

THE BULLETIN

California Writers Club

Vol. 5 No. 2

Summer / 2019

A Round of Applause

Congratulations to our latest winners of the 2019 Jack London award for outstanding service to your CWC branches.

Volunteering is a serious endeavor for many of our coast-to-coast branches that rely on hours of dedicated services to sustain a vital statewide membership.

The Bulletin is the official publication of California Writers Club, an educational nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. Issue e-edition 12 now in circulation since August 2019.

CENTRAL BOARD

President: Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Vice Pres.: Roger Lubeck
Secretary: Elisabeth Tuck
Treasurer: Anthony Becker
Member-at-Large: Jeanette Fratto

Branches: **22**

California Writers Club
PO Box 201
Danville, CA 94526

Ina Coolbrith Award Goes to Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

This time the coveted state award for continuous and dedicated service to the Central Board goes to Donna McCrohan Rosenthal.

The award is named for one of the founders of the California Writers Club, and the first Poet Laureate of California, Ina Coolbrith. It is given for outstanding dedication and service to the California Writers Club.

Donna is only the 13th CWC member to be so honored in the history of the California Writers Club. Previous winners are David George, Anthony R. Folcarelli, Bob Isbill, Ray Malus, Robert Garfinkle, Dave La Roche, Kelly Harrison, Joyce Krieg, Casey Wilson, Barbara Truax, Betty Freeman and Ruth Theodos.

Read more on Page 2.



President Joyce Krieg presents the Coolbrith to Donna McCrohan Rosenthal.

Welcome the New Central Board 2019-20

Newly elected CWC Central Board: (l-r)
Elisabeth Tuck, secretary;
Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, president;
Anthony Becker, treasurer;
and, Roger C. Lubeck, PhD., vice president



President's Corner

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

Meet Our Newest President



Joyce Krieg, on the left, handed the traditional gavel to our new President Donna McCrohan Rosenthal during the Central Board's scheduled meeting in late July. Taking the helm is nothing new to Donna; she has a long and varied career in publishing industry.

Here's a bit of her background.

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal moved to California from New York City in 1997 to marry Dave Rosenthal. Prior to that, she had begun her career in publishing at Pocket Books as editorial assistant to the legendary executive editor Bernard Shir-Cliff, continued on to the Literary Guild and Avon Books, then turned full-time author with books traditionally published by Simon & Schuster, Random, Viking, St. Martin's, Workman, and Crown.

She's written magazine articles in *Redbook*, *McCall's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Bakersfield Magazine*, and NY AAA Magazine frequently; and, in newspapers, the *Ventura County Star*, *Victorville Daily Press*, and *Oakland Tribune*. She has spoken at the Smithsonian and appeared on *A&E Biography* and *Oprah* television shows.

When she lived in New York, she represented the international service organization Pilot International as its NGO (nongovernmental observer) at the United Nations, where she worked alongside NGOs such as the Sierra Club, Cousteau Society, Rotary, Elks, and Lions.

For the CWC, she has served more than a dozen years on the Central Board, most recently as secretary and vice president. As CWC Public Relations director, she arranged for the placement of our centennial time capsule in the Bancroft Library. She chaired CWC-South for many years and in her branch, East Sierra, has held the positions of president, secretary, newsletter editor, program chair, and publicity chair.



Highlights of Central Board Events of July



The gavel is handed over from Joyce Krieg (outgoing) to Donna McCrohan Rosenthal (incoming) President.



All smiles for the 2019 Jack London recipients from their respective branches.



All hands on deck for the catered awards banquet, elections, and presentation of awards.



Clarissa is just one of the many Jack London recipients featured during the ceremony.

Photo credit: Vice President Roger C. Lubeck

THE GREAT ATTENTION SPAN DECEPTION

by Donnie Bryant (reprinted with permission)

So the question isn't, "how do we accommodate the shrinking attention span of our readers?" Rather, we should ask, "how do we become more interesting, valuable, and important to the people we want to talk to?"

Here are 3 suggestions:

Number 1: Spend more time talking about more important things (as defined by the reader). Sounds obvious, but I can't proceed without mentioning the point. We all love talking about ourselves. We like to talk about stuff we want to talk about. It's just natural, right? Just don't be surprised when people ignore you. Readers need to quickly recognize

the benefit of giving you their attention.

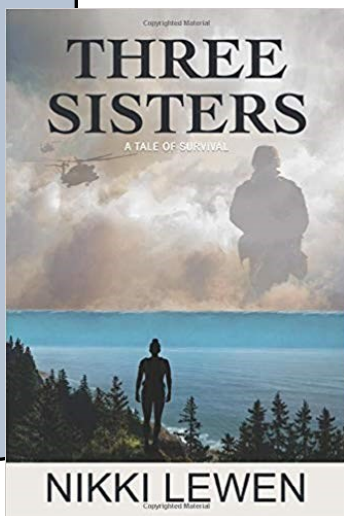
After all, Facebook is calling incessantly.

There's always something interesting there...

Number 2: Commit to telling more stories. People love hearing stories. They are more than happy to sit and listen. Or read. Much longer than they're likely to read raw information. Naturally, you still have to tie your stories back to what's important/interesting for the reader. More details are better. More emotion is better. More sensory information is usually better. Make the reader feel like he was really there, experiencing the story with you. (This is basic.)

Number 3: Become a personality.

Think about celebrities the media is obsessed with. The ones whose faces are on magazine covers everywhere you go. Huge segments of the population drop whatever they're doing to pay attention to these personalities. They know who's dating who and what their favorite midnight snacks are – despite the fact that there's no tangible value in gathering this knowledge. You can drill down and find there are niche celebrities pretty much everywhere, too. And people in those niches are just as obsessed with them.



