



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 21  
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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

## Your characters drive your plot

Speaker: Martha Engber

by David LaRoche

We each have different interests and goals and they change as we go through our lives. We encounter people, events, and ideas—we learn and we change. Yesterday, I wanted to punch Wally's nose—splatter it all over his face, the son of a bitch. Today I was borrowing his tools. Well, I needed them as my main water line broke and a geyser was flooding my yard. Wally refused at first, but he lived next door and his lot is lower than mine. He was motivated as was I. Our goals had changed and so did our relationship and our lives going forward.



So it is with the folks in our books. Our characters drive our plots as they encounter the needs of the others with whom we associate them—and the hurdles, the conflicts, resolution and rewards. Martha Engber is an expert at this, the finessing of plot through the needs of our characters and the change those needs bring. She will show us how that is done—smoothly, authentically, and with the grace of the author we want to become.

Martha has written a book about this, *Growing Great Characters From the Ground Up*, a five-star exposition, and she has delivered lectures on the same subject. Martha has received a Pushcart nomination for a short story incorporat-

ing her ideas and had a full-length screen play produced in Hollywood. Her short fiction has been published in *Watchword*, *Iconoclast Anthology*, *Bookpress*, *Berkeley Fiction Review*, and other literary magazines. Some of us know Martha, and can vouch from personal experience—she knows her stuff and how to deliver it in a memorable way.

Come to our September meeting and you will return to your writing that night with a new tool—not one to repair your water line, but to vastly improve your story. We need this sort of insight and we thrive on new ideas that assist with better writing. Join me then and we'll all become better at what we do—perhaps ending up at the table with Charlie Rose. September 11 at 6 o'clock is the time, Harry's Hofbrau the place. See you there.  
—WT

AUGUST RECAP

## High tension

by Grace Tam

At Harry's Hofbrau on August 14, Nancy Curteman began by defining tension as something abstract, but we all know it when we read it. Writers need to read, read, read; to learn to write tension, we should read tension. She cited many examples including Stephen King's *Pet Cemetery*; Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*; and Thomas Harris's *The Silence of the Lambs*—enough fine reading to last us a year.

Nancy listed several attributes of tension with examples of each. Bottom line: Tension evokes emotions such as worry, anxiety, fear, stress, and uneasy feelings on the part of your characters and readers and builds suspense until the climax.

Without crisis and conflict, your novel won't have tension. Crisis is created by an external event such as a murder, a crime, or an illness. Conflict occurs when a character wants or needs something that is blocked by another character, events in nature, or incompatible desires or values. However, it isn't action that builds tension, but the anticipation of action.

"Write dialogue, but not conversation," Nancy said. Avoid rehashing events. Use short, choppy sentences with action verbs to bring tension into dialogue.

Tension from conflicting emotions arises from a character's inner struggle with his motives and needs.

*Continued on Page 6*

### Is this your last issue of *WritersTalk*?

If you forgot to renew your membership in South Bay Writers, then after September 15, we will forget to send *WritersTalk* to you. Renew online at [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com) Do it today!

**Upcoming events**  
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# President's Palaver

by Colin Seymour  
President, South Bay Writers

## If we had to hire someone . . .

A couple of years ago I figured I was capable of becoming a general manager for South Bay Writers. I calculated I could be program director, publicist, treasurer, newsletter editor, and membership chair and even perform a couple of other functions—for about \$10,000 a year, working about 12 to 15 hours a week.

Unfortunately we would have had to more than double the annual \$45 membership fees to do that then. And now that our membership numbers are barely half of what they were, my general manager scheme would cause the dues to triple. That would decimate the Club.

The conventional wisdom seems to be that \$45 is pretty steep, pretty near the limit a large number of members—and potential members—can tolerate.

We are, after all, long established in the mold of starving artists, and not only because we are a non-profit organization. I go on the assumption that our creature-comfort standards are a combination of spartan and socialist.

So we spread the wealth, as it were. Many vital duties are distributed among Club members as widely as possible, though one or two duties often go unclaimed. At this writing we need a new treasurer and I wish there were a salary to offer.

But our free labor doesn't mean those gratis functions lack economic value to Club members, as well as value to those who take them on.

Rarely, if ever, has an SBW president shouted, "You OWE it to the Club to pitch in" while advertising these openings, though it is tempting.

Instead, the president must diplomatically promote these jobs as "opportunities."

That's no lie. I, for one, have networked with hundreds of publishing industry folks while performing SBW duties and also have established a comfort level with many Club members whose connections or literary advice could make all the difference to my endeavors.

You might be surprised at how much oomph some of these duties can add to your resumé. After I had spent nearly a year recruiting workshop presenters, dinner speakers, agents and others for our 2010 East of Eden writers' conference, it was pointed out to me that the "project management" the job entailed exceeded that of any organizing I'd ever done as a newspaper editor and designer. I'm told I earned that credibility even though we had to cancel the conference.

Ironic? No more so than publishing good books that don't sell yet still are valuable.

The value of everything is in flux, most certainly our labors. —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

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*. 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 15th 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

accolades@southbaywriters.com

### Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

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by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson  
Editor



## Your Internet brain

Yes, the Internet changes the shape of your brain.

In the DVD *Optimizing Brain Fitness* from The Great Courses, Richard Restak discusses recent research showing changes in neural networks in the brain, resulting from different kinds of activities. Time spent online, using the Internet, transforms our brains — transforms the parts of our brains we use for writing.

In particular, researchers have studied which parts of the brain are active while reading. Of course, these results apply to writers. As Stephen King said in *On Writing*, "If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot."

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) brain scans are showing researchers not only how reading changes the "channels" in the brain, but also how fiction transforms the mind. Hillary Casavant discusses these topics in "Internet Brain," *The Writer*, August 2013. She reports that Raymond Mar, York University in Toronto, found that the rich mental simulation of experience in fiction increases a reader's empathy. Natalie Phillips, Michigan State University, analyzed the neurological effects of reading Jane Austen and showed that "close reading" activated the parts of the brain responsible for movement and touch, as though readers were physically immersed in the book.

Although reading online involves a mental process similar to reading print, the effects are markedly different. Ziming Liu, San Jose State University, concluded that while the Internet has encouraged readers to explore more topics, individuals read digital documents on a "superficial level." That abundance of information interests readers but is mentally taxing.

Multiple studies have demonstrated "neuroplasticity," the way the brain changes and develops habits through repetition. Gary Small, brain fitness health expert at UCLA, found that novices' brains began to transform after only a week of regular Internet use.

