



WRITERSTALK

Volume 16
Number 7
July 2008

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

California Writers Club
South Bay Branch

ANNUAL POTLUCK BARBECUE



SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2008, 3 PM
(There is no July General Meeting)

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

POTLUCK DINNER

Please bring a dish according to your last name:

- A-K Main Dish or Side Dish
- L-R Salad
- S-Z Appetizer or Dessert

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

Location

Edie Matthews' residence



June Recap Tim Myers Speaks on Writing by Richard Burns

In order to bring the room to a reluctant, partial hush and calm down the din (that's why it's called a dinner meeting), Dave LaRoche started off with his much anticipated joke, eliciting hearty applause and a guffaw or three. By 8:00 we had been stuffed with dinner, announcements, new member self-introductions, East of Eden hoopla (hey, are *you* signed up?), and coffee; the Lookout Restaurant banquet room was indeed abuzz with networking.

Alex Leon introduced the speaker for our June 10 South Bay Writers Tuesday evening meeting—a teacher at Santa Clara University, an award-winning poet of Irish descent, and a writer of nine published children's books: Tim Myers.

Tim twisted the mike in his direction and was up and off to the races. He led with the pertinent fact that a regular get-together such as this one tonight is one of the few ways in which writers can take advantage of an organizing infrastructure, a rare but useful commodity for writers, something that is

Continued on page 10

SBW Elects New Officers

The SBW election of officers was held at the June 10 general meeting, as prescribed by the bylaws. Officers elected for the 2008-2009 term were

President: Dave LaRoche

Vice-President: Bill Baldwin

Treasurer: Richard Burns

Secretary: Rita St. Claire

President's Prowling

by *Dave LaRoche*
President, South Bay Writers

Centennial Year—2009

It's not entirely clear how or even exactly when the California Writers Club got its start as its modest beginnings were not salient in the views of historians of the day. We do know some things. Four men were frequent visitors to the Coppa Restaurant in San Francisco prior to the 1906 quake. Novelist Jack London; real estate agent and aspiring poet George Sterling; adventurer and short story writer Herman Whitaker; and lawyer and classical master at Tamalpais Military Academy Austin Lewis met casually to discuss their writing endeavors.



Then came the shake and a city afire, and many, left homeless, migrated across the bay to Oakland, including the "Coppa Four." In serious pursuit of their writing interests, the four joined the emerging Alameda County Press Club, a divergent group including other émigrés from the smoldering city.

One scenario has it that, in time, the "Coppa Four" became disenchanted with what they saw as the banal activities of the Press Club and split off to focus on more elevated ideas. They chose a bucolic, inspirational picnic-park (now known as Joaquin Miller Park) to engage their high-mindedness and soon others of like temperament connected. It was in this park that the California Writers Club found its beginnings.

A second version of our birth has an uncomplicated morphing from the Press Club into the CWC at about the same time—though I prefer the more colorful first. Both have one thing in common: recognition of "California Writers Club" as the name for this creative communion in the year 1909.

The Club grew and formalized, and on February 28, 1913, Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State. The ensuing years saw rough roads as California and the nation dealt with their economic and political challenges. Today we number 1200 members spread through seventeen branches—about half in the south of the state. From the beginning we have succeeded in providing safe harbor for writers and encouraging those aspiring to write. We have taught the noblest of enterprises and fostered camaraderie based on our work.

In 2009, we will have reached our centennial milestone—one hundred years of writing and educating, promoting a craft that brings substance and record to our culture—and we intend to celebrate. And here is the crux of the thing—we are not sure how.

So... I invite you to participate. Bring me your ideas. How should the CWC mark its one hundredth birthday? We have a Centennial Chair. Donna McCrohan-Rosenthal, of the East Sierra Branch, is collecting ideas and will make recommendations to the State Board. She looks to the branches for help. Send me your ideas, and I will see that she gets them and that you get full attribution. *WT*

Inside

Bloomsday—James Joyce in
Downtown San Jose 4
Accolades 4
Journey of a Thousand Miles:
Writers Beware 5
Losing the Apostrophic War 6
New Members 6

Publish Your Book in California! Part II 7
Story Circle Network 7
Mom's Way 8
My Date with Basil 9
Withypoll Welsa 11
View From the Board 12

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

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Join With Us

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



WRITERSTALK

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Submissions

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

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Guest Columns

Almost Anything Goes (400 words)

News Items

 (400 words)

Letters to the Editor

 (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs
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Creative Works

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

Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

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

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Editor's Perspective

by Dick Amyx
Editor

Knowledge Is Power



Tinkering around with Google one afternoon, I got to thinking about the idea that information is power. The phrase is most commonly interpreted as meaning that information is something that can be brokered; for one trivial example, a mailing list. Information may also be used to manipulate or control; for example, particular facts about an individual's financial position or personal indiscretions. I was feeling kind of uncomfortable about the amount of information—power—that Google is amassing, but I then considered the fact that Google is also giving a lot of that information away. Indeed, all kinds of people are using the Internet to give away all kinds of information. That awareness led to the conclusion that if everyone has access to all available information, then everyone is equally powerful. Free information of that sort is what makes governments want to control it: it's hard to hornswoggle someone who knows everything that you do. What popped to mind next was the kinds of information writers deal with.

Over dinner, I exposed my thoughts to Meredy, who told me that the "real" statement is "*knowledge is power*," which I immediately Googled, of course. That phrase is attributed to Sir Francis Bacon, in his *Religious Meditations, on Heresies*, 1597. Not exactly a new idea. In context, Bacon's statement is taken to mean that knowledge or education increases a person's potential to be successful in life. The Wikipedia entry for "knowledge is power" also says that, from a philosophical viewpoint, if the world exists solely as the content of consciousness, then knowledge has the potential to shape reality.

My thoughts had to do with knowledge as strength and knowledge having the potential to shape reality. Knowledge is like money: it has no inherent worth; its value is recognized only when it's put to use. A stack of paper bills isn't good for anything until it's exchanged for goods or services that improve the quality of a person's life. In a similar way, knowledge has strength—value—only when it's set free. Knowledge that's locked away in a mind is of only limited value until someone else can receive it and use it to improve the quality of his life and the lives of others.

When we as writers sit down and begin to turn our thoughts into words, we're imparting knowledge. As nonfiction writers, we're divulging knowledge of a particular topic that another person may be able to use directly. As fiction writers, we're liberating our unique understanding of the human condition, knowledge that may enable others to better understand themselves and their world, and ease their journey through life.