Over 700 copies sold!

Author Bio. When not traveling, or spending time south of the border, Nikki Lewen resides among the redwood trees of the Santa Cruz Mountains where her debut fictional trilogy: *Three Sisters: A Tale of Survival* takes place. She's often found in locations where cell phones, Internet access, and sometimes, even electricity is scarce. These experiences make for a rich resource to pull from as a writer, create unique problem-solving situations, and allow for a complete disconnect from a world accustomed to immediate gratification.

An apocalypse without zombies, no emps...just tsunamis & earthquakes which totally refigures Earth's surface. Most of California is gone. Parts broken off to form small islands. This is where we find our heroine...Sadie. She's been alone for 10 years with no contact from anyone. And then there is...Caleb (a long ago boyfriend) on her island. Where did he come from!? Sadie finds other friends she can rescue. She is superwoman! Love the characters, and the storyline follows thru. (reader: Jeannette on Amazon)

Three Sisters Trilogy

Three Sisters: A Tale of Survival by Nikki Lewen
Now \$13.99

Return to Three Sisters
by Nikki Lewen
Now \$13.99

Coming in 2020
Destined
by Nikki Lewen

[Available at Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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Give your readers a chance to become THAT interested in you. Show off your unique characteristics. Be likable. Be despicable. Just don't be boring. Think about it. We all form bonds with people we spend time with -- even if we never meet them in person. Psychologists have a term for that: parasocial relationships. On some level, you probably feel a little bit like you're actually friends with your favorite TV characters. You almost believe that you know them. You know how they would handle situations that you face in your life.

You can achieve the same kind of connections with your audience. But you have to put your personality on display. Demonstrate to them that what you're saying is true.

Your message to create your personality needs 5 kinds of proof:

Proof of Character – Who are you? Why should I believe you? What's your track record? What achievements can

back up your claims of expertise?

Proof of Story – How can I be sure you're not making this stuff up?

Are there 3rd party sources that verify the point you're making?

Proof of Catalyst – Why is your story important to me *right now*?

Proof of Product – Don't just tell me about your product. Show me it works. Pictures and videos are helpful. Who does it work for and when? Who is it not right for?

Social Proof – Testimonials, case studies, etc.

I don't believe attention spans are shrinking. But there's no doubt in that trust is on the decline. These "5 pillars of proof" put you light-years ahead of most of your competition. You can put these ideas to work right away and start increasing the duration and quality of attention.

By the way, an analysis of billions of emails by Litmus Email Analytics shows that email attention spans actually INCREASED by 7% between 2011 and 2016. Kinda goes against the prevailing theory, doesn't it? Now, go forth and win the "infinity war" for your audience's attention.

Donnie Bryant is a Direct Response Copywriter with tips for marketing <http://donnie-bryant.com/>





Branch News

Sacramento

The Sacramento Branch has experienced a mother lode of new members, thanks to a gung-ho board and new strategies, some of which have begun to pay off. We hope the trend will continue. Some of the strategies, which have taken months to pay off, include: Meet-up for marketing; focus on member discounts in printed materials; guest registration desk, offering attention and “TLC”; and more refined outreach efforts. The board will hold a planning meeting in August to set annual goals. Several members who are not on the board will join us. We will evaluate current activities that appear to be effective and how we know. Equally important will be when we examine activities to be modified or dropped. Data such as increase in the number of members and guests will guide the discussion, as will branch spending and social media traffic. We will also look at speakers expected for the year, both at the regular monthly luncheon and the breakfast network meeting. Calendar planning will allow us to synchronize planned events with media contact.

~~ Kimberly Edwards



Mt Diablo

Young Writers Contest Awards Ceremony 2019

The California Writers Club – Mt. Diablo Branch recognized the winners of the annual Young Writers Contest on May 18, 2019, holding to some traditions and welcoming certain changes. This is the first year that the celebration was held at the National University, JFK Campus in Pleasant Hill, instead of a restaurant banquet. Licia Morrow, Community Education Specialist at N.U., assisted with the planning. Three classrooms were opened up to form one large room for the event. Branch volunteers decorated the event space. National University provided IT equipment and personnel, screens, microphones, and plenty of seating for the winners, parents, and teachers who attended.

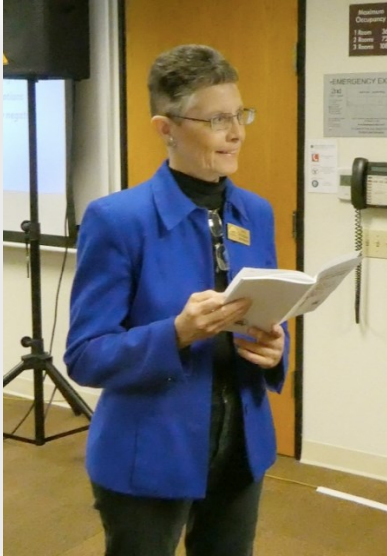


The contest was open to all of Contra Costa County’s public, private, and homeschooled 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, and included categories of short story, poetry, and personal narrative. For the second year enough entries were submitted to constitute a combined group in the category of humor. In all, there were 286 entries amongst 29 volunteer judges from the branch, trained and led by Ailine Soules, Dorothy Edwards, and John Marvin. First, second, and third place winners received monetary awards, in addition to a formal certificate. There were 41 Honorable Mentions identified by the judges who received a certificate by mail. Everyone was treated to an hors d’ oeuvres buffet.

