2006, please contact

Kathryn Madison at 408-376-3560, or kathrynmadison@sbcglobal.net.

We are looking for authors willing to share the expense of a booth at this very large book festival.

Reminder

Becky Levine is a writer and a freelance editor who is available for copyediting and manuscript critiques. Becky's new (and monthly) column below will give tips on ways to develop and strengthen your writing style. She can be reached at becky77@gte.net

Beating Up Your Dialog: **Adding Layers to Your Characters' Words**

Take a look at this:

"Did not!"

"Did too!"

"Did not!"

Besides the fact that it sounds like the latest dinner conversation with your kids, does anything strike you? How about the lack of dialog beats?

A **dialog beat** is anything surrounding the dialog, other than the spoken words themselves and the attributes ("he said," "she said.") In other words, in

"Help," George cried, fighting against the pull of the quicksand. Everything after "cried" is the beat.

What do dialog beats do? Well, in the above example, they tell you to run really fast and find a long vine! Otherwise, you might do something silly, like throwing George a bucket of water to put out some nonexistent fire, or bringing a ladder so he can get out of a tree. My point? You wouldn't know what "Help" meant.

You want tension? Conflict? Use beats to let a character say one thing and *feel* another. How about this: George is rescued by Murray, who also happens to be the idiot who got them into this mess.

"You're the best!" George said. He eyed the coconut at his feet and pictured the lump it was going to make on Murray's head.

Let's go back to my first example—the scintillating dinner-time conversation between your teenagers. I'm going to add two sets of dialog beats. Check out the difference. Here's one:

"Did not!" Mary cried, blowing a raspberry to emphasize her point.

"Did too!" Fred shouted back. He had to fight to get the words out between giggles.

This scene might elicit a mild "Enough," from you, or even get you to toss a crumpled-up napkin across the table at the silly kids or another might get you up off your chair and around the table in a few seconds.

Remember the rule of Show, Don't Tell? Remember the ban on using "-ly" words? In reality, and fiction, people *speak* words and *show* (or hide) feelings. Beats are the perfect tool for getting inside a character's head and heart, and for sharing those secrets with your readers. **BL**

CounterCurrents—Kerouac

By Bill Brisko

Last month I introduced you to the notion of Ernest Hemingway as a counter-culture icon. Whether you agree with me or not, you must admit that Hemingway was definitely cast a die apart from other writers of his time. However, the next counterculture writer I will introduce you to is a lead-pipe cinch. Just as Hemingway was the premier writer of the Lost Generation (between WW1 and WW2), this writer was the preeminent author of his generation, also growing up between two wars; actually three. He is credited with coining the term 'Beat Generation', the basis for the phrase being tired or worn down (later it would acquire a musical connotation). His most notable work is about his travels, over many years, between New York, San Francisco, Denver and Los Angeles. His name is synonymous with people like Ken Kesey, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs (don't worry, I won't profile him!) and Neal Cassidy. His books defined the weariness of an entire generation, and laid the groundwork for the Hippie generation still to come. You should have guessed by now I am talking of Jack Kerouac.



Kerouac is considered to be the spokesman of the Beat Generation, the dropout from the Happy Days lifestyle of the 1950's. Unlike Hemingway the Great Adventurer, Kerouac was decidedly more introverted, really looking for the meaning of life (at least for him) in what he considered troubled times. America had just been triumphant on two fronts in WW2, and now the great Suburban Exodus was in full swing, with the migration to the outskirts of the big cities and the promise of good jobs and prosperous families. Kerouac wanted no part of this 'prescribed' lifestyle and searched America with his friends to find their own 'groove'.

It is interesting to know how the term 'Beat' finally made its way into our vocabulary. Originally, Beat meant just that - beat-down, weary, tired. The Beats referred to themselves as Hip and to each other as Hipsters. Later in the decade at readings in New York and San Francisco (at City Lights bookstore, the primary Beat hangout) the Beats were accompanied by Jazz musicians, such as Steve Allen and Zoot Sims, and the phrase began to take on a musical connotation (sometimes they were referred to as Hep, which comes from the Jazz Hepcat.) The term Beatnik was finally coined to describe them (by Herb Caen in 1958 no less, a contraction of Beat and Sputnik),

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

(KEROUAC FROM PAGE 8)

which conjures up images of Bob Denver in Dobie Gillis for most of us. Finally, in the 1960's more and more unkempt, dope smoking, rebellious youth wanted to join the Beatniks, hang around with all the cool Hipsters. The Beats didn't want to call them Hipsters, because they didn't *play it* cool. Instead, they were middle-class Bohemians who wanted to *be* cool. They were eventually known as Hippies (again attributed to Herb Caen.)