The metaphysical notions of knowledge's shaping reality aside, if factual knowledge enables an engineer to build a bridge and spiritual knowledge enables an angry, unhappy person to find peace, then just by moving our fingertips, we're changing the shape of the world around us. WT

Erratum

A proofreader's comment was left in the second paragraph of Dave LaRoche's short story "Henry," published in last month's WritersTalk. The correct text is shown below; the full story is available on the SBW website.

She sent me out to fix the fence. Well, the fence was down 'cause they were building a pool and 'course they had to haul buildin' crap through it and back from the hole there ... and I told her that they'd just have to take it down again. She said no, no, it wouldn't make any difference, she wanted it fixed. She has lots of money, so it's just spread a little here and a little there ... and damned little at that, you understand....

Bloomsday— James Joyce in Downtown San Jose

by Carolyn Donnell

The day was June 16th. The place was O'Flaherty's Pub. The occasion? Bloomsday, a day to celebrate James Joyce and all things Irish.

Second only to St. Patrick's Day in festivities, this day marks a double anniversary: June 16, 1904, when Joyce and his future wife, Nora Barnacle, had their first date, and the June day in *Ulysses* when Joyce's Leopold Blum wanders through the city.

The Bloomsday events were sponsored by the Irish Social Club and Irish Network and hosted by Ray O'Flaherty (alias Davy Byrne) at his pub at 25 North San Pedro in downtown San Jose.

The audience, some dressed in Edwardian costume, including velvet

shawls and ornately flowered hats, crowded into the small space; many ordered the requisite Guinness or Joyce's favorite claret. We were told that we should have started the day with a full Irish breakfast. Oh well, maybe next year.



Audry Lynch reads excerpts from Brenda Maddox's *Nora*. Photo: Carolyn Donnell

John Cahill officiated, complete with tux and Irish (well, almost) walking stick. We listened to excerpts from *Ulysses* and *The Dubliners*. I was assured that

the accents were genuine. "A beautiful brogue so rich and sweet." With the pub's authentic atmosphere and the rolling Irish lilt from some of the speakers, you felt you could be in Dublin.

South Bay member Audry Lynch, one of the organizers, continued by reading excerpts from the Brenda Maddox biography of *Nora*. I read a couple of my poems with Celtic and Irish themes. John helped me with the CD player to provide background music. I did get one practice run at one of our Open Mics a couple of weeks ago, thank goodness.

Three actresses from The Mostly Irish Theatre company completed the evening with a performance of Act III of *Exiles*, Joyce's only surviving play.

The audience was appreciative, and to quote the Master of Ceremonies, "A great time was had by all." WT

Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

The lazy days of summer are upon us, and with it the sleepy afternoon draw of the hammock and a snooze. Don't let that deter you from keeping your writing schedule going. Consistency leads to success, as noted by these folks who shared their good news at the June meeting.



Jackie Mutz
Contributing Editor

- Cathy Bauer did finish her book, and she received the SBW Matthews-Baldwin Award, noted in the Cupertino local paper. You can also view this information at *San Jose Mercury News* online.
- Carolyn Donnell, WT contributing editor, received an honorable mention for her memoir "Simply, Bebee" at the June 13-14 Frontiers in Writing Conference 2008 in Amarillo, Texas. Not to mention the facts that Doris Wenzl of Mayhaven Publishing requested her story "Easter Bunny Rules" and Joan Beubauer of

Wordwright.biz expressed interest in her Suzie stories. Sounds like it was a worthwhile trip, Carolyn.

- Una Daly, another WT contributing editor, completed her 120 page Masters thesis on the electronic portfolios of liberal studies. Look for it in the library.
- Martha Engber, author of *Growing Great Characters from the Ground Up*, had lots of news: an essay published in the literary journal *Watershed*, a flash fiction piece in *Doors and Body Paint*, and a five-star review in the Midwest Book Review for *Growing Great Characters*. Martha will also be teaching two workshops in the near future. Check out <http://marthaengber.blogspot.com/> for more information.
- WT copy editor and sometime contributor Andrea Galvacs has been editing www.westernciv.com, the website designed by Professor William Fredlund, director of the Institute for the Study of Western Civilization.
- Bob Garfinkle, interim president of the Fremont Area Writers Club, published a book review in the June issue of *Sky and Telescope* magazine

and will have additional book reviews in the August editions of *The Observatory* and the *Journal of Astro-nomical History and Heritage*.

- Marjorie Johnson was a speaker at Zonta International, a woman's networking and service club. She spoke about her book *Bird Watcher* in May at the Palo Alto Airport—the setting for her novel.
- Lita Kurth, yet another WT contributing editor, recently had a poem accepted by the *Vermont Literary Review*, titled "New Hampshire: A Wish for Burial in the Ground."
- Edie Matthews was voted Outstanding Associate Faculty 2007-2008 by the Student Body at the Mission Community College graduation ceremonies. It was a "very sweet recognition from students." Congratulations, Edie, on a well-deserved recognition.
- Karen Sweet had an article, complete with photos, published in the October 2007 issue of the Monterey Diocese *Observer* (MDO) covering their Spiritual Directors retreat. Another article covering the May 2008 Spiritual Directors retreat will

Continued on page 11

Journey of a Thousand Miles: Writers Beware

by Lita Kurth

Probably every aspiring writer has met with a publishing scam. I feel a little sad when I see college students proudly mentioning their listing in *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, for



Lita Kurth
Contributing Editor

example. Many of these publishing corporations offer “exclusivity” based on a paid fee, and essentially prey on the innocent and those who are hungry for honors (what writer isn’t?). Without extensive research, it can be difficult to tell who’s selling soft soap under the guise of compiling reference books.

One clue to authenticity is whether or not the publication rejects anyone. It might be fun, in a consumer advocate way, to make up a nonexistent person and see if we could get him or her placed in one of these so-called exclusive venues. (Shall we set aside seventy dollars of club money?)

Another clue is whether or not honorees write their own bios. A serious publisher of reference books is not going to let every claim go straight to press. A bogus publisher, on the other hand, has no editing department. It has a “customer service” department instead, which not only lets customers do all the work but makes them pay for the honor of providing free content. The company then downloads their information into a file, prints, binds, and sells it back to the customer at a hefty fee.

Even Marquis’s *Who’s Whos*, the “real” books found in libraries, use vanity press strategies. Along with presidents and international artists, they’ll list everyday people, special ed teachers, administrative assistants, landscape designers, and so on who certainly add “significant value to our society” but kind of stretch the definition of “noteworthy achievements.” As Tucker Carlson pointed out in a *Forbes* article entitled “The Hall of Fame,” “Probably half of the welding staff at Ohio State

University are members of *Who’s Who*.” Expect a lot of mail after acceptance: *Who’s Who* sells addresses to direct marketers.