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Branch News continues



Branch President Marlene Dotterer ensured for a second year the winners work was printed in a 2019 Young Writers Anthology. New this year Marlene also produced a video featuring each winner and an accompanying quote from their work that served as a meaningful backdrop for the event. Board Member Lyn Roberts was the event organizer and Master of Ceremonies. For the first time, local officials were represented. Concord City Councilmember, Laura Hoffmeister, provided congratulatory, and inspiring words to the students.

Judges in attendance were honored with giving the prizes to the group of students they judged, having the pleasure of meeting them in person. After prizes were given, winners were invited on-stage to read a short piece from their work. Then the group was

treated to a panel of three judges, Richard Black, Ann Damaschino, and Dorothy Edwards, who spoke about what they look for when they judge and how to improve on writing, each from a different perspective, and allowed a forum for the students to ask questions.

1ST PLACE HUMOR – ALL GRADES

The Impossible Climb

Daisy Penney

*"Grandma, is that you?"
It couldn't be my grandma
There's no way her old bones
could have made it up here."*

~~ Linda Hartmann

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## Long Beach

### WINNING WITH WRITING WORKSHOP

In the last CWC Bulletin, we featured 'Publishing 101' as our workshop title. The official title is **"Winning with Writing."** We have invited five buzz-worthy experts to answer questions and lead roundtable discussions on **Editing, Book Promotion, Publishing, Manuscript Formatting, and Book Cover Design**. Here's the link if you'd like to see if there are seats still available. It's Saturday, September 28, 2019, in a modern, city college venue with ample free parking.

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Now with 12 issues completed, be sure your members don't miss out.  
Have a designated person forward CWC's *The Bulletin* to all in your branch.  
It's a free benefit and it's now better than ever.  
We recently got an upgrade so *The Bulletin* opens quickly on all devices.





## *Branch News continues*

### **Our Jack London Award Winner**

Let's be Frank. Frank Kearns, our Long Beach Branch's Jack London Award winner, has a surprisingly non-literary past. Frank worked most of his career as an engineer and manager in the aerospace industry before retiring in 2014. That might explain why he's kept us so organized as Vice-President and now as President of our branch. He has been married to Carol (also a CWCLB member) since 1975 and has two daughters. He and Carol have visited 44 (!) U.S. States and eight countries.

Our JL Award Winner is one of the club's few poets (his poem "Girona Twilight" appeared in the 2017 issue of the *Literary Review*), and he has loved Robert Frost "as long as I can remember," he says. He has published two poetry collections, *Circling Venice* (2013) and *Yearlings* (2015). He also writes short stories, short memoir pieces, and travel articles. His novel? "It progresses in fits-and-starts."



Frank Kearns

Lastly, Frank says, "Both Carol and I have been inspired by the writers that we have met through our participation in the Long Beach Branch of the California Writers Club. A big thanks goes to the volunteers who are the heart of this club!" And we in Long Beach CWC are thankful for all Frank's (and Carol's) efforts on our behalf.

### **Get Your Programs!**

Our speakers are our ticket to chapter growth. May's presenter was Manny Pacheco—a third-time visitor (over our twelve years), an author, and an informative, professional announcer. Manny's voice is what we hear broadcasting the traffic on our Los Angeles radio station KNX 1070. His Cal Writers topic: "Branding Yourself as an Author." Judy Reeves was the 'Standing-Room-Only' June speaker that maxed out our meeting room. Reina Menasche came in July. A social worker, author of three books, and radio personality in San Diego, Reina delivered an oh-*this-is-good* "Character Types in Fiction" discussion.

#### **OPEN TO ALL CWC MEMBERS**

**Winning With Writing Workshop — Secrets of the Pros**

**September 28, 2019 1:30-5:00 pm**

go to: <https://www.calwriterslongbeach.org/events.html>

A face-to-face workshop with professionals  
in the areas of Publishing, Editing,  
Book Cover Design, Manuscript Formatting,  
and Book Promotion

This is a ticketed event with limited seating  
**OPEN TO ALL CWC Members**

Presented by  
**CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB, LONG BEACH**



*Program and event details subject to change*

~~ Kathryn Atkins,  
PR Chair,





## *Branch News continues*

### **East Sierra**

In July, the Ridgecrest-based East Sierra branch weathered two back-to-back earthquakes, 6.4 on July 4<sup>th</sup> followed by a stronger and scarier 7.1 on July 5<sup>th</sup>. We live pretty much within walking distance of the epicenter and emerged shook up but essentially unscathed. Glass broke, books tumbled, and plates flew out of cabinets. The booklovers among us will spend the foreseeable future picking up and re-shelving their tomes that flew all over everywhere when the shockwaves hit. Papers cascaded and disappeared under and behind furniture. We all had some breakage in our homes but so far, we believe that nobody was hurt. We shared stories and appreciated the companionship of the community of writers that we have become. Nonetheless, we held our general meeting on its scheduled date, July 11.

As autumn approaches, we've thrown ourselves into preparation for some of our favorite events, including September 27-28's Weird Weekend with an interactive Bigfoot murder mystery by Monica Lorenz and our Weird Weekend Storytelling Competition; an Edgar Allan Poe tea on October 19: and our annual Dickens Tea in December (date TBA).

