

WritersTalk

A South Bay
Writers Club Monthly

Volume 15, Issue 2, February 2007

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Page 1

INVITE YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER

To Our February Valentines Meeting —Diana Richomme

Characters come to life in writers' minds. What goes wrong when the essence of a character doesn't reveal itself on the page? "Writers get hurried," Martha Engbert explained. "They try to drive



MARTHA ENGBERT

their characters where they want them to go. They bully them along: You have to let your characters do what they want to do."



Diana Richomme
VP & Programs Chair

Martha Engbert, a journalist by profession, has published hundreds of articles. Her fiction work includes a full-length play produced in Hollywood and several stories published in literary journals. Inspiration for her book, "How to Grow Great Characters from the Ground Up: A Thorough Primer for Writers of Fiction and Nonfiction", came from an article on character she published in *Byline Magazine*. Each article she wrote about real people and every fiction story taught her about character portrayal.

"There's always a reason they do what they do. When it makes sense, you understand who they are."

Why is character so important? "Stories are of essence, people," Engbert explained. "We are obsessed with ourselves. The human race is obsessed with itself. That's what story is about. You can have action ... but without characters, you don't care about what happens."

Engbert's book is chockfull of tips and details that teach writers how to portray their characters in real and relevant ways. "Once you decide all the things that are important about your character, it's really important to go through the book and make sure they get in. They are clues for you"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

FOOTPRINTS ON MY TONGUE

By Jack Hasling

I wasn't kidding when I wrote about getting Footprints on my Tongue. Even though I have taught public speaking and group communication for over thirty years, I have seldom, if ever, been able to keep from getting at least one big toe in my mouth on each occasion that I stepped up to a podium. But that has never stopped me from continuing to pursue an activity that most people dread more than death itself.

That was not always the case, however. I, too, was in that miserable state like the rest of you until I stumbled upon the key element of fearless public speaking: Write down your adlibs. Or better still, have someone write them down for you.

*Now I can't become a sage
by simply reading from a page
Or reciting lines of poetry I've
clipped.*

But I'd appear to be much brighter

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

A Look Ahead:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Feb | Open Mic, see p 19 for dates and details. |
| Feb 7 | Board of Directors mtg. —Diana's, 6:30p |
| Feb 14 | SouthBay dinner mtg. Bring a Valentine—maybe yours—eat chocolates |
| Feb 16 | Editors Mtg, Orchard Valley Coffee, 10:00am
(Photo meet) |

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President's Prowling —Bill Baldwin



Bill Baldwin
President, South Bay Branch

"In Dante's Dark Wood?"

I'm writing this as I anticipate our January workshop. I've grown more and more aware of the problem of "structure" in writing.

I realized, as I was working on my novel, that I must avoid one thing at all costs. The project

must not come across as a presentation of "How I spent my summer vacation" or "Let me show you my two thousand pictures of Europe."

Specifically, I wanted to avoid sounding like "First I did this. Then I did...this. Then I...did this. And then...I did this...then that....then that...then this." (Multiply this by one hundred!).

You have to create some sense of movement. You want the reader to feel like they're getting somewhere, not walking around in circles...at night...in a forest.

You don't want them to ask unpleasant questions such as..."Haven't we driven past that building before?"

You want a piece of writing to convey the sense that it is moving forward, that it is heading somewhere, and that every part of the piece is necessary for the whole. People shouldn't be asking, "What was *that* in there for? It didn't seem to have anything to do with anything."

This can be particularly difficult in the middle section of a piece. In the opening; the situation is being established, conventions are being delineated. As we plunge to the end of a piece, momentum is carrying us along, and we can see the finale approaching. But in the middle... the middle has to connect the beginning to the ending somehow. It can be difficult for any writer. I remember when I read *Oliver Twist*, at a certain point I began to lose the sense of why Dickens was describing a particular character or situation. I'd seen several film versions, I knew the basic story—but reading the book, I felt as if Dickens was fumbling about a bit, feeling his way uncertainly (of course many of Dickens' books were written as serials—he may have actually been fumbling about!)

Your challenge, as writers, is to limit this feeling as much as you can. If you absolutely have to hand-wave to connect beginning to ending, be sure to conceal it as cleverly as you can! WB

(Engber from page 1)

readers, like a trail of bread crumbs."

Please join us February 14 for an interactive discussion on character development. And bring your favorite character: a fictitious character of your own, a favorite from a book, your spouse or date. This talk will be fun for everyone. DR

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

— o —

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

Contact our Membership Chair
Marjorie Johnson



Dave LaRoche
Managing Editor

Editor's Itch

Though we strive for the cosmos, January's issue was not close to stellar. A photo was duplicated and pshaw, it was one of *my favorite personalities*.

There were comments about Arlyne's offer to help with our characters—seems we thought her a bit too commercial. And then there was my own column, *Itch*, cut off at the ankles, not to mention some negligible others—Stuff Happens, you tell.

Okay... I rub the ground with my nose and more. We have adopted a policy: no errors! Beyond that, here's the thing. First, I am pleased that you are reading the newsletter; it gives your editors satisfaction and hope—we need at least that. And we are thrilled that you are willing to express your opinions; it makes interesting reading and occasionally juices up my crystallized adrenalin. I am especially pleased with your "creative" submissions as providing a medium for light publication is what we think we're about. The newsletter is yours and you are using it.

As our experience, as editors, broadens and we discover opportunities and problems, we hope to adapt... and so, in light of complaint and good sense, we have adopted another policy and that is: No personal diatribes, aggrandizement, solicitations or promotions will be published, unless of course, you want to rebuke an editor and, in that, have at it—we're bullet proof. Criticism or acclaim for ideas, policy, opinions or "statements of fact" are all fine but no hanging in effigy—no hanging at all. It's a fine point perhaps, but you may write: "I disagree with Treu Raiberts's notion that appropriately treated, limas would make volatile and cheap IEDs." But we will not print: "That self-serving, idiotic, Slobovian slob Raibert is dead wrong about the beans. DLR

Attention WritersTalk Submitters!!

We welcome your work! Welcome it! ...and we want it on time!

Those of you submitting through an editor, meaning you wish someone—an expert—to give your work her pair of eyes (and brain) must submit your work to them on the **16th** of the month or before. Those preferring a beeline to the press, may wait until the **23rd** but NO later.

Jackie Mutz and Una Daly are our copy editors: address them at **newsletter@southbaywriters.com** and for the rest, directly to me.

Those of you who feel you are the exception, the ones in the express line with 35 items, will be out of luck or to the point, out of print. This hard-line submittal thing is the precursor to a better newsletter, one in which you and we editors will be proud.

