



WRITERSTALK

Volume 21
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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

APRIL SPEAKER

Victoria Zackheim

Assay that Essay

If you don't know what to call it, call it an essay

by Rita Beach

Victoria Zackheim explained in six words what made her want to become a writer: "The need to speak my heart." On April 10, she will be the featured speaker at the South Bay Writers Club meeting at Harry's Hofbrau in San Jose.

Ms. Zackheim feels that personal essay, along with other forms of writing, is the process of digging into the imagination, the heart, and the soul to create a story we long to tell by using words and images. She is an expert in the world of the essay.

An essay is a piece of writing often written from the author's personal point of view, an observation of daily life or his recollections and reflections. Essays consist of a variety of elements such as literary criticism, political manifestos, or learned arguments. Aldous Huxley said that an essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything.

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, Bubba Blue explained to Forrest that there are lots of different types of shrimp — pineapple shrimp, lemon shrimp, coconut shrimp, and pepper shrimp — all of which can be cooked in a variety of ways. You can boil them, broil them, bake them, sauté them, just to name a few. You can have shrimp gumbo, shrimp Creole, shrimp-kabob, shrimp stew, shrimp salad, and well, you get the idea. What can be said of shrimp can also be said of the essay.

Victoria Zackheim needs no introduction to many in the writing profession. She is a playwright, an editor, a freelance writer, and a teacher. She has edited five anthologies, including *Exit Laughing: How Humor Takes the Sting Out of Death* and *The Other Woman*, in production at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, February 2013. Other anthologies include *For Keeps*, the story of growing older as told through the voices of twenty-seven women; *The Face in the Mirror*; and the stories of moments in life when everything changed in *He Said What?* Also, she is the author of the novel *The Bone Weaver* and her screenplay *Maidstone* was optioned by Identity Films and is now in development.



Victoria Zackheim

— Photo by Vicki Topaz

Ms. Zackheim wrote the documentary film *Where Birds Never Sang: The Story of Ravensbruck and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camps*, now airing on PBS, and the film *More Than a Lord's Daughter: Ida Byron Lovelace*. She also is the story developer and writer of *Tracing Thalidomide: The Frances Kelsey Story* and has appeared at many book events across the country and around the world.

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MARCH RECAP

Taxpertise

By Grace Tam

Who knew a lecture about filing income taxes could keep writers hooked? On March 13 at Harry's Hofbrau, Bonnie Lee opened her lecture "Are you sure that's legal?" with a humorous story from her book, *Taxpertise: The Complete Book of Dirty Little Secrets*.

The first issue she addressed was how the IRS views you as a writer — professional or hobbyist. Professional writers write by day and night and can deduct all eligible expenses. Hobbyists have a day job unrelated to writing and write in their spare time. Hobbyists can deduct only the amount of expenses up to the profit made from writing — unless they go the extra mile to prove business intent.

Lee advised proving business intent by keeping adequate books and records, information on all writing activities, a mileage log, and a separate checking account for writing. Retain all receipts for any writing-related expenses and supporting material, such as announcements for workshops, conferences, and writing classes. For example, if you attended a writing conference and charged the registration, hotel fees, and meals, then you need receipts verifying each item. Also, keep copies of any advertising to promote your work as well as rejection letters.

After proving business intent, how do you decide what can be written off as a tax deduction?

There is no set list of what is allowed and what isn't, Lee told us. "The first thing to ask is, what is an ordinary and necessary business expense?"

For writers, our basic tools are pen, paper, and printer ink. However, in

Continued on Page 6

President's Challenge

by Bill Baldwin
President, South Bay Writers

What Energizes You?

As writers, we need to accomplish a variety of tasks to be successful. First of all, we have to write. You can quibble about whether that is really the *first* task we need to accomplish; some people might claim that you have to have an *idea* first. I'd say, though, that the idea is optional. Whether you have an idea or not, you should sit down and write. Doodle or write down random sentences if you have to. If you don't have ideas, try writing down ideas as you brainstorm. At least you are writing. And this random writing may generate ideas or at least sentences that you can develop.

After that, of course, you have to reread, rewrite, edit. You may want to generate interest in your writing, one way or another — public readings, interviews.

Now I've been asking myself how South Bay Writers can encourage and motivate its members, what the club can do to keep us all going when our motivation begins to flag.

We have our monthly meetings, we have workshops, we have open mics. In the past we've offered writers' retreats and the East of Eden Conference.

In the case of our monthly meetings, we recently changed our location because of the closing of The Lookout in Sunnyvale. While we've returned to a location we've used before, Harry's Hofbrau, the move has generated much discussion. Many CWC branches meet at locations without food or meet on weekends during the day. Do we want to continue with mid-week dinner meetings? Some members have difficulty driving at night; some do not want to pay for meals. On the other hand, some of us enjoy having food at our meetings and would rather not tie up our weekends. As it happens, The Lookout is preparing to reopen. I don't know what the new management will be like, but we will consider returning there.

So please tell us how you feel about our monthly meetings. Where would you like to meet? Would you prefer food or no food, weekend or weekday evening? Please do let us know. Board members' names are listed here in *Writers Talk*.

I think that the happier you are with the monthly meetings, the more they will motivate your writing. We want the chance to serve you whenever we can! —WT



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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, Sally Milnor, or sign up online southbaywriters.com.



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WritersTalk

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Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. All submissions will be copyedited to uphold our publication standards. The Managing Editor decides which submissions to publish.

Submission deadline is the 16th of the month.

Suggested word limits are not absolute; query the editor. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Anything Goes—Almost (300 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Creative Works

Short Fiction (1500 words)

Memoir (1200 words)

Poetry (300 words)

Essay (900 words)

Accolades

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Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

Editor



Walk a lot— but not on one leg

Our bodies may change with age, but, according to AARP, we don't need to trade the gym for the bridge table. New research shows that exercise can help prevent Alzheimer's, protect from stroke, increase life expectancy, and even change our DNA so our muscles work more efficiently. As we get older, though, we need to be smarter about exercise.

That sounds a bit like the advice about diet we see in every woman's magazine every month (with, sometimes, tempting dessert recipes on the very next page). We can all agree that such things are good for us; but it's hard to break old habits, and some of us are allergic to exercise.

But we are writers. Doing something physical every half hour or so can improve our writing by making our minds more efficient. So, for the sake of our craft, consider what we can do, easing into this exercise thing. AARP suggested several exercises to keep our bodies young, including the walk, the squat, and the flamingo.

Take a walk. Walking takes no preparation and does more good than any other single exercise. Let your mind idle and breathe in that fresh air. When you return to your desk, you'll feel refreshed and ready to write again.

Embrace the squat. "The single best exercise to prevent injury and maintain leg and lower-back strength, especially as you get older, is the squat," says Stuart Phillips, Professor of Kinesiology, McMaster University, Canada. "Start with your feet shoulder-distance apart, toes pointed 30 degrees out. Squat, keeping your back straight and pushing your butt out behind you, until you reach the desired depth. Then, rising slowly, push through your heels until your legs are straight again."

Play flamingo. "Equilibrium declines with age," says Vonda Wright, M.D., in *Fitness After 40*. "And wobbling can contribute to trips and sprained ankles." Increase your balance by standing on one leg a few times a day. Hold for 20 seconds; switch legs. For experts: do the exercise with your eyes closed.

I walk every day but do little else in the way of organized exercise. I squat every time I pick up something from the floor or pick up leaves from the front lawn; but if I do it too much, I get sore. Also, don't squat too low, especially if you have bad knees. I once went hiking along the seacoast in Wales—cold and rainy, lots of too-tall steps to climb, and no toilets. When I squatted behind a big rock and in the ever-present gorse, my knees refused to let me stand up and I almost toppled into the thorns on my bareness. As to the flamingo, my balance is poor, and I'm working my way up to two. I would never try this with my eyes closed!

Speaking of eyes, I have been assigned pencil push-ups to strength my weak eye muscles. When I sit at the computer too long, I ease stress through my upper back by rolling my shoulders—not exactly workouts. If you do an exercise near your desk, please write it up and send it to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. —WT

WritersTalk commends SBW poets with this special poetry edition.

View from the Board

by S. Halloran

Eight of us — President Bill Baldwin, Vice President Rita Beach, Treasurer Mike Freda, Secretary Sylvia Halloran, Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson, Networking Chairperson Eléna Martina, Central Board-NorCal Representative Dave LaRoche, and Member-at-Large Dick Amyx met in Sunnyvale Tuesday night, March 5, 2013.

