



Volume 19 Number 3 March 2011

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

March Speaker - Nora Profit

Clearing Our Brains: Easing readers' paths to emotional access

By Colin Seymour

While we're organizing our finances this month, Nora Profit is going to help us organize our synapses.

Profit will present an overview of creative writing at the March 8 SBW dinner

meeting. That's a complicated feat for the hour we've allotted, but she expects to achieve it by teaching us how to address these two questions:

"What do I want the reader to Think? How do I want the reader to Feel?"

The T/F Principle, she calls it. It will give us "the foundation to emotionally access the reader.

"We don't really read; we see pictures and hear the words," Profit explains, and they "become an emotional image in our heads."

Profit will implant those themes in our heads and then help us sort them.

"It's the emotional content that keeps us in a story,"

Profit says. "Everything has an emotional component. The trick for a writer is to write in such a way that you create an emotional response in the reader.

"There are certain principles that go along with creating an emotional response. *continued on page 8*

Shoes for Memories

by G Wayne

It was a crisp January morning, and it was Saturday. I got up early just to enjoy more of my day off. With my thermos-cup filled with hot coffee, I jumped into the car and headed out to – with no purpose, just to enjoy a drive. The morning sun was bright in its cloudless blue sky as I motored off into my weekend fantasy. It felt good to be on the move to no particular place, without the need for any arrival time. I passed the houses and the stores and a man dancing on the sidewalk while twirling a sign that advertised a tax preparation service. He was dressed like the Statue of Liberty, even his face was painted verdigris green. I was taken aback at how happy and eager the man appeared, preforming a task that seems to me less

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The Land That Disney Forgot A Writing Exercise about Setting from the February Monthly Meeting

By Luanne Oleas

I once stayed in Wellcross Grange, a brick manor house, partially covered in ivy, in West Sussex. England itself was a novelty to me, less a foreign country and more like a part of Disneyland. It was as if the American theme park had purchased the whole country, complete antiquated buildings and twisting, narrow roads. In a stroke of genius, the corporate execs then hired all the citizens with their lovely accents to keep the place tidy.

The second story window of Wellcross – the one with the best view – looked out over the cricket pitch and beyond that the duck pond that froze in winter for ice skating. A row of trees behind the pond hid the main road that *continued on page 4*

No Time for Blogging

by Rik Scott

No time to blog, I'm writing. That's an interesting idea. What about: No time to write, I'm blogging?

For most of us the first statement, whether it is true or not, is more creditable, more comfortable. We should have no time for anything but our official writing goals. Right? Perhaps. But maybe this is a good time to take a look at our goals, do a little reevaluation.

Blogging is writing, friends. Well, continued on page 4



Interviewing Well

by Lisa Eckstein

The February 8 South Bay Writers meeting featured club member Clare Mullin, who offered advice on creating a successful interview. Mullin hosts two interview programs on local public-access television station KMVT 15, so she knows all about how to make people comfortable in an interview situation.

Public speaking hasn't always been comfortable for Mullin. Twenty years ago, she sustained a traumatic brain injury in a freak accident, and she had to relearn how to speak. As part of that process, she joined Toastmasters. "If I hadn't joined Toastmasters seven years ago, I never would have the courage to be on television," Mullin says. "That's where I learned the communication skills I use on my shows." Curiosity about TV show production led to her getting involved with the community television station and eventually starting her own shows, Visions Unlimited and Colorful Journeys of Success.

Mullin believes that "everybody has a story," and her role as interview host is to make it easy for her guests to tell their stories. Before an interview begins, she helps guests loosen up by telling jokes, charming them with hand puppets and toys, or leading them through stretching exercises and deep breathing.

Club Vice-President Colin Seymour joined the presentation from time to time to add a reporter's perspective on interviewing. He pointed out that Mullin's relaxation techniques are just as effective in any situation where you're trying to get information out of someone, or whenever you're called upon to speak publicly.

Mullin prepares for interviews by coming up with a series of keywords or triggers that she'll use to guide guests into the thoughts they want to express and to bring out their expertise. When you're the one in the guest seat for a media appearance, be sure to notify the host in advance on what you wish to talk about.

As a guest, keep in mind that the goal of a media interview is to inform whoever is watching or listening, and focus on the aspects of your story that will fit into a show's theme and appeal to the particular audience. "Be entertaining, exciting, and educational," Mullin says. Stay aware of time constraints and keep moving through your outline. It can be challenging not to ramble if you're nervous, but fortunately, a good interview host such as Mullin will steer you back to the topic.

Seymour told the club about his experience being interviewed on one of Mullin's shows: "Clare was in control, but I did all the talking. It was much less nerve-wracking than sitting in this room in front of everyone. Compared to this, it was a walk in the park." He reminded us that "when you're faced with being interviewed, you have to put your thoughts in order in a different way than when you're sitting at your desk writing."

Mullin shared insider tips on how to behave in front of a camera. For one thing, never look at the camera during an interview. Instead, address the interviewer, or speak toward the audience if there is one. When promoting a book, bring it along to display. Hold it up for a count of ten so that the camera has time to focus, prop it against the table or your arm so that it doesn't wobble, and point it slightly down to reduce glare from the lights in the studio.

Since Mullin's experience is in traditional media, she asked Nina Amir to say a few words about online opportunities. There are a large number of internet radio shows and podcasts on many topics, and they are often seeking guests. Search for relevant subject areas to find appropriate venues. These interviews are convenient because you'll participate from your own home by phone. In Amir's experience, the hosts ask you the questions you want to be asked, so you can script your answers in advance, but she recommends trying to speak conversationally rather than reading a script. And there's always a chance that your questions won't be used, so be prepared.

After this meeting, we should all be ready to give successful interviews to promote our books, and some of us may be considering becoming interview hosts ourselves! WT

Setting Exercise #2 Magic Playground by Valerie Lee

It never ceases to amaze me just how little it takes to make a child happy until you see them on the playground.