~~ Donna McCrohan Rosenthal



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Writers of Kern

Writers of Kern is excited to welcome new and returning Board members, including President, Joan Raymond; Vice-President, Donnee Harris; Secretary, Janet Skibinski; and Treasurer, Cynthia Bermudez. This year our focus is on member achievements and we will host our first WOK Writer Day for published members at the August 17 meeting. Along with being able to sell their books, each author must give a 30-second pitch to meeting attendees, giving them a



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chance to practice their elevator pitches. A new website page “Books by Members” features our published writers with links to their books.

We’re gearing up for our Fall Writing Contest with the prompt to be announced on September 1. Members will have until Sept. 30 to submit their entries, with winners to be announced at our December Winter Dinner. Prizes are \$200 (1st place), \$100 (2nd place) and \$50 (3rd place), plus will qualify to be published in our upcoming WOK 2020 Anthology.

This year Writers of Kern was proud to nominate Janet Skibinski as our Jack London recipient. Janet has served on the Board for the past six years, helped organize our Spring Conferences, and has given countless hours without hesitation. Her smile and sense

~~ Jean Raymond

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## Central Coast

### High School Writing Contest Winners

Submitted by Dennis Hamilton with Ned Huston, Writing Contest Co-chairs

At our April meeting, we were pleased to announce the winners of the High School Writing Contest and award the top three winners cash prizes. This year’s contest saw a record number of entries, 145 from 27 schools. Our seven judges worked extra hard to plow through the original entries. Each judge read about fifty stories once through. The best were exchanged and reread and voted on. I know I reread them again and again to come up with the best of the lot. The final 17 were then reread and narrowed down to the final six. From there the winners and runners-up were selected.

The process became more enjoyable as the best emerged. After all, we do love great writing, and the imagination and freshness that comes from these teenagers is a treat. Our judges were CCW members Alka Joshi, Dorothy Vriend, Susan Miller, Maria Skyttä, Ken Holden, Ned Huston, and Dennis Hamilton. None of this would have been possible without Ken Jones behind the scenes working the website. Besides lending competence to the process, Ken was very patient with Ned and me as we stumbled through. A big thank you to all of these folks.

The winners are:



**Winner Olivia Nicholson (with photo prompt), Dennis Hamilton, Photographer Carol Silveri, and Ned Huston.**

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## Branch News continues

First Place, "Iron Works" by Olivia Nicholson, Carmel High School  
 Second Place, "The Mother of All Things" by Madeline Eubanks, Pacific Grove High School  
 Third Place, "Claire" by Caroline Clausen, Monterey High School  
 All of the winning stories are on the CCW website:  
<https://centralcoastwriters.org/ccw/contests/2019%20hs%20short%20story%20contest%20winners.htm>

We owe a special thanks to Carol Silvieri for her provocative and beautiful photograph, which served as our writing prompt this year. And finally Ned and I are so very grateful to Leslie Patiño for her organizational genius and to Joyce Krieg for her support and guidance.

### Annual 4th of July Parade

THANKS TO ALL THE MARCHERS!

Submitted by Nancy Swing and Russell Sunshine

Clarissa Conn, Dick and Cynthia Guthrie, Ken Holden, Erin McClure, Nancy Middleton, Gary Parker, Laurie and John Sheehan, Barbara Siebeneick, Maria Skyttä: thanks for your company on the streets of Monterey. Special thanks to Mike and Mary O'Connor for joining us with their convertible and to Laurie Sheehan for hers too. These drivers make it possible for those who can't march to participate, and that means a lot. The crowds clearly showed their enthusiasm for CCW. Thanks also to all the cooks for the after-party. And congrats to Gary Parker and Barbara Siebeneick, who both had such great costumes that we had to award two prizes!



**CCW Members in the Monterey 4th of July Parade**



**Snazzy members Russell Sunshine, and Dick and Cynthia Guthrie wave their signs**



**A great showing for July 4th parade in Monterey!**

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## *Branch News continues*



### **Joyce Krieg Wraps Up Tenure as State President**

Our long-time and valued member Joyce Krieg wrapped up her 3-year tenure as President of California Writers Organization at the end of July. As she exhales a big sigh of relief, we reflect on what a thoughtful president she has been for our state organization. She brought good humor to the role at the Central Board meetings, quick to

hold up a mirror to anyone who made a suggestion but neglected to volunteer to see it through. That kept the Central Board representatives in check! Joyce also knew when and how to clip the conversations on any topic to a decent length and ended the 8-hour meeting on time and sometimes early.

Then, of course, is the ongoing behind the scenes work of getting everything and everyone moving in

the same direction. She kept a close eye on it all, ending up a bit battle-weary, but ultimately guiding that unwieldy ship to port. You have our thanks, Joyce.

Best of all, we at CCW get to keep her as our Madame Secretary *extraordinaire*! Joyce was honored with a book of contributions from many CCW members, conceived and arranged by Treasurer Clarissa Conn with guidance by Debra J. Smith. Pictured are: Christine Sleeter, Patricia Hamilton, Mike Latta, Joyce holding her gift, and Debra J. Smith. Photograph by Clarissa Conn.

### **Handmade Quilt Fundraiser**

At CCW's annual August picnic, the lucky winner of Laurie Sheehan's handmade lap quilt will be drawn. Members have been buying up raffle tickets for the drawing for a few months. Laurie has been making writing-and-book-themed quilts for the club's benefit for several years.

***Laurie Sheehan with her quilt  
and CCW member Patrick  
Whitehurst (hoping to win it)***



### **CCW's Jack London Award Winner**

Clarissa Conn, CCW's treasurer, photographer-in-residence, members directory creator, and so much more, is our Executive Committee's unanimous choice for this year's Jack London Award. It seems she is engaged in club business nearly

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every day doing the accounting, sharing her expert photography for the newsletter, putting videos online, and generally working her gracious magic to make our club world a great place to be.