In studying Kerouac and his style of writing we come across his notion of *spontaneous prose*. Kerouac believed the first thought into your mind was the best thought, and not rewriting or editing a single word after you got it down on paper (this will be explored further in next month's featured writer.) Just as Kerouac was influenced by Jazz music and the Bebop genre of Charlie Parker and Thelonius Monk, he felt writing was a sort of improvisation; one should keep periods and short sentences to a minimum. Often his writing is featured with long run-on sentences punctuated by commas or dashes. Typical Kerouac writing often shows a quote or two at the beginning or end of a paragraph, sometimes in the body of the paragraph, with just a plethora of narrative-type wordage comprising the bulk of the paragraph. You have to stay alert when reading Kerouac, because in much of his writing (such as *On the Road*) one paragraph can simply be his thoughts on putting the make on some pretty little Mexican girl in Fresno while the next paragraph can be his complete travel adventures from Los Angeles all the way back to Patterson, New Jersey!

Although Kerouac's style is classic, there were many who didn't think much of it. Hemingway and Truman Capote both said the same thing about him: he was a typist not a writer. All he did was spew forth a lot of verbiage. But considering that nobody in the immediate Beat circle wrote as well as he did (Ginsberg wrote primarily poetry, Kesey, well..., Burroughs wrote garbage, Cassidy didn't), Kerouac's writing is the best chronicle we have of the Beat generation. In fact, much of what Kerouac believed in, and the lifestyle in which he lived, exists in the counterculture today.

Take, for instance, the Punk Rockers of the 1980's. These bands (like the Sexpistols and The Damned) and the following of people who embraced them rebelled against mainstream rock 'n roll that evolved from the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

(HOLIDAY BASH FROM PAGE 1)

mingling and glances upward at the precisely placed mistletoe. Hanging out in the shaker-style kitchen, the conversation was lively: Bill discussing reading at open mikes, Edie reporting on her upcoming trip to Buenos Aires, and Betty looking after all of her guests. Imbibers enjoyed several varieties of Rahal Red from member William Rahal's wine collection.

Edie valiantly moved the revelers into the living room for the ever-popular gift exchange. Although it is possible to steal a gift up to 3 times, few gifts were stolen this year presumably because most people liked what they unwrapped. Wine and liquor were especially popular. Least tasteful gift was probably the Arnie Governor switch plate with Schurra's chocolate sucker from yours truly but graciously accepted by Jaz. Betty Auchard's fluffy white teddy bear was mistakenly scooped up by an enthusiastic grandfather but a quick substitution of traveling Scrabble saved the day.

Jana McBurney-Lin, recent president of CWC Peninsula branch was a special guest at the gathering.

The evening ended with best wishes for all branch members past and present and a huge thanks to our gracious host, Betty Auchard. *UD*

Photos by Una and Dave





ASPIRING LEADERS



(KEROUAC ROM PAGE 9)

Hippie movement (such as the Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead), who, themselves, evolved from the Beat Movement of the late '40's and '50's. The Punks insisted that mainstream rock and roll became institutionalized, cowering to corporate America for beer and car commercial money. The underlying theme of these Punk bands was that if they got big enough (not sure where that line was drawn); they would spurn success and disband. And many of them did. Although this is a very Kerouac Ian thing to do, you have rebelled against the rebels who rebelled against the mainstream. Aren't you back to where you started from? As Ayn Rand would say, "Non-conformity for the sake of non-conformity is the worst type of conformity."

After Kerouac published *On the Road*, his popularity soared. But it was this very success that eventually became his undoing. He welcomed yet shunned his success at the same time, and began the slow downward spiral into the pit of alcoholism. His later books, *Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, began to show a darker, more morbid side to Jack; the big darkness was soon approaching. Finally in October 1969, Jack Kerouac died from complications due to alcoholism and heavy drinking at his mother's house in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was only 47 years old.

"Jack and I decided to drive the convertible we had stolen from the used car lot the night before. We both had figured the police couldn't have traced it by now, and even if they did, we had switched plates with an old derelict car we found abandon in an old quarry late last night. "Whooooeee," said Jack, "I've never been in a convertible before." He put the key into the ignition and the big straight six came to life with a roar that sounded like some big cat purring. It was running great! He eased it into reverse and we rolled gently out of the cornfield we were hiding in and onto the county road. Jack looked over and gave me a big smile, then revved up the engine and gunned it into 1st gear. The back tires skidded all over the place making volumes of gray smoke and a screeching noise and the whole back of the car started to swerve all sideways and stuff. Jack did all he could to keep the big cruiser straight but he couldn't get his foot off the gas and we wound up wrapping that beautiful 6-cylinder engine with all of its power around a creosote-soaked power pole, the car lurching to a stop with a big bang. We sat there stunned looking at each other wondering what we would do yet knowing what it was we must do. After a minute and letting the dust settle we popped open the doors of the big coupe and took off panic stricken running as fast as we could into the cornfield, hoping only to come out on the other side." BB