WritersTalk

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to Dave LaRoche

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

to
newsletter@southbaywriters.com

or

writerstalk@comcast.net

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Do you have expertise?

Do you have a specialty that you will share, that might be of help to a writer looking for accuracy in a scene? Do as Susan Mueller, John Howsden, Arlyne Diamond and Dottie Sieve—let us know. We will publish your offer and add

Introducing Dotty Sieve

Hi, I am a member of the Southbay club, but have not yet attended the meetings.

I will share my expertise with any writer needing help in my arena.

I worked in an OB-GYN office for over 33 years, as office manager, go-fer, often medical assistant, routine janitor, hand-holder, dryer of tears, and sharer of lots of hugs and giggles. During that time, only a very few patients ever knew that I was married to their doctor, before he was a doc. It was better that way, since many giggly patients said they'd LUV to date him!

DIRECTORY

Police Procedures: John Howsden jwhousden@comcast.net (article in Sep 2006 Issue)

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Anne Darling
Contributing Editor

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Open Mic

—By Anne Darling

Come early, stay late. Don't miss the chance to listen or read your own work at the Open Mic sessions held four times each month at local book stores. In a friendly, informal environment where attendance ranges from five to fifteen, people share writing and publishing tips, vent frustrations and tout their books.

Perched on a stool in a cozy corner, Bill Baldwin wearing his trademark velvet beret introduced the evening guests at the Almaden Barnes & Noble, San Jose location on the first Friday in January. Baldwin, President of the South Bay Branch of California Writers Club, repeats the process at the Santana Row Borders Bookstore, San Jose, on the second Friday each month, Pruneyard Barnes & Noble, Campbell, on the third Friday each month and the fourth Wednesday at Borders in Sunnyvale. All four meetings are held from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The monthly sessions attract drop-ins as well as regular members. Baldwin prefers that readers contact him at (408) 730-9622 or email wabaldwin@aol.com prior to reading, so he can add their names to the roster and introduce them to the audience. However, he stresses he's flexible and will accept volunteers if time permits.



Mr. Open Mic himself

Baldwin grins when asked why he's willing to devote four nights a month to Open Mic. "With the ten minutes allotted to each reader, I can read 1600 words each meeting of my book. In 40 weeks I'll have read the entire novel. It's amazing what you can learn by reading your manuscript aloud." Woody Horn, who helps Baldwin set up the sound system for each meeting,



Bill, Jack, CJ Cannino, and Woody Horn has been attending since the first Open Mic event in 1999. Horn, a memoirist, has filled two 4-inch binders with stories about growing up in Indiana. The former KNTV art director has taught memoir writing classes and is currently working on a book.

"Reading before a live audience is a great experience. I often find the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Dancing In My Nightgown

A Book Review

By

Robert A. Garfinkle

Dancing in my Nightgown

The Rhythms of Widowhood

Betty Auchard
Stephens Press, LLC;
139 pages; \$19.95



Betty Auchard

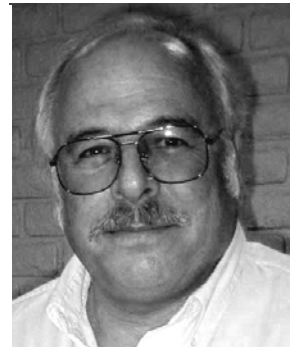
A new voice in memoirs has entered the stage. San Francisco Bay Area author Betty Auchard's award-winning debut book is about how she has survived the many crises in the life of a suddenly single person after the death of her husband, Denny. They had been married for 49 years when cancer took his life on July 9, 1998. Denny was the type of husband who did everything to keep the business end of a marriage running smoothly. He handled all of the finances and repairs to their home, and did almost all of the driving. When Denny died, Betty knew nothing about the mundane things like paying the bills on time, hiring a handyman to fix the minor problems that develop in our homes, or paying taxes. She even had to learn how to put gas in her car.

Most memoirs are too often as dry and uninteresting as any writing can be. They tend to begin with something about the birthday of the author, blah, blah, blah. What school the author went to, blah, blah, blah. The author's career, blah, blah, blah. You get the picture. Betty's book is a totally different self-help memoir and very refreshing, too. With poignancy and humor, Betty retells her story in a series of tales. Her life has been a challenge since the day Denny was diagnosed with cancer, through his treatment and death, and the efforts to survive widowhood, yet she has been able to describe all of this with humor and a

charm that makes this book hard to put down. You want to know what problem she has to overcome next and how she is going to keep her wits in the process.

One of my favorite stories is about Betty driving the car. On the occasions when Denny was forced to let her drive, he sat in the passenger seat and critiqued her driving. She finally had to put him "on a ration of five criticisms per round-trip" to the hospital during his treatment period. A couple of weeks after Denny's funeral, Betty was transporting his urn home in a velour bag. "Something occurred to me as I drove this container home. This was probably the only time in our forty-nine years of life together that Denny was my passenger and wouldn't be saying a word about my driving."

"Dancing in My Nightgown" was one of the 116 finalists out of 2200 books submitted in the 2005 Independent Publishers Book Award (IPPY) competition. The IPPY award is quite an accomplishment for a re-



Bob Garfinkle

tired art teacher who took up writing as a way to heal from the loss of her life companion. I guess it is too bad for the reading public that Betty began her writing career so late in life. One has to wonder what this very talented storyteller could have put on our bookshelves if she had been writing such amazing stories for many years. I highly recommend this delightful book, even if you are not in widowhood. *RAG*

Terse Verse —by Pat Bustamante

Feb Fib

I told some tiny little fibs --
(Now I "lie" me down to sleep:
I hope my agent's promise keeps!)
My list of credits
being "somewhat" ad-libs.....

(OPEN MIC FROM PAGE 4)

audience laughs at something I don't think is funny. I find these sessions quite educational." Open Mic offers camaraderie at a different level than the larger CWC meetings, according to Horn.

At the Almaden meeting in January, authors Jack Hasling, *Footprints on my Tongue* and CJ Cannino, *Cell Out* read aloud from their latest books.

Hasling, a regular attendee, has published several books and writes *Occasional Verse of the Month* at jacksverse.com.



Bill Baldwin and Toni Pacini

Both a new California Writers Club member and first-time reader, Cannino, enjoyed the Open Mic experience. She drew laughter when reminiscing about being a waitress at the Sizzler which preceded the book store at the Almaden Barnes & Noble location. "There was nothing like being in charge of cleaning the sneeze guard (over the salad bar) to motivate me to get a good education."

