



WRITERSTALK

Volume 17
Number 7
July 2009

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

California Writers Club
South Bay Branch



ANNUAL POTLUCK BARBECUE

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2009, 3 PM

(There is no July General Meeting)

It's time for our annual Potluck BBQ. Since there's never enough time to chat at the regular meetings, this month South Bay Branch is hosting its Annual Potluck Barbecue. Come and enjoy good food and good company. Visit with old friends and make new friends and contacts.

POTLUCK DINNER

Please bring a dish according to your last name:

- A-K Appetizer or dessert
- L-R Main dish or side dish
- S-Z Salad

The club will provide meat and drinks.
There is no charge.



Location

Edie Matthews' residence
917 Perreira Drive
Santa Clara 95051
RSVP to (408) 985-0819 or
RSVP@southbaywriters.com



Young Writers Workshop

by Jamie Miller

It worked! Our "South Bay Young Writers Workshop 09" brought together 31 young writing enthusiasts from seventh to twelfth grades for a day of sessions on aspects of writing. We moved through topics from "Growing Great Characters and Plots" with Martha Engber, through Jack Hasling's whimsically titled "It Might be Better, But It Could Be Verse" and "Secrets of Short Filmmaking" with Victoria M. Johnson. We closed with a panel discussion on "Getting Your Voice



Heard" with Colin Seymour, Mike Cassidy, and Reverend Kim Englemann of West Valley Presbyterian Church, and our host for the May 30 event. And, to acquaint the kids with the sort of format that they might someday encounter at an East of Eden or Jack London conference, we added author-storyteller Dave Breithaupt as lunchtime speaker. He left us with the most remarked-on few minutes of the day by talking about censorship and then going on to explain why and how he thrice wrote into a novel one of George Carlin's "seven words you can't say on television."

This was SBW's first foray into outreach to young writers, although the San

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President's Prowling

by *Dave LaRoche*
President, South Bay Writers

Is the Front Burner On?

We take a run at our meeting every month—well, about 20% do. We are nice to our tummies, liberate our lexicons, do an edge-of-the-chair for those stirring announcements, and spend an hour with the speaker. Yes, every month, it's a given—like walking the dog.

Yet despite those solicitous gyrations from our VP to shed the shivers and sell our books through open mics, the same few readers routinely show up. And we stand on our heads bringing workshops to the relatively small number that attend—in too large a proportion, nonmembers. And everyone clamors for critique groups while few actually sign up. So what's the deal here? Is it all about brownies?

There are critique groups and reading opportunities where the gnashing of impressions brings ideas to bloom and allows our writing to reach for its best. Our Networking Chair is poised to direct all the traffic—but little appears, as most of us, though interested, are idling.

We will crank up a Learning Center soon, a concept dressed nicely in hardware and a few DVDs. You may gather at any place (my own disheveled digs) and watch lectures by those considered phenomenal at their trade, then discuss that part of the craft that so (reputedly) inspires our interest.

And there is more. This past spring, your board voted to produce a repeat of our East of Eden Conference in September of 2010. Will we participate in its development? Will we attend? Do we all know what it means to put on such a show? Is it magical, like Jack's stalk—drop a bean somewhere down around Salinas and a conference grows?

We have a new bulletin board—call it a blog—where members can post their views and news, announce an event of potential interest, or leave a witty snarl. Join in—it comes with your membership.

You got it. It's my old get-involved-in-your-club nag—so get up and get out and do it. There is much here to stimulate and assist a writer, not to mention the opportunities to help with the assistance. We are writers; this is a writers' club.

Yes, the front burner is on and the pot doth simmer. WT



California Writers Club South Bay Branch

— 0 —

Executive Committee

President—Dave LaRoche
pres@southbaywriters.com
408 729-3941

Vice President—Bill Baldwin
vp@southbaywriters.com

Secretary—Loureen Giordano
secretary@southbaywriters.com

Treasurer—Richard Burns
treasurer@southbaywriters.com

Central Board Rep

Dave LaRoche (acting rep)

Directors

Programs—Bill Baldwin
vp@southbaywriters.com

Publicity and Public Relations—Edie Matthews
publicity@southbaywriters.com
408 985-0819

Membership—Marjorie Johnson
membership@southbaywriters.com

Hospitality—Cathy Bauer
cathy@bauerstar.com

Networking—Cathy Bauer
networking@southbaywriters.com

East of Eden Conference—Edie Matthews and
Kelly Harrison, co-chairs
eastofeden@southbaywriters.com

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin
408 730-9622

Webmaster—Ro Davis
webmaster@southbaywriters.com

Join With Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Contact the Membership Chair, Marjorie Johnson.



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WRITERSTALK

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

Managing Editor

Richard Amyx
newsletter@southbaywriters.com
408 297-4438

Contributing Editors

Bill Belew
Carolyn Donnell
Lisa Eckstein (copyeditor)
Andrea Galvacs (copyeditor)
Victoria M. Johnson
Lita Kurth
Jackie Mutz (copyeditor)

Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Suggested word limits are not absolute; query the editor. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com; or mail double-spaced, typewritten copy to

Richard Amyx
994 No. 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Guest Columns

Almost Anything Goes (400 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs
junestar@comcast.net

Creative Works

Short Fiction (1800 words)
Memoir (1200 words)
Poetry (300 words)
Essay (900 words)

Accolades

accolades@southbaywriters.com

Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

An announcement is information of interest and value to writers that does not provide direct economic benefit to its originator. Announcements are published free of charge.

Advertising is accepted on the basis of its interest and value to writers. Advertising rates for Club members, \$7 per column inch; non-members, \$10. We will assist or insist with layout.

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Change of Address: Send changes of address to the Membership Chair at membership@southbaywriters.com

Subscriptions: Nonmember subscriptions are \$20/year; send a check payable to South Bay Writers Club to the Membership Chair.

Circulation: 200

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Editor's Perspective

by Dick Amyx
Editor

This is not an editorial



Marty "Old Man" Mortenson stood with his hands in the back pockets of his jeans looking at the collection of green and yellow machines on the gravel lot behind the sales and business offices of Mortenson's John Deere. The spring air smelled of rain, earth, and promise, but Marty's state of mind blocked a future from his thoughts. Whereas yesterday there had been only tractors he couldn't sell on the lot, today there were two combines, too, combines returned to him because their owners couldn't make payments on them. If Marty had one flaw as a businessman, it was that he was too soft-hearted. The banks sometimes tended to get a little persnickety about making loans to ranchers who were having a tough time. Marty could easily carry the notes on the equipment, so he did. After all, he knew all those people—and most of their fathers and grandfathers, too. They'd all grown up together in Plain Rock and lived there all their lives. They were almost family, and you couldn't turn your back on family. God damn George Bush and his band of thieves, Marty thought, and the shit of it is that I voted for the son-of-a-bitch, too, trying my best to convince myself that he was a good ol' boy under the skin when I knowed better all along. Slapping his hands on his pants, he turned and went into the building.

He stood for a moment in the doorway of his office, taking in the space in which he'd spent a great deal of time since 1982, when he'd taken over the business from his father: walls lined with shelves sagging under the weight of parts and equipment catalogs, file cabinets with tattered corners of paper peeking out the tops of the drawers, the scarred old desk, stained and piled high with neglected paperwork, the 1936 John Deere calendar still where his father had hung it the day he opened Mortenson's.