I pick up my grandson, Matthew, every day to take him to his after-school Mandarin class, so I was not surprised to see how sad and forlorn he was when he saw me near the school office where we usually meet. But this time I said, "Today I'm also here to get your brother, so you can enjoy yourself for a while. He should be at least half an hour."

Suddenly his face changed, his eyes sparkled with delight, and he grinned from ear to ear while he turned to search for one of his friends. He saw Brian, dropped his backpack in front of me, and off he went, so quickly that he disappeared around the building. It was a good thing I remembered he had worn a grey tee shirt.

I headed toward the school playground to look for him. Parents were milling around talking to each other while others were watching the younger ones. Children of all ages were running around happily on this sawdust barked playground. There were bright orange and blue apparatus (playground equipment) which permitted them to get on ladders, layers of boxes to weave their way through different levels, areas to stand to wait in turn to use the slide, steps to climb up and down, and ropes to hang on and swing from or jump on to get even higher.

Then I saw Matthew on top of the jungle gym and he was pretty high up. I was tempted to yell for him to be careful but stopped, thinking I might distract him and he could lose his balance. With the hot sun behind him shining brightly and other children dressed in different colors enjoying themselves as well, I couldn't help but smile, for I could see that they were doing what they all liked best: playing together. Matthew laughed heartily at his friend and as they crawled down, he gave chase and he was all smiles.

Yes, regardless of all else, this was their magical playground where they could all be themselves, have fun, and burn off some of their energy, at least for a little while. WT

SAGE ADVICE - What's the point?

by Betty Auchard, retired Art Teacher

As an illustrator I want to make a point, engage the viewer, and cause a lasting emotional response. In order to do that I must know ahead of time what action the drawing will describe, what purpose it serves, and what message the art will convey. If there's no focal point and too many distracting shapes or lines, the viewer will be confused and wonder what the drawing is about.

As a writer, I must do the same. I ask myself this question: what's the point of this article? What's the message I want to convey? If I throw something else in here about daydreaming or doodling on the keyboard, the reader will get sidetracked. So, naturally, I'll drop that subject in a hurry and get back to the subject at hand which is this: "what's my point? What do I want to say? If I don't know, neither will the reader.

This little trick might help. Whatever idea you start with at the beginning of your story, support it at the end with a reference that makes the reader say, "Oh yeah. I get it." Your summary comment will remind the reader. Anything in the middle of the story or article that is off the point can be deleted. So, think of your "point" as bookends that hold the paragraphs together. WT

South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10 At the meeting. On the website. southbaywriters.com

View from the board

By Sylvia Halloran

Six of us — president Bill Baldwin, vicepresident Colin Seymour, treasurer Richard Burns, secretary Sylvia Halloran, membership chair Marge Johnson, and hospitality chair Danita Craft met in Campbell Wednesday night, February 1. Officers' reports had been emailed to board members prior to the meeting. Main topics were the upcoming summer retreat, members' newsletter participation, established club policies regarding disruptive influences, and General Meeting possibilities.

Motions included:

- Approval of 1/5/10 minutes. (Johnson/Burns)
- Approval to commit funds for

deposit of up to \$3700 for a retreat at UCCR Westminster from September 1-4, 2011. (Craft/Seymour)

Voting is proceeding for the Matthews-Baldwin Award Recipient. The award will be presented in March to a member who has shown outstanding special service to the club over the year.

Writers' Talk needs more member submissions. Deadline for publication is the fifteenth of each month.

Plans for growth strategies, upcoming speakers, workshops and retreats were also discussed.

We adjourned two hours later, not counting the conversations in the parking lot... WT

Directory of Experts

Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? Send a message to networking@ southbaywriters.com or to the club post office box and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.

Asia, Japan, China, Russia, Blogging Bill Belew wcbelew@gmail.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

Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace Jerry Mulenburg geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net

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

Knitting, Harp Danita Craft blue2eternity@me.com

Teaching and the Arts Betty Auchard Btauchard@aol.com

Music, Art, Graphics Benjamin Belew mephistoape@hotmail.com

I am an expert too, in... Your Name Your email address

No Time for Blogging

continued from page 1 for most people, anyway. One blogger I follow does very little "writing", but has a very entertaining blog. He draws cartoons on Post-It notes and publishes them.

Sorry for the distraction. Let me say it again: Blogging is writing. Actually, it's more than just writing. It is also a major part of your Author's Platform. Why a blog? Isn't the website you built to advertise your novel good enough? Perhaps it would be if you were a Stephen King or Robert Ludlum. But run the numbers. How many visits have you had on your author's website, or the site for your book? Are you getting hundreds of visits a day? Thousands? I'm guessing the actual hit-rate is relatively small.

On the other hand, a blog can be driven to very high numbers, and those would be daily, not monthly or yearly hits.

Frankly, if you're not working daily on a full platform, the chances of your novel, non-fiction book, short story or poem ever going anywhere are severely reduced. Your platform, which is made up of your writing, your author's website, a website specifically for your novel (for instance), a blog, your speaking engagements, social networking and any other public function that you can use as a publicity point, are, these days, how you get the word out about your writing.

We cannot afford to ignore this. We simply cannot.

Gone are the days when a breakout novelist will be wined, dined, and flown coast to coast for TV appearances, radio interviews, cocktail parties and gala book signings. No, friends, that money is held back for people with a strong track record, writers who are already making big bucks for the publishers.

Bottom line? Blog. No, really. Blogging is a way to get the word out. It is a way to prove to an agent or a publisher that you can capture an audience. That you can gather readers, and when the time comes, that you can drive sales for your book.

Blogging doesn't have to be a backbreaking, all-encompassing passion to be effective, but it does take some work. There is no end to resources to help you get started, to help keep you motivated, and to help answer those burning questions, like how, where, and when you should be blogging?

Isn't it time that you, as a writer, get your new blog started, or get your old one moving along the proper path? Look around. The resources are available. Make it happen.