Critiques are not given unless requested and then only after everyone has read. All the writers agreed that Open Mic allows people to test drive their manuscript in a relaxed no stress environment. AD

*****ANNOUNCEMENT FOR MEMBERS*****

As a member of South Bay Writers Branch you are automatically a member of the State organization. One of the benefits of State membership is a subscription to *The Bulletin*.

You should be receiving *The Bulletin* via U.S. Mail the second week of every other month. The most recent issue, January-February 2007, arrived in most members' mailboxes around January 12. *The Bulletin* is usually eight pages of tan-colored paper and mailed from Ridgecrest CA.

If you've never received *The Bulletin*, or have but haven't recently, or have other delivery concerns, please contact our Membership Chair, Marjorie Johnson,

Membership@southbaywriters.com

Accolades

by Jackie Mutz



Jackie Mutz

Contributing Editor

If you missed Tod Goldberg's workshop on Sunday, it's a

shame. Sure, his main message, as with every other serious published, successful (the key words here are successful and published) writer's is simple—if you really, really want to write, then sit down and do it. Don't spend all your time getting prepared. You know, finding the perfect place in the house to write with just the right light and view out the window. Making sure you have all the paper and pencils and pens and notebooks with the pretty pictures on the front or the perfect laptop. And sooner or later you plant your derriere on the chair and open that notebook or turn on the computer. Then you find yourself staring at an empty sheet of paper or blank Word document without an idea in your head. Now what?

There are mountains of books that can "teach" you how to write. Or you can take a Creative Writing class (such as the ones Edie Matthews and I teach through Santa Clara Adult Education). There are writing groups, workshops or any number of ways to help you get started. But after that, it's you and that blank page waiting to be filled up. You take that first writing step and keep going. That's the key. Make it a habit like that first cup of coffee or whatever your morning, afternoon or evening ritual is. Light a fire. Put a call into your muse and get busy.

Then fill me in on your accomplishments so I can put it in March's WT Accolades column. Email me at

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

And congratulations on a writing job well done early. Happy Valentine's Day! ~ jam

Silicon Valley Reads Author T. Coraghessan Boyle By Una Daly



Una Daly
Contributing Editor

“A story is the exercise of the mind, an invention,” T. Coraghessan Boyle, Silicon Valley Reads’ 2007 author told a large audience at the Campbell Heritage Theater on January 18. “I figure out things by writing a story”, added the tall, lean author with wiry red hair. *Tortilla Curtain*, his award-winning novel takes place in Los Angeles and was his response to the knee-jerk reactions to illegal immigration on the southern border. He notes that it may be more relevant today than when it was originally published in 1995.



Boyle consciously modeled his story on Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*. Not only do the two novels share the plot of desperate people seeking a better life in a new land but both are written as parables. A Mexican couple, Candido and America, are fleeing poverty and hopelessness

when they arrive illegally in Los Angeles and are forced to set up house-keeping on the side of a mountain. Delaney and Kyra Mossbacher, an affluent American couple live in a gated community adjacent to the mountainside. Boyle captures the interactions between the illegal immigrants and the Mossbachers, uttering the unspoken dialog occurring in the characters’ heads as well as the misunderstood spoken words.

Boyle’s favorite part in *Tortilla Curtain* is when two pampered dogs, owned by Kyra Mossbacher, are eaten by coyotes. His second favorite is the Thanksgiving Day celebration. He warns us to look out when anything good happens to a character because that is a signal that the axe is about to fall. Candido unexpectedly gets a free turkey from a couple of gringos at the grocery store. He carries the precious bird down the mountainside to his hungry, pregnant wife but just as the turkey browns on the fire, hot winds blow through the canyon igniting the surrounding vegetation. Candido and America must flee the conflagration losing all their worldly goods.

“Fiction should not preach ... we tend to ignore preaching,” recounted Boyle. His own personal experiences are the impetus for his writing. I want to explore something when I write but I am not advocating for a political message. He never outlines before starting a book but takes notes, which he usually loses as the writing process takes off.

Friends of the Earth is another of Boyle’s novels that engenders strong feelings as it explores the grim results of global warming and other environmental follies from the vantage point of 2025. He notes that every reading of this book brings out the hankies. When asked how to prevent the scarred earth scenario described in the book, Boyle quipped: “Restrain from sexual relations for 100 years with no cheating and the problem will be eliminated.”

Boyle holds a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and has taught creative writing at the University of Southern California since 1978. His middle name, Coraghessan, comes from a distant Irish ancestor. He has published 17 books and currently resides in Santa Barbara with his wife and three children. *UD*



A Reminder....

Our Yahoo Group, the South Bay’s locus for writers resources, is active and growing. Go to:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthBay_Writers_Exchange

Click on **Join This Group** button Sign in or Sign up.

- ⇒ If you already have a Yahoo Id you can sign in.
- ⇒ No Yahoo id? You can sign up.
- ⇒ Signing up is easy. Choose a password, etc. Then go back to step 1.

Continue with the process as outlined on the site and soon you will receive an invite. When you are (automatically) approved and have access, you may participate fully—too bad about the administrative stuff.

Give it a try, in time it could be the most centralized resource available to a SB writer. *DJR*

(FOOTPRINTS FROM PAGE 1)

If I had a decent writer

And my impromptu lines were written in my script.

The best kept secret that most public speakers will not tell you is that what they do is not totally spontaneous. Yes, it sounds that way. You've got to be able to make it sound that way. But behind every glibly articulated pronouncement; every brilliantly expressed gem of wisdom; every clever and memorable witticism, you will find there has been a thoughtful and talented wordsmith who has worked well into the night crafting thoughts and ideas into artful words and phrases. Hamlet didn't do that soliloquy all by himself.

When I was in graduate school learning about the people whose words made a difference in history, I came across the story of Daniel Webster who had made a stirring response to Senator Hayne on the floor of Congress. Someone asked him how he could have made such an eloquent speech on the spur of the moment. Webster replied, "Sir, I have been preparing that speech all my life."

During my disc jockey years I was kidded a great deal by my colleagues because I was always writing down my ad-libs. Now, a prepared ad-lib may sound like an oxymoron, but for me it is not. The trick is to keep the listener from recognizing that it has been thought out in advance. No matter how much effort might have gone into the composition, say it as though the idea is just welling up from within. But don't use a line as your own if it can clearly be traced to a recognized source. Pay attention to attribution—especially if you're quoting me.

Words that express important thoughts are good, but those that have cadence are better still. I'm talking about the rhythm of phrases, not the poetic structure of a sonnet. Cadence can be present whether the lines are scanned like poetry or not. We all remember Franklin

Roosevelt's inspiring words, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." It is written as prose, but the accent on the words gives it an iambic meter. That's why it is so easily remembered.