## Writers ConFabs

The Monterey Public Library is the Saturday morning meeting place for CCW Writers ConFabs, where speakers present on subjects for our CCW members. August 24 was devoted to social media with information provided by Shelley King, Mary Feliz, and Maria Skyttä. On September 24, Joyce Krieg offers assistance on preparing submissions to members who wish to submit work to *The Literary Review*. If there is no program, we just hang out and write from 10 to noon with President Laurie Sheehan.

~~ Lana Bryan



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Inland Empire

Since the Dickens Festival last February, the IECWC picked up a few new members. Many people stopped by our table and filled out the sign-up sheet saying they were interested in finding a writers club in their area. Many of our members who attended dressed in period clothes and had a fun time.

Since that annual Festival held in Riverside, we have had three interesting presenters. David Putnam, a thriller author; Yi Shun Lai, a local writer who taught us how to "demystify" the art of the personal brand; and, Professor Jo Scott Coe, who gave us an encompassing presentation on how she researched her book. Our next author, Timothy Green, who is the editor of "Rattle," a local poetry magazine, will offer tips on poetry and editing. He will be teaching us how to "write like a child," and not let our "will" get in our way.

Our biggest accomplishment is still in its the works. The Inland Empire will be celebrating its 20-year anniversary by publishing its very first anthology. Our round of judges have made their selections. Next the submissions will be going to our content and line editing judges. We hope to have our book out by the end of the year. We have had many volunteers working on this, and without them, it would not have happened.

This September we have two things on our agenda. On September 14th, we will present our Annual Retreat and have two speakers. It will be held at the Friends of the Quakers House, which is a beautiful facility under the trees of Claremont. Jonathan Lethem, a professor at Pomona College, will be our morning speaker talking on creative writing and David Wogahn will be our afternoon speaker discussing how to write a great book review.

The last weekend of the month at our regular meeting, we will host an Open Mic. Authors whose pieces were selected for the anthology will get an opportunity to read their selections to the rest of the club members and guests.

~~ Sue Andrews



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## Mendocino

Join us on August 15th at 6pm in the Mendocino Hotel for a talk and discussion led by Lisa Locascio, this year's director of the Mendocino Coast Writers Conference. The topic will be "Lying and Telling the Truth at the same time: Writing From Life." Monthly events are free and open to the public.

For Mendocino Coast CWC members, the submissions window for the 2020 anthology *Red Sky* will close the last day of August. Write something new—challenge yourself.

Saturday, October 12th, stop in at 4:30 p.m. at the Artists Co-op of Mendocino's gallery to see the full exhibit of artwork paired with a page of prose or poetry for our collaboration in the Ekphrasis Project, "art describing art." At the Mendocino Hotel on the 17th, the authors will read the Ekphrasis pieces while viewing images of the artwork on-screen.

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Mendocino College will have a course this fall, (THE) 210B Beginning acting, Tuesdays and Thursday, 10:00 to 11:50 a.m. There is also a playwriting workshop on five consecutive Saturdays starting September 7th. It's sponsored by the Mendocino Theatre Company, taught by Philip Zwerling, and held at the Community Center of Mendocino.

There are full details on the branch website, [WritersMendocinoCoast.org](http://WritersMendocinoCoast.org).

~~ Katherine Brown

## CWC South EIGHT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CWC BRANCHES

With the unspent funds in our CWC regional allocation, branches of CWC-South voted to award mini-grants to help support the following efforts in their respective communities.

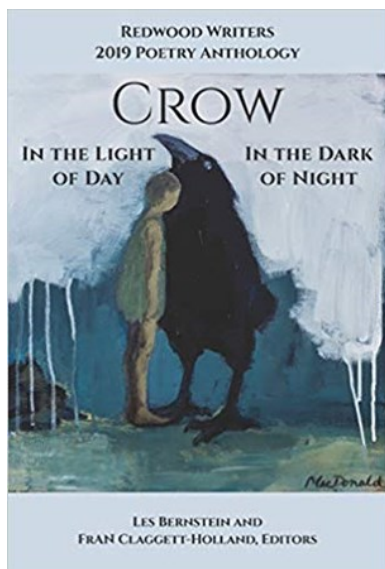
- ❖ High Desert: San Bernardino County Library Adult Literacy Program.
- ❖ East Sierra: High Sierra Artists Museum earmarked for two kick-off afternoons.
- ❖ Inland Empire: The annual CULTURAMA writing festival at Mount Sac (Mt. San Antonio) Community College. In addition to their own students of all ages, the program is attended by 130 writers from the community, and a significant portion is mature writers.
- ❖ San Fernando Valley: To assist in the publication of the Pierce College English Department's literary magazine, "Directions" which features poetry, fiction, essays, and short dramas written by Pierce students.

Also, several years ago, we created a CWC-South speakers, drawing speakers exclusively from southern region branches. Each local branch vets participants, limited to three per branch. We circulate the list at our regional meetings. Copies are available to any branch on request.

~~ Donna McCrohan Rosenthal



## Redwood Writers



In June, the Redwood Writers launched its newest collection of poetry: *Crow: In the Light of Day, In the Dark of Night*, Paperback – May 8, 2019 by Redwood Writers (Author), Les Bernstein (Editor), Fran Claggett (Editor).