Workshops are a vital part of club activity. It would be good to plan four per year. We desperately need a permanent workshop chairman to be able to obtain presenters and provide publicity material in time to generate interest of participants.

The dinner meeting survey forms provided excellent feedback. Thank you to those who participated.

The online presence committee submitted its report and recommendations:

Moved: (La Roche) to dismiss Richard Scott as webmaster and replace him with the volunteer service of Dick Amyx for a period of up to six months. Passed, 6 yes, 1 abstention.

The possibility of holding summer barbeque and winter holiday parties in public places rather than private homes was discussed.

Nominations for the Jack London Award are open. This is a biennial statewide recognition for outstanding service to the branch.

Recognition of longtime service:

Moved: (Johnson) to buy the monthly meeting meal and give public acclamation for Frank Johnson and Jim Matthews for setting up the audio equipment at meetings and workshops. Passed, unanimous.

Elections are coming up. Board membership gives you an insider's view of South Bay Writers as well as the statewide club. Become a mover and shaker! Run for office or volunteer to be on a committee! — WT

Leadership in a Nutshell

by Dave LaRoche

Leaders come in all shapes, colors, and styles, and from most anywhere. Some are charismatic, leading with promises and smiles. Others are impressively organized and known for processes that seldom fail. Some are simply well known, well liked, and a pleasure to be around. Wherever, whoever: what follows is common among all — all, that is, who succeed.

A leader first has a vision: that is, where to take the group and for what purpose. For us, it may be growth in the membership roll; more published authors, or more through “traditional” hoops. It might be more members at meetings, better critique groups, and/or a wider variety. These visions, whatever they are, often emanate from the group via surveys, a consistency with previously adopted rules, or just ordinary talk while the leader has his or her ears to the ground.

After vision, the next ingredient in leadership is passion. The leader must want to fulfill the vision, must be willing to put in the energy and time and

to endure the potential inconvenience. He/she must be energized, enthusiastic, persuasive, and above all, believable and credible. With these, the leader develops a following, and from that, the rest is ready to fall into place.

Above is the potential, but a leader must also produce movement; must be able to convert that potential into an executable plan and direct that plan to its anticipated conclusion; that is, the goal or goals that represent the original vision. So, the leader must be able to plan, to reduce the vision to workable goals, to identify and organize capable resources, and to design and put processes in place through which the goal may be reached. He must add feedback loops to the processes so that a misdirection or error in calculation can be recognized and corrected.

Through it all, the leader directs or oversees direction. She or he stays on top of the processes and their intentions; provides motivation, bearing and suggestions; shows enthusiasm and understanding; and solves or assists in solving problems. Finally the leader must be able to recognize success, to

Getting the word in

by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal,
pr@calwriters.org

We know that PR has to do with getting the word out. We less often recall that it also requires getting the word *in*, in other words, keeping our members informed regarding California Writers Club business. This applies particularly to new members. Too often, we tend to take their dues checks and leave the rest up to them. We don't explain the benefits of membership or fill them in on the history of the organization.

You might think about creating a New Member Kit for your branch. CWC South has one available, and it serves the dual purpose of conveying facts and the sense that joining CWC means more than writing a check. It contains a CWC timeline, a sheet about getting the most out of membership, and more. If you request one from me, I'll send it to you digitally. Most of the documents come in Word, so you can change them to suit your local needs.

Bottom line: Never miss the opportunity to tell the world what we do, but don't neglect your own members.

Good luck and sail on! — WT

give and take credit, and offer praise.

This is a lot to ask of one person and/or that person may not possess all the ingredients. In either case the leader must then be willing to bring others in. He or she may ally with a partner or several who fill in where weaknesses lie — that is, they may form a team. A leader, for example, may have vision but lack passion or have both but not know about planning and directing — a common reason for stumbling or failing completely and why teams, picking up on the missing, often work. In a world where time is short and tasks are many, a team may be the best or only solution.

This sounds overwhelming, but it's not. These building blocks can be large or small. The point is, they all need to be there — a pocket full or a truck, depending on the size and complexity of vision. Changing the world may take an army; changing an element of our branch, not so much. Do you have an idea you're passionate about? — WT

Networking Log

by ElénaMartina

Speaking Opportunities

A CWC member sent me an email invitation, asking if I could be a guest speaker at a class. She had some students interested in writing and she believed they would benefit from hearing what I had to say about writing and publishing. I promptly accepted the invitation.



Speaking opportunities should always be considered, accepted whenever possible, and appreciated. A public engagement is worth your attention and should be tackled professionally and enthusiastically. An excellent way to receive invitations to speak is by volunteering for key positions in your writing club—this will inevitably open doors for you in this arena.

Public speaking is not for everyone. We have all attended meetings where speakers arrived late, dressed unprofessionally, lacked dynamism, were unprepared, or gave boring presenta-

tions. Sometimes clubs invite people and assume they are wonderful speakers simply because they teach writing classes or they have a best seller.

A winning combination can occur when a club stops relying on resumes prepared by the presenters themselves and starts verifying their references and researching their work. Speakers, on the other hand, should ask about the club's expectations of them so they can model their spiel to the club's members. Additionally, a member satisfaction survey is extremely important because the evaluation of presenters provides data for future speaker recommendations.

As an SBW Board member, you will find that public speaking opportunities will present themselves in due course. After attending executive meetings, participating in club operation, making suggestions, striving for excellence and being part of a team, you will inevitably be in contact with other organizations where people will notice your talents and eventually invite you to speak. Your starting point will materialize this June, when our new Board will be elected. Club members who evolve from

regular attendees to active membership on the SBW Board or chair committees gain valuable experience. For instance, in 2010, I joined South Bay Writers; in April 2012, I became their network chairperson, and, by August, their *Facebook* page administrator. You owe it to yourself to serve and profit from it—or you'll miss great opportunities.

My March 4th speaking engagement marked the beginning of presentations I will be doing on behalf of both the writers' club and myself. I'm not a novice at public speaking, but I realize that everyone must begin at some point. By becoming an exemplary club contributor, you will benefit both our club and yourself.

Networking note: A critique group is looking for one additional fiction writer. They meet each month at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays at the Hick'ry Pit BBQ, 980 E. Campbell Avenue (across from the Pruneyard). Contact Karen Hartley for further information at sew1machin@aol.com.

If you have a networking question, contact ElénaMartina at networking@southbaywriters.com. —WT

April Accolades

by Andrea Galvacs



Audry Lynch's *With Steinbeck on the Sea of Cortez and Steinbeck Remembered* can be purchased in e-book form from Amazon.

Her book, *Garth Jeffers*

Recalls his Father Robinson Jeffers: Recollections of a Poet's Son, is also available in e-book form by contacting Mrs. Miller at Mellen Press, 716/754-2788.

Eléna Martina spoke about writing and publishing in a class that met at the South Hill Community Center last month.

Suzy Paluzzi's piece "Magic Woman: Coming Full Circle" has passed the first round and is still under consideration for the "Times They Were A-Changing" contest and for publication in the anthology *Times They Were A-Changing: Women Remember the 60's and 70's*. The book is due for release in August 2013.

Judith Shernock displayed her recently published children's book, *Sammi the Seahorse*.

Giselle Stancic's young adult mystery *The Paganini Curse* ranked first in the San Francisco Writers' Conference contest and was published in Febru-

ary 2013 and appears on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Her adult mystery *Final Adagio* was the 2013 grand prize-winner in the same contest and will be published this spring.

Steve Wetlesen received a birthday commission to create a Cycle of Haiku. —WT



Accolades to: Judith Shernock, Audry Lynch, Giselle Stancic, Eléna Martina, and Steve Wetlesen

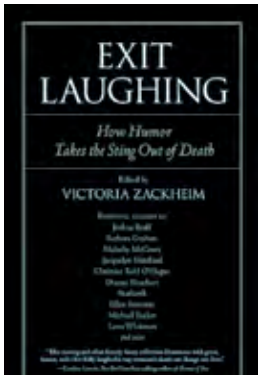
—Photo by Carolyn Donnell

Assay that Essay

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Ms. Zackheim has been a speaker and workshop presenter at several California Writers Club meetings. Her specialty is creative nonfiction/personal essay and she teaches in the UCLA Extension Writers' Program.

In September 2012 she was a workshop leader at the Central Coast Writers' Conference in San Luis Obispo, and in March 2013 she spoke at the Tucson Women's Foundation and at the Tucson Festival of Books. Later that month she traveled to France to the American Library of Paris for a personal essay workshop and then crossed the Channel to London for a reading from *Exit Laughing*. Her website is victoriazackheim.com.