It seems that new technology is rapidly and profoundly altering our brains. That means the more time we spend on the Internet, the more our brains adjust to quick bursts of information, and we gradually lose the ability to focus on extended tasks such as reading and writing.

The Internet may have changed the way our brains work, but reading fiction has simultaneously made a comeback in popularity. According to a National Endowment for the Arts study in 2002, the percentage of American adults who read literature began a steady climb after a 20-year slump. Thanks in part to eBooks' increasing popularity, revenue for fiction hit \$2.207 billion in the first half of 2012, up 8 percent from 2011, as reported by the Association of American Publishers.

It's clear that we hunger for stories — that's part of being human. While the Internet may change the shape of our brains, it doesn't alter our DNA. We crave stories, always have, always will. But make them short and punchy and filled with sensual detail; the magic word being "short".

And send those short pieces here to debut in *WritersTalk*. — WT

**Call for short fiction and memoir, fewer than 1000 words**

## View from the Board

by S. Halloran

Ten of us – President Colin Seymour, Vice President and Central Board rep Dave LaRoche, Treasurer Pam Oliver-Lyons, Secretary Sylvia Halloran, Newsletter Editor Marjorie Johnson, Member-at-Large Nader Khaghani, temporary Webmaster Dick Amyx, Publicity and Hospitality Chair Kimberly Malanczuk, Open Mic Chair Bill Baldwin, and interested member Carolyn Donnell met in San Jose on August 6.

A newly formed Planning Committee headed by Nader Khaghani has met and prepared short-, mid-, and long-term goals for the club.

The bare-bones ambiance and long food lines at Harry's Hofbrau continue to trouble some board members. Others recognize that maintaining a low-cost meeting appeals to many members.

Kimberly Malanczuk will be heading up a new hospitality effort. Folks on this committee will be dedicated to making everyone feel at home in the club. All are welcome to join Kim and help!

Programs and workshops for the year will focus on craft and creativity. A workshop is targeted for November, and a writing retreat in the spring. The following speakers are committed for upcoming meetings:

9/11	Martha Engber	<i>Character drives plot</i>
10/9	Victoria M. Johnson	<i>Voice and theme</i>
11/13	Charlotte Cook	<i>Structure/Arc</i>
12/11	Gisela Zebroski has again agreed to host our Christmas party!	

**Moved:** (Johnson) to accept July minutes. Passed, unanimous.

**Moved:** (Baldwin) to accept August officer reports. Passed, unanimous.

**Moved:** (LaRoche) to accept August committee reports. Passed, unanimous.

**Moved:** (Johnson) to ratify Nader as chair of planning committee. Passed, unanimous.

After last month's hopeful and enthusiastic beginning, the new board got down to business this month. Don't be fooled by the bread and butter motions – there is new energy and excitement brewing. – WT



Kim Malanczuk, SBW Publicity Chair  
– photo by Dick Amyx

## Seeking dynamic, creative brainstormers

by Kim Malanczuk

South Bay Writers' new Public Relations Committee seeks creative, gregarious new members who are prepared to roll up their sleeves and brainstorm. The committee will develop strategies to increase membership, obtain media coverage, and outreach externally to the community and internally to the SBW membership. A few possible projects include Happy Hour networking events, Brown Bag lectures, and Writers' Workshops for Kids. This will be a dynamic, highly engaged committee. If you like being creatively involved, email Publicity Chair Kim Malanczuk at [publicity@southbaywriters.com](mailto:publicity@southbaywriters.com). – WT

## Upcoming events

by Dave LaRoche

Throughout the year we will focus on craft, not leather work or diamond cutting, but how best to get your story onto paper. Successful writers know how – the techniques and devices that fascinate, bringing interest and cash. Why not us?

### SBW meeting programs

September – Martha Engber will talk about developing characters, those we love to hate, those we cannot help loving. Solid, believable people who carry the plot, making the story.

October – Victoria M. Johnson will speak to us about theme and voice – the backbone of story, its message, and the style that best suits you and carries the story.

November – Charlotte Cook will bring us arc. What that means and how it is structured. The story is like a symphony from the pianissimos of flutes to the crescendo of tympani and all that supports it.

December – Gisela Zebroski will host the branch at her home to celebrate the holidays. Wine will be present, a gift exchange is traditional, and no one leaves without a smile on his face.

January – Ransom Stephens will take us from craft (all the basics) into publishing, what we must have on the page to have our work published, the differing requirements for different paths, and which path will bring us the success we desire.

### SBW workshops and retreats

November 3 – Jordan Rosenfeld will be with us for the day, discussing in depth the development of scenes and their support of plot. Emotional, spiritual, realistic – “A boy with his line in the water, sun setting low, not a stir on the pond or a ripple in his mind. A heron sweeps low.” The scene and how it contributes to “A man runs up from behind, a gun in his hand, his face a mess, blood flowing over his shirt. ‘Look out, Jimmy,’” he yells, ‘they’re a comin’, those Miller boys – their still’s been blown and they think it was us.’”

Late Spring – A writers retreat in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Two spots under consideration: the Pema Osel Ling Retreat near Corralitos or the Mount Madonna Center off Highway 52, dates and details to come. – WT

## New members

by Sally A. Milnor

It is a pleasure to introduce our Club's three newest members.

**Annie Chen**—found us online. She is a full time student, interested in writing poetry.

**Gilda Henry-Hart**—also found us online, and she is interested in writing screenplays.

**Patricia Gregory**—loves mysteries, and she plans to focus her writing on that genre. Patricia is a former Hewlett-Packard engineer/technical editor, and she taught eighth grade science for ten years before she retired. In addition to her writing, she has a number of diverse interests. She is a private pilot, and she often flies around the US (including Alaska) in her own Cessna single engine plane. Additionally, she plays the fiddle with the San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers. She does Scottish Country Dancing twice a week and Cape Breton Step Dancing (similar to Riverdance) when performing with the SF Scottish Fiddlers. Downhill skiing keeps her occupied in winter and pitching for an over-50 softball team is her summer exercise.

Patricia belongs to the Zoetrope Writing Group, and she has found that very helpful. Now that she has joined South Bay Writers, she is looking forward to some face-to-face interaction with other writers.

**To our new members:** We wish a warm welcome to each and every one of you, and we hope your membership brings you inspiration and enjoyment. —WT

## Accolades

by Andrea Galvacs

**Rita Beach** has been in the music business for fifty years and now we can dance and sing to the tune of *Four Beats to Every Measure*. Her memoirs will be published and available through Amazon and at SBW meetings.