WT

Richard Scott blogs about writing at: UphillWriting.org

The Future of Publishing

by Ransom Stephens

Part 1: "Better than anyone but not as good as everyone" focuses on book development and acquisition, here's the link: http://indiereader.com/2011/02/ the-future-of-publishing-part-1-of-3/

Part 2: "Modernization puts an end to the vanity press and rescues booksellers" which is about the evolving state of self-publishing, title-positioning and business practices. http://indiereader. com/2011/02/the-future-of-publishingpart-2-of-3-2/

And, just released,

Part 3: "The next big move in publishing will be geographical" presents the inimitable strengths of the legacy publishing industry and what that might mean given that more books will be published in Silicon Valley in the next 12 months than have been published in New York City in the last 12 years. http://indiereader.com/2011/01/thefuture-of-publishing-part-3-of-3/ WT

Disney Forgot

continued from page 1

snaked through the countryside. That thoroughfare was alive with the interrupted purr of the manual shift engines in tiny cars with donut-sized tires. Off to the right of that spectacular view, on the far side of a little clapboard house called the "Home Cottage," there lay a long grass airstrip. It had a majestic old elm tree at one edge near the midpoint of the runway. There was a pronounced rise in the center of the strip, impossible to detect by approaching planes. That slight curvature caught all but the most experienced pilots offguard.

"Keeps the riff-raff out," one flyboy told me between puffs on his pipe. A blue metal hangar sat at one end of the grass strip. Keeping vigil beside it flapped a dusty yellow windsock on the tall pole. That steady wind indica-



tor had been stolen from a local theme park. When the wind filled it, bold, black letters of a single word graced one side and captured my feelings exactly: "WONDERLAND" WT

South Bay Writers Presents: A Workshop Led by

The

Margaret Lucke



The Long and Short of Writing Great Fiction

- > Do you want to write a novel?
- > Do you prefer short stories?
- > What defines a great story, and how do you craft one?
- > What, besides length, are the differences between short stories and novels?

Discover the answers to these questions at this workshop.

Explore the challenges and rewards of writing both long and short fiction from the first inspiration to the final polished draft. Margaret Lucke will give you tips, tricks, and techniques for artfully weaving characters, plot, and setting into a strong and compelling story. Whether you are new to fiction writing or have lots of writing experience, you'll receive encouragement and practical help as well as useful tips and strategies.

About the presenter:

Margaret Lucke is a writer and editorial consultant. Her novel, *A Relative Stranger*, was nominated for an Anthony Award for Best First Mystery. She has published more than 60 short stories, feature articles, and book reviews, along with two how-to books on writing, *Writing Mysteries* and *Schaum's Quick Guide to Writing Great Short Stories*. She teaches fiction writing classes for University of California, Berkeley Extension and other venues. www.margaretlucke.com.

March 19, 2011 9:30 am - 3:00 pm Lookout Restaurant 605 Macara Ave. Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Registration @ 9:00; workshop begins promptly at 9:30; continental breakfast and lunch included.

Students w/ID (up to age 25), anytime \$25 Early Bird (before March 5, 2011) CWC members: \$35 Non-members: \$45 After March 5 and at the door CWC members: \$45 Non-members: \$45 Non-members: \$55 Cancellation Policy: \$5 fee through midnight 2/12; \$15 fee 2/12 through midnight 3/12; no refunds after midnight 3/12.

South Bay Writers is a non-profit 501c3

Register and pay by credit card (Paypal) at www.southbaywriters.com

•	o: SBW Workshops, PO Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055. South Bay Writers (South Bay Writers is a non-profit 501c3) CWC branch (if applicable)						
Check Payable to: South Bay Writers	8	(South Bay Writers is a non-profit 501c3)					
Name:	CWC branch (if applicable)						
Address:	City, State, Zip:						
Phone #:	Email	Amount Enclosed:					
Early Bird (before 3/5)	Regular Registration (after 3/5)	Student Registration					

Building Author Platform by Pitching Yourself to the Media

by Nina Amir

One of the ways to build author platform involves pitching yourself and your expertise to the media. This means offering them solid, interesting, pertinent, newsworthy, unique information they need or want.

How do you know what type of stories journalists seek? Easy. Tap into the places they post their queries. In other words, discover what stories they are writing for which they need expert sources to interview. Then, offer to be that expert source.

Here are three ways to tap into reporter's needs and wants – along with millions of other people wanting the free publicity offered by being included in an article or invited onto a radio or television show.

First, subscribe to Help A Reporter Out. This free service sends you an email three times a day – yes, three times-filled with queries on a variety of topics from journalists. You can then answer those queries with a pitch. Help a Report Out, which is known as HARO, is provided by Peter Shankman. Second, subscribe to PitchRate.com. This free service also offers you the chance to view a variety of queries from journalists. You also can customize it so you see those requests that pertain to your area of expertise. PitchRate.com is provided by Drew Gerber, one of my guest bloggers.

Third, subscribe to Bill and Steve Harrison's Reporter Connection, another free service providing you with journalists requests for experts on a variety of topics.

If you subscribe to all three of these services, check the listings each day when they arrive in your email box, and then send pitches to the appropriate queries in a timely manner (Immediately!). If you do so, you will be taking a daily step toward building your author's platform. If your author's media kit and pitch are both top notch, you should be getting a positive response-which means media coverage. And each print, radio or television spot you receive builds that platform. (If you need information on how to create a better media kit, click here, or a pitch, click here.) WT

Nina Amir, Your Inspiration-to-Creation Coach, inspires writers to create the results they desire – published products and careers as writers and authors. Her blogs also appear at www.vibrantnation.com and www. redroom.com. Find out more about Nina's services and how to Achieve More Inspired Result at CopyWright Communications.

Book Review

by Chuck Peradotto

My Reading Life By Pat Conroy Published by Nan. A. Talase/Doubleday 2010 333 Pages. \$25.00 ISBN 978-0-385-53357-7

If you are a fan of Pat Conroy and a fledging writer, then you are in for a double treat. My Reading Life is not only an example of his eloquent prose, but it gives us a glimpse into how he came to this point in his writing life. It is basically a book about what makes Pat Conroy tick and why in his own words. Pat, the author of a number of widely acclaimed popular novels including The Great Santini, The Lords of Discipline, The Prince of Tides, and Beach Music, gives the reader a rare peek into where his tales come from and how they are developed.