Marty sank heavily into the wooden desk chair and fished around in the back of the upper right desk drawer until he withdrew a pint of Jack Daniel's black label. He held up the bottle and looked at it for long minute, almost as if he didn't know what it was. After taking a big slug of the amber liquid, he leaned back and laced his fingers behind his head. On the left corner of the desk was a picture of his father, dead ten years now; next to his father, a picture of his wife, dead seven years now. And his two sons. Both of them married and with children of their own, living fifteen hundred miles away. Neither had any interest in the business or in farming. One was a graphic designer; the other, a software engineer.

Marty drew another long swig of the Jack, then closed his eyes and remained motionless, as if he had nodded off. Then, with a start, he leaned forward and opened the bottom right drawer of the desk and took out his father's World War II .45 automatic.

The atmosphere of old oil and dust in the repair bay of Dorsey's Auto & Body echoed with the whoops and shouts of mechanics as they put their tools away for the weekend. Friday, payday. For Jack Hawkins, it was a particularly important payday: the first he'd had in nine months. While he was wiping down his 12mm box wrench, the shop fell silent. He looked up to see Hank Dorsey walking into the room.

Hank was built like a fireplug, squat and solid, given to chewing cigar stubs long after they should have been thrown away and slapping his employees on the back and swapping greetings and good-humored insults as he passed among them to hand out the pay envelopes. But today, Hank was quiet. His face was ashen, and it looked as if he'd aged ten years overnight. He stood in the middle of the ro **WT**

Blogging—Pay, Perks and Plus Alpha

by Bill Belew

Seriously, does anybody really make any money blogging? I mean, how much can a person earn by writing about what they had for breakfast and their most recent breakup and their job search?



Bill Belew
Contributing Editor

The short answer is yes, there is money to be made blogging. There are perks to blogging as well, and there are also intangibles (“plus alpha,” as they say in Japan) that come along with the ride. And no, blogs are not always just diaries of meaningless drivel. Would it sound better if I called my blogs websites with dynamic, constantly updated content posted in reverse chronological order where readers can interact with the author? That’s what a professional blog is.

I will tell you how much I make blogging, some of the perks that have come my way since I began doing it more than three years ago, and a few of the intangibles (have you seen Dracula’s castle?).

Before I tell you how much money I make, let me share with you a bit of my journey and my commitment to blogging. Almost four years ago, I started a blog so that I could just get myself “out there.” It wasn’t long, 3 months or so, before someone read one of my posts and contacted me. This fellow gave me a lead to a business network of blogs and said I should contact them. I did. It was a fledgling network that did not have the niche I was interested in—international business. I proposed the new topic and it was accepted. The first site grew as more and more readers came. So I proposed another topic and it got accepted. Then a third topic. At one point I was writing 450 posts a month of about 200 words each for this network, month after month. Then at about nine months, magic happened. The search engines found me and the sites began to grow organically—more and more readers came even when I did not

promote the sites. That’s right, I also had to promote while I wrote. My sites eventually became the most-read in that network of 90 or so topics. My sites made money for the network and I was paid well.

Problem: other writers in the network weren’t as committed. The result was a typical 80-20 distribution of effort and results among the network’s writers, production and readership. The network went belly up after about two years. I purchased my blog sites and went out on my own. I recruited a couple of other productive writers from that network and created my own blog network with a slightly different business model. That was about a year ago. While growing my own network I have also been recruited and am now writing for a national network. In addition to doing all of this I also have been teaching writing online for a national university, a position I am on the verge of giving up so I can devote myself full-time to writing.

As I write this, my network of blogs is about to surpass 10,000,000 views. So far this month, 600,000 folks have come to take a look. Along the way more than 10,000 posts have been written, each about 100 to 200 words long. That’s more than 1.5 million words in three and half years.

So what has all that work gotten me?

The perks: last year I drove some \$500,000 worth of cars. No kidding. A fellow blogger had introduced me to a few car brokers that were looking for folks with a readership to drive, write and publish reviews about their cars. Each week a new car showed up at my door with a full tank of gas and a week’s worth of insurance. All I had to do was drive, feel and write. And no, I am no expert on cars. The brokers didn’t want an expert opinion.

I have covered golf tournaments and rubbed elbows with the world’s best golfers on the best courses in the world. A friend introduced me to a fellow who needs someone to fly around the country and review golf courses. Hmm . . .

I have been to Vegas twice, cruised twice related to blogging and did my work on the side of a pool while I watched my son participate in national

championship meets. Need I go on?

The pay: you might be disappointed because I am not going to put an exact amount here. However, if you show me how much is in your bank account, I will show you mine. I will say that in the three and half years I have been blogging, I have been more than able to pay my sizable monthly mortgage on my Silicon Valley home and the lease payments on my wife’s three-letter German car. There have been ups and downs and the pay has not been consistent, but when looked at overall, it’s been more than adequate. I don’t make quite enough to be a full-time writer, but at this point I am close enough to make the leap and not depend on my spouse’s income or an inheritance.

The plus alpha: I am cowriting a blog on the environment with a fellow who has proven invaluable to me for tech support. I have no idea how much money he has saved me. He lives in Romania. My new-college-graduate son is going to Europe this summer. This green-blog friend will put my boy up and take him on a tour of Dracula’s castle. How cool is that?

On one of those Vegas trips I stayed for free with a reader of one of my blogs. Mom and Dad had taught me to not go home with strangers. Nonsense. This new friend put me up and now he works for the university where I have been teaching.

A book—*Gee, I Wish I Had Been Drinking at the Time*—has been published.

And, and, and . . .

All this and a lot more since I started blogging because I had something to say and wanted to get it out there.

Are you blogging yet? Watch for future articles with suggestions on how to get started. WT

July Fie

BANG the keyboard,
POP ideas out,
Never mind the rocket’s red glare.
If you’re distracted by the racket
Your work never gets anywhere.

—Pat Bustamante

Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

It was nice to be among familiar faces at the June 9 meeting, although I missed the food and Dave's opening line (was there a bad joke?). The coffee was good, the laughter was flowing, as well as the sounds of people networking, catching up or introducing themselves. Here's what I heard:



Jackie Mutz
Contributing Editor

- Not a specific accolade, but lots of new people working on novels . . .
- **Betty Auchard** gave her program recently to the CWC in Orange, CA, noting "they were one of the most responsive audiences I've had in seven years . . . not the top, but darn close." And then she was off to Las Vegas to promote her best-seller, *Dancing in My Nightgown*. Go to carolynhayesuber.com to see how much fun Betty had.
- **Linda Lappin** of Poetry Center San Jose announced there are noteworthy workshops coming this fall—Robert Haas and Brenda Hilmead. Check it out at pcsj.org.
- **Phyllis Mattson** has continued her talks and recently spoke at the Menlo Park library.
- **Jana McBurney-Lin** gave a talk about *My Half of the Sky* at the Martin Luther King Library on June 27 and will be speaking at the Campbell Library on August 12 at 7 p.m. as part of the Summer Reading Series.
- **Jamie Miller** has secured a spot for the SBW anthology *Who Are Our Friends?* to be sold at Bookshop Santa Cruz.
- **Suzy Paluzzi** recently launched a blog at suzy-writethoughts.blogspot.com.
- **Colin Seymour**, backup theater critic for the *San Jose Mercury News*, recently published a piece on Theatre on the Square's rendition of Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream*. Last month, his boxing blog made \$800.
- **Reed Stevens** has been busy: published commentary columns in the

Broad Street Review (broadstreetreview.com); cranked up a website and blog at reedstevens.com; has a review in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* newspaper that will run July 5, and an upcoming book signing of *Dreamhouse* in Santa Fe, NM, July 25 at the Garcia Street Bookstore, 2–3 p.m. And finally, she has been "reading my new fairy tales to clients in Sarahcare, a lovely daycare for Alzheimer patients. To my surprise, they're a great audience!"