"The Summer Room," **Pat Bustamante's** poem, has been published in the summer edition of the quarterly *The Song of the San Joaquin*.

**Maureen Griswold's** interview on KKUP, 91.5 FM, appears on YouTube.

## WritersTalk Challenge

by Marjorie Johnson

At the August 14th meeting of South Bay Writers, Andrea Galvacs announced the titles of the winning entries to the Challenge Contest and presented first place awards consisting of \$40 each to the authors. The month of publication in *WritersTalk* follows the author's name.

- Poetry: "The Storm" by K. O. Llewellyn (April)
- Fiction: "Interlude" by Karen Hartley (March)
- Memoir: "Bee Attack" by Gerri Tiernan (May)
- Essay: "Channeling Truman Capote" by Luanne Oleas (July)

The poem "Tastes" by Mary Vantamelen (July) earned an honorable mention, and Mary received a gift certificate for See's candies.

Congratulations to all!

Remember, submissions published in *WritersTalk* are automatically entered in the next Challenge Contest. So keep on sending your best work. —WT



Contest Winners Gerri Tiernan, Karen Llewellyn, and Luane Oleas

—Photo by Carolyn Donnell

Her website is [www.magriswold.com](http://www.magriswold.com), and she has published two nonfiction books on Smashwords.

*Bark in the Park*, a coloring book designed by **Sherrie Johnson**, discusses animal abuse and is now available.

*Angels at Sunset*, a historical novel by **Tom Mach**, was a finalist for the International Book Awards this year. Tom is a lifetime member of South Bay Writers now living in Kansas and his book is available on his website, [www.tom-mach.com](http://www.tom-mach.com). He says, "Miss you guys."

Last month **Giselle Stancic** did a book-signing of her award-winning young adult mystery, *The Paganini Curse*. —WT

### A special note to our members from SBW Membership Chair

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2013/2014, be sure to do so by September 15th to remain on our membership list and to continue receiving *WritersTalk* and other membership benefits. —WT



Ready, Set, Go! South Bay Writers meeting, August 14 — Photo by Carolyn Donnell

## October costume contest

by Dave LaRoche

Be a famous author — Henry James? Be an infamous author — Henry Miller or Anaïs Nin? I may come as D. L. LaRoche — the least well known of contemporary writers. Be a character you like or hate, or a setting — the Eiffel Tower? This coming October is the month to dress up as something or somebody else. Our meeting will feature a literary costume contest, an annual tradition at South Bay Writers, and if you are sufficiently outlandish you may win a prize. Others have before you.

Now here's the deal. Dress as a literary figure: person, place, or thing — recognizable is best. There will be categories like "most imaginative," "best likeness," and "brightest flare," maybe others. I don't really know, as it's up to our president to determine, and he may wait for the line up to see what fits our colorful imaginations.

If you need ideas or can't think of an approach, go to [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com), double-click on Events, scroll down to Event Photo Gallery, and open Halloween Party 2012. See who has done what before and drink in some encouragement.

Of course you don't have to dress up in a costume. You may come as yourself. You won't win a prize, but you'll be just as welcome. Either way, see you there at the Hofbrau, October 9.

Hey, cut a threatening figure as Edgar Allan Poe's pendulum scythe! — WT



### Plan your literary costume!

To help you fire up your imagination, here on the left is David Breithaupt as The Cat in the Hat, October 2008.

— Photo by Carolyn Donnell

## California Writers Week

Thanks to efforts by the California Writers Club, the State of California observes California Writers Week every third week of October (see [calwriters.org](http://calwriters.org) for details). Contact any Club officer if you have an idea about how South Bay Writers could mark the occasion. Your representative is Member-at-Large Nader Khaghani, pictured on the right.

— Photo by Dick Amyx



Nancy Curteman

— Photo by Carolyn Donnell

## High tension

Continued from Page 1

Nancy explained that tension increases when a character's needs conflict with what he knows is right and true. The classic struggle is the moral dilemma in which a character needs to sacrifice a personal belief in order to get what he wants.

Concerning tension from stakes, the stakes must be high and the consequences of failure dreadful. She emphasized understanding what a character most values and putting it in jeopardy. Although the stakes don't have to involve moral values, the character must feel as if it's a life or death situation. Death can be physical, psychological, or professional.

Lastly, tension exists from introducing an expectation and then making the reader wait. Leave clues that allow readers to predict what's going to happen and then pull the rug out from under them by making them wrong about their assumptions. Nancy advised drawing out the expectation for as long as possible.

As the night settled in, Nancy ended her lecture with a bang against the podium and exclaimed, "That's it!" — WT



## Grammar glitches

The classic—and still the best—resource for reviewing rules of grammar is the slim volume, *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White.

*WritersTalk* copyedits all submissions to show each writer in his best light. We **all** make mistakes—typos, minor grammar glitches, spelling of foreign words; the *WT* staff attempts to remove those minor embarrassments. However, we do not rewrite any submissions.

From time to time, *WT* includes writing tips and grammar refreshers. Short articles along those lines are welcomed—“short” being a key word in writing these days. —WT

### It's its — or is it?

by Andrea Galvacs

If its is not it's  
And it's is not its  
Then its is its  
And when **it is**, it's it is.

## Grammar Nazi's list

by Carolyn Donnell

Grammarians hate it when we confuse our pronouns or homonyms. Here are the ones most frequently abused.

They're — They are  
Their — It belongs to them  
There — A place  
Then — A point in time  
Than — A method of comparison

To — Indicates motion  
Too — Also or excessively  
Two — The number 2

We're — We are  
Were — Past tense of are  
Where — A place  
Who's — Who is  
Whose — Possessive form of who

You're — You are  
Your — It belongs to you

This sentence unscrambles they're, their, and there: They're taking their kids to the beach; once there, they'll spread zinc oxide on all those little noses.

And here are the words to comfort the grammar Nazi: “They're, their, there.”

—WT

## Serial commas

by Kelly Gomez

When should we use serial commas these days? Well, perhaps if you wish to tell all your East Coast relatives about the seasonal pies you've been enjoying in California. “What kinds of pies do you eat over there?” they ask. You respond in an email, “We've been eating apple, blueberry, olallieberry and raspberry pie, which is truly the best in the world!”

A short time later you receive a voicemail on your answering machine, “We're flying into California next week so we can try your olallieberry-raspberry pie! We've never heard of the flavor, so this will be a special occasion!! Can't wait to see you!”