Born in 1945 in Atlanta, Georgia, he talks about his younger life growing up on a succession of military bases. He deeply loves his mother, Peggy, who from early on encouraged his reading and not only guided his selections but participated in the experience as well. Pat examines the serious issues he had with his macho Marine Corps fighter pilot father, Donald Conroy, and how that impacted his writing.

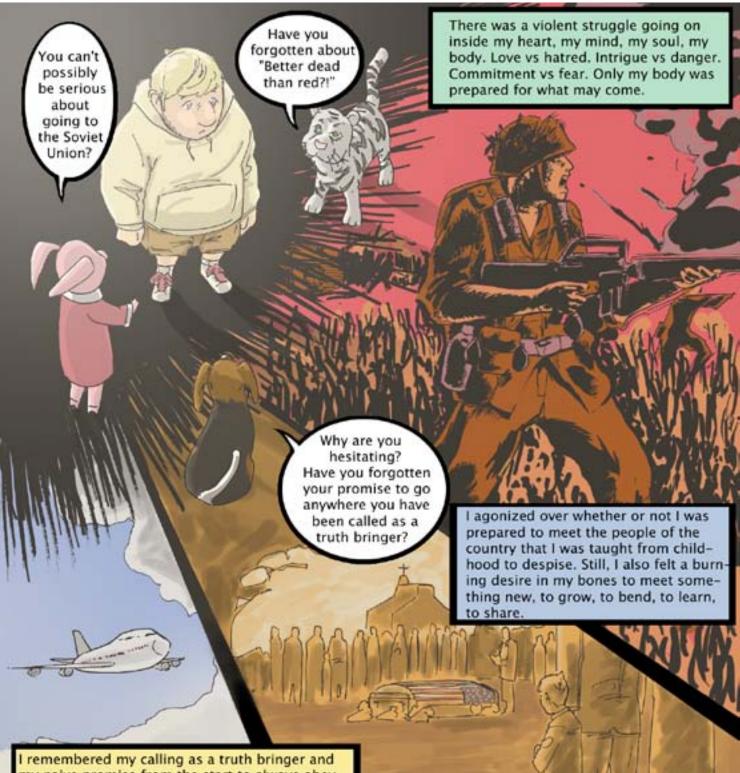
Conroy talks of his constant search for just that right word, phrase or idea to elevate his writing and the reader's experience as far above the ordinary as possible. He developed a passion for recording his observations of characters, scenes, scraps of conversations and glimpses of life in notebooks. Then later, when he needed a thought starter or just that perfect item or word, they were there to guide him.

He delves into his relationships with some of the many people who influenced his writing life: The quirky and cantankerous librarian Eileen Hunter, who he secretly provided liquid "cold" medicine in order to protect her image. The owner of the Old New York Book Shop in Atlanta named Cliff Graubart, who was standoffish at first then warmed to Conroy and helped expand the writer's interest to include finding, collecting and "owning" books. The Beaufort High School English teacher Gene Norris, who became a lifelong friend. Norman Berg, the book rep who taught Pat the ins and outs of the book business using the hands-on approach. American poet and author of Deliverance James Dickey who became Conroy's hero and a later teacher and mentor.

Pat Conroy was mesmerized by Gone with the Wind. He dissects it and gives his views on why it is a great novel and was so well received in the South. Scarlett and Rhett come to life again through his eyes. Pat does the same with the other novel that had a major influence on his career, Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece, War and Peace. Conroy tells us of his fixation with Thomas Wolfe who he credits with greatly influencing his stories. He keeps poetry on his desk and uses it to this day to jump start his own prose.

This book, although short, is bursting at the seams with usable content and could be used as a primer for aspiring writers. WT





I remembered my calling as a truth bringer and my naive promise from the start to always obey no matter what. I was ashamed for having hesitated even a moment. I knew what I should do, what I wanted to do. Nothing was more important to me than to be faithful to the Truth Giver. When the Russian consulate in Niigata overlooked my previous encounter with the KGB and the fact that I had served in Navy intelligence, I had more than enough reassurance that I should go. Soon, I was on my way not knowing that even deeper internal and external struggles awaited me.

STORY BY WCB, ART BY BB

episode #3: The Decision

dventures o

Clearing Our Brains: Easing readers paths continued from page 1

You have to get out of the writer's seat and into the reader's seat, and that's difficult for writers to do. It's completely different from the ways traditional books and speakers are taught to write."

She teaches writing at her own institute, The Writing Loft, in Paradise, near Chico, where she moved during the past decade after having lived and worked in San Jose for about 30 years. Many of her students arrive "unable to narrow down what the issue really is."

She's always been a whiz at boiling things down, and that's why she is one of the most prominent presenters on our literary circuit. Many plaudits have emanated from her highly praised appearances at two retreats in our midst last year, one of which SBW sponsored.

She says she has always been able to "take complex theories or ideas and really distill them down to a sentence. That's what I do."

And that's what she teaches others to do.

She does it with a storehouse of axioms at the ready. "That's where the 'Nora-isms' come in," she says. "I have one of those for every single thing."

What's a Nora-ism? "One of them is the 'so-what factor.' Writers often will tell more information than you need to know. Writers think, 'They're not going to be able to get this until they get that.'

"You say it's important, but I say 'so what?' If it doesn't work to help to prove your point, you need to leave it out."

In addition to Nora-isms, there will be exercises. In one, she'll show us how changing one verb gives the reader a completely different picture, helping us bear in mind that "the reader has to be able to read between the lines."

And so does the writer. "We always have more information in our heads than you can ever put down. The information trips up the writer. I have a specific mechanism whereby you'll never get lost."

Profit has many presentation strengths – character, plot and the like. She'll even be teaching non-fiction writers how to build platform March 26 (all day) in Carmel.

But it's the T/F principle that seems to cover the scene-crafting I suspected SBW wanted above all at some point this year, and maybe it covers a lot more.

Profit fleshes out editing issues that some writers suspect satisfy critics instead of readers, but she'll disabuse us of that notion.