Who’s Who probably shouldn’t even be in libraries anymore because they’ve let huge lies go by without even so much as a query. Carlson reports that a former ambassador to Switzerland, Larry Lawrence, attended Wilbur Wright Junior College (not too fancy) but in his entry for *Who’s Who*, he claimed a degree from the University of Arizona (much better!). *Who’s Who* was fine with that “fact” and with a whole list of other nonexistent achievements. Believe it or not, Lawrence’s body was eventually exhumed from Arlington National Cemetery after researchers discovered that he wasn’t a veteran at all, as published in *Who’s Who*.

Now on to more ambiguous abuses, but nonetheless practices that writers may wish to boycott. Again, many of these venues prey on writers’ eagerness or even desperation to be published. Some venues that don’t give writers their full due are anthologies in which writers give up all their rights for a flat fee, receiving no royalties at all no matter how many copies are sold. The best-selling series *Chicken Soup for the [Your Niche Here] Soul* follows that model. On the other hand, they’ll pay you again for the same article if they accept it for a different anthology, so, for example, if they accept your essay for *Chicken Soup for the Renter’s Soul* and it also fits in *Chicken Soup for the Divorced Soul*, you get paid twice. Still, if you consider that a hardcover book usually nets a buck in royalties for each copy sold, and we know millions of Chicken Soup items are sold, \$350 doesn’t seem like much. *Chicken Soup for the Underpaid Writer’s Soul*, anyone?

One anthology contributor, Renie Burghardt, noted in an article in *The Dabbling Mum* ezine that her inspirational story was chosen to appear on thousands of bags of Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover’s Soul cat food (just one of the lucrative franchises Chicken Soup is involved in)! There are writers who provide the words for can labels and receive full-time pay and benefits. They’re called marketing and advertising writers. For the sake of our own honor as writers and for better working

conditions for other writers, maybe we should all at least try to publish our first-person stories in better places before resorting to the Chicken Soup writers’ mill.

Let me close with a nasty scam from the late 1990’s that involved some well-known agents in New York. Those agents rejected a number of manuscripts and referred their authors to an organization called Edit Ink. Edit Ink told writers that “only a select few” manuscripts were referred to them, the most promising ones, and that most publishers needed manuscripts to be professionally edited, after which they’d likely have their book published. Edit Ink then charged a hefty \$5/page fee for editing. And who did this “professional” editing? Undergrads paid minimum wage. Not surprisingly, when aspiring authors sent the “edited” manuscript back to the agent, their work was once again rejected with an excuse like “the agency [is] ‘no longer representing that genre.’”

Edit Ink was found guilty in court but not before they’d made at least five million dollars. Interestingly, they’re still in business. To read more on this case and others, check out the website maintained by the vigilant Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America: <http://www.sfw.org/BEWARE/agents.html>. For further information, get in touch with the National Writers Union, a writers’ advocacy organization (just Google the name), and check out the publishers listed under “Writer Alerts.” As they used to say on *Hill Street Blues* (whose writers, as I understand, were well compensated): “Be careful out there!” WT



Woody Horn shares some of his memories with attendees at the Almaden Open Mic. Photo: Carolyn Donnell

Losing the Apostrophic War

by *Meredy Amyx*

Quantities of ag-grieved and over-wrought prose have been expended on the misuse of apostrophes, especially with -s plurals, a phenomenon that has grown and spread with bubonic vigor in the past



Meredy Amyx

decade or so. Some defenders of the language have seen the struggle against this contagion as a battle if not all-out war.

Here are some authentic, not invented, examples of apostrophes I've seen in use lately:

- Peco's Bill
- Miley Cyru's
- Wales' (the country)
- What doe's it mean when...

(The last author gets credit, at least, for not spelling the word as "dose," a variant that is becoming increasingly popular. No extra points to the one who wrote: "What do's it mean when....")

These atrocities are in addition to anomalous -'s plurals and, of course, that maddening rampant "it's" that utterly confounds legions of the well-intentioned.

One day recently, in a bit of a mood, I reacted to the fourth or fifth e-mail communication in a row from a documentation colleague in which he had used apostrophes to mark all his plurals. "I just have to ask," I said, not even apologizing first. "Why are you doing this? Why?" (With some effort, I refrained from sending him to Bob the Angry Flower [<http://www.angryflower.com/aposter.html>] for a well-deserved tongue-lashing.) His cheery reply: "I can never remember where they go, so I figure I'm always safe to put them in." A professional writer, no less.

Recalling a newspaper article I read about English learners in which one was quoted as saying that his teacher had told him he needed to learn only one tense of the verb, I wonder if there are

teachers out there who really are saying, "Don't bother to learn where apostrophes go. If an *s* comes at the end, put one in. People will know what you mean."

And the hell of it is that for the most part, people do.

What strikes me as so odd about this relatively recent explosion of indiscriminate apostrophizing is that the usual path of linguistic evolution is toward simplicity and economy. While we are witnessing the erosion of the past perfect, the loss of the possessive-with-gerund construction, the extinction of the subjunctive, and Miss Thistle-bottom's systematic eradication of the very valuable passive, how is it that the humble apostrophe has been mounted like a diadem to crown all the terminal esses? Given the examples above, I expect to start seeing it in medial positions, without any regard to significance. Perhaps our grandchildren will study Engli'sh compo'sition.

Or worse, perhaps they won't.

To tell you the truth, I would feel better if all the apostrophes atrophied and fell off, as would seem logical in this age of texting minimalism, than I do to see them as empty symbols distributed randomly and arbitrarily, mocking the meaning they once had.

If there's any comfort at all here for me, it's in the thought that in some way, by some dim light, the folks who are adding the extra stroke are trying to get it right, no matter how misguidedly. And that's why I think that in our present climate of constraining people's choices for their own good, some fascistic software company that owns the favorite writing tool of millions will step in and make sure that no one can ever mess up a good English plural with a stray apostrophe again. And so the die will be cast.

It's my belief that in the foreseeable future—maybe within the lifetime of our children—we will see the apostrophe fused to the *s* typographically for permanent use, just as we have the dot fused to the *i* and the *j*. There will be no distinction between *s* and 's. Perhaps the enhanced character will look something like one of these:

Šš Šš Šš Šš

Kindly note that this prediction is made with all due gloom. I think that the battle is lost and that the reasoned use of this once-serviceable mark of punctuation is past salvaging. So in anticipating the innovation, I'm only telling you what I see ahead; I would never dream of advocating it.