Well, what do you do? You had really meant to say, “We've been eating apple, blueberry, olallieberry, and raspberry pie,” and somehow things spun out of control. Where will you find an olallieberry-raspberry pie?

If you had known that the serial comma was an important distinguisher in the English language used to prevent confusion within sentences, such as the names of people you might wish to dedicate books to, it would be helpful. The inspiration that guided the making of this novel goes out to my parents, Shawna and Tupac. And if we had gone out for drinks, then you would know my best friends and ex-wife, Todd, Jeanette and Teresa. Or, what about remembering every friend in your grandson's class? He knows Bill, Billy, Billie, Billy Joe and Bobby. Was that Billy Joe or Billy #2 and Joe?

Therefore, be warned. If you forgo the serial comma this month, it may lead you down a path of shenanigans and quite possibly on a wild goose chase. You may even go hunting for an olallieberry-raspberry pie! —WT

*Note: At this writing, the jury is out on the serial comma. Opinions are close to 50-50 as to what's right, but the Chicago Manual of Style supports Kelly's view.*

## Wordle

by Carolyn Donnell

Here's a little fun thing to do with your chapters. *Wordle* is a toy for generating “word clouds” from text you provide.

The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. Tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes at [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net). —WT

## The fourth wall

**Warning! Don't break it.**

The fourth wall is an imaginary wall between fictional characters and an audience, and it's broken when a character recognizes his own fictionality.

Have you ever seen a TV or stage set of a room? There are usually three walls, the back wall and two side walls. The fourth wall is invisible—it's what the audience is watching the play or TV show “through.”

Any time a character turns to the camera, addresses the audience, or comments, making it seem as though he knows he's in a TV show or a play, he's said to be “breaking the fourth wall.” It's an author intrusion. —WT

You go to your TV to turn your brain off. You go to the computer to turn your brain on.  
— Steve Jobs

**The writing prompt**  
by Maddie McEwen-Asker



*Peter pondered the writing prompt.*

# The Stranger and the Preacher

## Part 3: *The Inquisition*

by Betty Auchard

In 1949, I'd been a wife for five months when I left my husband at home to go on tour with the college choir. Our mission: to recruit students for the church college where we lived. Denny had to stay home to teach classes and guard the wine we'd hidden in our refrigerator.

*Is Denny as worried as I am?* As much as I wanted to go on this trip, I felt troubled about leaving. The half-empty bottle of wine nagged at my conscience. We should've thrown it away, but didn't want to waste it. When our bus stopped for gas, I placed a collect call. The operator asked for my name and I said, "Betty Peal," forgetting I had a new last name. Luckily, Denny knew who I was. When he answered, I said, "Honey, I can't explain how much I miss you. Do you miss me?"

"Betty, I haven't had time."

"Denny, I've been gone for five whole hours."

"I know, I know – but right after you left, something happened. A scandal broke on campus."

"A scandal?"

"Yes. The college president wants to fire the football coach because he steals towels from any team that beats us, and he cusses and drinks beer with the team whenever we win."

"Denny, why are you so upset? Are you and the coach really good buddies?"

"Not at all. I'm upset because someone will be questioning the faculty under oath about these accusations that I know are true. But, how can I report *anyone* when we're hiding wine in our own refrigerator?"

All we had wanted to do was create a fine dinner, but we had created a dreadful mess instead. Denny's predicament at the college frustrated and worried me. He promised to keep me informed by way of the addresses supplied ahead of time. I shared his troubles with his sister and her husband who were also on the trip. When Denny's first letter arrived, all three of us huddled close to read his one-line letter.

*"Dear Betty, I transferred the beet juice into a canning jar."*

Glenna said, "I hope he saved that pretty bottle."

I said, "Me too."

In the short time we'd been married, I discovered that no matter how upset he was, Denny appeared calm. I wasn't used to such unnatural composure.

A longer letter arrived the next day.

*"My dearest Betty--tomorrow is interrogation day. I flushed the beet juice down the toilet. It was spoiled."*

Denny's impending grilling could flatten our future in one meeting. He didn't like to rock the boat or do anything to alter the way people saw him. Me? I was just angry. I lingered on those thoughts too long, causing my stomach to boil. I had a solo with the choir that night; and, on the way to the stage, I whispered to our director, "I think I'm gonna throw up."

"Good Grief, Betty! Drop out of line."



I slipped away from the procession and went to the back of the church, eyes scanning every row for an isolated pew where I could lie down. I used an opened hymnal for a pillow and stretched out flat so no one could see me but God. Then I closed my eyes and listened to our entire concert while hidden from view.

The pure, clear tones of our choir sounded prayer-like, a distraction from my worries. I barely felt the hardness of the bench under my hip bones and the music sent thrills down my arms and legs. When the program ended with a tender rendition of "All on an April Evening," warm tears trickled into my ears, and my nose ran something awful. I turned into an emotional mess, caught with no handkerchief, and wiped it all away with the back of my hand.

The next day I dreaded calling Denny, afraid of what might have happened at the interrogation. When he answered I said, "Okay, Honey...break it to me gently."

He said, "I will. Are you ready?"

"I'm ready."

"Before my turn to be questioned even came up, they had fired the coach."

I almost fainted from relief and couldn't wait to tell Carl and Glenna. I felt guilty that someone else got fired and not us, believing that stealing towels was worse than drinking wine.

We performed our last concert in Southern California and headed home where Denny welcomed us with a simple dinner he'd fixed by himself. After giving thanks for our many blessings, Carl said, "Hey, Auch, did you put any of that Manny-shevvy in these pork chops?"

Denny said, "Heck no. That stuff traumatized me so much that I dumped it."

Glenna said, "I loved that pretty bottle."

"That fancy decanter was a real pain. I wrapped it in five layers of newspaper, wound string around it, and put it in a gunny sack. After the boys went to sleep, I sneaked to

*Continued on Page 11*

# Short white gloves and black rosary beads

By Karen Hartley

Young Marabelle's Sunday essentials, gloves: short and crisp, purity white and her Rosary – the never-ending strand of black beads.

When Marabelle grew up, her rosary beads remained her most important item. Now on Sundays, she wore vintage white gloves, crocheted and delicate.

Marabelle took the train to work. She'd take out her rosary beads. Whisper while she moved her fingers from bead to bead. Katy always sat next to her. She watched Marabelle. She wondered about the ritual. She knew Catholics used rosary beads. Marabelle knew Katy found the beads mysterious. The spaces between them. The things you had to say. Seemed like nonsense to Katy. Marabelle took Katy's hand. Placed the beads in her open palm.