Redwood Writers is proud to present this beautiful volume, enhanced by our local artists, which expresses the heart and talent of our community. Redwood Writers Poetry Anthology depicts the rich and varied aspects of life in Sonoma county. In addition, it has a special section devoted to five poets who received the Sonoma County Award of Merit distinction. We believe this anthology is truly something to crow about.

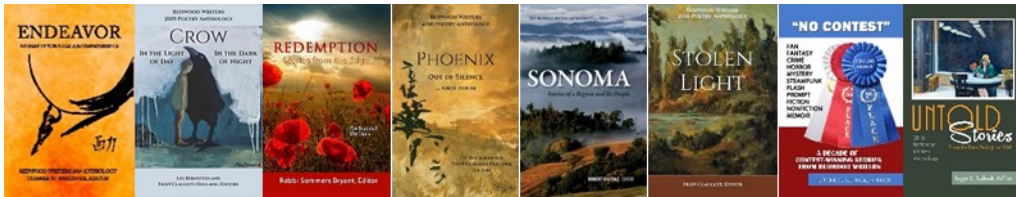
In July, Board member and past president, Linda Loveland Reid was honored for her service to the board and the club at the July meeting of the Redwood Writers. In honor of her long service, Linda was made an Emeritus Member.



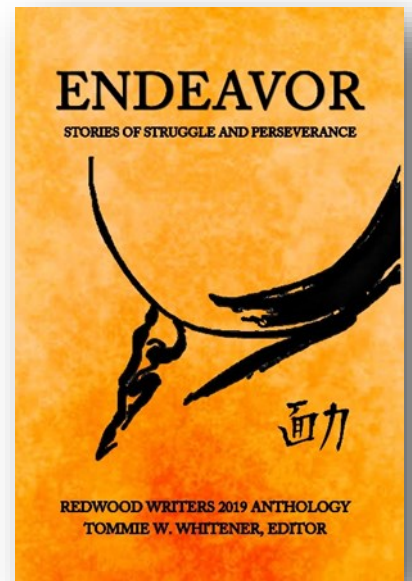
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During early August, Redwood Writers manned a booth at the Sonoma Country Fair's E.C. Kraft Building, on the Fairgrounds. The club sold its collections of prose and poetry anthologies. Member authors also sold their books.



And making its debut at the Fair, its newest collection of prose and memoir, *Endeavor: Stories of Struggle and Perseverance*, edited by Tommie W. Whitener, at the Sonoma Country Fair. The forty-four works of fiction and memoir contained in this anthology all reflect the volume's theme and title, "Endeavor: Stories of Struggle and Perseverance." Each story provides an uplifting example of how the human spirit can prevail against all that nature, man and circumstances can throw against it. Sometimes mundane, but often exalted, the difficulties, hardships, and conflicts experienced by the protagonists of the stories are an inspiration to us all.



For September 8, Linda Reid will make a presentation at our September meeting. Her topic: Writing Outside the Box is set for 2:30-4:30pm, Flamingo Hotel, 2777 Fourth St., in Santa Rosa.

For Redwood Writers October 13th meeting, a distinguished panel of member authors will discuss their processes and practices for writing novels and stories. Each panelist has three or more published books, along with published short stories and poems. Panel Round Table — Title: A writer's life. Their facilitator will be Roger C. Lubeck, President, Redwood Writers & Vice President, California Writers Club.



**Roger C. Lubeck**



### **Redwood Writers' Jack London award winner**

Robbi Sommer Bryant has served on the Redwood Writers board of directors as Member, Vice president, and President. She is a current Vice President and serves as the Contest Chair, Hot Sommer Nights Program Chair, Director of Member Professional Services, and monitor of the branch's e-mails. During her tenure on the board, Robbi has served as editor or judge on all our recent prose anthologies and she has consistently helped or participated in all club events.

**Robbi Sommers Bryant (right) receives award from President Joyce Krieg**

*most photos courtesy of Roger C. Lubeck*

**~~Roger C. Lubeck**





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Nonfiction  
Memoir  
Poetry  
Screenwriting  
Top Authors  
Literary Agents

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20% discount!

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# KAUAI WRITERS CONFERENCE

**Master Classes**  
Nov. 4th-7th

**2019 Conference**  
Nov. 8th-10th

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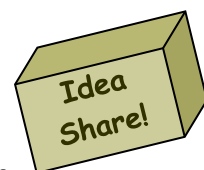
## Branch News continues

### High Desert

#### HDCWC Conducts Round Table Educational Discussions



Some of us think of it as “speeding up” your interests. We spotlighted qualified members who led round table discussions of topics including writing thriller stories, poetry, self-editing, how to conduct book signings, and young adult novels. The branch also invited a representative from the Toastmasters organization to join us about public speaking and the value of getting your book publicized through public speaking. Members moved to their choice of topic for an energetic way of getting info fast, then moved on to another table of interest.



da-

topics

#### At Work On 5<sup>th</sup> Branch Anthology

High Desert is currently working on our 5<sup>th</sup> branch anthology, which will be published in late 2019. The first four anthologies were all profitable for the club, and there is every hope the 5<sup>th</sup> one will be as well.

For the first time, the anthology committee decided to select a theme: On the Lighter Side. Thirty-seven entries in a combination of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction were submitted by 21 different authors. Contributing authors must be current members, both at the time of submission and at the time of final selection for publication. To encourage an even greater level of quality in the submissions, an independent group of judges, chosen from outside the branch's membership, will determine the top four entries in two categories—poetry and prose. Cash prizes, from \$150 to \$25, will be awarded to the winners in both categories.