- **Susan Zeisler**, SBW member and English professor at Mission Community College, wrote to say that

eight student entries were accepted for publication as part of the Santa Clara County poem featured in the *SIMN* and *Mountain View Voice* as well as radio and television.

Summer is surely here as we approach July. It's hot and dry and can leave one feeling uninspired. Find a way to "beat the heat" and keep the writing process in place. Sit in a pool and write, run through the sprinklers and plop on the grass and write. Blast that air conditioning while you write. Or get up when there is still the hush of cool in the air and write. In other words, keep writing, and send me your success stories at accolades@southbaywriters.com. WT

SBW Elects New Officers



The SBW election of officers was held at the June 9 general meeting as prescribed by the bylaws. Officers elected for the 2008–2009 term were President, Dave LaRoche; Vice President, Bill Baldwin; Treasurer, Richard Burns; Secretary, Loureen Giordano.

News from Membership

by Marjorie Johnson

Thank you to the many members who have renewed membership in South Bay Writers for 2009-2010.

This year, the CWC centennial year, pins are available to all members pay dues for 2009-2010. If you have paid your dues and haven't received your pin, please see me at any meeting.

Also, some members have indicated that their ID badge is damaged or lost. If you need a new ID badge, let me know at marjohnson89@earthlink.net



View from the Board

by Dave LaRoche

Attendees of the Board meeting on June 3: Dick Amyx, Marjorie Johnson, Richard Burns, Marilyn Fahey, Jamie Miller, Ro Davis, Bill Baldwin, Dave LaRoche.

Dave LaRoche:

- Nominations were lagging for 2009–10 offices although Loureen Giordano has added her name to the slate for secretary.
- We need to generate a Club Asset List including name of asset, its location and condition.
- Called for a round of applause for superlative work from Marilyn and Jamie on Young Writers Workshop.
- The NorCal Association will meet on June 27 in Oakland.

Bill Baldwin announced BBQ potluck, July 19; Katie Hafner as speaker in September; and hopefully an agent in August.

Rich Burns announced he will be out of reach from June 13–27 and:

- We took a net loss at the May meeting of \$73.
- Many branches do not pay an

honorarium.

- Youth workshop with 39 attending netted \$300.

Marjorie Johnson declared 223 members. Networking news included a restart of the Saturday orientations. Dave mentioned a legal workshop possible for August. Bill reported stable open mic attendance. Ro Davis reported disappointing web/email communications with about half of addressees deleting the messages unread.

Marilyn Fahey and Jamie Miller agreed to continue their efforts with young writers on an ongoing basis. Their committee was elevated to permanent status with the new name of “Young Writers Events.”

The EoE2010 Working Group will meet at Carrows (El Camino and Calabasas) on June 20 at 10a.m. Dick Amyx and Marilyn Fahey will join the group.

Dick Amyx plans an anthology marketing meeting soon. Jamie Miller has one outlet in Santa Cruz.

Old Business

Bill Baldwin moved, seconded by Dick Amyx, that the Club purchase an Optoma digital projector (EW1610) and “Black Tie Protection Plan” for the total price, including tax, of \$1033.98—

unanimously approved.

New Business

Marjorie Johnson moved, seconded by Ro Johnson, that the club purchase 250 cloisonné pins (representations of the CWC logo) to be presented to new members and this year’s renewals; total price of \$550—unanimously approved.

Rich Burns moved, seconded by Marjorie Johnson, that the club purchase the learning DVD, *Building Great Sentences: Exploring the Writers Craft* on sale from The Teaching Company for \$69.95—unanimously approved.

Improving the Branch

- The idea of building interest in office through “member-at-large” positions on the board drew interest—Dave will look into the feasibility.
- Bill commented that announcements and introductions seemed to take up too much time—especially at the last meeting. Attention seems appropriate, although it was agreed that this meeting feature was needed.
- Booths at Art and Wine Festivals were discussed as a way of reaching out to the public. More and specific information is needed to act—time, cost, location, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. WT

Thoughts of a Day Forever Gone

by Darwin Mathison

While watching the movie *Bridges of Madison County*, oh how this thought comes over me, as I also feel the same feelings of the Woman this story or movie is about. While I think back and realize I also had a brush with a similarity of thoughts, quite the same as She.

What a thought after all these years! Way back when the kids were young and I was working away, working in Hibbing, Minnesota, money was really tight, with this job all that was available. Aw Shit! I had to be away from home once more and I hated to be away and always broke.

Same old crap and thank GOD for the twelve hour days, all my clothes were filthy, so do the S.O.B.n laundry, heck I got to that wash machine center, plunkin the dirties to wash. Went and

sat down to watch the fake washer TV bounce the colored stuff. Boring, Boring, Boring, life away, nothing but the dull drone of today, I’m happy with my life, Wife and Kids, I got all I ever wanted, but the gray feeling of: is this all there is for me in life?

Shuffle those few quarters in my pocket. When into the laundrymat walks in this knock-out of a Woman, stepped right out of some movie magazine. The wheels in my head spun like a slot machine. A little dab of clothes She had wouldn’t even fill one machine. What Was She Doing Here?

Yes and only Yes, I found out post haste, when She came right up to me and planted Her face directly in front of mine. Saying: Are you one of those construction people? I couldn’t breathe, what was this, am I dreaming or only hallucinating?

She steps back when I say I am and She says like a whip cracking, TAKE ME

OUT OF THIS PLACE; I’m so bored, another day and I will go nuts or worse yet. I got money She stammers, if you got the car and we can go anywhere you desire, as long as You just get me out of here.

What can I say, I’m so dumbfounded, I can’t speak, with Joy’s face and those of the kids, flying across my eyes like shooting stars. NO, NO, NO, NO is what they were telling me and they were Five Hundred miles away. Home needing ME! And they were mine. What was this knock-out, but a beautiful bird on the fly? Who was I? Husband, Father, or just another bird?

The show on the dryer TV quits doing its job, but by GOD I’m not quitting mine, chucking the grubbies in the sack, I hit the road back to my bare bulb room, damned glad I was a Father and Husband. AND I AIN’T NO QUITTER—and still AIN’T. WT

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Writing Without a Left Hand

by Carolyn Donnell

Did you know that the longest common words that can be typed using only the right hand in proper typing form are “lollipop” and “monopoly”? If you count words with hyphens then you have Johnny-Jump-Up, a fast-growing flower or a brand name for a type of toy. There is also niminy-piminy (a Mother Goose-ish accusation of feigned daintiness), if that’s a real word. A few longer words can be found if you wander through the annals of science, medicine, and biology, but the above two are the most frequently used.

Why am I interested in this subject? In early April I fell and fractured my shoulder—“smashed” is the word the doctor kept using. With my left arm immobilized in a sling for 6–8 weeks, only my right hand remained to find and peck at letters on the keyboard. If the immobilization had lasted longer I definitely would have investigated the voice recognition software. I may yet do that. Or, if I’d had an extra \$600 lying around, I might have tried the Half-QWERTY keyboard. But for now I simply used the time to discover just what the right hand could do all by itself.