In the end, ignorance always holds the trump card because it is unpredictable and defies the rules in exactly the same way that guerrilla fighters can best uniformed troops marching in formation. It may take a universal *s*, improved by that all-purpose stroke, to set the terms of a truce. Then we die-hards who have vowed never to surrender won't actually have to capitulate. The option will simply be taken away from us: the price of peace. WT

New Members

by *Lita Kurth*

John Askins, a Willow Glen marketing writer and former journalist, joined South Bay Writers to find a critique group in the area. His work-in-progress is a humorous mystery novel, and he can be contacted at johnaskins@earthlink.net.

Dan Elliott, Jr. of San Jose found us via all-powerful Google. Having attended L.A.'s Book Expo, he learned about writers clubs, decided to attend East of Eden, discovered it was sponsored by us, and joined! He's a novel writer, seeking a critique group. danjr27@comcast.net WT



Pat Bustamante, winner of the first *WritersTalk* Worth 500 Words contest, receives her certificate and \$35 cash award from *WT* editor Dick Amyx.

Publish Your Book in California! Part II

by Victoria M. Johnson

Before you send your book proposal off to New York, you may first want to consider one of the many publishers right in our own backyard. Below I feature another successful publisher with a unique way of doing business.



Victoria M. Johnson

Founded in 1992 in San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler is an independent publisher that is 46% owned by more than 100 authors, customers, employees and suppliers!

Jeevan Sivasubramaniam is the senior managing editor at Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., and he provided insight into their philosophy. “We have a real partnership in the publishing venture with our authors versus authors signing away their rights. We

work every step of the way with them—throughout the entire process of publishing their book.”

When asked how Berrett-Koehler was unique in the publishing world, Jeevan sent a copy of a sample contract. Indeed, it included phrases one rarely, if ever, sees in a publishing contract, e.g., “if for any reason the author is not satisfied, the author can stop the process and take back their book,” a favorable “Reversion of Rights” clause, and “authors are involved in the book title, the design of the cover and interior of the book.” But a common publisher clause has been deleted from the Berrett-Koehler contract. The clause that gives the publisher the right to the author’s next book has been removed because their view is that a publisher needs to earn the right to the author’s next book and authors should make that choice. Also, Berrett-Koehler does not pay an advance. “We start off at the same royalty rates as other publishers but may go higher than standard publishers once the book has crossed a certain border of sales.” Jeevan adds,

“We have a true collaborative attitude with our authors as well as absolute transparency about everything. Even our contracts and memos as well as other documents are available for anyone to view and download at <http://del.icio.us/bkeditorial>”

Berrett-Koehler publishes 30 to 35 titles per year. “We publish in the areas of personal growth, current affairs, and business. We like books that have a general appeal, so a book specifically tailored for accountants or people interested in healing crystals would not be for us,” says Jeevan. A review of their spring catalog shows titles such as, *Prescription for Survival: A Doctor’s Journey to End Nuclear Madness*, by Bernard Lown, MD; *Making Waves and Riding the Currents: Activism and the Practice of Wisdom*, by Charles Halpern; *Flight Plan: The Real Secret of Success*, by Brian Tracy; *Crunch: If the Economy’s Doing So Well, Why Do I Feel So Squeezed?* by Jared Bernstein; *Something To Live For: Finding Your Way in the*

Continued on page 11

Story Circle Network

by Carolyn Donnell

How many of you have ever thought about writing a memoir but didn’t know where to begin? Or began writing and are now bogged down, either in the writing itself or with publishing or marketing issues? Here’s one resource that might offer some help: Story Circle Network.

The Story Circle Network is a national not-for-profit organization, founded in early 1997, made up of women “who want to explore their lives and their souls through life-writing—writing that focuses on personal experience, through memoirs and autobiographies, in diaries and journals, in personal essays, in poetry.” They are headquartered in Austin, Texas, but have chapters nationwide (and in Ontario and Yemen!). The network encompasses local chapters, including a special circle type for seniors (sixty-plus) called the Older Women’s Legacy (OWL), an online chapter, a monthly journal, classes and workshops, both local and online, retreats and many other activi-

ties. The Internet Chapter costs extra, but provides writing and reading e-Circles, weekly writing prompts and quotes and other services.

I first learned of this group from South Bay member Marsha Brandsdorfer. She discovered them through an article in



Carolyn Donnell (center) with *Story Circle Journal* contributing editor Lisa Shirah-Hiers (left) and Editor-in-Chief Jane Ross (right). Photo: Carolyn Donnell

Writer’s Digest magazine. As her memoir *The Accidental Secretary* was about to go to press, she found that the mission statement about encouraging women’s memoirs immediately resonated with her. One of the member benefits of the Story Circle Network is a book review, so Marsha submitted her book. Marsha stated, “I was very happy with the positive and concise review I

received of my book.” Read that review at <http://www.storycirclebookreviews.org/reviews/secretary.shtml>.

On a recent trip to Austin, I met with Journal staff members Editor-in-Chief (at the time of this printing) Jane Ross and contributing editor Lisa Shirah-Hiers. They answered questions and gave me a copy of the *Story Circle Journal*.

Members receive this quarterly newsletter that contains member contributions (short—up to 350 words), excerpts from the author’s life writing, along with news, announcements, and other information. When one of Marsha’s friends died in December of 2007 she wrote a short article about him, *My Friend Jim*, and it was published in the March 2008 issue.

The only local chapter I found listed in California is in Lincoln; there’s also an OWL Circle in Concord. Members are encouraged to form new local groups (Story Circle provides a facilitator’s guide for this purpose), or they can join

Continued on page 11

Mom's Way

by Valerie Whong



About 1:30 p.m., Mom took a short cut and crossed an alley, heading toward the large shopping center. She had to go to the post office, pick up a few gifts and then do her banking. It was all so convenient, all in one place. She clutched her purse tighter under her arm and shook her head when loud music blared from cars that whizzed by. A red convertible slowed down beside her. She turned to stare at the two young men, thinking perhaps that she knew them. But suddenly, the man on the passenger side reached out and yanked her shoulder bag. He pulled it off with such force that she fell and hit the cement pavement hard. Dazed, she watched as the car sped off.

Excruciating pain shot up the right side of her body but she managed to crawl to the curb on all fours. Tears rolled down her cheeks, and when she struggled to sit up, blood poured from her nostrils. Shaking, moving slowly, she grabbed the first thing handy—the scarf around her neck—and applied pressure to her nose. She brushed the tears from her eyes with the back of her hand.

By now a crowd had gathered but no one came to her assistance. A woman yelled, “I’ll call 911. I’ll get help.”

The police arrived first on the scene ten minutes later. Questioned while she was confused and traumatized, Mom momentarily forgot her name and address. After calming down she said, “I’m scared. These young men know where I live. They’ve got my IDs, checkbooks and even my Social Security card. Good thing I had enough sense to keep my car keys in my slacks. Otherwise, they’d have taken my car too.”