What I like best about teaching and learning the art of public speaking is that it contributes to rational thought. You might say that I have a passion for rational thought. People who rely on their emotional reactions and gut feelings may be exciting and creative, but they generally screw up their own lives and the lives of others around them. The people I want to listen to are the ones who have given some thought to what they are going to say. If I want conflicted psychological human drama, I can find it in a book or play or a movie. I don't have to live with it or listen to it from an orator who is trying to arouse my passions. I don't need spontaneous creativity. I "let it all hang out" in the sixties, but now that I'm older and smarter I've been able to get most of it back in.

* * *

This article appeared in the January issue of the Scribe—the newsletter for the San Fernando Valley branch of CWC. Jack Hasling is the author of *Footprints On My Tongue*, (Outskirts Press, 2006) a book of verses for all occasions. You can find Jack's Verse of the Month on his web page,

<http://jacksverse.com>

NEW MEMBERS WANTED

The Northpoint Writers, a critique group, is looking for new members. We meet bi-monthly in Cupertino on Monday mornings to review and critique members' writing and discuss publication possibilities. Writers of all genres are welcome. If interested, please contact:

Pat Nipper at 408-295-1575 or
Valerie Whong, 408-873-7070.

*It is the love of a woman that
makes the story of a man.*



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

WINGS

—A Short-Short Story by Jeremy Osborne

I looked across my kitchen table at her, numb to everything that I once believed, ignoring all common sense informing me about what has been happening for the last half-hour. Sharee sat directly across from me holding my white ceramic senchawan inches away from her lips. Her shaking fingers must be churning the milky mixture into a froth. I never thought that she drank anything but the straight stuff in the first place.

Sharee grasps her other hand around the ceramic bowl, minimizing her shakes enough to take a small sip. "The tea," she says, "It's cold."

"And that surprises you?" I ask. "Do you want another blanket?"

"Three is enough," Sharee says, but I don't believe her purple lips or her blue finger tips.

"Thanks," she adds after another sip.

I push my chair back and tell her, "I'm going to turn up the thermostat." Her black eyes widen. "It's just across the hall." The dark pools of her eyes shimmer a bit. "I promise I'll be right back," I say and stand up, turning my back to her, a definite no-no, if I were following the book of procedures prescribed for this situation. But what am I supposed to do, huh God? What the hell am I supposed to do with a situation like this?

Handful of steps and the green lit LCD of the thermostat informs me that the current ambient temperature inside of my apartment is 79° F; the flashing numbers tells me the temperature is rising. Pressing the button inked with an upward arrow a few times changes the new maximum temperature to 86° F. Good thing mom and dad raised me in the land of mosquitoes and humidity. It also helped that the cloth of my pajamas measured hardly a millimeter thick.

"I'm not used to trusting anyone anymore," Sharee says as I return to the kitchen. Her tea cup sits on the table and everything but her face, and her horns, burrows away beneath the blanket. "I figured I could take a chance with you."

My stomach hurts despite my mental objections against it hurting. Before I take a seat at the table, I decide it is time to drink my third bottled water. All this heat relieves me of the problem I have with my

usually small bladder. Might as well just open the bottle, let the liquid inside evaporate and cut out the middle man.

I fully expect Sharee to tell me to shut the refrigerator door the moment after I crack open the rubber seal, but she doesn't. Standing there in front of my only Maytag appliance, sweating in my own apartment, staring into a bright white light, trying to comfort the woman sitting at my table... but she's not a woman anymore, I remind myself. I take the bottle of water back to the table and sit in my chair.

"Will you forgive me?" she says.

"I can't forgive you," I say. *God left you long ago*, I hear myself reflexively say and cringe at how horrible that sounds. I cringe at how many times I've said that myself to people who just needed love. *You're why I left my job years ago*.

And she cries. A single tear runs over her eyelashes and trails down her left cheek. Another tear escapes her eye and drips onto the table, the first drop preceding a storm. She speaks not a word or sound. Her pupils pantomime the pain of every atrocity committed against each and every living being, and I want to cry with her, but I don't feel anything but dull pain in my belly.

I push my chair back on my way to pace around the kitchen and before I can escape she grasps my forearm in her exceedingly warm hand and utters the word, "Please." I pull away and begin my endless march around the butcher block in the center of my kitchen.

"Do you have any idea what you have done to me?" I say.

Silence, the correct answer to a rhetorical question, and the one that annoys me the most. I take one more lap around my tiny isle of chefdom and head back to the refrigerator. Yanking open the door causes exactly what I want to spill on the floor: a small plastic container of partially eaten homemade coffee flavored ice cream labeled **You Have Better Things to Do**. I scoop it off the floor, slam the freezer door shut and grab two dessert spoons on the way back to the table, tossing one in front of Sharee. The spoon clatters against the tea bowl and stops. The now open container of ice cream sweats

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

The Next Draft — Becky Levine



Becky Levine
Columnist

Becky is a writer and a freelance editor who is available for copyediting and manuscript critiques. Becky's column will give tips on ways to develop and strengthen your writing style. She can be reached at

www.beckylevine.com

Characters: Connecting the Dots

Start with an average word problem.

When Richard rented a car, he paid \$34.95 per day, plus 18¢ a mile.
When Molly rented a car, she paid \$33.25 per day plus 20¢ a mile. They both rented the car for a week. Who paid more for the car?

If you're like me, reading that paragraph turns your stomach—until you remember you don't have to do that kind of math anymore. Look at it as a different kind of word problem—a *writing* word problem. Now you're interested—in making it better.

As part of a story, that paragraph isn't nauseating; it's just boring. Why? Because we know nothing about Richard or Molly. More importantly, we know nothing about Richard *and* Molly—about their connections.

Go back to the word problem. Do Richard and Molly know each other? Are they co-workers traveling together to a conference? If Richard paid less than Molly (No, I'm NOT doing the actual math!), is he mad at the rental company or mad at Molly? Or are Molly and Richard total strangers, but—as they drive off the rental car lot—they crash into each other, fall in love, and decide to share the one drivable car left?

How do you get this on paper?

- Include *small* pieces of relevant background details—give the reader a taste of these characters' personal history together, or their lack of one.
- Vary the dialog. Maybe Richard talks to Molly with irritation, but talks to someone else—the rental car clerk—with politeness. Or vice versa.
- Play with the levels of familiarity between the characters. If Richard has known Molly forever, things she says and does will feel almost repetitive, habitual. If they've just met, he'll have to work a bit harder to interpret the meaning behind her words and actions.

If the word problem is nothing but addition and multiplication, who knows (or cares!) about this couple? If it's a story, though, the reader wants to care, and you—the writer—need to know. That's the fun of it. *BL*

THE EXTENDED ARTIST

SBW member **Lawrence Pratt** has taken a selection of photos from his series of travel articles solo and invites you to visit his online presentation hosted by

www.decembersrose.com.