"You're 100 percent doing it for the readers," she says. "But believe it or not, the reader is the critic. If they don't pay the \$25 for the book, it doesn't matter what it says."

If that's a Nora-ism, bring 'em on. WT

Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

It was inspiring to see my fellow writers at the February CWC South Bay meeting and to hear all the interesting things going on in the writing world, be it blogging, e-book publishing, writing the next Great American Novel or interviewing interesting people on public television as a venue to "get your book out there." Much of a book's success is dependent upon promotion and marketing, something the author gets to do. Several of our members are out there doing just that: networking, teaching, blogging, etc, and finding ways to get their work out there and noticed.

Nina Amir, WT contributing editor as well as blogger, is teaching online classes for San Francisco Writers University. She was also a guest speaker at the San Francisco Writers Conference on February 20th, sharing her expertise on How to Blog a Book.

Betty Auchard, author of Dancing in My Nightgown and The Home for the Friendless, will be speaking at the San Francisco Peninsula CWC branch (Belmont Public Library) on March 19 at 11 am. She will also be one of the presenters at Wild Mind Writer Retreat in Half Moon Bay on April 15 - 17. Register at www.wildmindwriterpresents.vpweb. com.

Bob Balmanno, author of September Snow and Runes of Iona, will be a workshop leader and novel panelist on Dystopian Fiction at the 6th annual Gold Rush Writers Conference April 29-May 1. For more information, check out www.goldrushwriters.com.

Bill Belew, WT managing editor and blogger, received 750,000 hits online at his various blog sites February 1-7. He

will also be a speaker at the All India Writers Conference in Damoh, India in March and the Asian Publishing Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in July.

Belo Cipriani will see his book Blind: A Memoir published by Wheatmark of Arizona in April. He noted it was very helpful to attend the Pitch Workshop in January – there he received some query letter tips, talked with two New York agents and found his publisher. To find out more, go to blindamemoir.com.

Donna Fujimoto is doing book reviews of children's books. See her book reviews on the blog: Books for Christian Kids.

Steve Wetlesen received a request for a poetic commission for an upcoming June wedding. Keep those commissioned poems coming, Steve!

Be sure and attend South Bay Writers monthly meetings. It is a wonderful way to meet other writers who share your passion for the written word. And don't forget to send your writing successes to Jackie Mutz at accolades@ southbaywriters.com. WT



Shoes for Memories

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desirable than: sitting on a hot stove, eating broken glass, treating stuffed-up sinuses with explosives, or shaving with a chainsaw, a Cuisinart, a jackhammer, or a bench grinder.

Driving on, I noticed a homemade cardboard sign attached to a lamppost. It was bordered with metallic fringe that sparkled brightly in the breeze. This sign selfishly stole my attention and announced in big, unevenly printed block letters, "YARD SALE TODAY". I was annoyed at this interruption in my almost perfect day and quickly decided to stop thinking about it. I drove on, still caught in the novelty of a day with no responsibilities. My mind wandered from thought to thought as I drove, and that darn yard sale sign kept popping up. Then memories of the great deals I had found at yard sales in the past began to play in my mind. Before I was aware, the Siren had attached herself to my soul and the sweet, irresistible song of the sea nymphs beckoned me beyond my control to be dashed on the rocks of yard sale. I quickly found the next safe spot to make a U-turn and headed back while feeling the glow of great expectations for my new muse. It was not hard to tell which house was having the sale, only one had the front lawn covered with blankets where things of all nature had been placed. Although it was still early and yard sale primetime would not happen for a while, there were still plenty of other bargain hunters and we carefully ignored each other, adhering to the unspoken yard sale hunter's code. I walked up the driveway, cautiously surveying the litter, searching for that coveted prize. The thing that I did not know until the moment I saw it. I could not live without. Of course, it must be purchased for far less than its true value. The cheaper the better is my motto, and I consider my haggling skill is a force to be reckoned with. In the garage there were makeshift tables made of planks on top of sawhorses. I quickly glanced over a collection of

ceramic poodles and then commemorative plates set up on risers like a choir, to an item that stood out in contrast. A pair of old shoes rested toward the back of one table. The leather was scuffed and cracked and they were very unremarkable outside of the large metal cleats mounted on their toes and heels. Next to the shoes was a pair of spats, once clean and white, now yellowed by the passage of many years. I began to fantasize who the person was that once wore those shoes. It looked as if they were made for a professional and the yellowed spats suggested an era that had passed by long ago. My mind's eye could see a brightly lit stage. On it was a man tap-dancing to the sound of a full band. In one hand, he held a straw hat with a wide red band circling its crown and in the other, a straight, black tipped white cane. He wore a blue-tinged white seersucker suit with vertical red pinstripes that made those spats seem to glow in the dark. I could see his radiant smile beaming out over the audience as he proudly strutted across the stage. I picked up one of the shoes to inspect it when a voice called out from beside me.

"See anything you like?" Startled, I looked around to see an old man with wispy silver-gray hair smiling at me. His stooped posture and hollow cheeks betrayed a frailty brought on by prolonged illness and old age.

"These shoes sure look interesting," I said after regaining my composure. "Oh ya, what's so interesting about 'em?" he asked, his eyes boring into me. "Well, it's not really the shoes or the spats, it's the story they tell." The man seemed amused at my insight. "And what story might that be?" he asked, leading me along.

"These shoes and spats look to me as if they belonged to a professional dancer. Someone who performed on the stage" His visage began to noticeably change. The man's hollow eyes brightened and years melted away from his weathered face as he began to smile. He took the shoe from my hands, shaking slightly at the end of each movement, and held it as if it were a magic lamp, a private gateway to fond memories of a past world. He nodded his head while running his thumb over the scratches and scuffs; it seemed that each one sparked a story of its own. He looked at me, but his eyes focused wistfully on a point in the distant past as he said:

"These are my shoes, at least they were. I haven't put then on for over fortyfive years. Yep, it was the best part of my life - what's that idiot phrase that got so popular, "back in the day." Well back in the day for me was the end of a glorious era. It was when radio became popular and the audiences got smaller. Then TV came along and the only folks that showed up were streetpeople with nothing else to do and kids with fake IDs, cutting school to see the strippers. Ya know, I worked with the greatest vaudeville acts of all time. I got to dance with Gene Kelly and one time I was in a number that followed Burns and Allen. George Burns himself invited me to have dinner with him and Jack Benny. For months, I danced in a comedy sketch with Blaze Starr and the part where she rubbed up against me never got old."