"What're you doing?" Katy asked.

"Feel the beads. You seem interested when I'm using them."

"They feel strange. What's the point?" Katy asked, fingering each bead.

"They're symbolic," Marabelle answered.

"Of what?" Katy rolled each bead in her fingers.

"Faith, of course," Marabelle said.

"Can't you have faith without the beads?" Katy asked.

"Of course. But the beads and intonations enhance faith. It's about the mystery."

Katy handed back the beads.

"Would you come to church with me?" Marabelle asked.

"I don't need any icons or babble." Katy sounded defiant. "Go ahead with your rosary beads. It's not my thing." She took her book from her bag and read for the remaining ride into work.

Several months passed. Late for church one Sunday, Marabelle sat in the back. She reached her white-gloved hand into her bag and pulled out her black rosary beads. Someone sneezed. She looked up and saw Katy sitting one pew down and across, in the seat nearest the aisle. Marabelle knew Katy had her own rosary beads. She could see her lips and fingers moving. Marabelle would speak to Katy after mass.

Outside, Marabelle waited. Katy appeared.

"I'm surprised to see you here," Marabelle said.

"Thought I'd see what it's all about," Katy replied.

"And what do you think?" Marabelle asked.

"Been reading about the beads and other stuff."

"What other stuff?" Marabelle looked pleased.

"Doesn't matter. Think I'll research more."

"There're stages, you know," Marabelle said.

"I know. I read a bit last night. Might look into it. I think I'm liking the beads and the words. Something to believe in."

"Let's go talk." Marabelle put her arm through Katy's.

"Glad you didn't give up on me," Katy said.

"I'd never do that. We're friends."

They walked to the church garden, found a bench by the shrine, and sat down.

"Might get some gloves, too." Katy smiled.

Marabelle smiled back. "Great. *Your Sunday essentials: short white gloves and black rosary beads!*" – WT

# My first brush with the law

by Judith Shernock

On a cold November morning in 1942 in Brooklyn, New York, I wended my way to the second grade classroom at Public School 217. Seventh Street was deserted. All the other children went to Catholic school, which started at 8:00 AM. I had to be at school by 8:45.

Suddenly I noticed a large pile of boards across the street where renovations were going on. My friends and I had been practicing balancing on narrow ledges and fences. Here was a golden opportunity to get in some practice when no one was watching.

I clambered up the boards, which were arranged, as if made for me, in step-like piles. They were pine and smelled freshly cut. I brushed off my knees and took up a balancing stance – both arms outstretched equally, feet straight, head up but eyes glancing ahead. I took three, four, five successful steps and had gotten to the middle of the board when a terrible roar reached my ears. "Get down from there!" A policeman, who seemed at least seven feet tall, stood on the street. His face was very red.

Down I came. Then began the lecture to the tiny scared person who was me. The cop's heavy, blue winter uniform was so intimidating that even his golden buttons were scowling at me.

"Are those your planks, Missy?"

"No." I hung my head.

"You better not be doin' that again or I'll be taking you down to the station house! Would you be wanting that?"

"No."

"You say 'No, Sir' when you talk to a policeman! Well, are you going to be doin' that again?"

"No, Sir," I quavered.

"Well I'll be watching out for ya! What's your name now?" He took out a stub of a pencil, licked it, and then wrote in a little note pad.

"What?" He raised his voice ten decibels until the bell went off in my head.

"Judy Hoffman, Sir."

"That's better." He wrote my name on his paper – I froze.

"Now off to school with you."

"Yes, Sir." I ran. Because of my encounter with New York's finest, I was late to school. That meant a visit to the Principal. Oh what a day this was.

*Continued on Page 10*

## Off the Shelf

Edie Matthews & Marina Menendez-Pidal



*Caveman: Dang! I've got two more chapters!*  
*Cavewoman: You need a bigger cave.*

### Brush with the law

*Continued from Page 9*

What reason could I give for being late? Certainly not my frightening encounter with the policeman.

I waited outside Dr. Ross's office. On the bench with me were two very scruffy and gangly boys. The secretary came out with a sheaf of papers and called, "Bruce Whitman."

The first boy untangled himself and, head down, walked slowly to his fate.

The second boy slid closer to me.

"Hey kid, what ya doin' here? Never saw ya before."

"I was late. Why are you here?"

"The usual. Talking back to the teacher. I've been late at least ten times."

"How come?"

"My Ma is always hung over so she don't wake me up on time."

"Then why doesn't your father wake you?"

"That's even funnier," he said sarcastically.

The secretary came out and called, "William Denton."

He arose from the bench and went into the lion's den.

I would be next.

The opulence of the office took my breath away. There was a full-length portrait of principal Dr. Ross on the wall flanked by pictures of Washington and Lincoln. Head bent, I waited to hear my punishment.

"Please sit down," came a kind, sweet voice. I looked up. In front of me sat a round-faced man with small spectacles, a fringe of grey hair and a smile.

I handed over my late slip.

"Why were you late?"

"My mother overslept and didn't wake me in time, Sir."

"Well, this is your first late or tardy. I see that you are a good student." He had my school file in front of him.

"It will never happen again, Sir."

"I'm sure it won't. Now go back to your classroom and continue to come on time." He smiled at me.

"Yes, Sir. I will always be on time, Sir."

I was never late or tardy again. My brush with the law had taught me to always say Sir, but my meeting with William Denton, on the bench, had taught me even more. —WT



## Feel free to disagree

by Pat Bustamante

Although in her sixties, Kellie still had an invisible playmate named Jerry. When she was a preschooler she could see Jerry clearly in spite of her older sisters teasing.

Jerry had morphed into an invisible entity not native to this planet. Kellie kept this companion of hers a secret; none of her friends knew, none of her family knew, but Jerry remained as real as he had ever been. At this point in her life, Kellie was enthralled by Sudoku or any puzzle, either of words or of numbers. Not only were puzzles and brainteasers recommended to elderly people as brain sustainers, she had always liked puzzles. She tended to forget lots of words that had always been with her until now, but she refused to worry about the grim prospect of Alzheimer's.

Jerry was a co-puzzler on a battery-run toy that produced a fresh Sudoku puzzle at the press of a button. They played this way: every time Kellie completed the puzzle with not one mistake (pressing the button for an incorrect number always resulted in the correct number appearing instead), she was the winner. Each time she blew it—even as late as the last number to complete the puzzle—Jerry won.