California Writers' Club South Bay Branch is delighted to welcome Victoria Zackheim as our speaker on April 10 at Harry's Hofbrau.

The answer to every tax question is "That depends." — Bonnie Lee



Bonnie Lee reads an anecdote from *Taxpertise* — Photo by Carolyn Donnell

Taxpertise

Continued from Page 1

some cases, research trips can also be written off as a tax deduction. For example, if you are working on a novel based in New Orleans and travel there for research, the airplane ticket, hotel fees, and meals can be deducted even if the novel never gets published — as long as you can show a copy of the manuscript and proof of an effort to publish, such as rejection letters from publishing companies. If you happen to take a tour in New Orleans and have fun while you're at it, then go for it!

However, the primary purpose must always be the production and publication of your creative work. "Just don't have fun because the IRS hates that," Lee said with a smile and a wink. — WT

Resident Experts

by Rita Beach

On March 13, we interviewed Membership Chairman Sally Milnor, Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson, and NorCal Representative Dave LaRoche to learn about the duties of their positions.

On April 10 our members will finally be given answers to the one question everyone wants to know but never asks — what do our board members *really* do? President Bill Baldwin, Vice President Rita Beach, Secretary Sylvia Halloran, and Treasurer Mike Freda will share with us what their duties are.

Election of new officers is fast approaching. Hopefully, some of you will decide *I can do that*. Whether you feel the urge to jump into politics or just to stay in your seat at the meetings, we felt you should know who and what makes your club work. Inquiring minds want to know. — WT



"Resident Experts" Sally Milnor, Marjorie Johnson, and Dave LaRoche — Photos by Carolyn Donnell

WritersTalk salutes our poets

April is National Poetry Month

Love (or Not): Poems From the 60's

by Carolyn Donnell

Come Sweet Sleep

Come sweet sleep
and rescue me
from tears and pain.

Come blest night
and pull down the shade
on all my sorrows.

If there are dreams,
let them be forgotten
with the morning sun.

— Carolyn Donnell

I Cry

The last time I held you,
I cried.

The last time we fought,
I cried.

I cry when you're gone.
I cry when you're here.

Like a fountain without end,

I cry.

I cry.

I cry.

— Carolyn Donnell

Reunion

In Wyoming,
the road rides up
to meet the sky,
a black rumble of angry
Dad's electric in my eye,
the sea of rolling terrain
hugs the eastern path
we take toward family,
the Great Reunion—
a small testament of
Clinton's childhood own,
Illinois corn fed home grown.

But in Wyoming,
the blackness of earth
and sky soon become one
as far as my eye can't see,
and I follow into
a simple reverie,
Sleep's sweet nothingness,
silence a great thunder-less sound,
as we rush toward memories
yet to be made.

~ j mutz

Say It Now, Whatever!

When you have something worthwhile to say,
say it now
Don't hesitate—speak up even if you just say
Wow!
Have you started to say a word, you waited,
you forgot it?
Then, you think, what was I going to say? Oh,
to wit
That's why you should say it now, whatever
you need
You need help of a sort, say so now, to wait is
late indeed
You are having a conversation with a friend,
you stop
Your friend will say, what happened, stopping
like a top?
So, whatever you have to say, when talking
to anyone
Say it, never wait, that's very bad, it's called
procrastination
If you wait too long to answer anything, you
will stumble
So, answer whatever, I know you will, you're
so able
In a nutshell never pause to answer,
no or yes
If you do they may not believe you,
so you guess.
— Clarence L. Hammonds



Photo by K. O. Llewellyn

The Storm

The wind rushes and fights against the window.
The glass flexes and warps,
Pushing back as the storm, an unwanted guest, demands to come in.
I quake as I watch the trees
Whipping like impatient cows' tails,
And the lightning attacking the hill across the valley.
The house shakes with sudden thunder
And moans with exertion, its walls unyielding against the gusts.
Candles flicker in the drafts and I shiver,
Though the logs in the hearth burn heartily.
I am a storm, too.
Overflowing with wrath, bleeding with hurt and anger.
But unlike the weather, swirling with violence and thwarted,
I imprison my lashing frustration inside.
A vortex of hurt, fear, and shame
Sweeps fury through every cell of my being
Until it exhausts itself, and me, into a pitiful
Dust devil of muttering resentment.
I am a heap of irritation, struggling to surrender,
Still quivering with vexation,
But finally, letting the anger go with one last puff of wind.
How peevish and small anger makes me,
Disfiguring my life with detritus,
Like a storm wound down, leaving piles of debris.
I have seized the emotion and wrestled it to a stop.
And now I tally the damage,
For I must always count the cost of the storm.
The soul, now chaos-scarred, lies marked forever
By unrestrained havoc.
And I must rebuild what I have torn down with my own hands.
— K.O. Llewellyn

The Businessman and the Bum

by Mike Freda

Writing as C. Arthur Michaels

"Get a job you bum!" barked the middle-aged businessman to the longhaired, disheveled soul who approached him for a handout. "I worked hard to get where I am. You should, too!"

The bum excused himself and ambled off.

The businessman had struggled through school and scraped by on student loans and welfare checks to complete his college education. He currently was abiding in a small but comfortable apartment near a delightful park, to which he retired every evening for a short stroll. He was on his way home, where he planned to meet with a close friend for an evening of pleasant chatter.

He had recently "struck out on his own" after a number of years toiling at a small business concern and had upgraded to his comfortable surroundings. In fact, his evening repast was a kind of "celebration" marking this important event.

He reached the exterior door of his building just as his friend approached it from the other direction. Together, they climbed the five flights of stairs to apartment 5B. Upon entering, the businessman walked to the counter, opened a bottle of \$20 chardonnay, and poured a glass for each of them. He set out a block of cheese and the wine on a coffee table. They sat down and began to recount recent events in their lives.

Soon, they reached the topic of which the businessman was most proud. "Look at my check stub—\$100,322," he exclaimed. "I have finally reached the six-figure mark!"

"That's quite an accomplishment! Let's have another glass of this excellent chardonnay," spoke his friend. The businessman was pleased, basking in the glory of this praise.

"Yet there may have been some mistake," his friend said. "You have only deducted 7.65% for social security, but now that you are on your own, you must deduct twice that, or 15.3%, leaving you with 84.7% of your entire amount."

"Is that so?" the businessman mused. "Well, it's going for a good cause, and I still have \$85,000 on which to live."

"Yes," his friend replied. "We must support those who have paid into this system these many years. They receive only \$2000 per month and can hardly live on that."

The businessman agreed, "Who could make ends meet?"

"They have Medicare for basic health care, but that's not worth much."

"Tell me about it," the businessman said. "I pay \$600 a month for health insurance and make a hefty co-payment. Thankfully, I can deduct my medical bills on my income tax."

"But your medical bills are not deductible unless they're over the 7.2% threshold," his friend explained.

The businessman was feeling less comfortable with his status in life, but this was only a few hundred a month more. He took another slice of cheese and a pleasing sip of wine.

"Surely there has been an oversight," his friend continued. "Someone has forgotten to deduct disability insurance from your pay check. It's only 1.2%, but it's required."

The difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector is the taxidermist takes only your skin. —Mark Twain

"What that's for? I never heard of it," the businessman said, a slight tremble in his voice.

"It's for those unfortunate souls who have been injured during the course of their employment. We must help them."

"Yes, of course," said the businessman, who was thinking of the \$100 a month it would cost him to provide this service.

"There must be a lot of them."

"There are over a million in this situation. It's fortunate that there are plenty of others who earn a living and can afford to pay their bills," his friend said.

That may be true, thought the businessman, but \$100 a month is a steep price to pay. His \$100,000 was now down to \$76,000, yet quite a bit, but not at all close to the original amount. *I'll just have to cut back a little more.*

"What is this?" exclaimed his friend. "Only 20% deduction for federal income tax?"

"Why yes. I pay quarterly. They said I need to take out 20% each quarter," he replied with an air of assurance. Secretly, he was starting to be unsure about this entire conversation.

"But that is the bare minimum required. Unfortunately, as you are unmarried and have no children, your federal tax rate is 38.9%, not the minimum of 20%," his friend said.

"Nearly forty percent! Why, 40% of \$76,000 is over \$2500 a month! How can I possibly afford that? I'll have to give up this apartment and return to my previous disagreeable hovel!" The businessman nearly shouted to his friend.

"I wish it were different, but you are taxed on the entire \$100,000. The actual amount is over \$3300 a month," detailed his friend.