From the home page, simply click on the "photo of the month" to go to the Site Map page. From the left side of the map page, select "Artists & Their Images" to access the gallery of artists. Of course, Larry would like you to visit his site first and, if you like what you see, pass word of the site on to others.

Paraphrasing Tod Goldberg's Structure Workshop in Haiku;

Emily Jiang

Setting begets a
Character begets a
Great Want driving Plot.

Romance = boy gets girl.
Crime = dead body, who dunnit?
Literary = no order (chaos)

First paragraphs serve
to set characters, setting,
and expectations.

Drama = Men can't walk
away from consequences
of actions, they run.

Adverbs are crutches
for dialog tags, unless
your book is published.

What is shown and said
is not as interesting as
unspoken subtext.

EL

(WINGS FROM PAGE 9)

and drips all over the table, the café colored inside liquifying in the heat.

"Want a bite?" I ask Sharee as I hold one of my few pleasures remaining on this planet out to her. She looks straight at me and I soften. "I'm not making fun of you, it's a real question."

Sharee smiles for the first time, just a bit, and says, "Yes." She picks up the metal spoon (made sure to keep the flimsy plastic ones in a cooler place) and scoops out no more than a thimbleful of the frozen treat. It melts into warm flavored milk on the trip from container to lips. Her lips close around the spoon just a moment before her eyes widen and she slams the spoon onto the table. "Ouch!" she grimaces and grips the side of her head. "Oh my head. Brainfreeze!" She rubs her temples with both of her hands, just below her horns, for almost a minute before looking up with a bright smile. "Thanks."

I look at her, stare at her, at her face, at her huddled up in her chair like a little kid. My stomach hurts and it isn't from the lactose, but I want it to be, but it isn't and I know it, so I put down the ice cream and stare at the soupy mess it transforms into. "Before I went outside, I called the cops. They're on their way." *And I haven't called them off*, I think, and then I say it aloud. "And I haven't called them off."

"You shouldn't," she says.

This pisses me off and I say "What do you mean I shouldn't? Are you crazy? How dare you come back here? Don't you know

NIPPER S NITS

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



Pat Decker Nipper
Columnist

Lesson 23. And/But

"And" as well as "but" are coordinating conjunctions. This means they are words used to conjoin or tie two different parts of a sentence together, even link two sentences.

Although some of us might remember our teachers telling us not to begin a sentence with "And" or "But," thankfully that's an out-of-fashion rule. We can now start a sentence with a conjunction, if we don't over-use the technique.

This method connects two related sentences. For example, you can use "And" instead of "Also," "Likewise," "Additionally," or "Furthermore" to start a sentence. You can use "But" instead of "Except" or "Besides" or other repudiations. You don't need to add a comma after "And" and "But" when using them at the beginning of a sentence. PDN

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

how much pain you've caused me? And you show up at my door and make me intervene—"

"I'm sorry," Sharee says.

"Why do you keep being so nice? What the hell happened to you anyway?" I cross my arms over my midsection. The sweat on my skin is making it difficult to assume an angry pose, and that upsets me even more. I want to scream.

Sharee uncurls her smile and holds her lips neutral. Silence again for minutes and I start to wonder where the cops are, and then remember the side of town I'm now spending my life in. My mind grasps for anything, and bumps against a thought so simple I can't escape it. I prop my elbows on the table in front of my, in front of her, and rest my head in my hands.

"You know I left the church after you left me," I tell Sharee the keystone of my problems, this one thing that everyone knew about me already, except maybe for me. "I left the church after you—" I start sobbing into my tightened fists, the pain in my stomach pushing itself out through my eyes and nose. I dig my fingers into my scalp, giving me something real to cry over, but it's not enough.

"I have missed you so much Sharee," I confess, admitting it out loud for the first time. "I tried to carry on but I couldn't, I refused to. I refused to believe in that—that crap."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

Note: This is the first of several pieces planned, the including from Phyllis Matson and Betty Auchard, telling us of experiences in getting books into print. The authors and editor hope you find them informative and interesting.

A New Author's Tough Reality

By Kathryn Madison

The thrill of seeing my novel, bound and ready for the reading public was sublime beyond words. I was a published author! In the club with Steinbeck, London, Clancy, Grisham, and Rowling. Well, not exactly.

Very soon after cradling my new child for the first time, I learned the dark little secret of today's publishing business. Unless you are one of the five authors mentioned above (or at least one of the three still living) you're really not in THAT club. Unless you are one of the chosen, there will be no 21-city book tour, no sit down with Matt on the Today Show, and Oprah will never hear about your book. The sad truth is that even if you signed with a big-name publisher they will not be setting aside a huge pot of money for marketing your first masterpiece. And if you signed with a small press, there is no pot of money.

I realized that this quiet spirit that dwells in the silence of my own imagination, this solitary lover of words and story, would now be required to morph



Kathryn Madison

your own book. Phrases like "guerilla marketing" and "never accept no" terrified me.

Lest, dear storyteller, you are drawing a sharp knife across your wrist even as these words cross your eyes, take heart. This is not impossible - those guys DO sell cars. This dark cloud does have silver linings. I will tell you what truths I learned, mostly the hard way, what I did to create my own "marketing scheme" within my limited resources. And, most important, I will tell you why I'm now diligently creating the next novel, fully aware that the same Jekyll and Hyde transformation will be required when it is published.

When my publisher announced my novel's release date, my team (that would be myself and my saint-of-a-husband, Mike) began to work on marketing ideas. There were some that were "must-dos" that we tackled immediately. These are:

1 – Create a website. (kathrynmadison.com) This huge task fell to my husband who has the technical skills required. My contribution was to write all the content. We freely stole ideas for design and content "sections" from successful authors' websites. Critical to us was a hot link to booksellers (my publisher and Amazon) and the ability for readers to email me directly from the site, to begin growing an audience that would be eager to read Book 2.

2 – Create and memorize a riveting one-line description of your book. I created 12 of these for "Woman's Sigh, Wolf's Song", that I could recite, conscious or not, and chose the one most appropriate to whomever I was talking to at the time.

3 – Print business cards with cover art, ISBN# of the book, and website URL. These cards now accompany me EVERYWHERE. I've probably given one to many of you multiple times. Bless you. They have been successful in opening doors to events for speaking

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

Central Coast Writers Poetry and Short Story Contest

1st Place Winners will be Published in the Spring 2007 Homestead Review produced by Hartnell College and on our web site.