Jerry often won. He never crowed about it, but there was hushed laughter in the atmosphere. He also had suggestions for her computer-wanderings.

In July 2013, there was a crash of gigantic proportions at San Francisco Airport—one of the largest jets created by Boeing hit the seawall before making it to the runway. Over 300 passengers were tossed about, some to their death.

Kellie watched a video of the disaster on several news programs. A puzzle of the deepest mystery—four pilots over-seeing the landing and automatic gear in the jet to override any pilot mistakes.

Kellie remarked to Jerry, no one else being in the living room, other than two sleeping cats, "The pilot is going to take the blame for this, poor guy."

Jerry, though actual words were never spoken, conveyed the thought, "It was caused by a sun-bolt."

*Continued on Page 11*

# September: Terse on verse

by Pat Bustamante



Pat Bustamante

## Sept.-ICK!

"Icky" my children told me  
Has to do with "I won't touch."  
Some subjects a writer runs into  
Are really just too much  
To deal with, yet sometimes reality  
Makes demands (despite one's taking a stand)  
That prop your "write-no-no's" on a crutch.

— Pat Bustamante

ICKY! I confess—I'm a coward at critique or open-mic groups when it comes to reading aloud a description of intimate relationships. I do like to read silently, occasionally, the details of a romantic seduction—never too old to learn something new! There is no doubt that a novel with cleverly written adult romance as part of the plot will find a market.

Forms of entertainment over the years have ranged from ancient Rome's Coliseum "sports" of gruesome murders to today's daredevil actions involving motorcycles, racecars, and jet planes, always with the possibility of a horrible crash. Slimy sci-fi critters or wickedly lethal predators, snakes to sharks, also draw an audience. Gore! Screams of pain, maniacs committing multiple murders! Then there are chronicles of bloody wars, past or imagined future. It's something to wonder about, the capacity the human race has for violence with so little justification. How many TV shows now play with cadavers and ways to murder or be murdered?

Spare me death's nastier details. But, if I have to read (or write) a long saga, I expect the loss of loved ones will be included in the story as well as a courtship or possibly a seduction. That's reality, but I like to think I'd be one of the citizens to boycott that bloody stuff at Rome's Coliseum, were I living in ancient Rome. Bad and ugly things do happen; the writer might include detailed accounts in a story that ultimately makes a point. Or, because it's so popular, a romp in bed for the hero or heroine! Tastefully described, or I won't be able to read it out loud or recommend it to friends. — WT

## A Wonder, what is it?

When one figures out a wonder, it could be a sensation  
A sensation, to what it is. How about a rapid emotion?  
Or getting the attention of things that of astonishment  
In other words a surprisingly phenomenon, that is sent  
People, say to others, "you are a wonder", a confound  
That says much for that one. That the one is dumfounded  
Dumfounded meaning that the person is really, surprising  
That is really a compliment to everyone, truly amazing.

A wonder is what? It could be a thing or a person, yes!  
That is a miracle, a spectacle, and fabulous, not a guess  
Someone may say, a wonder is called, **A wonder**, see?  
That is to say, any extraordinary, is the wonder of glee  
Further into wonder, it is perplexed in any, appearance  
Not, seeing things as others, be mystical, in endurance  
A wonder, of looking into the future, to be marvelous  
The idea, of wonder to us, portentous and miraculous.

— Clarence L. Hammonds

## If Only

If only  
we could find  
the wished for Balm of Gilead  
the source of healing  
flowing from the heart  
of giving love.  
Some say it's church  
the pope or cross  
or fluttering white dove.  
Others say go deep within  
just breathe away  
regrets of yesterday  
or fears to come.  
But looking at the world today  
it seems that Gilead has fled  
to some far flung stellar shore  
and left us all alone.

If only.

— Carolyn Donnell

## Free to disagree

*Continued from Page 10*

"WHAT?"

"You call them solar flares—a huge amount of magnetic and electrical energy surging from your sun, aimed at this planet—a bullet from the sun. Radio waves shut down. All instruments fail for a short time. The pilots saw the flash of energy, which also shut down instruments and lights where the passengers were; any computers or phones or pads would have gone black. It was, as you people call it, an "Act of God"—but certainly not a very kind act. Out of all possible targets, this random solar bullet had to hit those poor people. There will be more unexplained crashes—

there already was one in Alaska and one at Lake Tahoe. Check it out!"

She was astounded. It took her a while to track down via Google "solar flares in July" because the posting was slow. The sun was throwing an unusual number of tantrums, not at this strength for hundreds of years. The *DailyMail* source on Google mentioned similar problems with electronic instruments due to solar flaring in the past.

Kellie had planned to fly to Arizona to visit her daughter this month, but oh yeah—that was cancelled, for sure! And then, there was this huge approaching comet to worry about, too. Time to find that old air-raid shelter buried in the back yard! — WT

## Stranger and preacher

*Continued from Page 8*

the basement with a hammer, and whacked the daylights out of that bottle, and pushed the bag deep into the garbage can."

I said, "Well, I'm glad it's over."

Denny said, "Me too. Never again will we buy anything we have to hide."

I said, "I'll drink to that."

Denny said, "Betty, that's not one bit funny."

Carl and Glenna hid their smiles while I reminded myself that Denny had no sense of humor. I would have to change that. — WT

# The Haunted Hole

by Marjorie Johnson

When I was fourteen, my best friend Dorothy and I captured secret places in the Gold Country in our journals. We wrote ghost stories at an abandoned gold mine, its rusted ore cars left half-full by Cornish miners, now long dead. Why half filled? Had they ignored the Tommyknockers, green gnomes two feet tall who knock on walls before cave-ins? Did the miners' ghosts live there still?

"Let's explore a new place," I said one day. While hiking there, I pointed out a funnel-like hole in the loose soil.

"Ever see a doodlebug catch an ant?" I dropped an ant into the tiny sandpit. It tried to climb out but slipped farther down until the red sand quivered and it disappeared.

Dorothy knelt for closer inspection. "How'd you learn that?"

"My dad showed me."

We resumed our walk and stopped in the shade, overlooking a pine-needle-filled scooped-out-looking place about twelve feet across, bowl-like but deeper in the center and ringed with rocks and rubble. Between bites of sandwich, I said, "That sunken place might be a mine shaft. During the Gold Rush, miners dug lots of exploratory holes."

"Looks normal to me." Dorothy threw a fist-sized rock into the center of the dip; it disappeared with a faint thump. "What's so special?"