"How can this be? They take away \$24,000, yet they tax me not on the \$76,000 remaining, but on the entire \$100,000! This is outrageous!" The businessman's face turned a bright red.

"It is yet a mystery to me, but those are the guidelines."

"But what can they possibly do with my \$40,000? How can I live on the amount left?" pleaded the businessman.

His friend took the liberty of pouring himself another glass of chardonnay. "How can you complain? That leaves you \$36,000 or nearly \$3000 a month. And think of the good your \$40,000 does. It supports important government programs—the millions who live in poverty, able to only afford an apartment, a wide screen television and only one cell phone per family member; or those who receive food, medical care, and housing at government expense.

"Those poor souls have had a miserable life, left with little self-respect or hope. How can we deny them? You should feel guilty about your ungracious attitude."

"I cannot feel any guilt. I'm left with only a third of my labor, giving two-thirds to others who don't produce anything, lay around all day doing nothing," the businessman expounded.

Continued on Page 12

On My Poetic Art Process: Part II

by Stephen C. Wetlesen

In the first installment of my Poetic Art Process (*WritersTalk*, April 2012), I explained that poetic art is no longer really poetry, but in a deep sense a visual motif like painting. Poetic art is a new and separate genre, fundamentally different from poetry, in that poetic art renders a visual aesthetic more than one's mere inner feelings and relationships with others, though there may sometimes be overlap. The first step in poetic art is to SEE like a visual artist. Many look, but few actually SEE. Even those who do SEE are, like me, mostly blind or our sight is feeble.

It is here we return to the chase. On a deep level, I'm really a frustrated painter more than a poet or writer.

Although the Japanese haiku masters Buson and Shiki probably called themselves "poets", they may have been among history's first poetic artists. Buson was an 18th century artist by trade; Shiki stressed a "painterly" approach to his word pictures as the west began to influence Japan after the Meiji restoration of 1868. This tableau in the form of elegant words shows in their output and sets their work apart from haiku in general. One reads Buson or Shiki and gets the impression of looking at a canvas rather than reading literature, and it is this quality I have sought to emulate.

The concept of seeing a "haiku moment" — a butterfly fluttering past an ugly garbage pile or light ripples on trees — should be intensely studied! I also note some masters spent entire lifetimes rewriting only a few haiku — the singular and plural are the same word — or even only one of them!

Therefore, a poetic artist focuses on matters visual more than on reading verse. I have amassed a great collection of books on painting and physical artifacts — more Vincent Van Gogh, Jackson Pollock and Alexander Calder than William Shakespeare, Herman Melville and James Joyce. I have visited many museums and galleries and taken up life model sketching rather than discussing meter and rhyme in literary circles.

1. The Use of Sharp and Keen Visual Artistic Language.

Back in the mid 1990s, I ran across a *San Francisco Chronicle* article in which local university scientific researchers compared the language utilized by artists with that of non-artists in a given situation. They separated the artists from the non-artists and took them a few miles down the coast from San Francisco to a beach studded with granite boulders weighing many tons each. The teams were asked to observe one large object and describe it verbally as the scientists recorded.

The difference was striking, to say the least. The non-artists used general expressions like "big rock" or "giant boulder." On the other hand, the artists all waxed into intensely detailed descriptions, such as "specks" and "fleckes of mica" or "dots" and "jagged cracks."

Fascinated, I at first reasoned the other way around. *Perhaps, I thought, if I started using such intricate expressions to describe visual scenes and structures, my brain would become more "visual" and I would start to evolve into a painter by sheer semantics alone!* Indeed, my sketching abilities did improve a little, but not overwhelmingly.

Still not satisfied, I evolved a "fall back position" as it were.

Haiku for Haiku

Painterly word arts –
Transoceanic sculptures.
Japan's season gifts.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

If visual language does not greatly improve my visual motifs, maybe at least the use of more visual language in poetic form could transform such verbal rhythms into a brand new and original form of "visual form" in itself!

Thus was born poetic art.

Poetry describes one's feelings and relationships with others and gives a narrative of life. While there is some overlap, poetic art is very different; it uses rhythmic language as a "paintbrush" to render real or imagined visual aesthetics, forming a "sculpture" with pure thought and words.

In the deepest sense, poetic art is a visual motif like a brush-stroke rather than literature.

Please note: Poetic art is not to be confused with conceptual art. The latter is an IDEA, such as something to symbolize human rights or an abstract concept. The former is what we visually PERCEIVE with the eye or in the mind! Yet the two may overlap, just a little, as do poetic art and straight poetry.

It therefore behooves the poetic artist to study much visual art theory, commentary, and history to transform art into elegant and rhythmic language.

2. Perceptions of the Unusual or What Most Others Do Not Notice. Major influences on my poetic art have been master photographers such as the late Diane Arbus (pronounced "DEE-ann AIR-bish") and the late Edward Weston. They saw people and things others overlooked, or aspects of them others did not spot. For example, Arbus focused on the intimate details of off-the-beaten-track carnival and circus performers, many with medical conditions that branded them as "freaks" whom "polite" society pretended never to notice, and saw them as beautiful. Weston found new ways to see mundane things such as sliced artichokes so they appeared as strange otherworldly objects. I try to do likewise with fluid language alone.

3. Visual Connections or Relationships and Contrasts or Juxtapositions. Usually, the best art combines and compares very different things. My haiku often display seemingly unlikely sights in the sky, such as a meteor passing near a crescent moon, or odd-looking clouds occluding the lunar orb. Some artists call this atypical positioning "composition."

4. Depth. My work often hints at subtle questions, like eternity or infinity, with riddles, enigmas and a mysterious air, much like Stanley Kubrick's film, *2001*.

5. Life Drawing. It is possible, and highly laudable, to combine poetic art with physical forms such as the life sketches of undressed models I did in a series of gallery sessions. They both rendered the individual, often in the semi-abstract, and also adorned them with surrounding poetic art. Some might also try a mixture with musical forms, especially classical music.

Continued on Page 12

April: Poetry Month

By Carolyn Donnell

National Poetry Month is a month-long, national celebration of poetry established by the Academy of American Poets in 1996 to “increase the visibility and availability of poetry in popular culture while acknowledging and celebrating poetry’s ability to sustain itself in the many places where it is practiced and appreciated.” If you don’t already have plans to celebrate, their website at poets.org has some suggestions—30 of them. You can do them in any order except for Celebrate Poem in your Pocket Day, scheduled for April 18th: select a poem you love, carry it with you, and share it with co-workers, family, and friends all day. This site has much information on National Poetry Month and poetry resources in general.

You can also bring poetry, yours or your favorite poet’s, to South Bay Writers’ open mics or check out Poetry Center San Jose at sjcpl.com or the Santa Clara County Poet Laureate site at poetlaureateblog.org/

The Santa Clara County Poet Laureate title will change hands in April. The current term for Poet Laureate Sally Ashton expires March 31, 2013, so stay tuned for news.

You can also find Los Gatos Poet Laureate activities on Facebook or at erica-goss.com (under Events), or some poetry related activities at MeetUp, such as poetry.meetup.com/cities/us/ca/san_jose/ Or you could just create your own activity, start your own group, or try writing a poem a day.

The Academy of American Poets suggests thirty activities for April at poets.org/page.php/prmID/94

1. Celebrate Poem In Your Pocket Day, April 18
2. Read a book of poetry
3. Memorize a poem
4. Revisit a poem
5. Put poetry in an unexpected place
6. Bring a poem to a place of worship
7. Attend a poetry reading
8. Play Exquisite Corpse

9. Read a poem at an open mic
10. Support literary organizations
11. Listen on your commute
12. Subscribe to a literary magazine
13. Start a notebook on Poets.org
14. Put a poem in a letter
15. Watch a poetry movie
16. Take a poem out to lunch
17. Put a poem on the pavement
18. Recite a poem to family and friends
19. Organize a poetry reading
20. Promote public support for poetry
21. Start a poetry reading group
22. Read interviews, literary criticism.
23. Buy a book of poems
24. Start a commonplace book
25. Integrate poetry with technology
26. Ask the Post Office for poet stamps
27. Sign up for a poetry class
28. Subscribe to our free newsletter
29. Write a letter to a poet
30. Visit a poetry landmark — WT

Poetry Center San Jose

by Karen Llewellyn

Poetry readings, workshops, a literary journal—Poetry Center San Jose is the hub of poetic activity in the South Bay.