The standard keyboard—called QWERTY—is pitted against the right-handed typist to begin with. Thousands of English words can be spelled using only the left hand, while only a few hundred words can be typed using just the right hand. This is unfortunate when you remember that that most people are right-handed and becomes even more troublesome for those with an incapacitated left hand. Yet QWERTY assigns to the left hand the most common English letters: E, T, and A, along with S (no plurals with the right hand) and R. When the left hand is not available, for whatever reason, the right hand is forced into much more than double duty.

During my involuntary one-handed creativity period, I became interested in what these few hundred words might be and found the following tidbits of information.

Continued on page 11

Betty Comes Home

SBW member Betty Auchard, who has been making presentations to CWC branches around the state, has returned home and will speak about her award-winning memoir, *Dancing in My Nightgown*, on Saturday, July 18, at 2:00 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble at Almaden and Blossom Hill Road in San Jose. Winner of a national IPPY award, *Dancing in My Nightgown* is an engaging record of widowhood that has readers laughing and crying on the same page. Since 2002, Betty’s audiences have appreciated her compassion and humor in recounting stories about learning how to be single so late in life. Her book was published when she was 75. Betty will be available after the talk to answer questions and autograph books.



Betty responds to a question after speaking to the Orange County CWC branch: “I mean . . . really—who would sit at the computer all day long and write in a nightgown? Me, that’s who.”

Foothill College Writers Conference

Authors of all ability levels can read, write, and workshop poems and prose, fiction, nonfiction, and screenplays by registering for the 33rd Annual Foothill College Writers Conference. The event is July 9–12, 2009, and features intensive daily workshops, lectures, and seminars.

Prose and poetry readings are presented daily at noon and 5:30 p.m.

Guest presenters are Bay Area literati including Alan Cheuse, Justin Chin, Lesley Dauer, Sharon Doubiago, Scott Inguito, Linda Janakos, Avotcja Jiltoniro, Danielle Haysbert, Carol Lem, Morton Marcus, Barbara Jane Reyes, Michelle Richmond, Doren Robbins,

SBW Poets: One Line in a Santa Clara County Album

by Carolyn Donnell

The lines of three SBW members were selected for inclusion in the Santa Clara County poetic project: “A Family Album, Santa Clara County, 2009.” Roughly 500 lines were submitted.

Nils Peterson, Poet Laureate of Santa Clara County, requested submissions of one line between 9 and 13 syllables in length on the subject of life in Santa Clara County, past and present.

A quote from Nils on the web page: “What shall we call our creation? A poem doesn’t seem quite right, though clearly there is poetry in it. I think of it as a collage, a gathering of verbal snapshots, an album of the Santa Clara County family, a time capsule . . .”

Nils arranged the lines according to subject matter. Groupings were mostly random. They include Work, People, The Look of Our Place, What’s Here, and What Was Lost.

Authors are listed at the bottom of each section in the order of their appearance and include SBW members Clysta McLemore, Suzy Paluzzi, and Steve Wetlesen.

See sccgov.org/poetlaureate for more information on the Santa Clara County Poet Laureate program and a link to “A Family Album, Santa Clara County, 2009.” WT

Greg Sarris, Tony Tulathimutte, Marianne Villanueva, R.J. Ward, Kim Silveira Wolterbeek, and Al Young.

The conference is offered as a one-unit course. California residents pay \$53. Participants are encouraged to register online for CRWR 120B01: Creative Writers Conference. Register online early as conference seats fill quickly. On-site registration will be available, but workshop space is limited. Advance registration is highly recommended.

For information and on-line registration, go to foothill.edu/la/conference/.

Phone: (650) 949-7924; eMail: svetichkella@fhda.edu

Gennaro's Blessing

by Rita Baum

Gennaro rose and dressed earlier than usual for his morning walk along his beloved Bay of Naples. He kissed his sleeping wife, Emilia, who stirred as his lips touched her hair, and then moved quietly across the room, closing the bedroom door behind him. Today would be the day of action. He must prepare himself for what lay ahead.

He looked in on his children still asleep in their beds, blessing each child with the sign of the cross: thoughtful Concetta—ah, soon she will become a young lady, his pretty Carmela, and young, bright, inquisitive Giovanni—Gianni, his first son. “Bless them, O Grand Sir, and guide them through today’s journey,” he prayed. Little did they know of the journey and adventure that lay ahead. And for Gennaro it would be an adventure as well as the fulfillment of a dream, a reachable dream that would finally come to fruition.

He walked on tiptoe to the kitchen for his cup of morning espresso. Too preoccupied for small talk, he drank in silence, with only a nod to his housekeeper, faithful Francesca, already silently at work peeling vegetables. He must walk, walk and think, and gather courage for the task ahead. It was nearly May, and he had delayed too long to make arrangements. They must cross the Atlantic in summer, when the sea is kind and the danger of storms is less.

Gennaro walked, walked and thought. He stopped to gaze at his beloved Bay of Naples, inhaling the water’s essence and the pungent fragrance of orange blossoms drifting from a nearby garden. Savoring this moment, he raised his face to the morning sun. Ah, the exhilaration, the filling of his senses! He would miss this more than he dared imagine. He resumed his walk, practicing the speech he had recited to himself a hundred times. Then he stopped abruptly and turned. “No, I’ll cut my walk short and go straight to my father’s house,” he thought.

Walking quickly, he passed men pulling carts filled with metal containers of

fresh milk to be delivered to each doorstep. Papa, also an early riser, would be working at his desk. His grandmother, La Nonna, would be up early too, perhaps sitting on her bedroom balcony enjoying her demitasse espresso. He did not want her to see him approaching at this early hour. She would be suspicious. His mother would still be asleep.

As Gennaro walked through the garden to the kitchen door, he came upon Nino, the old gardener’s son and his childhood chum, enjoying his morning demitasse. Nino was now the lead servant who ran all aspects of his parents’ large house. They embraced and Nino invited Gennaro to join him for a second espresso. “You look nervous, my friend,” he said. “What troubles you?”

“It’s nothing,” said Gennaro. He poured a hot demitasse for his father and carried it upstairs to the study.

“Ciao, Papa,” he said brightly.

Giovanni looked up. “What is it?” he asked suspiciously. “It is early for a visit. We’ll see each other at the factory in a few minutes. Why are you here?”

Gennaro put the tiny cup on the desk and kissed his father, still handsome and distinguished-looking at 63. He hoped he would look as well when he reached his father’s age. His appearance would be important in his future work.

His father sat patiently, sipping coffee, waiting and watching him. Gennaro stared silently. The words he had practiced over and over stuck in his throat. His vocal cords weren’t working.

“Gennaro, speak, what is it? Are you sick?”

Gennaro wanted to shout the words but he heard himself whisper hoarsely, “Papa, I’m leaving for America in a few weeks.”

Giovanni’s reply was instant and volatile. “What, that foolish talk again? Act your age, Gennaro. You’re a man in his third decade. You want to leave a prosperous business that’s been in the family for generations to go play on the stage in America? You’re my only son, a family man with responsibilities, with duties to your parents and your family. In your country you are a respected gentleman, a businessman of worth. In

America you will be an immigrant, a starving actor with a hungry family, a *buffone*.”