**Mother and daughter team, Gemma (above with mask) and Mom Mary DeSantis, man their table, while member volunteers (right) took turns promoting the branch event to raise funds.**

#### High Desert Partners with Barnes & Noble for Fundraising

The HDCWC recently coordinated an all-day Book Fair with the local Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Victorville where authors displayed, signed, and sold their books on two-hour shifts, generating enough overall in-store and online purchases to gain over \$200 in Barnes & Noble gift certificates for the club.

Authors enjoyed meeting and greeting the public, and having the opportunity to discuss their books with potential B&N customers while encouraging them to use HDCWC's code at time of purchase for any B&N purchases. By doing so, the branch got credit for the sales.



*continued*





## Branch News continues



Mary Langer Thompson is our branch award winner for the Jack London, receiving from Joyce. She is a prize possession for our membership with her dedicated hours in the Dorothy C. Blakely Memoir Project, her ability to promote poetry within a sub-group called Po-emSmiths that she hosts at her home, and the resources she represents through her retired teachers affiliations.

Joining her are HDCWC Jack London recipients, six from the most recent 12 years our branch has been choosing awardees.



**At right: (back row) Roberta Smith, Jenny Margotta, Robert Isbill; (front row) Mary Langer Thompson, Dwight Norris & Carol Warren.**

~~ Bob Isbill

~~~~~

Fremont Area



FAW celebrated its 10th Anniversary with a picnic in the park at beautiful Lake Elizabeth in Fremont on Saturday, July 6th. We ate and talked and celebrated. Of course, there was CAKE! It was also member Penelope Cole's birthday, so we celebrated her as well. The celebration continues throughout the year.

Jan Small is the FAW recipient of the Jack London Award for 2019. She has been a member for nine years and during that time, as Book Signing Chairperson, has arranged book signings at various locations in the Tri-City (Fremont, Newark and Union City) area. She also took a turn as Hos-

pitality Chairperson. Jan is an award-winning artist, a writer and a teacher. She has self-published a dozen books and is now working on her 13th. Congratulations Jan!

We held elections for officers at our June meeting and all of our current officers will continue serving in their positions: President – Terry Tosh, Vice President – Knuti VanHoven, Secretary – Carmen VonTickner, and Treasurer – Cherilyn Jose.

We've had some significant changes within the rest of our organization. After almost ten years of service, our newsletter editor, Myrla Raymundo, decided that it was time for her to retire and passed the torch to her Co-Editor, Nancy Guarnera (that's me). I have some big shoes to fill and will do my best to make my dear friend proud. In addition to her responsibilities as Hospitality Co-Chair, Sue Curtzwiler has taken on the mantle of Volunteer Coordinator. Anita Tosh is now going to be our NorCal Representative and has taken on the responsibility of Membership Chair. New member Scott Davidson is stepping in to take over as the FAW Webmaster.



Jan Small receives Jack London from Joyce Krieg

continued next page



Branch News continues



Chris Dews

Anita and Scott are filling positions held by our dear friend and member Chris Dews, who died in May. He has been sorely missed. (See his memorial on Page 26)

FAW's partnering with Half Price Books in Fremont to present monthly "Second Saturday" Meet Your Local FAW Authors readings continues to thrive. Our most recent "Second Saturday" featured screenwriter Carol Lee Hall. She and her merry band of actors presented a "staged reading" from two screenplays about the sex slave trade in Chinese girls and young women during the early 1900s in SF's Chinatown, each told from a different POV. More than 50 people attended the event.

August will feature author Marjorie Bicknell Johnson and her YA adventure-thrillers which are steeped in the history and culture of the Maya. In September we'll feature comic book author Dave M. Strom performing excerpts from his Super Holly Hansson superheroine comic book, replete with distinct character voices and unique supervillain evil laughs. We have a full schedule through the end of the year and are already scheduling for 2020.

Negotiations are underway for another FAW book signing at the NewPark Mall in Newark this Fall, and we will be reading and signing books at the Fremont Main Library on December 14th.

Our recent guest speakers at our monthly meetings have included Shelley Adina on "Planning and Plotting a Series," Andrew Benzie on "Judging a Book by Its Cover," Cathy Dana on the "Art of Poetry," and LeeAnne Kru-
semark on "Marketing Your Work."

~~ Nancy Guarnera



Tri-Valley

Tri-Valley Writers (TVW) Webmaster G. Karl Kumfert is our Jack London Award winner for 2019. Kumfert is a technology entrepreneur with a Ph.D. in Computer Science. He created a WordPress plugin for the branch's website to showcase the social media links of its members, set up online registration and payment pages for the TVW Writers Conference, including private pages for conference organizers to see registration statistics in real time, and ran an extended workshop on social media to help members find their voice on Facebook and Twitter. Kumfert has published many technical papers and also writes epic fantasy and young adult fiction.

The keynote speaker at Tri-Valley Writer's 2019 High School Writing Contest awards ceremony was TVW member Vidhima Shetty. Shetty has been the TVW assistant newsletter editor for the past three years. She spoke about the importance of young people letting their voices be heard through writing. She also described the research and publication process for her book, *An Adolescent's Guide to ME/CFS: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome*. Shetty graduated from California High School this year and will enter Columbia University in the fall as a journalism major.



Vidhima Shetty



Karl Kumfert

continued next page





Branch News continues

Tri-Valley Writers began a partnership with the Alameda County Fair this year, sponsoring cash prizes for their Youth Writing Contest. President Lani Longshore and newsletter editor Patricia Boyle attended the fair's awards ceremony to meet the first-place winning youth writers (elementary through high school).

With the help of the CWC matching fund scholarship program, Tri-Valley Writers sponsors a writing scholarship at Las Positas College. This year's winner is Sara Decker, who plans a career in teaching and hopes to introduce a new generation to the joys of writing.

~~ Lani Longshore,
President



~~~~~

## South Bay

### GRILLIN' & CHILLIN'

Let's ketchup! Join us for our  
annual summer Potluck BBQ.