The third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m., Poetry Center San Jose holds readings at the Willow Glen Library. The meeting begins with a featured writer, followed by open mic readings. The poems vary widely in topic and style—love, of course, requited or not, is popular, but at a recent meeting one member read a poem about a garden hose, especially entertaining because it was unexpected. MC Christine Richardson always has encouraging words, and the audience is quick to cheer participants. This warm reception makes it easier to take a risk and present your work. The next meeting for the readings is April 18.

PCSJ also meets once a month at Markham House in History Park on Senter Road for Poets @ Play. This is usually the second Sunday of the month. Poets @ Play is, according to Dennis Noren, PCSJ Secretary and Markham House Chair, “an informal

gathering where we share poetry, start new poems, revise, and get constructive feedback from others.” The next meeting of Poets @ Play is April 14 from 1 to 4 p.m.

The second floor of Markham House is home to a collection of 1,300 volumes of poetry and reference materials relevant to poets. Downstairs is a resource room with poetry books for children, and materials for those interested in teaching poetry in their classes.

Each year, PCSJ also produces the literary journal *Caesura* to showcase “a compelling mix of work from the established award-winning poet to the burgeoning writer.”

For more about PCSJ’s activities, see www.pcsj.org/ — WT

April 2013 National Poetry Month Events

By Victoria M. Johnson

Poem in Your Pocket Day

Pick up a poem at the Los Gatos Library. Volunteers will be handing them out around town. Thursday, April 18, ALL DAY.

Erica Goss & Friends National Poetry Month Reading & Open Mic

Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 3600 Stevens Creek, San Jose 95117. Sunday, April 21 at 2:00 pm.

Poetry Los Gatos Presents: NPM Poetry Reading & Open Mic

Great Bear Coffee, 19 N. Santa Cruz Ave, Los Gatos 95030. Thursday, April 25 at 6:30 pm. — WT

Travel Writing Workshops

I’m the executive editor at *Go World Travel Magazine*, www.goworldtravel.com, and the director at Travel Writing on Location. We offer travel writing workshops in top destinations and provide not only classroom instruction but also an incredible travel experience to write about. One upcoming travel writing workshop: Native American & Spanish Heritage in New Mexico, May 2-6, 2013; details at <http://travelwritingonlocation.com/writing-workshop-in-taos-santa-fe-nm/> Contact Janna Graber, jgraber@travelwritingonlocation.com — WT

Austin's Angel

The angel stands alone, facing East, foreseeing each rising sun.
Her acolytes lie before and around, awaiting their judgment days.
Behind her, Highway 50 stretches arrow-flight straight,
Vanishing in desert dust and haze.

What is this town she watches over, itself so nearly a ghost?
There's the hotel. Is there laughter and music? No. It's forever stilled.
Across the road and up the hill stands a locked and sunburned church.
It's empty now. Tell me, was it ever really filled?

On up the slope, see rows of stones where lives and houses stood,
Only bare foundations now. The wind speaks for those who were.
Look, over there, a mine portal waits, inviting us, calling us near.
Inside, in the darkness, do those long-ago miners stir?

Up the valley once came iron rails, a path from the world outside.
Up them rolled a people's dreams, down went lives and silver ore.
Up them once came the angel, carved from cold, white stone,
Carved into life and sent to bless her benighted town evermore.

I must go, but I pause a moment to follow the angel's gaze.
From atop her plinth, she sees beyond what I can see. A green lawn,
Hewn from this desert. Square of bases. Soccer goals. Tables, a park.
The town clings to life. Bless its angel. May that life go on and on.

— Jamie Miller

Austin's Angel

by Jamie Miller



Austin, Nevada is a desperate little town that should have vanished into the desert forty years ago but clings to life still. There are mineral deposits to be mined to the south, and a few young people to mine them, yet Austin remains as near to a ghost town as imaginable. But, as Billy Crystal said in *Princess Bride*, "He's not really dead. Just mostly dead."

Over it all, this lovely angel sculpture stands in the middle of a graveyard with falling-down fences and plastic flowers faded to white. It was too abandoned, too lonely. We gave her a little handful of flowers to hold as she wrote in her book.

— WT

Petite Christmas Poinsettia

Red furled leaves beckon to me from the floor of the thrift store.
Tiny buds, gently cradled amidst the two toned crimson.
Perfect offering of love, your sweetness is in your size.
I left you at her doorstep to stop, and feel the season.

— Suzy Paluzzi

Springtime Reverie

One misty April morning an Artist mused —
Contemplating a garden pond with water lilies infused.
He felt the stillness of the moment and outside matters cease —
With that inspired impression, he created a masterpiece.

A solitary Poet wandered one bright spring day —
He marveled at golden daffodils gracefully swaying beside the bay.
On recollecting those flowers in the tranquility of his home —
He brought them to glory in a wondrous poem.

The Artist's stark, white canvas —
And the Poet's empty page —
Transfigured to reflections of beauty,
And the untold wisdom of a sage.

— Sally A. Milnor

No one is an artist unless he carries his picture in his head before painting it. — Claude Monet

*Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.
It takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquility.*
— William Wordsworth

Untitled

After the pain and shame
When we view what has again
Been done,
The death, destruction, dismemberment,
The agony of disbelief
At the atrocities we commit
Upon each other---
In the name of RELIGION
Because of SKIN COLOR
An individual's sexual orientation
LAND, TERRITORY, which cannot be "owned"
Earth being the host to humanity,
When will we stop?

~ j mutz

Poetic Art Process

Continued from Page 9

6. Vocabulary. One of the most important aspects of poetic art is to cultivate a very high USE vocabulary, not just words one knows when read, but words that the artist actually uses in writing or conversation. In English, it is thought the average person used about 20,000 words in Elizabethan times (1500s to early 1600s) – perhaps actually fewer today. William Shakespeare, however, is estimated to have had a vocabulary of over 50,000 words. I try to do likewise with visual artistic vocabulary.

Building a large USE vocabulary is not as easy as it sounds. It is at least as difficult as mastering the cello to a symphonic level of skill. Using computer files, exercises, and a Thesaurus or two over several years, I have only slightly improved. My vocabulary file has grown to several hundred pages, and I try to improve upon it daily.

Writing poetic art also helps to improve one's language usage skills as does attending or viewing artistic and musical events.

7. Inventing New Language. Increasingly, I have felt lan-

guage is inadequate; so, in a number of paid commissions, I invented new words for people, events, and things. For example, to commemorate a lady who had used various needle stitching and quilts in her therapeutic discipline, I called her a "Crafthealer" and told her family I hoped the term would one day be accepted in the *Oxford Dictionary*.

8. "Something Above Us." Astronauts and astronomers tell us there are no words for "something above us," and indeed, having scouted some galactic objects for an online project myself, I have to agree with them! People who have survived negative experiences and lived to tell the tale often say the same thing.

These observations point to a higher reality – call it consciousness, if you will – above and beyond our mental limits. I try to let this beauty, which I tie to my personal faith tradition, filter subtly into my work.

9. Conclusion. Poetic art is a never-ending process. Disappointing as it may sound, we never reach "completion" – we never know it all; nor does any worker in any creative discipline. Yes, it is forever, but that keeps art fresh. – WT

The Businessman and the Bum

Continued from Page 8

"But consider the unfortunate woman of twenty-two who has four tiny mouths to feed. Surely, we must take care of her."

The businessman could only lean back in his easy chair, eyes closed and fists clenched.

"But what of the great state in which we live? You need to pay 12% of your income for all of the state benefits. Where is that on your pay stub?" barked his friend. "We must pay for our safety and to incarcerate those who have chosen to disregard our rules and regulations; their housing and health care comes to \$47,000 per inmate."

"Why, I'm required to send my ex-wife \$2000 a month, or \$24,000 a year. I have resented paying her this amount, but now I see she cannot afford to live on that, save for the largess of her boyfriend," the businessman quietly stated. "So, 12% of my \$36,000 is an additional \$4000 per year, leaving me at \$32,000, minus the \$24,000 I give to my ex-wife."

"Well, no," the businessman's friend pointed out. "The 12% is on your salary of \$100,000, so that's \$12,000 a year."

"That means I am left with nothing! How can I possibly live with no money whatsoever?"

"You should feel pleased. You're supporting those unable to work – welfare recipients, criminals, children, and your ex-wife – people far less fortunate than yourself. Well, thank you for your hospitality. I must be getting along."

His friend exited the building and made his way down the boulevard. He chanced upon the same bum the businessman had passed earlier in the evening. They walked together until they reached the entrance to the homeless shelter. As they entered, the smell of baked turkey, mashed potatoes, and fresh rolls increased their desire for a delicious meal.