An officer replied, “Don’t worry. We’re here. No one’s going to hurt you now. Shall we call your children?”

Mom responded, “No. Please don’t bother them. My daughter’s at work. My son is at a job interview. No use upsetting them. I’m fine.”

The medics arrived to check her vital signs and to make certain the nose bleeding had stopped. Then the police accompanied Mom to her parked car to make sure it was locked. One officer suggested, “Have your son pick up the car later. You’re in no condition to drive. We’ll take you home.” Relieved, Mom felt safe with the police.

Inside the police car, Mom relived the nightmare and tried to give the police a more vivid description of the two young men in the red convertible. She was not surprised when the officer said, “It sounds like the same two guys involved in several other purse snatchings at shopping malls. Can’t be too careful nowadays. Don’t worry. We’ll get them.”

On the way home, she felt a little calmer, anxious to get into the safety of her own house. The officer stayed with her to make certain everything was in order. As he was leaving, he handed her a card with his number on it and warned, “Just take care of yourself. Don’t answer the door for just anyone. You know where to reach me if you need me.”

When Mom called me at work to tell me what had happened, I was livid. She said, “Take it easy. You know. Not bad—didn’t get mugged until I’m almost eighty (*bat sup suey*).”

Although she pretended not to be afraid, I could tell from her quivering voice that she needed me. It was just like Mom. I knew what she was trying to do—alleviate my fear and worries. She didn’t want to be a burden. I reassured her by saying, “Keep the doors locked (*saw moon*). I’ll be right there.” I cleaned off my desk and left work early.

At home, I found Mom sitting in a trance at the kitchen table, rubbing the right side of her arm. Her answering device was on. Something was wrong. Mom’s eyes widened, “I’ve been getting strange calls. The phone rings, then there’s heavy breathing. When no one answers I just hang up. It’s been happening a lot.” From her frown, I could tell she was nervous.

“Mom, don’t worry (*mow sow*), I’ll take care of that immediately. We’ll just change your phone number right now.” I got up to dial the phone company and watched when she began to pace. “Why me?” Her eyebrow arched as she shrugged her shoulders.

After the call, I sat down beside her.

She said, “You know, luckily I hadn’t gone to the bank yet. I would have had over \$1,000 on me if they had mugged me later on the way back to the car.” She shuddered, and I put my arms around her to comfort her. “Now, Mom, it’s over. You just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. It can happen to anyone. From now on, you’re not going to carry a purse. Wear a fanny pack around your waist instead. You’re too much of a target with a large handbag. What the thieves can’t see, (*mmm tie doe*) they can’t take.”

“But I’ve always carry a purse. I like handbags.”

“I know Mom, but times have changed. After a while, you won’t even miss carrying one. Believe me, I know. Another thing, always wear a jacket or long sweater so you can hide your fanny pack. Don’t worry, I know what to do.”

It took months to replace her driver’s license, birth certificate and other IDs. Every time I see Mom rub her pretty face and wince with pain, I am just grateful she wasn’t terrorized because then she would never be able to get rid of the mental scars. Still, what kind of people would prey on the elderly? To me they are cowards. Why can’t they let our seniors enjoy their golden years?

Mom now became paranoid whenever she went out by herself. She would call me constantly to tell me where she was going. Even her mah jong games have been curtailed because of fear. She refused to go anywhere unless others accompanied her. I was very concerned. She wasn’t the independent woman she once was. I felt “these cowards” had stolen a very special part of my mother and she would never be the same again.

One day, to our surprise, somebody from a department store in the shopping mall close to Mom’s house called. They had found her purse on their roof. When I told her about it, I expected her

to be happy but she reacted strangely. "Let's forget it! Someone might be waiting to hurt me. After all, they have my address and know where I live."

"You don't have to come, I'll take care of it. You're safe here."

"No. I don't want to be here by myself. For all I know, they could be watching this place. I'm going with you."

In the car on the way to the shopping mall, Mom was in deep thought. As I stared at the troubled expression on her face, I got angry all over again. How dare these men scare her so that she was afraid to go out and be alone now? It wasn't fair!

Terrible water spots, probably due to the heavy rains that we had been experiencing, had ruined Mom's lovely brown leather purse. At first she just stared at the purse and refused to touch it, but when I opened up the zipper to look inside, she grabbed the purse from me. Her eyes lit up with excitement as she went through her belongings. She recovered everything except some cash and her eyeglasses. I laughed at her child-like behavior because again, though not knowing it, she taught me something else—courage and strength.

One evening I decided to take Mom to see the movie *Mrs. Doubtfire*. She needed to be distracted and I was certain she would enjoy a night out. Mom laughed at the scene in which the woman grabbed her purse back from a purse-snatcher and said, "Look at that! From now on, that's going to be my way". WT



Valerie Whong is the author of *The Jade Rubies*.

July: Will Fly (2008)

Lucky travelers on vacations.
Relaxing summer destinations;
A writer's work may never cease.
Airports sting our peace like bees.
Stung to write? Small compensation!

—Pat Bustamante

My Date with Basil

by Betty Auchard

Basil is my writing buddy. We spend a lot of time together, talking, eating, sharing stories, and attending meetings. Most people in our writing club assume we're an "item." But Basil has many health problems and is not inclined to get cozy with me. To do so would compromise our friendship as well as his health. We both know that's the truth, but we keep it to ourselves, letting people think what they want. It's nice to have a male friend to meet me for breakfast at a local diner, with no strings attached. And it's great to have another writer I trust to give honest feedback or to drive with to literary meetings.

The evening before Valentine's Day, I had taken a break from my computer to watch TV when the phone rang.

"Hi. This is Basil." His voice sounded tired.

"Hi, Basil," I chirped.

"Are you busy tonight?" he inquired.

"Nope. What's up?" I assumed he was asking me out for a Valentine dinner.

"I need you to take me to the hospital," he said. After four hours of trying to reach his daughter, he'd finally called me. He was having difficulty breathing and had pain in his left lung.

Immediately, I pushed my self-calming emergency button and, with cool efficiency, got instructions for letting myself into his house. As I drove the mile between us, I imagined all kinds of things and wondered if I would be capable of handling an emergency situation. As soon as I opened the front door, I called his name and he answered from the living room. He wasted no time in telling me what to assemble in case he had to stay in the hospital. I appeared composed as I packed the necessary items. But my façade cracked a little when I inquired for the third time, "Are you sure we shouldn't call 911?" He brushed off that idea with a wave of his hand and assured me it wasn't that serious.