Prizes, Both Categories:

1st: \$150 plus publication; 2nd: \$100; 3rd: \$50.

Open to all work not previously published.

Reading fee: Short stories: \$10/\$15, Poetry: \$10/\$15

Short story: 4000 words. Poetry: no restriction Enter as many times as you wish. Entries must be postmarked on or before April 1, 2007

Submit to:

CCW Contest, c/o Martin Dodd, 23799 Monterey Hwy #63, Salinas, CA 93908, checks payable to Central Coast Writers. For more info:

centralcoastwriters.org/CCWContests.html

(MADISON FROM PAGE 12)

and selling books. When I say they go everywhere, I mean everywhere. I booked a successful event standing in the checkout line at Albertson's. My team (yes, both of us) chose an online service (Overniteprints.com) and have been very satisfied with their work. But there are many online printers or you may choose to print them yourself.

4 – Create a “hook”. This would be the backbone of my marketing strategy. I needed to craft a clear, concise statement of how my book is timely, important, a “must-read”. As a writer of environmental fiction, my hook is that my stories parallel the human condition with that of a sentient creature – wolves, whales, etc.

5 – Create a sales pitch. Knowing I would need to set up my own “marketing tour”, I had to create a sales pitch that I could recite in NO MORE than 2-3 minutes to any bookseller. I practiced this until the words flowed from my lips, whether my brain was engaged or not. Trust me, when you are standing in front of a very busy bookstore owner you will be nervous. My loving sister (who's in sales) said the call was a success if I didn't throw up on my shoes. I didn't, but on my first call I did sit in the car three times longer than it took me to give my pitch. I firmly believe this ability to talk about your own work – to sell your child – is what separates the new writers that will be successful from those who won't. I needed to look professional, sound knowledgeable, and above all, be courteous and polite. This was not always easy – as when the book buyer I had driven 60 miles to meet told her assistant (within my hearing) to “take her package, she's just another local writer.” Ouch! On that day my mantra became, “Only she who attempts the absurd can achieve the impossible.” It still is.

6 – Create your marketing tour. After leaving 12 messages for the local Borders' rep, I decided to only pursue independent booksellers. They are very nice people who love books and authors. For Northern California they can be found online at nciba.com. I created a sales package which included a media kit (the publisher's formal announcement and sales info of the book), a one-page flyer (cover art, brief description, website info, my contact info, etc.), business cards, and a copy of the book. My publisher was happy to provide the media kits, and reimbursed me for all “giveaway” copies of the book. I started my

tour locally, visiting EVERY independent bookseller in the bay area. Then I hit the road and drove from Los Angeles to Seattle, doing the same thing – making appointments, visiting bookstores, talking to book buyers. I will say, without question, this was the single hardest thing I have ever done in my 50+ years. Without question. But these calls resulted in fourteen book store reading and book-signing events for me. I always followed up with a thank you note (with the cover art on front) again including my contact info.

7 – Create a “spellbinding” reading event. This should be 20-30 minutes of reading and presentation that entices your audience to BUY YOUR BOOK. When I got those events scheduled it was time to create a memorable presentation for the audience. I wanted to provide something visual too, people needed someplace to park their eyes other than my face for 30 minutes. So in my presentation I use two large photographs of the first wolf released in Yellowstone Nat'l Park in 1995, a pivotal part of my novel. To whatever extent you have theatrical resources, use them. Make people laugh, make them cry and they will buy. I realized that this was entertainment, my infomercial to hook my audience's curiosity. I knew my presentation was a success when I saw tears and counted money.

8 – List your book with online reader groups. The web is full of these, some cost, some don't, I listed with Readers' Circle, and it produced another event in a local library where I sold books, and the library featured my book.

9 – Investigate book fairs and festivals. These can be costly - drive time, registration, and lodging - so carefully consider participating. These events were physically and emotionally draining for me, harking my book along with 50-100 other authors. But they produced successful sales, as well as follow-on events with local book clubs.

There were two activities we attempted that weren't so successful.

1 – We processed a mass mailing of postcards (printed by Overniteprints.com) to all independent booksellers in the US. This was the most costly thing we did, and if I use email responses to evaluate it, I only heard from a handful of booksellers. The one positive element of this mailing, however, was when I went into the local booksellers I often heard a comment like, “oh, I've seen this book somewhere...”

2 – Using the online listing on independent book

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

WritersTalk Challenge

Creative Writing Awards are offered to those publishing in *WritersTalk*

Genres:

Memoirs <1200 wds
Short Fiction <1800 wds
Poetry <300 wds
Essays <900 wds
Articles <900 wds

Awards:

Twice yearly, Mar 15 and Sep15

First Prize - \$60

Second - \$40

Third - \$25

Honorable Mentions

Entrance:

All work in the genres above, published in *WT* during the periods Aug 15 through Feb 15 and Feb 15 through Aug 15, is entered. (*WT* editors are excluded from participation)

Judging:

Is to be done by genre-related Club members selected by the editors.

Judging approach:

Ten points are available for each piece, to be allocated over several categories of grading in each genre. The allocations are available from *WritersTalk* Editors

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

(*MADISON* FROM PAGE 13)

stores I mined each store for “staff picks” that were similar to my novel. Then I personally emailed that staff person with a brief pitch about my book, and an offer to send them a copy. This took weeks. In the end we only sent out 4 copies.

Now for the list of “The Things I Should’ve Done, and Didn’t”:

1 – Get an agent. I know authors who are quite successful without ever getting an agent. I don’t believe I am one of them. I spent far too much time on the business end of selling books and dealing with my publisher, than on being a writer and writing. Also, I was very ignorant of publishing contracts, and will spend years paying for the lack of expertise a literary agent would’ve provided.

2 – I should’ve been more knowledgeable of the publishing business – and that it IS a business. I should’ve known the publishing calendar, how to get positive reviews, and above all, I should’ve understood that this is a money-making enterprise. Publishers are no different than grocery stores – they want to make money before the fruit goes bad. They don’t care about your feelings or want to be your friend. This means that the most important thing an author needs – after literary talent – is a thick skin. The second important thing is a sense of humor, so you, like me, can smile when the esteemed agent, Michael Larsen, holds up your novel in his class at the East of Eden Conference to illustrate that “an author ALWAYS carries copies of her book” – the very novel he rejected 10 years ago. You gotta smile!

When I started this missive I said I would tell you why I am now polishing Book 2 and planning Book 3.

1 - I have touched people. The Readers’ Circle listing led me to many local book groups, 8-20 book-loving readers, who bought AND read my book. Sitting in living rooms, I watched the tears well up as they discussed their own life experiences, rediscovered through my fictional story, and how they found strength to overcome challenges just as my character did. I received many emails like the following: “I was transported into such a vivid story that I was able to throw all my household duties to the wind.” I have received emails that made me cry.