The only things certain in life are death and taxes.
– Benjamin Franklin

"I cannot believe what a pleasurable existence I have," the businessman's friend said to his companion. "I take evening strolls, visit my friends, and come here for meals. I am well pleased with my friends who continue to toil so I can lead such an existence. Since I quit my six-figure job, things have improved for me immeasurably." – WT

Shelf Life by Madeline McEwen



It's called a book.

Didn't you have electricity back then?

Seven Scenes: Haiku

by Stephen C. Wetlesen

Cold and Dry Weather

Hummingbirds dogfight.
Last day of January.
Golden State springtime.

On the Peninsula Train

Rusted sidetrack spurs.
Pink tree blossoms in contrast.
Decay in culture.

To Sean

Liquid sun mirror -
blinding light on wave faces.
Single surfer in glow.

Outside Walgreen's Drugs

Bare naked branches.
I did not hear the "Nocturne" -
Borodin classic.

Northwest Teen Years

Bright full moon rises,
silhouettes evergreens ridge.
Oregon summers.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

Wooden Pavilion

Ripples of pond light
Reflect on wisteria -
Branches still barren.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

Saratoga Hakone Tea Garden

Imperial Koi -
Red and white blimps swim to food.
Watery canvas.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen



Koi fish in Japan represent good fortune.

Poetic Art Process: Poetic Art Words

by Stephen C. Wetlesen

A file listing a few favored poetic art words for beginners follows.

Abstract, acrobatic, Aeolian, airborne, amorphous, artful, angles, asymmetric, awkward, balletic, balloons, background, beautify, bliss, branches, brushstroke, carnival, celestial, cerebral, chromatic, circlets, classical, coil, colorful, comical, confetti, contours, corkscrew, crescent, curious, dancelike, dazzle, decorate, deep, delight, dervish, dots, eccentric, eclectic, effortless, elongated, ethereal, evergreens, exotic, fans, fantails, fantasia, farmlands, ferns, fireworks, firmament, flecks, floating, flurries, focus, formless, fragments, glide, glitter, golden, graceful, grades, haiku, happenings, helix, hoops, horizon, intense, junk, juxtapose, kaleidoscope, kites, levels, lightshows, loops, lopsided, lunar, marine, meadows, meteors, morsel, metallic, moonlight, moonscape, moss, nightscape, nocturne, oceanic, orders, ornamental, otherworldly, overview, panorama, picturesque, pinwheel, planes, prismatic, rainbow, ringlets, rural, scenery, scraps, scribbles, shapeless, shards, shreds, sideways, sight, silvery, sketch, slant, slivers, snapshots, sparkles, sparks, speckles, spiral, squiggly, spheres, starry, stately, statuesque, storybook, string, sublime, summit, sunlight, sunshine, surf, symphonic, tantalyze, tidbit, tiers, tip, treetop, twigs, unearthly, uneven, ungainly, whimsical, wildflowers, windborne, wispy, woodlands, wreath, zigzag.

– WT

Child of the Great Depression

Whooping cough, measles, impetigo, chicken pox,
Head lice, strep throat, vaccination scars.

Rationing, black market, sugar, coffee, hoarding,
Saving bonds, patriotism, growing vict'ry gardens.

Handouts, county aid, poor kids in overalls,
Heartaches, happiness, conflicts and kisses.

Sadness and soft hearts, aunts, uncles, grandparents,
Hide-and-seek, fireflies, lightning-bolts and thunder.

Bed-bugs, mosquito bites, kerosene and poverty,
Payday was layoff day, so there went the groceries.

Popcorn was cereal combined with milk and honey
Tomatoes were strawberries if you wanted them to be.

Liver free, onions cheap, calf brains were yummy,
Sugar and vanilla turned snow into ice cream.

Write down the recipes to share with the public.
How could I leave all this behind?

– Betty Auchard

Pier 39 San Francisco

Fog Harbor Fish House
Overlooks Bay Boat "Old Blue" -
My alma mater.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen



Historic Cats

Long ago the cats were made happy
When sheep were put out to pasture.
"DIOS!" The Spanish ranchers then cried:
A problem. Something soon to decide.
Both "big Los Gatos" and small ones survived
By a miracle, though there was serious hunting
With township and homesteads and timbering
industry

Following closely the riotous cat-hunts:
The newly settled "Los Gatos" thrived.
Bobcats and cougars are still there at home.
Hard to find. Melting with night.
Quail and rabbits are dined on, not sheep
Or possibly animals we call "our pets"--
A large hungry cat must take what it gets.
The hills are patient, the trees grow again.
The township now celebrates historic things
saved.

Ghosts of vaqueros with lassos whoop by
Then out of dark shadows speaks an owl:
Hear the answer, defiant cat's lonely weird cry.

— Pat Bustamante

To Appear in *Anthology of Los Gatos Poetry 2013*

Mom

I don't remember how it was when I was born,
I don't remember if I snuggled in your arms,
I don't remember if I nestled in your caress,
I don't remember if I sucked at your lace.

All I remember is years of care,
You standing by me when I was scared
You telling me there is always a way,
That life is beautiful no matter how gray.

As I close my eyes—
I see your loving gaze,
I see your rebuking finger,
And your patient face,

Even though I am much older now,
I still seek the comfort of your embrace.

— Anuja Seith

San Francisco Beat

Broadway at Columbus
Chinatown fades into
little Italy, blessed by
Saint Francis of Assisi

omne ignotum

Chianti and Brad
at Ristorante Franchino
photos of young mama and
papa hang on the walls
buon appetito

City Lights, across the alley
Vesuvio Café where
50s Beats spouted prose
while pissing in the john
cool man

Ginsberg's *Howl* banned
Burroughs was *Junkie*
pre Condor and Carol Doda
Kerouac lived *On the Road*
the Beat bible

In that flicker between
when The Gate glows sienna
and neon lights Broadway
young poets of North Beach
hear the rhythm of the Beats

— Leslie E. Hoffman



Harmless Little E-mail

I write to her
a harmless little e-mail.
I reply yes to
her idea to meet
and walk at a park,
a nearby neutral ground,
for the old times, we say...
She's married.
Me, I'm widowed, now, and free.

What harm?

We had a long and
checkered history;
felt chemistry's
white heat; exhilaration's
explosions, those soaring
highs. But bumper lows blew in,
rough sailing on ruffled seas,
bed promises imploding,
trusted bridges failing.

Time heals.

In my heart of hearts,
she was,
she remains
the love of my life.
Yes, but on that kind
of kid's stuff,
we had agreed,
things changed
and we had closed the books.

I thought.

— Richard A. Burns

Weather Report

Residents of Iowa don't know what to do.

They have snow on the ground
and weather that can't make up its mind.

We're not much better off in California.

Here, the sun is warm and bright while
warnings of frost are implied in the news.

But roses have better things to do than read
or listen, which is no different from many
good folk who reside in our state.

Roses believe everything they feel is real.
Ignorant of the truth, they push out fresh, new
red sprouts which tonight will turn deadly black.

So much for hope, life, and the pursuit of happiness.

It's Mother Nature's fault. She can sure
nip things in the bud, the bitch.

— Betty Auchard

April Terse on Verse

by Pat Bustamante



Pat Bustamante

April App

The "Spring-fever" app is all the rage:
When you start to wilt,
When it's not worth your wage.
Let the weather take some of the guilt.
Or blame your computer! Could be trying to stage
A takeover! Writing with you as its alias!
I suspect such machines
Can maliciously fail us.

— Pat Bustamante

YOU ARE SITTING next to a bunch of agitated electrons. That is, if you are near a computer, a TV set or radio, a phone, or even a wristwatch with a battery. The Electronic Age is now — unless the sun, that great generator of electro-magnetic energy, decides to throw a fit of huge sun-storms, and anything electrical on our planet objects by quitting. That goes for automobiles and airplanes. Keep a bicycle handy.

Computers and I have this "love/hate" going. Yet I do realize that all writing is migrating into electronic machines — what if books disappear? "Fahrenheit-destruction" a la Ray Bradbury, not necessary? The library-space in homes may become a mere shelf for "the tablet."

The larger question is: how will the human brain change? We generate our own electrical currents, in our nerve synapses. Sometimes I think I hear static when nothing appears to be turned on — radio reception through tooth-fillings, as others have claimed? These robots we have — even automobiles that need no human driver — are bound to change everything.

When online you can do a word-search. You can probably go online and find all about yourself! (Maybe one day, listed as "author of that famous--") I am trying to be optimistic, but the pessimist in me will not die. Will robots themselves write our history? Sadly, though such machines can put various random words together, they are not "poets," so enjoy your unique creativity!