Still hoarse and fighting back tears, Gennaro reasoned, “Papa. I’m sorry. I’m sorry, I must follow the dream I have had since childhood—to perform, to have my own theater company. It is in my blood. If I wait any longer it will be too late for me. It will be too late! My family won’t go hungry! The Italians in New York are starved for the opera and the theater they love, performed in their beloved language.”

Giovanni stood. “No, no, and no!” he insisted. “It is final. I won’t give you my permission or my blessing to go to a foreign land and play the fool before an audience.”

A long silence—could Gennaro proceed without his father’s blessing? Finally he rose to leave. “Goodbye, Papa,” he said quietly. For the first time, he left without kissing his father.

Gennaro ran blindly down the hill to his own house. His wife, Emilia, would support his dream. He pushed open the front door. The older children had gone to school. Good, they could talk. He raced to the bedroom and stopped short at a familiar sound. Emilia was retching over her new toilet with the gold pull-chain. It could mean only one thing: she was pregnant. Gennaro gently helped her to her feet and held her close. “Why didn’t you tell me?” he asked.

More tears, this time Emilia’s. “I didn’t want to spoil your dream, your plan,” she responded. “You can go without me, Gennaro. Take the older children. I will follow later with the little one and the new child.”

“Never mind that now,” Gennaro said. “Lie down and rest. We’ll talk later.” He walked to the wardrobe to pull out clothes suitable for the business day and dressed quickly.

What had he been thinking? Of course Papa was right. The words rang in Gennaro’s ears as he dressed for work. “You’re a family man with responsibilities.” The foolish dream was over. They were having another child. Emilia could not make the voyage while pregnant. It was already 1903. Later it would be too late. “I am a family man with responsibilities,” he repeated to himself as he left the house.

As he neared the family office building, he heard someone calling his name. "Gennaro, wait!" He turned to see Nino running toward him, calling breathlessly, "La Nonna wants to see you right away. Come now to your father's house. Come!"

Startled, Gennaro replied, "What is it, Nino? Is she ill?"

"Just come, come quickly," said Nino.

They walked briskly back to the family house. His beautiful grandmother was sitting in her room near the fireplace, where a lively fire was burning. She was always cold even though the winter chill was long past. He kissed her on both cheeks. She held him close and felt a warm tear fall on her hand. "Mio caro," she said soothingly, "your old friend Nino was listening this morning. He told me everything."

"Nonna, it's all right," he interrupted. "I'll get over it. I'm a family man. I have responsibilities."

"Hush," she said. "You must leave quickly, Gennaro,

as soon as you can book passage. Take the older children, at least Giovanni. You'll die of loneliness alone. Your mother and I will take care of your father, and we will look after your Emilia and the little ones. Your dream is not foolish, Gennaro. Your dream is good. The theater refreshes our souls, relieves our pain, makes us laugh, and teaches us lessons. The work you love is important. Follow your heart, my grandson."

Gennaro wiped his eyes and looked at his grandmother in disbelief, realizing what she had said. "Nonna, I can't take Gianni. He is only nine and he is at the top of his class. He is afraid the American boys will make fun of his poor English."

She chuckled. "Don't worry, Gennaro. His best subject is math, a universal language. He will excel in school and he will be a comfort to you. And your daughters? They are beautiful and gracious. Their new friends will be too awed to criticize them. They are young

and will learn a new language quickly."

There was an excited crowd at the dock to witness the departure of Gennaro and his older children for America, the land where dreams come true. Nearly everyone he knew was there: Nino and other childhood friends, his mother, grandmother, the servants—everyone except Giovanni, his father. Gennaro hugged his mother and the little one, then held Emilia close and looked deep into her eyes. "Take care, my dearest," he murmured. "I'll return for you soon. In the meantime, Nonna and my parents will be blessed to have you with them in their house."

She could not kiss him in this public setting but she kissed him with her eyes. "Even with the vast ocean between us,

there will be no distance between our hearts," she whispered.

Reluctantly he released his embrace. It was time to board. The children squealed their final goodbyes. Casting his

eyes across the crowd, Gennaro took one last look, hoping to see his father, and then waved at the well-wishers. Disappointed, he took the children by the hand and turned toward the ship. Once on board, they stood at the rail, waving back at the crowd one last time. All of his loved ones waved and shouted their good wishes in return.

The ship was preparing to pull away from the dock when he saw someone standing next to Emilia. Gennaro lifted his hand to shield his eyes and squinted against the glare. Papa? Yes, yes, it was Papa. Papa had come! His father was waving to Gennaro with one arm, holding the baby in the other! Looking up at him, Giovanni slowly raised his right hand and made the sign of the cross. Then he placed his fingers on his lips and held his palm up to him.

Gennaro's tears clouded his vision as he raised his own hand in acknowledgment of his father's blessing. He heard his grandmother's words, "Your dream is not foolish. Your dream is good." WT



Illustration by Betty Auchard

WRITERSTALK Challenge

What Is It?

Twice a year, in March and September, awards are given to contributors to *WritersTalk*. You need take no special steps to enter this competition; if your piece in one of the designated genres is published in *WritersTalk*, you are a contestant in the Challenge.*

Genres

Fiction
Memoir
Essay
Poetry

Judging Periods

February 16 through August 15
August 16 through February 15

Prizes

One winner will be selected from each of the eligible genres. Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$40.

Judging

Judging will be done by *WritersTalk* contributing editors and other Club members whom the contributing editors may ask to assist.

* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club; judges may not judge in any category in which they have an entry.

Grampa's Strawberries

Grampa's strawberries,
cut in precise pieces, quartered,
no, not drawn,
Grampa's strawberries lie neatly
in the sterile bowl
smiling tartly, waiting to be
sweetened by sugar and cream.

My brother, Grampa's little crewcut,
shifts impatiently
in his seat,
juices already flowing,
we await the fresh crush
of cold red,
smiles swallowed greedily
into our stomachs,
now pulp, darkened, gone.

—Jacqueline Mutz

Toothpaste Candy

by Betty Auchard

After my brother, sister, and I moved to the Home for the Friendless, I missed seeing my parents every day. I also missed sweet treats, which were allowed at the Home only on very special occasions.



Betty Auchard

Bobby, Patty, and I were used to getting a little sack of penny candy every Friday when Dad paid the grocery bill. Just looking at all those goodies made me drool. I would pretend to be a grownup as I sucked on candy cigarettes and sipped from little wax bottles of make-believe soda pop. I didn't care that the colored water wasn't fizzy as long as it was sweet.

At the Home, I could only fantasize about those goodie bags. One night I dreamed that I found a mountain of Tootsie Rolls. I scooped up way more than my dress pocket could hold, so I pulled up the bottom of my skirt and turned it into a bag to hold oodles of the yummy chocolate pieces. My flour-sack panties were showing, but did I care? No sirree.

I could hardly wait for my eighth birthday. Not only would there be cake with frosting, but I knew my wish would come true if I blew out all my candles with one breath. And that year I was going to wish for a candy bar.

When the special day finally arrived, I couldn't wait for dinner to be over. I was so dizzy with excitement that it was impossible to sit still. At last, the candles on my cake were fired up and the kids in the dining room bellowed the birthday song at me in whatever pitch came to mind.

I had planned to wish for a Hershey bar to plop right into my lap where no one else would see it. Then I thought about all the other candy bars I might have. *Should I wish instead for a Mars bar, a Clark Bar, or a Baby Ruth?*

Demands to "hurry up, make a wish" interrupted my thinking.