"Really!" I said, not being able to convey the awe I was feeling. "That's quite a life."

"Yes, it was. Yes, it was. I experienced the good times and the bad, the highs and the lows. I held on and embraced that life no matter what it would bring. When times were tough, and dancing on the street corner for tips would barely afford me a hot meal; I was happy and still felt fortunate. To this day, I have no regrets."

There was a long pause after he finished speaking. I was full of emotion, but empty of words to comment on the vicarious look that he shared into a world I could scarcely imagine.

"Thank you, I think I'll remember this for a long time," was all I could say. "That's OK, kid, my pleasure," he said and gathered up the other shoe and the spats. "I don't think I should be selling this stuff quite yet," he said, then turned and lumbered off, disappearing into the house. WT

TERSE ON VERSE

by Pat Bustamante

MARCH MADNESS:

There is a lot of amusement in writing various forms of humorous poems.

The limerick, usually made up of 5 lines includes 3 "major rhymes" and 2 short internal lines "minor rhymed"-starts and ends with 5 metric-feet lines (5 emphasis-syllables: also called iambic pentameter).

(The English language seems MADE for pentameters!)

There are wonderful parody poems. Think what you can do with something (no copyright infringement, it is very old) like "The Twelve Days of Christmas":

"..And a Porshe, decked-with-pearshaped diamonds-from Tiffany's!" (You have to slur over some of the words to make the meter "count".) This brings a modern interpretation to what "My True Love gave To me."

And there is always "Anonymous", the most famous poet of all, to your rescue if you feel your limerick or other humorous poem is a bit too...? You know what I mean. Especially if you are from Nantucket.

April being the month of "fools" it would be perfect for some humorous poems, "anonymous" or not.

You can use a "pen name." Lewis Carroll did, for his adventures of Alice in Wonderland, making parody poems to "show up" some of his stuffy literary contemporaries.

"'Twas brillig--" Brillig did not make it into the English language but does hint masterfully at some brilliant meaning..any one you want actually. Carroll lampooned many famous writers of his day as well as giving us the unforgettable March Hare and Mad Hatter. Carroll played with language: you may also enjoy making outrageous puns or dabble in "tortured language". Duck when people start throwing things!! WT

Poet's Page Dodging Raindrops

by Richard A. Burns

Dodging raindrops, one by one, Getting wet is kind of fun, Until it really starts to pour, Then so much "fun" is bottom-drawer.

Fin'ly, the summer sun gets hot. Dad sweats and barbecues a lot. The creek dries up to hard, cracked clay,

And I wait for raindrops, day by day.

My Favorite Four Lines from Luanne Oleas

The Whales off Wales *by X. J. Kennedy*

by A. J. Kenneuy

With walloping tails, the whales off Wales

Whack waves to wicked whitecaps. And while they snore on their watery floor,

They wear wet woolen nightcaps.

More of my Favorite Four Lines from Luanne Oleas

The Green Glens of Antrim *by Kenneth North*

Sure if only you knew how the lamp of the moon Turns a blue Irish bay to a silver lagoon

You'd imagine the picture of heaven it could be

Where the green glens of Antrim are calling to me

TRANSKALEIDO-SCOPIC

(Defining a Newly Coined English Language Word) *by Steve Wetlesen*

> There was once an elegant infinitely irradiant gemstone that long eons ago was created as a deeply passionate blood red ruby, but one far distant epoch near the final demise of the countless realms of all possible futures on the Last Day, will transmogrify to an ethereal angelic otherworldly green priceless sacred emerald. Yet from the vantage point of eternity, both past and all tomorrows already exist, simultaneously, form one great unified whole, an unchanging spectrum, and so, right now this very instant, this unearthly crystalline treasure shines with both these intense dazzling chromatic illuminations this very same ever present moment. Time itself is outside time and timeless and beyond it. Try to grasp this exquisite transitory mineralogical rainbow of myriad temporal facets in the palm of contemplation and be humbled. And what intricate shape and delicate flower will finally emerge?

At a Long Beach Bar Part 2

by Richard Burns

In the initial segment of this short story serial, two men are talking at the bar in Long Beach, Ron and Wayne. At first they are strangers, and Ron gets to telling Wayne about his crazy brother, Paul. It is told in first person, Ron's point of view. Wayne is beginning to get interested in Ron's story. The last few lines from Part 1 are as follows:

He looked straight ahead at the mirror and the bottles, lined up. The guy seemed to be on my wavelength.

"Ironic, though," I said. "You never really think it will happen to you."

"I don't think on it. If I do, I shoo the

thought away."

"I still feel like I'm eighteen, I mean the way I see the world."

(continued...)

"For me, I feel thirty-five." He sipped and put his glass down. "What do you do with the broom, man?" he asked. "Whiskbroom; it's a whiskbroom." He looked at me, grinning, and tilted his head. "Well?"

"I'm only down here every five of years. I figure the least I could do for my brother is to sweep his gravestone clean." My eyes welled up, and I wiped at it with a little square napkin. "Flowers are a waste of money on dead people."

He smirked and nodded.

"Anyway, not long after he was discharged, Paul was relegated to this home out in Long Beach, really a home for messed up people. He was diagnosed with social pathology. I guessed they had caught him in some 'unwholesome activity" in the Navy. That's how my dad described it. All their rules, you know." With a whisper, I interjected that I thought it might be homosexual activity. My dad would never get into that kind of subject with me. "Five years later, he was insane. Paranoid schizophrenia, they called it." "A lot of 'crazies' at our rest home, too," Wayne said. "Always was. It's the neighborhood. Oh, you get used to it. Long Beach and Hollywood, where homos and perverts--" He caught himself and stopped.