WritersTalk Challenge

Creative Writing Awards

Genres:

Memoirs <1000 wds
Short Fiction <1500 wds
Poetry <300 wds
Essays <700 wds

Awards:

Twice yearly, Feb 15 and Aug 15

First Prize - \$60

Second - \$40

Third - \$25

An **East of Eden Scholarship** will be awarded in February and then regularly, once every two years.

And always, **Honorable Mentions**

Entrants:

Limited to (all) work in the genres above, published in WT during the preceding six months although the first awards will cover the period from Jan 05 thru Feb 15, 2006.

Judging Standards:

Will be established by WT Editing Staff. Editors are excluded from participation in awards.

Judging: To be done by genre-related critique groups, headed by Club members, overseen by the WT Editors

Judging approach: Ten points are available for each piece. These will be allocated to each of several categories of grading in each genre, i.e., in fiction, 1.5 might be allocated to imagery, 2.3 to suspense, etc. The allotments will be determined in consultation with respective critique groups.

The three pieces with the highest scores will win (regardless of genre)

When you submit to *WritersTalk* and are published in the genres above in the word allotment indicated, you are entered. You need do nothing else.

Note: Publishing in *WritersTalk*, excluding ads and announcements, is limited to members of the Southbay Branch of the California Writers Club







Announcements Announcements Announcements

**CWC's
Sam Marines wants inter-
views with Bay Area
parents who have
adult-aged offspring.**

It is part of research for his non-fiction book about the importance of the relationship between parents and adult children.

His urgent needs are parents who are foreign-born, or have only step children, or gave up their children to adoption but later established contact.

You may find book information at
www.agapeguypress.com/

Contact information may be found at
questions@agapeguypress.com

You may be able to help



Write a column—
Anything Goes (Almost).
That's the name of the space and we mean it.
Your ski down Mount

Whitney, your first PGA tournament, your thoughts on the "book table" or the arts community in Nepal. Opinionated, informational, persuasive...

Email it to Una Daly, by the 16th of the month.

newsletter@southbay writers.com

Mark your calendars:

Our biannual *East Of Eden Writers Conference* will be held September 8 – 10, 2006 in Salinas, California. Please see our website at **www.southbaywriters.com** for more information in the coming months about scholarships, contests, Early Bird discounts, accommodations, etc.

We will have special discounts and scholarships for South Bay Branch members. So, stay tuned, put a red circle around **September 8, 9, and 10, 2006**, and tell all your writing friends!

GOT NEWS?

Know of an event that needs reporting—one coming up or happening now. Email Andrea—She'll hop on it or appoint one of her huge staff.

**Book Reviews
Committee Meetings
Critique Groups
Reading Fourms
Book-store openings
Conferences**

If it's of interest to writers we want to publish it.

Andrea Galvacs
newsletter@southbay writers.com



**South
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Writers
Open Mic**

First Friday each
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Borders Books
50 University Ave, Los Gatos

Third Friday each Month
7:30 — 9:30 pm
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Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. For a spot at the podium, contact Bill Baldwin

(408) 730-9622 or email
wabaldwin@aol.com
or reserve at

Terse Verse —
by Pat Bustamante

"Jan You Wary?"

Jan, Jan, the Agent-Man,
Run to a publisher
As fast as you can!
The new opportunities
Start in January:
A little bit hopeful,
A little bit scary!

I have made this letter longer than usual because I lack the time to make it shorter.

-- Blaise Pascal

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California Writers Club

South Bay Branch
PO Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055

www.southbaywriters.com

Stamp(s)

ADDRESSEE

Address Correction Requested

SAVE THESE DATES

Board of Directors
Jan 18

General Meeting (replaced)
Workshop Jan 22
See Insert

Open Mic
Jan 6, 7p
Borders, Los Gatos
Jan 13 7p
B&N in the Pruneyard

WritersTalk Inputs
Jan 16

Editors Pow Wow
Jan 23 7:30pm
Orchard Valley Coffee

**This month, our annual workshop on
January 22, 9am-3pm, at**

**LookOut Restaurant
605 Macara Ave., Sunnyvale
(Sunnyvale Golfcourse)**

(no regular meeting)

Take 237 to
W Maude to Macara