"Well, it moans. It's haunted by Tommyknockers."

"Oh, come on," she said. "It's not Halloween."

"You don't believe me? I heard them last week."

"Then you should go down there." She pitched some crumbs to a squawking blue-jay standing below us inside the saucer. "Find out why it moans."

"Can't do that! What if I fell in?" Secretly, I wanted to do just that—go there, not fall in. "My dad would kill me."

"Then your dad wouldn't have to kill you, because you'd already be dead." We laughed wildly and agreed that we had to do it.

When we returned to the haunted hole,

I wore my oldest pair of jeans. As a precaution, we tied a long cord around the tree and to one of my ankles in case the gravel slid down like in a giant doodlebug trap. Close to the center of the pit, I dug through matted pine needles that smelled of warm pine pitch and stuck to my fingers.

Dorothy shaded her eyes with one hand. "What do you see?"

"Nothing, just darkness. Roll down that flashlight." Lying with my chin directly over the hole, I lowered the flashlight, attached to a long string, but when I shifted myself for a better view, it slipped through my fingers. The metallic sound of its case hitting rock echoed, but it didn't break—it illuminated a yellow-gray object. "A skull!"

"You have to go get it," Dorothy urged.

"No! Not me!" That skull's smile gave me the creeps. I hauled myself out and untied my ankle.

"We better tell somebody."

"No! They'll find Dad's flashlight."

We decided not to report it, but not telling Dad was as bad as lying, so I finally confessed. "You know your big flashlight, the one with four batteries? Well, I lost it, so I bought you a new one."

"I thought it looked too shiny. So, what's the rest of the story?"

I stared at my coffee cup. "I dropped it. Into a mine shaft."

"What were you doing?" He slapped down his cup, spilling coffee.

When I mentioned the moaning, Dad said it was the wind; Mom said it was my imagination. I didn't say the hole was haunted. "And I saw a human skull."

"What did I tell you?" he said. "The sheriff needs to know."

On the appointed day, I bumped along beside Dad in his forestry fire truck. At the pine tree, the sheriff's men lowered a gunnysack for gathering bones—206 of them, according to my high school biology book.

The sheriff wore a khaki uniform like Dad's, except his had a silver star. He pointed at me. "Someone small has to go down there."

"Me?" With that skull?

Dad loaned me a long-sleeved shirt; I wore my usual Levi's and hiking shoes. Swallowing hard, I stepped into a harness, a strap between my legs.

"No, shaft's too narrow," the sheriff said. "Lower her headfirst."

My head and left arm went through one leg hole, my right arm through the other, my ankles tied so my legs wouldn't flop around. I breathed faster and faster. *What if they drop me on my head?*

I entered the shaft like bait on a fishing line, a flashlight held in my left hand. I could see only what was within the cone of light. I pushed away from the ragged edges of the hole and squeezed past tree-roots in the dark. *A familiar moan!* My heart pounded, my eyeballs ready to pop out of my head, my feet severed at the ankles.

"Dem bones, dem bones, dem . . . dry bones," I sang to distract myself. *Knocking!* The walls closed in and the skull's smile broadened.

They lowered me until my head hung close enough to kiss the skull. I opened the gunnysack and loaded Dad's flashlight. When I lifted the skull, pieces of bone fell off. *Dry bones*—cold and damp against my bare fingers, gathering kindling wood while walking on my hands. "Knee bone connected to the thigh bone—" except nothing was connected at all. My head felt full, my eyeballs ached, and my ears rang.

They hauled me up slowly. Released from the harness, I wobbled to my feet.

"You OK?" Dad didn't smile.

"Getting there." I grabbed his arm and clung, soaking in sunlight and letting the blood drain back out of my head. I wanted to scrub my hands, over and over, like Lady MacBeth. I stared at myself in the truck's side-mirror, my face swollen and red, my eyes bulging, my forehead a river of sweat. No way would I tell him I was scared to death.

While I never heard the moaning again, I knew Tommyknockers haunted that hole. —WT

*Note: This piece has 1000 words and fills one page. It was trimmed from 1500 words. Surely, you can do better!*

*Believe me, this is an important editing skill to develop.*

# Contests and Markets

## 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](http://pw.org/grants) have been carefully reviewed and benefit writers.

While you're perusing the listings, please take a look at the entry for *Tuscum 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](http://preditorsandeditors.com) and on [writersdigest.com/competitions/writing-competitions](http://writersdigest.com/competitions/writing-competitions). —WT

**To win, you first must enter.**

## Poetry contest

### Reuben Rose Poetry Contest

**Deadline:** September 30, 2013

**Website:** <http://www.voicesisrael.com/reubenrosecompetition.htm>

**Entry fee:** Voices Israel members: \$5 for one poem, \$10 for 3 poems, \$15 for 6 poems. Non-members: \$6 for one poem, \$12 for 3 poems, \$18 for 6 poems.

First prize \$500, second prize \$150, and third prize \$50. Prizewinners and all honorable mentions will be published in the *Voices Israel 2014 Poetry Anthology*. Challenging, humorous and/or curious poetry is welcome. Poems should be unpublished, no more than 40 lines, including stanza breaks but not including title. —WT

## New Indie Bookstore Opens from Victoria M. Johnson

Village House of Books, a new indie bookstore, opened on August 17 at 326 Village Lane, Los Gatos. The owners have set up a local authors' section and plan to host several events. Website: [www.villagehouseofbooks.net](http://www.villagehouseofbooks.net)

## Find book reviewers

from Maureen Griswold

Two free services connect independent writers with online reviewers looking for books. Check out Galley Cat Reviews, [www.mediabistro.com](http://www.mediabistro.com)

## Sell your book here

from David Breithaupt

A new shop, Discover San Jose at 150 South First Street, San Jose, showcases local books and art and local authors. The proprietor welcomes consignment arrangements.



## Short story anthology

*A Western Short Story Anthology* is now accepting short story fiction manuscripts for *Broken Promises*, the third in our anthology series about the American West. Deadline: October 15. Read all about it on [legacyofthetetons.com/](http://legacyofthetetons.com/)

## Call for Poet Laureate

Santa Clara County POET LAUREATE: application deadline, September 30.

The Santa Clara County Poet Laureate is an honorary post created in 2008 by the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors. The nominee is appointed by the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors for a two-year term.

The Laureate raises public awareness and advocates for poetry, literature, and the arts through public appearances and community projects that make poetry more accessible to Santa Clara County residents.