Betty Auchard

I prayed he was right. Getting him to my car was a slow process. He was extremely weak, which caused him to stumble. Luckily, I had a death grip on his arm. Once he was settled in the car, I said, "Fasten your seat belt, Basil. I'll try not to make this a bumpy ride." He barely acknowledged the fact that I was trying to imitate Bette Davis in an old movie called *All about Eve*.

After all the times I had driven Basil to club meetings and social events, I had become aware of his accomplished back seat driving skills. They were as fine-tuned as my deceased husband's, and this emergency night was no exception. Basil slumped in the passenger's seat with head bent forward and eyes closed as he struggled for breath. Still, he managed to issue directions to me as though I had never driven to that hospital before.

Upon arrival at the emergency department, I left Basil in the car while I got someone to help transfer him to a wheelchair. Once that was accomplished, I felt less tense and tried again to reach his daughter. Several nurses and a doctor had gathered around Basil, asking questions. Then they administered an injection that made him relax so he could breathe more easily. I exhaled slowly, releasing both breath and fear as I handed him over to the care of the medical staff. It meant I could sit back, relax, and close my eyes. The various sounds of a nighttime emergency ward barely registered. But just as the tension was leaving my bones, someone interrupted my unruffled state of mind.

"Mrs. Stevens?" A nurse with a clipboard was addressing me. I sat up like a pole.

"I'm not married to Mr. Stevens. He is my neighbor and friend."

"Alrighty then." She couldn't hide her devilish grin. "I have a few questions."

Eventually, Basil was transferred to a larger room filled with equipment where three doctors attempted to diagnose my friend's problem. I kept one eye on the monitor that showed Basil's unstable heartbeat while the nurse fussed with dials, vials, and machines. I was seriously concerned about my buddy's well-being.

Continued on page 13

Tim Myers, continued from page 1

more prevalent in other careers. "It's wonderful, even exhilarating, to be in front of a group of such interested writers," he said.

The theme he came back to more than twice was "self-definition" for a writer. "It's easy to find yourself building life on sand," he said. It's shifting sand. The writer's job is certainly not a very secure way to make a living. Unlike other vocations like, say, professional sports, union and corporate jobs, nursing, or teaching, there are few if any institutional supports for writers. A writer is the worker, the boss, the accountant, the marketing goal-setter, and guru of his subject, with few others to lean on (until, perchance or skill, his/her product is accepted for publication). No one is obligated to support a writer. That's the way it is. Writers can expect no career ladder to climb, which certainly makes a normal life difficult. Can you imagine the Yankees not trying actively to get the most out of an up-and-coming player in its ranks? There is no natural similar support available for a writer. (The journalist is an exception; the news organization is infrastructure.)

"For a writer, even with a publication success or two behind him, it's, 'Yeah, but what did you write lately?'" Myers said. "You're only as good as your last book. Compared to most careers, writers have a sandier environment."

Even with successful children's books to his credit such as *Basho and the Fox* (an award winner and a children's books bestseller) and *Basho and the River Stones* (which garnered a glowing NY Times review), Myers wakes up each morning wondering if he should keep persevering. And yet, his inner voice says "Oh, please, let me keep being beaten up."

He commented that he is considered by his peers to be "different." At SCU, apparently some of the rest of the faculty chide, "Tim, you teach, to be frank, so darn differently than all of us."

On "the art of the writing life," he laments that we, as writers, often need to eat but harder to concentrate on writing. Tremendous uncertainty, again, that shifting of sands, is all around. Yet in Tim's thinking, there is a beauty, goodness inside anyone in the writing life.

You'll find that the most important part of writing is not your stack of successful, published works, but in the writing itself, that time spent working the story out. A real writer, not merely a poser, is not just there for the money. Money—as a side effect—of course is a help. But Tim quotes Van Gogh's brother, Theo, remembering the now-famous artist's saying, "I would live the life of a dog just to be an artist."



Tim Myers speaks to SBW writer-to-writers.

Many nonwriters have this impression, which does have a slender element of truth in it: "Wouldn't it be great to be a writer like you? All you do in a day is sit around looking out your window." Little do they realize the sweat and craft that goes into our work.

Suppose you get advice from your critique group or some negative comment from your publisher? "Take it all with a grain of salt," he suggested.

He spoke about the difficulties of marketing to young readers of today. What they want is a written product that is "byte-sized," brief, and provides content of *their* choosing on demand; interactive. But knowing your audience is different from pandering to it. Or is it?—something to think about.

He spoke of dogs that keep getting kicked around by their owners yet keep coming back, tail wagging. Myers rhetorically asks, "What is it that keeps me coming back?"

Stepping back and observing who you really are as a writer, your self-defini-

tion, can clarify your strategy. For example, you want to avoid what one person tonight said over dinner, "I was watering the leaves instead of the roots."

When probing deep inside yourself, find a balance of chaos (writing) and orderliness (the rest of your life). "Writing is like falling in love." It's often not orderly. Insecurity and ego are involved. "You may very well fail." Your heart and soul are put out into the public arena and "subject to getting stomped on." If you are a writer, try on that "mask." Admit it if it's not right for you. (You may naturally be a natural-born "poser" instead.) Like a maturing love relationship, the writer is *always* in the process of "becoming."

Myers said that one of the best definitions of being human is that we are the species that doesn't stay in place. Be true to that tendency: step out to become your best self. "To get ordinary shells, you walk the shore; to get pearls, you dive deep," a statement Tim said came from Thomas Jefferson.

He defined a writer as being oriented to success and doing. Goals and minute-to-minute work habits are crucial. But the writer is also a promoter of himself and his work; he's a marketer.

Each person's self-definition is unique. Some are completely satisfied reducing success to numbers, the number of novels published, the royalties earned. For some people that's plenty. But there is a potential for a deeper form of vocation. Frederick Baker defined successful writing thus: "Our deep gladness meets the world's deep needs." Myers mentioned heeding a call. It comes from within you. You are not the one who decides. In his case, he said, "I didn't choose; I acquiesced."

He likes the quote, "If you don't have to write, don't!"

But it is great when you can say, "I'm a writer," and mean it.

We writers don't just use our intellect alone. We play [with ideas; with our characters] and that is what drives culture. And you are a success if, at the end of the day, you can say, "I'm being who I'm meant to be." WT

Second Half of Life, by Richard J. Leider and David A. Shapiro; and *The Hamster Revolution: How to Manage Your Email Before It Manages You*, by Mike Song, Vicki Halsey, and Tim Burrell. The Spring Catalog also revealed that Berrett-Koehler holds an annual authors' retreat.

Yes, Jeevan accepts unsolicited and/or unagented material. "Of about 1,000 unsolicited projects proposed to us annually we choose between 3 and 5." Last year they bought proposals from 5 first-time authors.