Happy Poetry Month. (Kick a computer.) — WT

Screen Play

We are a movie the world can't see
Can't hear the crescendos as the
soundtrack fills in the script of
secrets only we know

As the film rolls our story unfolds of
clandestine meetings, of hearts beating with joy
of days passing into years of laughter together
and the tears of despair with rules we must obey

We are a movie the world can't see
You and me reading lines day by day
the screenplay of our destiny
On and on in rhythm and rhyme
the musical score keeps perfect time
to every heartbeat, every sigh. Until finally
we lie together again looking in each other's eyes

Dreaming quietly with a far off gaze of
Words that must for now remain unspoken:
together, forever and always

— Karen Hartley



Women Who Work

Half a dozen brains
Under tresses some men fear.
A constellation making rains
So watch out, Those-Who-
Fear, my dear.
Every star a mother of a
planet or two
Our universe is organized as
female —
To males, I say, "Boo!"

— Anonymous

Texting Grandma

by Pat Bustamante

Being an email correspondence between
an Internet-savvy kid and his grand-
mother.

Txtng Grama

Y allus fss over/wirds

What in the world are you saying?
Your spelling, I am not okaying.

'S Nu

What are you trying to tell
me? You've forgotten how to spell?
We ought to sort this out,
"Nu" means "No" as I know well.

OMG U dont know?

Hole erth duz, promus u!

Kids 4 sure alla rage.

Hmwk, Im stuk ona page.

Yelp. Can u help?

I think you need me to teach you
Grammar and spelling, they are ageless
I believe.

Causes me to grieve
Their importance does not reach you!
It'll be sinful if you grow up wageless.
C u 2nite — Did I get that right?

— Pat Bustamante

Cocoon

I wrap myself within your safety,
Sheltered from the harsh world outside,
Protected from living wild and free.
Sometimes I feel claustrophobic,
As you tighten your grip within these walls,
Someday a crack will find me unfettered,
Free to discover me.

— Rita Beach

Twinkle, Twinkle

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder where you are.
Star Walk app shows Pegasi
Up above the world 47° 50' 35"
Pegasi, super-giant, orange.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder where you are.
Star Walk app shows Pegasi
689.6 light years away —
Pegasi, what rhymes with orange?

— M. Johnson

Announcements

Day of the Book Workshop

April 20, 2013, Time: 10 – 4

JFKU 100 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill,

Featuring the artists who created *Banned & Recovered: Artists Intervention*, a collective response by 37 artists to book challenges and bannings in U.S. schools and libraries and the threats to the U.S. Constitution posed by the 2003 Patriot Act. Also, hear from Beth Barany, Catharine Bramkamp, Stephanie Chandler, Jeane Slone, Michael Somers, Elizabeth Rosner, K. Tutashinda, Tanya Egan Gibson, Charles Burack, and Linda Joy Meyers.

\$35 with lunch. For more details and to preregister, contact Catharine Bramkamp at bramkamp@yahoo.com. Preregistered pay at the door. – WT

Self-editing course

I'm teaching an online 9-week class starting April 1 through UC San Diego Extension called "Self-Editing for Fiction and Non-Fiction Writers." This new class will concentrate on how writers can look at their own writing through the eyes of a copyeditor. Students may submit their writing on a weekly basis to be copyedited and discussed personally and privately.

Sign up at <http://extension.ucsd.edu/studyarea/index.cfm?vAction=singleCourse&vCourse=WCWP-80029>. Contact Chris Stuart at chris@chrisstuart.com. – WT

March Madness Poetry Tournament

SBW Poets: Look for this next March.

Posted on Facebook March 14 by Susan Taylor Brown: So today the voting opens for the March Madness Poetry tournament where 64 poets were given a single word (a hard word) and had 36 hours to write a poem for kids using that word in the poem. I drew the word "espouse" and am up against Allan Wolf. Gulp. For those that love poetry, this is a fun tournament to follow. It's modeled on the basketball March Madness tournaments so the 64 will be reduced to 32 and then the members of that group will each get a new word to use in a poem. Here's my matchup.

Loaded Verses at Dawn

Beware the skirmish just begun, poetic lines are drawn,
my dictionary and thesaurus whimper on the lawn.

Broken pencils surround my bed, red ink stains all the sheets,
I need to channel Dr. Seuss or Silverstein or Keats.

My garbage bucket overflows with pithy paper bits,
while bloody blisters fill my hands like rows of zombie zits.

For the poetry I espouse I'll make myself the clown,
I'll wrestle any word you want and take that big wolf down.

– Susan Taylor Brown



Anthology Submissions

Margie Yee Webb, co-creator of the upcoming anthology *Not Your Mother's Book . . . On Cats*, announced that May 1, 2013 is the deadline to submit funny, silly and endearing cat stories, 500 to 2,500 words. Visit <https://publishing-syndicate.com/> for details. – WT

Weekly Poem Prompt

Look for a weekly poem prompt at:
www.ericagoss.com/index.php?page=poems



DeAnza Creative Writing

by Victoria M. Johnson

Here are the creative writing classes offered at DeAnza College this spring. Spring quarter begins Monday, April 8.

Poetry Writing*, EWRT 41, Liz Green, 1:30-3:20 M & W

Fiction Writing*, EWRT 40, Alex Giardino, 11:30-1:20 M & W

Introduction to Creative Writing*, EWRT 30, Lita Kurth, 10:30-12:20 T/TH
*Red Wheelbarrow** Literary Magazine, Student Edition, EWRT 65/ JOUR 65, Ken Weisner, 4:00-5:50 Mondays

Details at www.deanza.fhda.edu

*If you lack a prerequisite, email the instructor for permission to enroll:

giardinoalex@fhda.edu
lizgreen79@gmail.com
lakurth@yahoo.com
weisnerken@fhda.edu

– WT

Grammar Girl:

Quick and Dirty Tips, Better Writing

<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/chicago-style.aspx>

The Time is Now

Poets & Writers

The most important and underrated factor in a writer's success is discipline. Talent and luck always help, but having a consistent writing practice is often the difference between aspiring writers and published writers.

However, finding the time and inspiration to write is not always easy. That's where creative writing prompts and exercises can help. Sometimes writing prompts and exercises result in a workable draft of a story or poem. Other times, they may lead to what can seem like a dead end. But having to generate ideas, being pushed in a direction where you wouldn't normally go, and just plain putting pen to paper is often enough to provide that crucial dose of inspiration.

"The Time Is Now" offers a weekly writing prompt (poetry on Tuesdays, fiction on Wednesdays, and creative nonfiction on Thursdays) to help you stay committed to your writing practice throughout the year. See www.pw.org/writing-prompts-exercises – WT

Contests

More Writing Contests

Poets & Writers lists more writing contests than any other source, and all of the contests listed in their database at pw.org/grants have been carefully reviewed and benefit writers.

While you're perusing the listings, please take a look at the entry for *Tusculum Review's* annual literary prizes, which offer \$1,000 and publication to winners in poetry and fiction.

An extensive list of contests appears on preditorsandeditors.com and on writersdigest.com/competitions/writing-competitions. —WT

To win, you first must enter.

Contest for sports writers

Whether you're a player or a fan, or the kid who counted the minutes till gym class was over, sports can bring out the best and the worst in human nature. Sports can reinforce bullying and social dominance, or offer personal empowerment to an underdog. Yet stories and essays about sports are too often dismissed as "genre writing". This contest aims to bridge the gap between the worlds of physical culture and literary culture. For advice from the contest judge, go to our website

http://winningwriters.com/contests/sports/sp_guidelines.php#.URxur2cr-GRM

What to Submit: An entry is one story or essay on a sports-related theme. Entries should be original and unpublished, up to 6,000 words. Multiple submissions accepted.

Prizes: Categories, fiction and essay. Each category, first Prize, \$1,000 cash; five honorable mentions, \$100 cash each. All winners of cash prizes will be announced in our email newsletter and published on WinningWriters.com, which receives over one million page views per year.

How to submit: \$15 per entry. We welcome online submissions with payment by credit or debit card. We also accept email submissions when paid via PayPal.

Deadline: May 31, 2013. —WT

Senior Poets Laureate Poetry Competition

Entries are now being accepted for the 21st annual Senior Poets Laureate Poetry Competition (state and national laureate awards) for American poets age 50 and older. Deadline June 30, 2013. For rules, download from www.amykitchenerfdn.org

Nimrod Literary Awards

www.utulsa.edu/nimrod

Announcing the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction and the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry: First place, \$2,000 & publication; Second Place, \$1,000 & publication. Deadline: April 30, 2013.