"It's okay," I said. "I knew he was queer when I was twenty-five. He was living with a Hawaiian guy." With his fingertips, he lifted and twirled the glass in front of him, like when kids push a merry-go-round.

"At that place in Long Beach where he wound up, right along Pacific Blvd. here, Paul and I, we'd talk about the tent we played in that we set up in the backyard. Other times, we talked about how hard college was; how important perseverance was. I made it through Engineering, you know. But we'd talk deeper into stuff, too, sometimes too weird to even understand—he was crazy, as I said—but, with me, usually pretty normal; normal, but slow-talking and hard to understand through those missing front teeth."

"Missing teeth?"

"Oh, he lost his four front teeth panhandling. Where he lived wasn't locked up during the day. This was after Reagan closed all the state-run asylums. Paul was gentle. Sure, he smoked a lot. Dad hated that. But if he was hungry, he'd go out and, with no shame at all, ask anyone, 'Can you spare fifty cents to help me buy me a Big Mac?' He loved a Big Mac. There was a McDonald's across the street."

"McDonald's? He sounds like someone we took care of," Wayne said.

"No kidding."

"What did you say your name was?" "Ron. Ron McCabe."

"Your brother was Paul, huh? Paul McCabe. Was this around, Jeez, when was it, 1995 or so?"

"No must have been around '91, '92. He died in October '93."

The white-haired man said, "Hey, I'm pretty sure...." He rubbed his hands together, excited. "You said something like he fell? Hit his head?"

"That's what Dad said, but the death certificate indicated heart attack." He paused. "Could have been both."

"Yeah, I suppose."

"We had this guy," Wayne said, poking a finger at his palm for emphasis, "I remember, a real tall guy, Paul something, might have been McCabe. Seems like that was it. His folks visited every Saturday. The day he fell and died, it was midweek." He paused. "Yeah, news on TV...Clinton...gays in the military. I argued with a nurse about it that day."

"Early Clinton years," I said. "Probably was '93."

["]Paul, he was rash sometimes, but usually a peaceful guy, but, hell, he smoked like a chimney. Nearly burned down two rooms in our rest home."

"Oh, Wayne. That's him."

"I know." His smile was incredulous. "He had a wheelchair."

"Yes, yes. He had gotten hit by car crossing the street to McDonald's. He should have healed up, but he had this sore on his leg that leaked pus."

"Oh, that busted up leg," Wayne said. "He'd wheel down the hallways in his bathrobe."

"Oh, God, yeah."

"Five or six times that sore was healed." He laughed. "It was. But the damn guy was a lousy patient. He'd have a couple of drags on pot, and then he'd go fall down. Or he'd run into chairs real hard, walking on crutches in the cafeteria."

"Oh, you don't have to apologize about that sore. I was pissed at the time, but he's gone and it's probably a good thing."

"Honestly?"

"It's not cruel to say that," I said.

"You didn't mean anything bad, Ron."

I grimaced. "Depends on the day you catch me. Today, I cleaned off my twin brother's grave marker. It's real bronze, nice and official; embossed flag; that fancy Navy emblem under his name. I whisked off old grass clippings and dirt. I wanted to let his marker breathe." I chuckled. "Who's crazier?" The bartender looked our way.

Wayne shook his head and covered his glass with his hand. "Now that we're on it, I do recall quite a lot."

I asked intently. "Fourteen years ago?"

I felt him nod and he continued: "Your brother was in the office of Pacific Haven, needing a match for his cigarette, a little gruff and pushy that day."

Wayne's speaking accelerated. "Jack, the manager, shoved him back. 'No matches here,' he said. But really, Jack didn't want him burning down another damn room.

to be continued... WT

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ma	r '12	1 7:30-9:30 Mark Twain Westmont	2 Mega MU with Google in Palo Alto	3 Mega Meetup with Google in Palo Alto	4 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza	5
6	7	⁸ Monthly Meeting	9	10	11 7:30p OpenMic Borders Santana Row, SJ	12
13	14	15 7-9pm Meetup - San Jose 7:30-9:30 Mark Twain Westmont	16	17	18 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard	19
20	21	22 7-9pm San Jose	23	24	25 7:30p Open Mic Borders Sunnyvale	26

Ongoing Critique Groups

The Arm Wavers

Meets downtown San Jose on Wednesdays Contact: Georgia Platts – gplatts@comcast. net

Closed to new members at this time

Writers' Salon

Meets in Santa Clara Contact: Edie Matthews – edie333@sbcglobal.net Closed to new members at this time

Le Boulanger Writers

Meets at Le Boulanger Pruneyard Shopping Center, Campbell Contact: Karen Hartley – Sew1Machin@aol. com

All genres; open to all

Northpoint Critique Group

Meets in Cupertino Contact: Valerie Whong – valeriewhong@ att.net Closed to new members at this time

Our Voices

Meets in Santa Clara Meets every other Tuesday 7:15 p.m to 9:30 p.m. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical nonfiction, memoir Contact: Dave LaRoche – dalaroche@comcast.net

No openings at this time

Valley Writers

Meets: Valley Village Retirement Center, Santa Clara Mondays 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Contact: Marjorie Johnson – marjohnson89@ earthlink.net All genres; open to all

New Critique Group forming in Campbell

62. S. San Thomas Aquino

Mondays 6:30pm

Contact: Danita - blue2eternity@gmail. com

What's a Meetup?

A meetup is a weekly, sometimes twice a week meeting for SBW members and other writers who want to discuss and learn about writing and blogging related topics.