I squeezed my eyes shut extra tight and whispered, "I wish, I wish, I wish with all my might that a Clark Bar *and* a Baby

Ruth bar will land in my lap." *Will I feel two thumps on my kneecaps? Will it hurt? Maybe I won't feel anything because the candy will come out of the air.* I felt all jittery and nervous as I took a really deep breath and blew with all my might.

When I saw that I'd blown out every candle, I couldn't stop smiling. I sneaked my hands under the table to feel around for my birthday candy bars. *Nope, not there yet.* I began to worry that maybe I was being greedy asking for two instead of one, but it was too late to change my wish. I peeked under the table to see if anything was there, but my lap was still empty.

By the time a big slice of birthday cake was placed in front of me, I'd stopped checking my lap for candy bars. I was so disappointed that I hardly tasted the frosting on my cake. If wishes didn't come true on your birthday, maybe they never came true at all. I felt like crying. Then I got mad. Who cared about magic anyway? Not me, that's for sure. It was better to daydream about real things like the sacks of candy Dad used to bring home.

But that didn't keep me from thinking about those candy bars. And the more I thought about them, the more I wanted something sweet to eat. One night as I squeezed toothpaste onto my brush, I sang my favorite jingle:

You'll wonder where the yellow went
When you brush your teeth with Pepsodent.

I was so in love with the taste of Pepsodent that I always sucked all the goodness out of my toothbrush before I rinsed it. I didn't want to waste any of that minty taste because that was the flavor of candy. That night an idea popped into my mind. *Maybe I could make Pepsodent Lifesavers.*

The next day I tore the cardboard backing off my drawing tablet and squeezed little circles of toothpaste on top of it. They didn't look right, so I squeezed out little chunks of toothpaste instead. Chunks were a lot easier. I decided to call them "Lifesaver Holes." I found a hidden spot on top of the radiator and left my cardboard tray there so the Lifesaver Holes could bake. I peeked at the little chunks a few times

to see if anyone had tried to eat them while they were still raw. Each time I touched the homemade candies, they were still soft, so I left them in the secret place overnight.

By morning they were warm and as hard as a real mint. The cardboard was kind of hot and curled up at the edges, and the candy came unstuck really easy. I tasted one of the Lifesaver Holes and it was *goood*. I was thrilled with my invention and shared it with my friend Virginia. She got so excited that her eyes bugged out. She thought it was even more wonderful than I did.

I tried to calm her down, saying, "Virginia, this is a big secret."

"I know that. You don't hafta tell me," she replied.

Virginia was not only a blabbermouth, but a big fat liar because soon every girl in the dorm room wanted a taste of our toothpaste candy, and Virginia was getting all the credit for my invention. "We could make more and sell the candy to all the kids," she said.

What a dumb idea that was. I reminded her that none of us kids had any money.

"Then we can sell toothpaste candy to the people who work here," she suggested.

"Virginia, we'll get in trouble with Mrs. Stone 'cuz we might use up all the toothpaste."

"We'll just brush our teeth without toothpaste. No one will notice."

We made a few more batches of Lifesaver Holes, but didn't have enough to sell because the kids kept eating everything we made. One of the stick-in-the-muds said, "You're gonna have fits and die if you eat toothpaste!"

"It's not toothpaste," Virginia corrected her. "It's toothpaste *candy*."

"What's the difference?" one of the big girls asked.

"There's a *big* difference. Toothpaste is soft and our candy is hard. And you may not know this, but Lifesavers are made out of toothpaste." Virginia and I actually believed that.

In the end, we didn't stop making toothpaste candy because we got tired of brushing our teeth with plain water. We didn't stop because we got stomach

Continued on page 13

My Two Most Sought-After Dreams

by Clarence L. Hammonds

Dreams have different definitions; however, the one I like is expressed in one word: *imagine*. Therefore, I will forever keep my imagination in mind until my dreams are fulfilled. Here is the background of my first dream:

I was drafted to serve in the United States Army during the Second World War, in 1943. I was living in York, Pennsylvania, then but I moved with my family to Wilmington, Delaware. On February 6, 1944, I became a minister. The army took me to India and Tinian, and I received my Honorable Discharge in March 1946.

While I was stationed overseas, I kept a log of my travels, and using the log, I have written my memoirs. The title is: *My Decades of Endurance and Survival (Four Decades: the 20s, 30, 40s, and 50s)*. I spent more than three years completing it. I have made several contacts, but no success; however, I will keep on waiting and dreaming. So my first dream is getting my book published. It contains

115 pages and 18 chapters.

The above was written in 2000–2001. I now have an editor who is reading my manuscript. I am still hoping and waiting. It will be published soon, but I am still dreaming of seeing its completion.

There are many things in my lifetime that have been fulfilled. I do not think of these as dreams, because I knew they were going to happen. I saw them unfold. Here is what I mean: After I was discharged from the army, I married in 1948, and I knew I was going to be ordained the following week. In one way these events might have been dreams, but not completely. I began to pastor a church in 1952. I could not think of that as being a dream because I never wanted to pastor.

So I say I still have two dreams. My second dream is to publish a book of poetry. As of May 24, 2009, I have composed more than 1,057 poems. I have read some of my poetry at several events. I have written poetry that rhymes, sonnets, pantoums, ekphrasis, and Shakespearean sonnets. I write every day. Some of my poems appear in the following anthologies:

- *Chasing the Dawn*, International Library of Poetry, Owings Mills, MD (2000)
- *Clover Collection of Verse*, Washington, DC (1973)
- *Horizons*, Iliad Press, Sterling Heights, MI (2000)
- *Lyrical Voices*, Young Publications, Knoxville, TN (1979)
- *The Color of Life*, International Library of Poetry, Owings Mills, MD (2003)
- *The Strand Book of Modern Verse*, London (1973)
- *A Tapestry In Poetry*, Valley of Hearts Delight Writers, San Jose, CA (2005)

I would love to see an entire book of my poetry published. That would make me, as someone said to me, *shoutin' happy!* I am now 84 years old; I will be writing as long as I can.

The Greek word for *poem* is translated as *creation*. A poem is a dream set to words. I see poetry everywhere, and that is why I can write a poem a day if I desire.

These are my two most sought-after dreams. These are my goals. WT

Writing Without a Left Hand

Continued from page 7

The last name of a U. S. President that can be typed entirely with the right hand is Polk.

The name of a state that can be typed with the right hand is Ohio.

The name of a state capital is Honolulu.

The names of some chemical elements are holmium, nipponium (element 43 named by Masataka Ogawa), and polonium.

I found a sentence using only the right hand letters:

In July, oh my kill-joy Molly, I'll look in upon my jumpy polo pony up in hilly Honolulu. (Stuart Kidd).

I tried my hand at a free (very) verse poem:

Milky moon on Honolulu hill.
Jill
Nymph in pink kimono.
Phil
Hunk. No monk.

Pull uphill
Lollipop lip
Linkup
Union
Joy

Ok. Not so great. You guys try writing a poem using only right-hand keys. Right-handed keyboard words can include only the letters Y U I O P H J K L N M. I suppose you could cheat and use = for equal and – for dash, etc., but that could get a little tricky. Some word lists can be found online at rickwalton.com/wordplay/yuiophjk.htm and dimax.rutgers.edu/~apantel/words/right.txt.