No previously published works; fiction, 7,500 words maximum; poetry, 3 - 10 pages. Omit author's name on manuscript. Include a cover sheet containing major title and any subtitles, author's name, address, phone and email. Staple manuscript. Clearly indicate "Contest Entry" on both the envelope and the cover sheet. Include SASE for results. Manuscripts will not be returned.

Entry fee: \$20 each entry, checks payable to Nimrod International Journal, The University of Tulsa, 800 S. Tucker Drive, Tulsa, OK 74104.

Hurry! Writing Workshop: Creating Plots and Playing God

Saturday, April 6, 12:30 - 4:30 p.m. A writing workshop with New York Times Bestselling Author, Robert Dugoni; \$60 CWC member, \$70 nonmember. **Especially for SBW**, CWC Tri-Valley Branch has extended online registration to April 3. You must pay online at www.trivalleywriters.org

Call for Entries: Fault Zone

Fault Zone: Shift, the fourth in the anthology series edited by the SF/Peninsula Branch of California Writers, will be published by Sand Hill Review Press later in 2013. Non-members of SF/Peninsula Writers are eligible to enter the *Fault Zone* short story contest. First Prize, \$300 and publication in *Fault Zone* anthology; Second, \$100; Third, \$50. **Contest deadline:** July 31, 2013. **Reading fee:** \$15.

Previously published work will be considered; let us know where it has appeared. The book will be available on Amazon by January 2014. The San Francisco/Peninsula Writers will be the contest judges. Your piece should relate to the anthology's theme in some way. We can't wait to see it!

How to Enter the contest: Mail two (2) copies of your submission plus \$15 to the address below. Please put the name of the story and page number on each page. Use Times New Roman or similar font, 12 point, double-spaced. Maximum word count is 2500. Please use a cover sheet and give us your contact information: your email, address and phone number. Mail your two copies plus entry fee to: SF/Peninsula CWC, P.O. Box 853, Belmont, CA 94002. **Note: No Registered Mail.**

WRITERSTALK Challenge

What is it?

Twice a year, in February and August, 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, 500 - 1500 words
Memoir, 500 - 1200 words
Essay/Nonfiction, 500 - 1200 words
Poetry

Judging Periods

January 16 through July 15
July 16 through January 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. —WT

Directory of Experts

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

Astronomy, History of Astronomy

Bob Garfinkle ragarf@earthlink.net

Banking

Pam Oliver-Lyons polpap@prodigy.net

Character Development

ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net

Counseling/John Steinbeck

Dr. Audry L. Lynch

glynch0001@comcast.net

Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace

Jerry Mulenburg

geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net

Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up

Martha Engber martha@engber.com

Internal Medicine/Addiction

Disorder/Psychology

Dave Breithaupt dlbmlb@comcast.net

Marketing and Management

Suzy Paluzzi, MBA jomarch06@yahoo.com

Mathematics/Fibonacci Sequence

Marjorie Johnson

marjohnson89@earthlink.net

Teaching and the Arts

Betty Auchard Btauchard@aol.com

Telecommunications Technology

Allan Cobb allancobb@computer.org

Television Production

Woody Horn 408-266-7040

Thanatologist: Counseling for Death, Dying, and Bereavement

Susan Salluce susansalluce@yahoo.com

Want more?

Listings for contests, conferences and workshops commonly appear in *Writers Digest* and *The Writer*. Check their websites and also the websites of other CWC Branches listed above.

Please send information on other conferences and workshops to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. — WT

CWC Around the Bay

These are published meeting locations and times for 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: 1:30 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. cwc-berkeley.com

Central Coast: 5:30 third Tuesdays, Bay Park Hotel, 1425 Munras Avenue, Monterey. centralcoastwriters.org

Fremont: 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Marin: 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. cwcmarinwriters.com

Mount Diablo: 11:30 second Saturdays, Hungry Hunter, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. mtdiablowriters.org

Redwood: 3:00 first Sundays at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. redwoodwriters.org

Tri-Valley: 11:30 third Saturdays, Oasis Grille, 780 Main Street, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.com

Sacramento: 11:00 third Saturdays, Tokyo Buffet, 7217 Greenback Lane, Citrus Heights. cwcsacramentowriters.org

San Francisco/Peninsula: 10:00 third Saturdays, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. sfpeninsulawriters.com

Workshops and Conferences

Pitch-O-Rama

Here's an invitation to SBW members: Pitch-O-Rama, April 13th. CWC members special offer, same price as Women's Nat'l Book Association- SF Chapter members. Register here: <http://wnba-sfchapter.org/pitch-o-rama-meet-the-agents-editors-and-publishers/>

P&W Guide to Literary Agents

Searching for an agent? *Poets & Writers* has just published an e-document that will interest South Bay Writers: *The Poets & Writers Guide to Literary Agents*; pw.org/content/the_poets_and_writers_guide_to_literary_agents

Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop, July 2013

The eleventh Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop will take place July 15-19 in the exquisite Oregon coast town of Oceanside. The instructors are at the top of their game. For information visit: www.occbww.com

CSUMB Summer Arts July Writing Workshops

July 1-14: The Triple-Threat Writer: TV, Play, Screenplay; July 15-28: Memoir Writing: From Personal to Cultural; July 15-28: Writing Fantasy for Children and Teens. See csusummerarts.org

Writing for Life Workshop

Writing intensives with

- James Scott Bell, June 28-30
- Davis Bunn, Sept. 14-15
- Michael Hauge, Oct. 19-20

For information go to

www.writingforlifeworkshops.com

Ongoing Critique Groups Our Voices

Meets in Campbell every other Thursday 7:15 pm. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical non-fiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche — dalaroche@comcast.net

Valley Writers

Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center in Santa Clara, Mondays 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Contact: Marjorie Johnson at marjoriej358@comcast.net

Emperor's Mystery Circle

Meets at Emperor Norton's, 7508 Santa Teresa Blvd, San Jose, 1:30 pm., first Mondays. Mystery genre. Contact Pam Oliver-Lyons, polpap@prodigy.net

Karen's Critique Group

Meets at The Hickr'y Pit, Campbell, 10am to Noon, second and fourth Tuesdays. Fiction, non-fiction or memoir only. Contact Karen, Sew1Machin@aol.com

Your Critique Group

For consideration, send information to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 7:30p SBW Board meeting	3	4	5 7:30p Open mic Barnes & Noble Almaden, San Jose	6
7	8	9	10 6:00p Regular Dinner Meeting, Harry's Hofbrau	11	12	13
14	15	16 Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	17	18	19 7:30p Open mic Wil- low Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	April 2013			
Future Flashes						
	April 30 SBW Board meets	May 3 and 17 Open mics	May 8 Reg. Dinner Meeting	Saturday July 20 CWC picnic at Joaquin Miller Park Oakland		

South Bay Writers Open Mic

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

Note third Friday location: Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave, San Jose

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

Note: Come to a South Bay Writers dinner meeting to look for others who may want to form a critique group. Contact Networking Chair Elena Martina at networking@southbaywriters.org.

CWC bags: Only \$10 each



Offered during our monthly meetings. Collect yours before supplies run out!

Your ad could go here

\$7 per column inch for SBW members

\$10 per inch for nonmembers

Members Books

Go to southbaywriters.com to see the members' gallery and members books. Add your book to our website.

South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10

At the meeting or on amazon.com

Poetry Readings

Poets@Play

Second Sundays: Check for times
Markham House History Park
1650 Senter Rd., San Jose

Poetry Center San Jose

Willow Glen Library
3rd Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.
1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose

Free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dennis Noren at norcamp@sbcglobal.net or go to www.poetrycentersanjose.org/calendar.html



Stay Informed

Read the Constant Contact notices in your email to receive meeting and event announcements. If you are not receiving those announcements, send your name and email address to webmaster@southbaywriters.org



California Writers Club

South Bay Branch

P.O. Box 3254

Santa Clara, CA 95055

www.southbaywriters.com

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

South Bay Writers
April Regular Monthly Meeting
6 p.m. Wednesday, April 10

Harry's Hofbrau
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose

SPEAKER: Victoria Zackheim

Assay that Essay

**If you don't know what to call it,
call it an essay**

WritersTalk deadline is always
the 16th of the month.

Regular dinner meetings are
second Wednesdays 6 – 9 pm



Harry's Hofbrau

From Highway 280, take Saratoga Avenue North.
Harry's is on your right near Stevens Creek Blvd.