2 – Seeing the comments posted on Amazon.com by readers I do not know personally like this one: “The book was alive! In fact, there were a couple of times I had to put the book down just to let my heart rate get back down to normal. Even though I don’t ski or SCUBA dive, when reading her book I felt like I was right alongside the characters, whooshing and diving. A thought provoking, vital, and entertaining book.”

3 – The unequalled privilege of spending an evening with Hugo, Asimov, World Fantasy, and British Science Fiction award-winning author, Kim Stanley Robinson. After reading my novel he asked us to dinner where he spent a great deal of time telling me what I did right in “Woman’s Sigh, Wolf’s Song”. This author (who has his own shelf in most Borders) talked to me with the same respect he would give any peer, any well-established author. I had to excuse myself to go

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

(MADISON FROM PAGE 14)

to the bathroom for fear I would start crying. Then he asked about my next books, giving me sound advice and encouragement. For twenty years he's made his living writing novels, and he believes I have the stuff to do the same.

Regarding financial remuneration, suffice that I am my loving husband's "favorite tax write-off". Kathrynmadison.com is not quite in the black - yet. But I know that no author - not Steinbeck, Clancy, Grisham, or Rowling - achieved success with their first book, and I'm in the early stages of building a career. So I will continue to write, better educated about this job, so my stories will reach the souls who want to join me on my journeys. *KM*

(WINGS FROM PAGE 11)

I hear Sharee say, "I love you. I think it's the one thing that gave me a chance." I start laughing at the absurdity of that comment, the absurdity of what she just said, the proof in front of me that went against everything I had learned. I wipe my eyes and see Sharee's facial expression ask me *Why are you laughing?*

Before I can explain, a rap on the front door silences me. I had completely forgotten about my previously made hysterical 911 call. Emergency services obviously hadn't. From the pit of my stomach I feel a moment of tired hatred for what used to be a woman that I now look at, for the person who put me in this embarrassing situation in my life. I stand up to open the door, to get this over and send things back to the way they used to be, and then sit back down again.

"For some reason I think what I'm about to do would make Mother Theresa proud," I say, looking at the horns on Sharee's head. "Will you forgive me?"

Giant tear drops rain down from Sharee's cheeks onto the table top. "Yes," she says.

Words never meant much to me until that moment. "Thank you," I say. "I forgive you, too." I grasp her hands in mine, still feverishly hot, but that doesn't matter anymore. I leave Sharee for just a moment and open the front door to my apartment to do what I know is right. *JD*



Valentines Day

By John Wilson

I have no idea who Victoria is and far less of an idea what her secret might be, but sexy lingerie seemed like a good solution to my Valentine's Day gift dilemma. The first store I see on entering the Mall is Frederick's of Hollywood, competition for my meagre dollars? Could this be a sign, an omen? I hope not, because not only am I in the dark but so is the whole lower floor of the Mall. The lights are out at Frederick's but they are on at Victoria's place. Either the loss of power or discretionary income has suddenly caused the masses to evaporate. No matter, it will reduce the risk of the embarrassment that I'm about to face.

Three salespersons and myself, I should get all the help I need here. That I appeared to need help couldn't have been that evident or maybe they were just bored. I kept getting looks that made me feel like a "flasher" who had left his raincoat at home.

Eventually one of the girls, sorry salespersons, decided that maybe I did have enough money to afford something and that the bulge in my pocket really was my cell phone. I'm browsing through the racks looking at things that were totally alien to me, wondering where and what they might fit.

Underwear with three holes, have I missed something? "No Sir, those are crotchless panties" she says, without a hint of a blush. When I buy clothes I expect them to be complete in every detail and if not, I expect a discount! Underwear missing such a strategically located piece of material should never cost what they were asking for it.

Topless, bottomless, cheekless and crotchless, I felt like Rip Van Winkle; when did all this happen?

Undaunted the salesperson proceeded to show me everything in the store, which for me was a very educational experience, for her it was a chance to torture and tease someone old enough to be her father. I finally decided on a piece of silk underwear that was conservative, intact and fully functional.

What if it's too big or worse still, too small? I used to know what a 36" 24" 36" figure looked like. However all the women I have been in contact with over the last fifteen years were all fully clothed and my imagination isn't what it used to be. I could ask the salesperson to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

A Spoon Full of Humor Makes the Lessons Go Down. —Dave LaRoche

As writers we've heard humor is a good medium for message and, without any doubt, **Tod Goldberg** illustrated that notion on the 21st of our first month of writing in 2007. Someone is sure to argue the point but most suggest he was a winner; that he maintained our seat edges where they insure our discomfort but keep us tuned in, and because he delivered his technique and writing experience with humor, we listened and laughed and remember.

It would be silly to attempt a repeat of Tod's message, but I can jot down a few salient Goldberg ideas I manage to recall.

- ◆ The essence of drama is: man cannot walk away from his actions.
- ◆ A book is like a hamburger franchise, think McDonalds. You should know with the first couple pages what to expect at the counter.
- ◆ Stories need a "key event" that introduces the conflict, sets up the plot—get to it early.
- ◆ A reader will accept anything in the beginning but not up-heaving surprises in the end (or the middle).
- ◆ Conflict is the writer's friend. Put it early and everywhere: plot, subplots and character. Think: man versus man, machine, nature, society, God and self.
- ◆ Characters and writing must be organic. A book is a jambalaya, not a cafeteria tray.
- ◆ Portray your characters with action and dialog, not from a sketch.
- ◆ The writer recreates life (enough said).
- ◆ Avoid cliché in all elements of a book: if you've heard it or read it, don't write it.
- ◆ Stick to the notions of risk and value and put everything else in the trash.
- ◆ Read... read everything and everybody.
- ◆ Plot and subplot equals characters, setting, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution... in that sequence.