A few longer right-hand only words I found (some are not in basic dictionaries, but I did look them *all* up) include the following nine-letter words: homophony, homophyly, monophony, nonillion, pollinium, polyphony, and polyonomy. Also included are hypophyll (“the cotyledonary hypophyll is the always bifacial basal part of the cotyledon”—whatever that

means), lupulinum, minikinly, okupukupu, philliloo (no, it's not a British bathroom in Philadelphia), philonium, polyonymy, and polyphyly.

Ten-letter words include plynlymmon (I thought this was a place in Wales) and polyphyly (as opposed to polyphyly with one L). Both words have to do with species and ancestors, but I am not well versed enough on the subject to define the terms.

Eleven-letter words: hypolimnion (water at a lake bottom) and kinnikinnik. (Yes, there really is such a thing. It's a preparation made from dried leaves, bark, and sometimes tobacco and smoked especially by certain Native American peoples—and no, I have not been smoking it.)

Twelve-letter words: hypophyllum and illuminopoly (some kind of game).

Thirteen-letter words: phyllophyllin.

The list goes on . . . and on, but I am tired. Maybe I should go try some of that kinnikinnik after all. WT

Young Writers Workshop

Continued from page 1

Francisco/Peninsula branch has sponsored a similar workshop, the last one four years ago. (I volunteered to help at that one, and was quite impressed with the response of presenters and kids.)

The Mt. Diablo branch has an annual writing contest for kids in lower grades, a quite different sort of event.

We learned a great deal about putting on an event like this. For instance, venues cost quite a lot for an eight-hour day and come with their own sets of complications and rules that could have made this a serious money-loser for SBW if young people didn't respond.

So we were most appreciative of Pastor Kim's offer of the church's meeting hall, and of Cathy Bauer's efforts in smoothing our way (and providing her famous brownies for lunch). We learned that, despite the \$20 registration fee we charged to require enough investment on the part of participants to be sure they were serious (and cover lunch), about a quarter of the kids registered

didn't show, so we could have raised the limit on number of registrants to perhaps 80. We learned that, despite their vaunted appetites, teenagers don't eat anywhere near as many Togo's sandwiches as we expected (leftovers went to the church's homeless program). I learned that, if we do this



again, I really need to get a date pinned down earlier so it doesn't fall at the beginning of the "dead week" before finals (thank you again, Reverend Kim).

I gained an interesting perspective on the response of school districts during my travels around the valley with our flyers. Two high school districts turned

us down flat on our offer to provide them, and two districts circulated my sample copy electronically so quickly that I didn't even have a chance to offer hard copies. Most were quite accepting. Parochial and private schools responded well, despite the workshop's being on graduation day for some.

It's delightful meeting bright kids like these and seeing their responses. When Jack Hasling invited each person to write a line, then pass it to a neighbor who would write the next line of rhyme, one table of four girls went all the way around the table, writing two complete four-line poems.

It was fun, it was rewarding, and there are lots of people to thank in addition to the presenters. My co-chair Marilyn Fahey did all the hard work, Dave LaRoche moderated the panel discussion, Richard Burns came along to help with the money, and several others helped, though I lost their names in the confusion. (Well, I was confused, quite a lot of the time.) Would I do it again? In a minute, and Marilyn says she would too. Join us and bring ideas! WT

Little Joys of Life

A '56 Ford Thunderbird, some juicy gossip overheard,
It's true I like the little joys of life.

A postcard from a good old friend, the ice cream shop in Willow Glen,
I savor all the little joys of life.

A laughing girl, her new white blouse, the lemon drops at Aunt Pearl's house,
And Mighty Mouse are little joys of life.

When annoying kids don't tug your sleeve, when stuffy guests get up to leave,
Sure, they count, too, as little joys of life.

Seems like distressful things sometimes surround me
And my Irish anger floods to almost drown me.

I hate a wad of gum on a nature trail, hate gobs and gobs of old junk mail,
Hate how my wayward uncle fresh from jail so quickly found me.
That first warm night in early June, a dance band playing a Miller tune,
And sleeping in till almost noon; they're all little joys of life.

A kind remark that I receive, a child's face on Christmas Eve;
Aren't they nice, the little joys of life?

Sometimes the people scoff, gee, how they ride me.
Sometimes my timing's awful and they chide me.
Sure, but when that perfect couplet rhymes, when the stirring climax climbs,
And my poem finally shines, that's when they'll dine me.

The giant moon that fills the sky, the diamonds sparkling in your eyes,
A king can't buy these little joys of life.
So with our fingers intertwined, let's hand in hand the pathway wind.
We'll stroll and find more little joys of life.

—Richard A. Burns

Equisetum

Shy horsetail rushes,
Dinosaurs found you owned the
land. And still you live.

—Jamie Miller

Redwoods, ancient, proud.
Shy below, like paint-splashed rocks,
Lichens form the earth.

—Jamie Miller

Summer Mosaic

To Spring's jeweled promise,
Summer responds—
Opalescent sunlight scatters
glittering diamonds,
Amethyst petals
grace turquoise ponds.

In an emerald forest,
a silver-tailed squirrel with
a ruby-red berry absconds.
From the crystal-crested shore,
a pearl-winged gull corresponds.
Summer's Golden-Tiled Mosaic
With a free-formed spirit bonds.

—Sally A. Milnor

Walking InCENTive

by Suzy Paluzzi

Writing is often solitary and sedentary. SBW member Rita St. Claire has made it her calling to have writers become more aware of the need to exercise.

I was already under doctor's orders to walk an hour a day in order to lose weight and stay healthy. The outdoors always has been my cure.

Sadly, I started getting dizzy spells and fell several times in just as many months. The diagnosis is an inner ear problem. Falling on the sidewalk can leave one quite injured and sore.

I became fearful of walking outdoors and by myself. The suggestion was made to get a walking partner and exercise indoors.

My neighbor asked me if I would like to join him on his daily rounds at the mall. One benefit is that the mall has more security. The second is that I now have a buddy who could phone for help if I fell again. And walking with my neighbor provides good company and pushes me out my door to keep our commitment.

My walking experience no longer involves appreciating the local flowers, but now I have a different motivation. My neighbor Sam looks for coins that have fallen on the floor in the mall. It keeps me occupied as I circle almost the same route twice.

Pennies are the coins we find most often. That's the contest that keeps me going! It brings out the child in me.

Happy Hunting! WT

Toothpaste Candy

Continued from page 10

cramps and diarrhea. We gave it up because making toothpaste candy was a lot of work—and it would never measure up to the Baby Ruth bars I dreamed about every night. WT

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The Home for the Friendless, where Toothpaste Candy was invented, was a 1930's version of a children's shelter where my brother, sister, and I lived for two years while our parents got their act together. We went there to live in 1937 when I was seven and a half years old. This story happened when I was eight.

Remembering Naomi

Dead at 39

It was an invitation like a hundred others
We'd laid out in press type, cutting out
The pictures from our files,
Only this time your name appeared,
Yours and the men on posters, those whose history
You authored as much as
Your own.

Invitation to a Memorial, it was to be a celebration
A defeat of the cancer and we knew who was to blame
They butchered your breasts
The Comrade said you danced to Cyndi Lauper
Only the day before the doctors came, then disappeared.
We cried.

"Don't mourn, organize!" we heard our Mother Jones through
The years. And we knew that when we sang the "Internationale"
You clapped your hands, held up your fist in the heavens.
How innocent we had been then of blood and gore.
Of lies.

Listen, Sister. I didn't know you well.
We marched the same march, sang the same songs,
Loved the same Class, hated the Other. Sometimes we were in step.