The topics, places, and times can be discovered in detail at:

http://www.meetup.com/South-Bay-Writers/

&

http://www.meetup.com/Silicon-Valley-Bloggers-and-Writers/

&

http://www.meetup.com/nonfictionwriting-concept-to-publication/

In Between Monthly Meetings

March 11

35th Annual Foster City International Writers Contest fostercity_writers@yahoo.com

March 12

Redwood Writers Poetry Workshop freelance@jmartinpoetwriter.com

March 15

Annual Writers-Editors International Writing Competition www.writers-editors.com

March 19

Our own **Betty Auchard** will be speaking to the Peninsula Writers Branch

March 26-27

Pleasanton Poetry, Prose & Arts Festival

March 28

Central Valley Writers Workshop 2011 and Short Story Contest www.centralvalleywriters.com

March 31

Gemini Magazine Short Story Contest www.gemini-magazine.com/contest. html

March 31

CWC Sacramento Short Short Story Contest marshar@quicknet.com

March 31

Tom Howard/John H Reid short story contest

www.winningwriters.com/tomstory

April 16-17

Writers Retreat in Half Moon Bay www.wildmindwriterpresents.vpweb. com

April 29-May 1

Words in Bloom Writers Conference UC Davis Extension Sacramento www.extension.ucdavis.edu/wordsinbloom

May 20-21

Antelope Valley Christian Writers' Conference www.avwriters.com info@avwriters.com

June 30

19th Annual Senior Poets Laureate Poetry Competition 50+ or older www.centralcoastwriters.org

July 11-15

Peninsula Writers Branch will host Oregon Coast Children's Writers Workshop www.occbww.com

July 31

Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing Contest www.dreamquestone.com

September 15

Central Coast Writing Contest www.centralcoastwriters.com

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 on the third Sunday of each month, except for July and August, at 1:30 at the Oakland Public Library Main Branch. cwc-berkeley.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

Fremont: Meets (except in July, December, and on holiday weekends) from 2-4 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of the month at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. Contact: Richard Scott, rikscott@yahoo. com; (510) 791-8639

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

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

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

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

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

President's Challenge

by Bill Baldwin President, South Bay Writers

"Why do you write?"

In planning for the 2010 East of Eden Conference (which, unfortunately we were unable to pursue), we decided to make the theme of the conference "Why Do We

Write?" It seems like a very good idea indeed to know why you write. It's very popular right now, I think, to "write to get ahead." People want to get published, people want recognition, people want money. Is that why you write?

People talk about blogging and about developing platforms, and so on; all these ways of getting attention for your writing. I'd enjoy money and recognition, but I'm not sure that's why I write.

I write because I want to share my ideas and the stories I tell. Bill Baldwin I want to share my characters. Now what if most people aren't particularly interested? We all have different interests. I'm interested in spirituality and sexuality, history and music. You may not be. Does that mean I should stop writing? I don't think so.

Because some people are interested in the same things I'm interested in, and I'm writing for them; even if a lot of other people, even perhaps most people, aren't interested.

I also write because I love language, and I love putting words down on paper and then rearranging them until they become what I consider "beautiful." You may not consider them beautiful, but I still do. That's okay – one shouldn't perhaps argue about taste!

And I love reading words out loud; I love acting out dialogue and dramatizing and soaking in well-written description. And this is all separate from whether or not anybody pays me money for what I write or read.

So I suppose I'm a bit of a Don Quixote in this respect. And I'm lucky in the sense that I have a "day job." That makes it a little easier to take a Bohemian attitude towards my craft. Jack Kerouac and a whole host of other "artists" (e.g. Van Gogh) didn't have day jobs. My hat is off to those who manage to make a living by their writing. My hat is also off to those who love writing – or painting or music or the stage – but have to live in poverty because they can't make a living by it. I'm very lucky compared to the people without day jobs!

Do think about why you write. Is it to survive? Is it to make beauty? Is it for spiritual development? Whatever it is, remember why you do it; and then apply yourself to your own personal writing goals. Knowing why you write will clarify those goals for you. WT



California Writers Club South Bay Branch

____o ____

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Join 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.



WritersTalk

is the monthly newsletter of the South Bay Branch

of the California Writers Club.

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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

Bill Belew 111 W. Arques Ave Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Guest Columns

Sage Advice (400 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words) to Bill Belew newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

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SJC-LAX-IND-BJX-BOS

by Bill Belew

How do you get from San Jose to Los Angeles to Indianapolis to San Miguel to Cape Cod? And a whole lot of places in between?

Bill Belew

These are just a small portion of the

places I have been in the past year. I am speaking in Monterey tomorrow. The last on the list, Cape Cod is still pending.

How/why do I get asked to speak at these different places? Better yet, how can you get you, the reader, do the same?

It started over 25 years ago. That's when I moved to Asia, starting in Japan.

Fast forward to just five years ago, and that's when my blogging career began.

I was goofing off in a forum for blogger wannabes and I posted something about one of my experiences in Japan. A fellow blogger pinged me and said he knew of an online blog network that was devoted to business topics and he recommended I approach them. I did.

I saw that they did not have any topic devoted to international business so I suggested one and it was accepted. I began writing about business in the PanAsian region. It did well, so they asked me to write about Japan specifically. It did well so the network asked me to start writing about education (I had been an educator in higher educator for life). I did that, too.

One year, one month and 26 days later I reached 1 million visitors to those three sites combined. I not only got that many visitors, but they looked at over 1.59 million pages I had written. I not only got that many visitors and page views, I knew how I did it.

I tried my methodology again and again and again. It worked. Now, I have nine unrelated topics with more than one million unique vistors each AND I know how I did it.

I started subtly and not so subtly letting those around me know what I had learned. Then the requests started coming in.

"Can you come here and tell us how you did it, too?"

"Can you tell us if your method will work for our product (think YOUR BOOK), too?"

It will work. I think I can take almost (keyword) any topic and get one million people to take a look.

So, how/why do I get asked to speak?

1. I created something people want/ need to know about.

2. I wrote about it.

3. I told people what I know.

and the last is most important.

4. I asked others if they wanted me to tell them, too.

And people wanted to know - from SJC to BOS. And lots of places in between. That's why I go to these many places. WT





California Writers

Club

South Bay Branch P.O. Box 3254 Santa Clara, CA 95055

Mail To

Monthly Meetings

Every Second Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

Lookout Inn 605 Macara Avenue, Sunnyvale @ the Sunnyvale Golf Course

> March Speaker Nora Profit

Clearing Our Brains: Easing readers' paths to emotional acces