We enjoyed him in Salinas, in Sunnyvale we adopted him and we hope that he'll sit again at our table. Thank you Tod Goldberg for your experience and noesis... and for your delicious, sweet humorous delivery. *DLR*



Intro by Diana

Getting into it



70 folks attending

I heard Tod say _uck card. Someone said to add a "T" which I interpreted as _uck carT. Duncan heard it as _uck hard, and Edie thought he had said Pop Tart. -- Betty Auchard



This is fun



This is serious

Not only an inspiring and informative workshop, Tod Goldberg kept us laughing throughout the day. This is the first time where attendees were reluctant for the workshop to end. Edie Matthews



Tod's plot diagram, and his advice, was a key in lock for me. I took more away from this workshop than I have any I've attended in many years. Ro Davis



I laughed, I cried (from laughing), and at times it was better than "Cats." Best of all, I came away with more than enough information to bring some new luster to a nearly completed



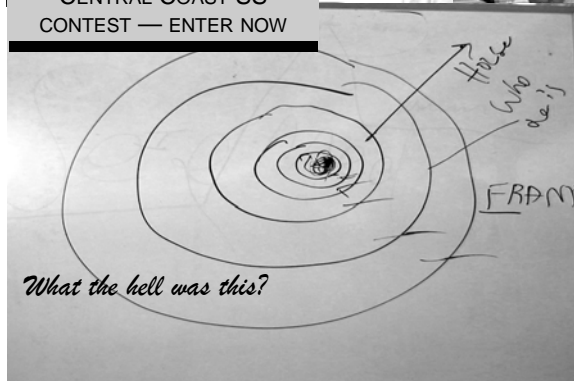
Tod was informative, entertaining and at times outrageous. His pleasant banter with the audience made this thought inducing day fly by. Chuck Peradotto



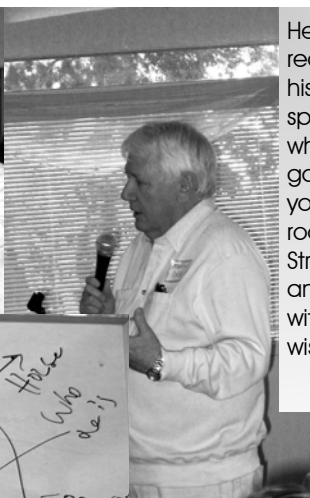
Setting begets character begets plot. From page 1, character must be primed for conflict. Essence of drama: man cannot escape the consequences of his actions. Writer and reader must trust each other. Have a cookie. Thanks, Tod. Thanks, Owen Meany. Meredy Amyx



CENTRAL COAST SS
CONTEST — ENTER NOW



Tod has a wonderfully unique ability to combine practical and useful information with a delightfully zany wit. Arlyne Diamond



He's like a bull who sees red, then charges into his material. Sharp, side splitting funny, especially when he makes and engages the audience, you could be in his living room having a beer. Straight forward, sincere and shoots from the hip with his bang-bang writer wisdom.

J Mutz



Dude...I dunno....
Desert Rules! Where's the camel, Fucktard?
Duncan King



A Road Runner Writer's workshop, hosted by Todd himself, wrangling writers' wisdom to those whose love affair lies with the written word. In a word, he was and is fabulous!

Jackie Mutz



Be more free in the subject matter, length of, and target audience for my stories. Don't feel I need a "complete interview" of all my characters; think thru and improve the entertainment value, the difficult, constantly arising obstacles, and the denouement/ climax BEFORE I start writing it.

Rich Burns



Announcements

Creative Writing Classes

Looking for more skill and feedback on your writing?
Edie Matthews M.F.A.
offers creative writing classes on Tuesdays.

- 10am-noon Westmont Retirement Center, 1675 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara.
- 1:30-3:30 pm Valley Village, 390 N. Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara,

"My goal is to make students become consciously aware of what they're doing right and how to improve themselves."

For more information, contact
www.scae.org
or Edie or show up.
Enrollment fee is three dollars.

(*VALENTINES DAY* FROM PAGE 15)
model for me but if she should ask if she was my wife's size, alas, I would have to confess that this was not so. I'm confusing fact with fantasy.

The cashier, a rather aloof young lady surveyed my purchase, making a point of double checking the price, then giving me a look that bordered on contempt. I wanted to tell her that my wife of 40 years didn't consider the price of something as being relevant, it was the thought that counted. "Would you like your photograph taken and included along with the article?" she asked. Instantly, I had visions of myself trying to squeeze my portly frame into this miniscule garment. Why would I want to have my photograph taken wearing this? As if reading my thoughts, her look became even more withering and she bluntly added, "The gift giver's

Announcements

**JACK LONDON
WRITERS
CONFERENCE**

March 24, 2007
Presented by
SF Peninsula Writers
Foster City Crowne Plaza,
Foster City, CA

The 17th Annual Jack London Writers Conference will be held all day Saturday, March 24, 2007 at the Foster City Crowne Plaza. Key-note speaker Daniel Handler (Lemony Snicket) will kick off the one day conference of workshops, speakers, and agent appointments.

www.sfpeninsulawriters.com .

photograph to go with the card, the personal touch."

With my reputation as a big spender demolished, my morals questioned and my ego severely bruised, I reneged on the additional three dollars for the photograph. Scuttling from the store I ran to my car glad that the ordeal was over.

Home at last with my present safely gift wrapped and hidden, I await the appropriate moment to show my affection. I start having second thoughts! Chocolates in a fancy box would work just as well at least they have done for the last thirty years. A raunchy card with a bunch of roses might work better still. No, not me, I have to be different this year opening myself up to embarrassment and potentially damaging questions, by offering an intimate piece of apparel.

Pick the wrong time and place to present my hard won prize and there could be repercussions. Questions will follow behind the initial obliga-

Announcements



**South
Bay
Writers
Open Mic**

First Friday each Month
7:30 — 9:30 p
Barnes & Noble
Almaden Plaza, San Jose

Second Friday 7:30 — 9:30 p
Borders Books
Santana Row, San Jose

Third Friday 7:30 — 9:30 p
Barnes and Noble
Pruneyard in Campbell

Fourth Wednesday 7:30 — 9:30 p
Borders in Sunnyvale

Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. Contact Bill Baldwin

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

tory smile, questions which in turn will quickly cause the smile to change to a look of inquisitiveness.

"It's very nice darling and the right size too, who helped you pick it?"

"It's lovely but when did you start shopping at Victoria's?"

Stop already, I don't need all this second guessing.

The moment of truth! Sitting opposite each other at our favorite eating place, I proffer my offering. Her look followed by her touch, tell me all is well and that my earlier doubts and fears were groundless.

"Happy Valentines Day darling."

There is a God and She is kind.

JW



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 Meet
Feb 7, 6:30 at Diana's

General Meeting (Dinner):
Feb 14,
Bring ur Valentine

Open Mic:
Feb 2 7:30p
B&N, Almaden Plaza
Feb 9 7:30.p
Borders, Santana Row
Feb16, 7:30
B&N in the Pruneyard
Feb 23, 7:30
Borders, Sunnyvale

WritersTalk Inputs: Feb 16/23

Editors Pow-Wow:
Feb 16, 10:00am
Orchard Valley Coffee

Genral Dinner Meet — Feb 14, 6:00
At

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

See Map Below

Take 237 to
W Maude to Macara