Jeevan cites the most common reasons he rejects a manuscript:

- The topic is not new or has already been covered ample times by others.
- The author does not have an estab-

lished marketing platform or presence.

- We do not publish in the arena that the author's book focuses on.

Jeevan offers this advice to authors submitting to him: "Do thorough research into competing titles and also see what kinds of books we have published to see if there is a solid match."

Guidelines are available at www.bkconnection.com

Click About BK, then click Proposal Guidelines WT

Victoria M. Johnson is published in non-fiction. She's an award-winning author and screenwriter and writes medical romances. Visit her website at VictoriaMJohnson.com

Story Circle, continued from page 7

the Internet chapter. If you don't want to become a member now, you can sign up for the free e-newsletter on their website.

Other Story Circle benefits include journaling tips and guides in each issue of the Story Circle Journal. Internet Chapter members also receive weekly writing prompts by email. Speakers Bureau pages on the website include on-line or local writing workshops and classes and events, postings for your writing-related classes and workshops; the Market Watch lists current publishing opportunities, contests, and conferences; the Members in Print and in the News page lets members share their writing achievements.

So how can you become a member? You can join the national organization as well as the Internet Chapter by filling out an on-line form and paying through PayPal or by mailing your membership dues to their office (see addresses below).

Sorry guys, this particular resource is for women only. I know it's not fair, but you would have to talk to the directors of the group. (Maybe you could start your own circle. MW2—Men Write Too! Or MFM—Memoirs for Men.)

Annual dues are \$35 for an individual; for an additional \$18, you can join the

Internet Chapter. (You must be a member of the National Story Circle Network to join the Internet Chapter.)

Web site: www.storycircle.org Contact information: storycircle@storycircle.org or phone 512-454-9833. Write to Story Circle Network P.O. Box 500127 Austin, TX 78750-0127 WT

Accolades, continued from page 4

appear in the MDO July 2008 issue.

- Steve Wetlesen's latest commission concerned a piece of poetic art for a memorial service. He promoted the idea that direct marketing of commissioned poetic art for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, or any occasion is an untapped source of income for writers. It is an approach that might benefit all CWC writers who are looking for ways to generate income from their writing. Interesting thought.

It does seem that the same names appear every month. What about the rest of you? Surely you have some good writing news to share? Email me at j_mutz@yahoo.com. And don't forget the CWC BBQ at Edie Matthews' home on July 20. WT

Withypoll Welsa

by Marjorie Johnson

Withypoll Welsa felt silly whenever she snapped the elastic band around the upper quarter of her head, right where you'd cut a head to make a cookie jar if it were made of plastic, but, then, what the heck? It was a job, wasn't it, and it wasn't like it was illegal or anything.



She draped a stethoscope around her neck and posed herself behind the desk just under the *Plastic Surgery Today*, *Beautiful Tomorrow* poster. The corded edge of the mask she wore marked the typical incision on the forehead to lift the eyebrows, and they were lifted, all right, high enough to stretch every wrinkle, even skin only thinking about wrinkling. She knew that the real incision would be higher and hidden in the customer's hairline, the extra skin excised—or maybe exorcised—she couldn't remember which. She had forgotten if this mask represented the before or the after, old face or new face.

It didn't matter.

Either way, she'd say, "This is what you get in cheap plastic surgery," always good for a laugh. The client would cough up the \$99 down payment and sign on the dotted line, and she'd get her usual \$50.

Withypoll did have one rule, however. She never posed for breast augmentation. WT



Michael Murray reads from his novel at the Sunnyvale Open Mic. Photo: Carolyn Donnell

View from the Board

by *Dave LaRoche*

The SBW Board of Directors met June 6 with Leon, Davis, Baldwin, Osborne, Vegh, Paluzzi, Amyx and LaRoche attending; Bauer, Matthews and Aurich absent. President Dave LaRoche began the meeting with a rundown on 2007-08 objectives and their status. Most all goals met with noteworthy achievement in the areas of budget, membership, formalized policy, interactive website, upgraded programs, increased workshops, networking and member involvement and recognition. Two objectives, youth outreach and a review/rewrite of the bylaws, were not attained.

Alex Leon, VP, announced the program schedule for coming months, with Tim Myers in June, workshop and BBQ in July, Dahr Jamail in August, EoE in

September, Steve Bhaerman in October and Norman Solomon in November.

Jeremy Osborne, Treasurer, announced a generally balanced cash flow for the month and year. As Central Board Representative, LaRoche described a web-supported method of conducting business being tried by the Central Board which, if successful, may save the Club travel expenses.

Marjorie Johnson, Membership Chair, announced that we had broken through the 200 member mark and Bill Baldwin, Open Mic Chair, reported an average of eight readings at each of the five monthly open-mic sessions.

Dick Amyx, *WritersTalk* Managing Editor and Anthology Chair, reported that the anthology selection team is considering about 140 pieces previously published in *WritersTalk* and an additional 40 original submittals. The production team is looking for publish-

ers, anticipating a 6x9 book of 150 pages, and expects to be ready for subscription orders sometime in September. A publication date is planned in early 2009. A sample cover was circulated.

Nominating Chair Suzy Paluzzi reported the slate to date, the election process she will run and the method of qualifying voters. The slate: President, Dave LaRoche; VP, Bill Baldwin and Phyllis Mattson; Secretary, Cathy Bauer and Rita St. Claire; Treasurer, Richard Burns.

A previously tabled motion to purchase a video camera was again taken up and defeated. A motion to adopt Policy 08, Membership, was passed unanimously, and a motion to set aside a maximum of \$200 for bookmarks was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm. WT

CWC South Bay Writers presents a special workshop

Pitchcraft: Taking the Mystery out of Writers Conferences

Get ready for East of Eden or any writers conference

POSTPONED UNTIL AUGUST 17

Join us for a day of tips and fun with SBW members and workshop leaders Rick Brost and Ro Davis. Learn the dos and don'ts to get the most value out of any writers conference you'll attend.

With 30+ conferences between them, Rick and Ro have made all the mistakes, so you don't have to. At the workshop, we'll work on:

- your conference strategy
- working the room
- dealing effectively with agents and publishers
- crafting your pitch
- practicing your pitch in one-on-one practice sessions

Where:

Lookout Restaurant
605 Macara Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA
(at the Sunnyvale Golf Course)

Special price (includes lunch):

- \$20 for CWC members
- \$25 for nonmembers

Registration:

Registration has been suspended until the new date has been confirmed.

If you have already registered and want a refund, email the treasurer at treasurer@southbaywriters.com.

Visit the website for latest information
www.southbaywriters.com

WRITERSTALK Challenge

What Is It?