The Laureate receives a \$4000 stipend each year, plus up to \$1000 reimbursement for project expenses.

See 2011 Poet Laureate Sally Ashton's blog: <http://poetlaureateblog.org/>

For details, guidelines, timeline, and application, go to [www.sccgov.org/sites/opa/Programs/PoetLaureate/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.sccgov.org/sites/opa/Programs/PoetLaureate/Pages/default.aspx) —WT

## 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



## Extra! Extra!

## Read all about it!

Polish up those short short stories and memoirs, fewer than 1000 words, and send them to *WritersTalk*.

If your work is published in *WT*, not only will you have a publishing credit but also you will automatically be entered into the *WritersTalk* Challenge Contest. Prizes: \$40 for each genre, fiction, memoir, essay/nonfiction, and poetry. Bonus: you will have a possible entry for other contests. —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](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) and we will add your listing to our directory of experts.*

### **Astronomy, History of Astronomy**

Bob Garfinkle [ragarf@earthlink.net](mailto:ragarf@earthlink.net)

### **Banking**

Pam Oliver-Lyons [polpap@prodigy.net](mailto:polpap@prodigy.net)

### **Counseling/John Steinbeck**

Dr. Audry L. Lynch

[glynch0001@comcast.net](mailto:glynch0001@comcast.net)

### **Engineering: Mechanical, Aerospace**

Jerry Mulenburg

[geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net)

### **Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up**

Martha Engber [martha@engber.com](mailto:martha@engber.com)

### **Internal Medicine/Addiction**

### **Disorder/Psychology**

Dave Breithaupt [dlbmlb@comcast.net](mailto:dlbmlb@comcast.net)

### **Marketing and Management**

Suzy Paluzzi, MBA [jomarch06@yahoo.com](mailto:jomarch06@yahoo.com)

### **Mathematics/Fibonacci Sequence**

Marjorie Johnson [marjohnson@mac.com](mailto:marjohnson@mac.com)

### **Teaching and the Arts**

Betty Auchard [Btauchard@aol.com](mailto:Btauchard@aol.com)

### **Telecommunications Technology**

Allan Cobb [allancobb@computer.org](mailto:allancobb@computer.org)

### **Television Production**

Woody Horn 408-266-7040

ROOM LEFT FOR YOUR LISTING

## 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](http://cwc-berkeley.com)

**Central Coast:** 5:30 third Tuesdays, Bay Park Hotel, 1425 Munras Avenue, Monterey. [centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

**Fremont:** 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 204, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

**Marin:** 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. [cwcmarinwriters.com](http://cwcmarinwriters.com)

**Mount Diablo:** 11:30 second Saturdays, Hungry Hunter, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. [mtdiablowriters.org](http://mtdiablowriters.org)

**Napa:** 6:30 second Wednesdays, Napa River Inn. [napavalleywriters.net](http://napavalleywriters.net)

**Redwood:** 3:00 first Sundays at Copperfield's Books, 2316 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa. [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org)

**Sacramento:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Cattleman's Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. [cwcsacramentowriters.org](http://cwcsacramentowriters.org)

**San Francisco/Peninsula:** 10:00 third Saturdays, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. [sfpeninsulawriters.com](http://sfpeninsulawriters.com)

**Tri-Valley:** 11:30 third Saturdays, Oasis Grille, 780 Main, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.com](http://trivalleywriters.com)

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## Ongoing critique groups

### **Our Voices**

Meets at Coco's on Hamilton in Campbell every other Sunday 11 am. Genres: Fiction, non-technical nonfiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche — [dalaroche@comcast.net](mailto:dalaroche@comcast.net)

### **Valley Writers**

Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center, Winchester Blvd. in Santa Clara, Mondays 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Contact: Marjorie Johnson at [marjoriej358@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:polpap@prodigy.net)

### **Karen's Critique Group**

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

### **Your Critique Group**

For consideration, send information to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

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## Conferences

**North Coast Redwood Writers Conference**, September 20-21, Crescent City. [www.ncrwc.org](http://www.ncrwc.org)

**29th Annual Central Coast Writers Conference**, September 20-21, San Luis Obispo. More information at the webpage for the conference.

**Upcoming—THE BIG ONE San Francisco Writers Conference**, Mark Hopkins Hotel

February 13 – 16, 2014, [sfwriters.org](http://sfwriters.org)

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## Ongoing writing and reading groups

**Writing Group: A Chapter at a Time:** Needs a member of SBW to sponsor it.

**Reading/Book Group:** Several people have expressed an interest verbally. Needs a member of SBW to take charge.

**Open position: Networking Chairman.** Contact SBW President.

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## Workshops

### **Writing for Life Workshops**

Davis Bunn, Sept. 14-15

Michael Hauge, Oct. 19-20

[www.writingforlifeworkshops.com](http://www.writingforlifeworkshops.com)

### **Big Sur Writing Workshops**

December 6-8, 2013

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## 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 conference/workshop information to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 7:30p SBW Board meeting	4	5	6 7:30p Open mic Barnes & Noble Almaden, San Jose	7
8	9	10	11 6:00p SBW meets Harry's Hofbrau	12	13	14 10:30A Editors Powwow
15 Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	16	17	18	19	20 7:30p Open mic Wil- low Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	September 2013				

#### Future Flashes

October 1 SBW Board Meeting	October 4 and 18 Open mic	October 9 Reg. Dinner Meeting				
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#### 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](mailto:WABaldwin@aol.com)

#### New and oh, so cool

South Bay Writers mugs with CWC logo. See them at the next meeting.

**SBW mugs: Only \$10 each**

#### Your ad could go here

\$7 per column inch for SBW members

\$10 per inch for nonmembers

#### Members books

Go to [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com) to see the members' gallery and members books. Add your book to our website.

#### 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](mailto:norcamp@sbcglobal.net) or go to [poetrycentersanjose.org/calendar](http://poetrycentersanjose.org/calendar)

#### CWC bags: Only \$10 each



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

#### South Bay Writers Anthology



\$10

At the meeting or on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



#### 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.com](mailto:webmaster@southbaywriters.com)



**California Writers Club**  
South Bay Branch  
P.O. Box 3254  
Santa Clara, CA 95055  
[www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**South Bay Writers**  
**September Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**6 p.m. Wednesday, September 11**

Harry's Hofbrau  
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose

**Martha Engber**  
**Your characters**  
**DRIVE**  
**your plot**

*WritersTalk* deadline is always  
the 15th 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.