We knew we were right. We were. Kind of.
You, who could have been driving your Jaguar over the bridge
But Chose to march instead. You, whose scholar's arms grew men's
Muscles at the meatpacking company.
You grew thinner and thinner each day until
Even your pink tennis shoes said there's
No time.

Sister, I never knew you had so many friends. That your hair
Ever came to your waist, or was red. That you'd married twice,
That you left the Ivory Tower to come into the streets, that your
Body had become so hard, your breasts so soft, that your voice could
Lead us beyond
All graves.

—Victoria Ballard

Recession Comeback

Our high-tech hotbed lush with liberal comforters
yields yummy IPOs for intrepid investors.
Creeks, trails, roads and rails crease our gypsy sheets.
Pillows plumped by labor boost business that competes.
Our bed frame hewn from Valley Oak features PC art
recalling orchards, old adobes, and even tule barques.
Snug inside are tucked out young ones, minds unleashed,
counting on wellness, literacy, promise, and peace.
Outside, worrisome weathers spawned by nature and man
spin droughts, firestorms, job losses and stimulus plans.
We adjust. We retrain. We aim to get ahead.
We innovate together while we remake our bed.

—Clysta Seney McLemore

Directory of Experts

Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? If you are willing to share your expertise, send a message to networking@southbaywriters.com or to the club post office box. We will add your listing to our directory of experts.

Asia, Japan, China, Russia

Bill Belew
belew@panasianbiz.com

Astrology, Singing

Sara Aurich
saraaurich@comcast.net

Astronomy, History of Astronomy

Bob Garfinkle
ragarf@earthlink.net

Character Development

ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.
ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net

Character Traits

Jeannine Vegh, M.A. M.F.T.I.
ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net

Computer Dingus and

Full-Time Nerd

Jeremy Osborne
jeremy_w_osborne@yahoo.com

Counseling

Dr. Audry L. Lynch
GLYNCH7003@sbcglobal.net

Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace

Jerry Mulenburg
geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net

Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up

Martha Engber
marthaengber.com
marthaengber.blogspot.com

Hiking, Backpacking, Scuba, Bicycling, Classic Cars, Running

Rick Deutsch
MrHalfDome@gmail.com; 408-888-4752

Hospital and Nursing Environment

Maureen Griswold
maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net

Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/ Psychology

Dave Breithaupt
dlbmlb@comcast.net

Library Science

Molly Westmoreland
mulcarend@hotmail.com

Marketing and Management

Suzy Paluzzi, MBA
jomarch06@yahoo.com

Mathematics: Teaching and History; Fibonacci Sequence

Marjorie Johnson
Marjohnson89@earthlink.net

Philosophy, Religion, Evolution, Construction, Crafts, Norse

Darwin Mathison
darwinunioncity@aol.com
510-471-8944

Police Procedures

John Howsden
jwhowsden961@yahoo.com

Profile Writing

Susan Mueller
susan_mueller@yahoo.com

Real Estate, Horses, Remodeling, Southwest History

Reed Stevens
reedstevens@earthlink.net ; 408-374-1591

Teaching and the Arts

Betty Auchard
Btauchard@aol.com

Television Production

Woody Horn
408-266-7040

USMC and NASA/Ames

Terry DeHart
tdehart@earthlink.net

Book Publishing 1-2-3: From the Writer's Fingers to the Reader's Hands

Are you a writer? Do you want to get published? Join us for a “behind the scenes” glimpse at how a manuscript becomes a printed book, including the major steps within a publishing house (acquisitions, editorial, and production).

Laurie Gibson, a freelance editor since 1997, who has edited and proofread more than 175 fiction and nonfiction manuscripts, will describe the process and share some practical, proven tips to help writers improve their chances of getting published, including ideas for finding and connecting with literary agents, editors and publishers.

When: Saturday July 11th 3:00–4:00 pm
Where: Campbell Public Library
Who: Everyone is welcome

For more information please contact the Campbell Library Adult Reference Desk, 408-866-1991

Campbell Library
77 Harrison Avenue
Campbell, CA 95008

CWC

Around the Bay

These are the published meeting times and locations for the other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you're thinking about attending one of their meetings, be sure to check the website first for details.

Berkeley: Meetings are held from 10 a.m. to noon on the third Saturday of each month, except for July and August. Unless otherwise noted, our meetings are held at Barnes & Noble bookstore, in Jack London Square, Event Loft, Oakland.

berkeleywritersclub.org

San Francisco/Peninsula: Meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at the Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. sfpeninsulawriters.com

Central Coast: Meets on the third Tuesday of each month except December at the Casa Munras Hotel, 700 Munras Avenue, Monterey. The dinner hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. centralcoastwriters.org

Mount Diablo: Meets the second Saturday of each month, except July and August, at 11:30 a.m. at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette (corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Highway 24). mtdiablowriters.org

Tri-Valley: Meets the third Saturday of each month, except July and August, at 11:30 a.m. at the Oasis Grille, 780 Main Street, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.com

Sacramento: Meets at 11:00 a.m. the third Saturday of every month, except July and August, at Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento 95815. sacramento-writers.org

Marin: Meets on the fourth Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. at Book Passage in Corte Madera. cwcmarinwriters.com

Redwood: Meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month (except for holiday weekends), from 3-5 p.m. at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. redwoodwriters.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>JULY 2009</h1>			1 7P Board Meeting LaRoche residence	2	3 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza, San Jose	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 7:30P Open Mic Borders Books Santana Row, San Jose	11 10:30A Editors' Powwow
12	13	14	15 7P Open Mic Barnes & Noble 3900 Mowry, Fremont WritersTalk deadline	16	17 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	18
19 3P Annual SBW BBQ Home of Edie Matthews	20	21	22	23	24 7:30P Open Mic Borders Books Sunnyvale	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
		August 11 6P Monthly Meeting				Future Flashes

Stay Informed!

Sign up for the SBW Email List to receive meeting and event announcements.

www.southbaywriters.com

South Bay Writers Open Mic

Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. See calendar for schedule.

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

For Fremont Open Mic contact
Jeannine Vegh
ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net

or

Bob Garfinkle
ragarf@earthlink.net

SBW Poets

The San Jose Poetry Center is turning its eyes toward SBW with an interest in showcasing our poets at its monthly readings. PCSJ's host and member of South Bay Writers Linda Lappin is making a personal request. Are you a poet? Would you like to read your work? If your answer is yes, contact Linda by email at captainlappin@netzero.net and have a look at PCSJ's website, www.pcsj.org

South Bay Writers Anthology



\$12.50 + 9.25% sales tax
At the meeting.
On the website.
southbaywriters.com

San Jose Poetry Slam (Est. 1998)

8:00 p.m., \$6.00

First Tuesday: Open Mic with music by Rebelskamp

Second and Fourth Tuesdays: Poetry Slam with music by Jay Rush

Third Tuesday: Head-to-Head Poetry Bouts with special guests.

At The Britannia Arms
173 W Santa Clara
Downtown San Jose
www.sanjosepoetryslam.com

Poetry Center San Jose Readings

First Gallery downtown
Willow Glen Books

Cosponsored by the
Creative Writing Department at
San José State University

Free admission.

See www.pcsj.org for featured guests and details.



California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
P.O. Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055
www.southbaywriters.com

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

No Monthly Meeting in July

Alternate activity:

Annual SBW Barbecue

Sunday, July 19, 3:00 p.m.

See front cover for details

Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any.

—Orson Scott Card