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

Genres

Fiction
Memoir
Essay
Poetry

Judging Periods

February 16 through August 15
August 16 through February 15

Prizes

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

Judging

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

* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club; judges may not participate in the competition.



EAST OF EDEN
Writers Conference

September 5 - 7, 2008 Salinas, CA Steinbeck Country

- Agents
- Editors
- Publishers
- Keynote speakers
- Writing workshops

REGISTER NOW!
www.southbaywriters.com

California Writers Club
Founded 1909

Sell Your Book at East of Eden Writers Conference

If you are a published member of CWC and attending this year's East of Eden Writers Conference, you are invited to sell your book there. If Barnes & Noble can order it, they will sell it through their bookstore, or if you are self-published, we will allow you to bring books and sell them. There will be a special table for authors to sell and sign their books.

At the last conference we had about 300 people attend, and we all know that writers are readers. Come sell your book, enjoy the conference, and be inspired to write the next one.

Contact Edie Matthews in advance if you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity. edie333@sbcglobal.net.

Good ideas!

BAD IDEAS

CREATIVE

IDEAS

The SBW anthology needs a title. Please send your suggestions to
anthology@
southbaywriters.com

My Date with Basil, continued from page 9

Four hours passed and the place was never quiet. Now that Basil could breathe more easily, he became the life of the party. I was a used dish rag. He told stories about his writing career, his grandchildren, his lifelong health problems, and the fact that he was supposed to have his weekly chemotherapy treatment the next day. He introduced me to everyone who passed by as his friend, the published author. This prompted the nurses to ask what I wrote about.

"Memoirs," I replied. "I write about the events of my life and the people who cause them." Naturally, they wanted to know if I was going to write about that evening. I said, "I'm not sure. I don't know how this story is going to end yet."

After his daughter arrived, we talked for an hour—'til nearly midnight, but I wasn't even tired. I knew that once I got home, I would need to unwind with a cup of hot milk and a shot of brandy.

Before I left, Basil beckoned me closer to his bedside and said, "Thank you for all you've done for me, Betty." He was so genuinely sincere that I wondered if he was saying goodbye forever. But then he added, "I hope you're taking notes about tonight because I'm just *dying* for you to write a story about me."

"Basil," I replied, "you don't have to die for me to write a story about you. I'll start it tonight. But when you get home from the hospital, you owe me dinner at the diner." WT

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *This account was written in February, 2003.*

32nd Annual Foothill College Writers Conference

July 09, 2008–July 13, 2008

Authors of all ability levels can read, write and workshop poems and prose, fiction and nonfiction by registering for the 32nd Annual Foothill College Writers Conference. The event is July 9–13 and features intensive daily workshops, lectures and seminars.

Small group interaction is emphasized in the popular manuscript workshops, and gives participants the rare opportunity to have their creative pieces critiqued by professional authors and workshop peers.

Also, prose and poetry readings are presented daily at noon and 7:30 p.m.

Guest presenters are Bay Area literati, including Kathleen de Azevedo, Denny Berthiaume, Christopher Buckley, Dennis Drury, Sharon Doubiago, Avotcja Jiltonilro, Carol Lem, Ann Marie Macari, David Meltzer, Joanne Palamountain, Doren Robbins, Dixie Salazar, Catherine Seidel, Jon Veinberg, and Gary Young.

The conference is offered as a one-unit course. California residents pay \$53.50. Participants are encouraged to register online beginning June 3 for CRWR 120B01: Creative Writers Conference at www.foothill.edu/la/conference.php. Register online early as conference seats fill quickly. On-site registration will also be offered.

For more information, e-mail Conference Coordinator Doren Robbins at robbinsdoren@foothill.edu or call (650) 949-7678. <http://www.foothill.edu/news/newsfmt.php?sr=3>

Central Coast Writers Branch 2009 Writing Contest

For poetry and short stories.

Winners' awards: \$500 and publication (print and on-line) in the *Homestead Review* (Hartnell College).

Entry Fees: \$15 per short story and \$5 per poem.

Submission period: August 15, 2008 through November 15, 2008.

Guidelines and Info:
www.centralcoastwriters.org

Directory of Experts

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

Character Development

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

Character Traits

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

Computer Dingus and Full-Time Nerd

Jeremy Osborne
jeremy_w_osborne@yahoo.com

Doctors' Office Environment, OB-GYN

Dottie Sieve
pdrsieve@yahoo.com

Hospital and Nursing Environment

Maureen Griswold
maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net

Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/Psychology

Dave Breithaupt
dldbmlb@comcast.net

Police Procedures

John Howsden
jwhowsden961@yahoo.com

Profile Writing

Susan Mueller
susan_mueller@yahoo.com

Teaching and the Arts

Betty Auchard
Btauchard@aol.com

Television Production

Woody Horn
408-266-7040

CWC Around the Bay

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

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

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

Central Coast: Meets on the third Tuesday of each month except December at Buzzard's Backyard BBQ, adjacent to the Travelodge, 2030 N. Fremont, Monterey. The dinner hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m.
centralcoastwriters.org

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

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

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

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

Redwood: Meets the first Sunday of the month, from 3 to 5 p.m. at Marvin's Restaurant, 7991 Old Redwood Highway, corner of William St., in Cotati.
redwoodwriters.org

The pen is the tongue
of the mind.

—Miguel de Cervantes

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July		1	2	3	4 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza, San Jose	5
		6	7 7P Board of Directors Meeting	8	9	10
13 Preconference Workshop	14	15	16 <i>WritersTalk</i> deadline	17 7:00P Open Mic Barnes & Noble 3900 Mowry, Fremont	18 7:30P Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	19
20 SBW Barbecue	21	22	23	24	25 7:30P Open Mic Borders Books Sunnyvale	26
27	28	29	30	31	2008	
Future Flashes						

Stay Informed!

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

www.southbaywriters.com

South Bay Writers Open Mic

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

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

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

or

Bob Garfinkle
ragarf@earthlink.net

SBW Poets

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

SBW Writers' Forum

Events
Conferences
Contests
Networking
Resources
SBW Author Events
and News at

southbaywriters.com

San Jose Poetry Slam (Est. 1998)

8:00 p.m., \$6.00

First Tuesday: Open Mic with music by Rebelskamp

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

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

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

Poetry Center San Jose Readings

First Gallery downtown
Willow Glen Books

Cosponsored by the
Creative Writing Department at
San José State University

Free admission.

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



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

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**No Monthly Meeting
in July**
Alternate Activity
**SBW Annual Potluck Barbecue
July 20**
See front cover for details.

**East of Eden
Writers Conference**
September 5, 6, and 7, 2008
in Salinas, California
Mark your calendar now!

**It's gotta be
Pitchcraft!**
See page 12