SUNDAY, August 18, 2019, 3pm.

Enjoy tantalizing food and good company—both  
provided by you! Relax, network, chat with old  
friends, and make new ones.

Potluck: last names bring:

A-K Salad

L-R Appetizer or Dessert

S-Z Main Dish or Side Dish

The club provides the meat and drinks!

No charge.

**DON'T FORGET—Jim & Edie have moved. RSVP  
and receive the new address (in Santa Clara near  
the University). [pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com) or (408)  
772-4240.**



### Annual Potluck Barbeque

~~ Edie Matthews



### *Well Said*

**“Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint  
of light on broken glass.” ~ ~ Anton Chekhov**





## Branch News continues

### San Fernando Valley

At recent SFV club meetings, members participated in several prompt writing exercises. These half-hour sessions were led by Rita Keeley Brown, a published writer, creative writing instructor, and our nominee for the Jack London award. After these sessions, some members have reported that their prompt exercise stories were extended into short stories or even inspired the writer to consider a future book.

Another club activity spotlighted in the newsletter this spring: our flourishing critique groups. For several years, retiring SFV Critique group coordinator Geri Jabara kept six groups in robust health and started a seventh evening group for people who aren't able to meet during the day.

SFV member, Gary Wosk, described his critique group experience: "As a member of a critique group, I have learned so much about different writing genres, and enjoyed reading about other members' trips to far-off places, childhood reminiscences, ways of life that have vanished, and Erma Bombeck-type essays. When we're not talking shop, my fellow members and I just enjoy each other's company and discuss a wide range of subjects. In other words, our group feels like a family." The critique "family" simile was a shining thread connecting six group reports published this year.

Next year, member Jenny Jordan will become our new Critique Group Coordinator. We are so grateful that Jenny has stepped up to take on this key position on our Board.



**Rita Keeley Brown, Jack London recipient, seated with sons Paul and Steven at awards banquet.**



**K.A. Parker**

Our March speaker was a new member of our branch: Award winning Motown lyricist, song writing workshop leader and UCLA lecturer, K.A. Parker. Parker spoke to us on the link between writing song lyrics to more familiar writing genres. "Writing lyrics can be a musician's biggest challenge but it doesn't have to be this way. Discovering the ability to express our deepest feelings within ourselves in song is not difficult." During Parker's lecture, she played several hit songs, examples of different popular song genres, and got her audience tapping their feet to the beat and singing along with an old top-40 hit song. "Pretty Woman" by Ray Orbison really rocked the Saban Community Room.

Anyone who has published a book quickly discovers that he/she must also market their new book. An author must make innumerable sales pitches to groups of potential buyers. To address this challenge, our April speaker, long-time member, Ester Benjamin Shifren, author of *Hiding in a Cave of Trunks*, presented "How to be a Winning Speaker." Shifren is an accomplished speaker and has traveled around the world and marketed her book to hundreds of audiences. She told us, "A brief opening statement should immediately engage the audience and hold their attention. The opener should be practiced until your voice sounds natural and confident." In other words, a smooth sales pitch won't happen without lots of practice. A writer must learn sales skills to promote and market their book. And always have a pen handy for all those future book autographs!



**Ester Benjamin Shifren**

*continued next page*



## Branch News continues



**Ara Grigorian**

Best-selling author *Game of Love* and writing workshop coach, Ara Grigorian, spoke to our May gathering about the “heartbeat of a story.” He said, “Every great novel has one thing in common: a great story. But what is a story? Story is not just plot and it’s not just character. Instead, it’s how that specific plot transforms that specific protagonist. Here’s the good news: anyone can become a better storyteller. The best way to learn is to decompose and analyze your work until you see inherent patterns that make all stories flow. These internal patterns are story beats – they are in fact the heartbeat of a story.”

Finally, our branch finished the CWC-SFV year with record high membership, increased attendance at our meetings and good fellowship. We anticipate an equally successful 2019-20. Write on!

~~ Kathy Highcove  
CWC-SFV Editor



## Orange

Elections were held in July. The following board members will serve for two years: President (for second term) Jonathan Yanez; Vice-President Brian Gaps; Recording Secretary Tracy Neis; Corresponding Secretary Marilyn Silverstein (Marilyn has the distinction of being the only corresponding secretary since the branch opened); Treasurer (for second term) Denise Longrie. In addition, Carol Celeste continues as Membership chair and Jeanette Fratto continues as Central Board representative.

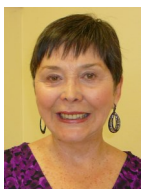
We have been meeting at the El Modena branch library this year with an afternoon schedule. Meeting attendance has not been affected by this change but the consensus is that mornings are preferable. Fortunately, we will be able to return to the main branch library in January 2020, with a morning meeting time. We have many guests each month, and as an inducement to membership, beginning with the July meeting, members will no longer have to pay a fee for monthly attendance. Guests will continue to pay.

Our summer program began with a lively presentation by Ara Grigorian as he instructed us on the “beats” necessary to our novels. In July a panel discussion with our own member experts guided us through the maze of marketing options, focusing on the ones with the most successful outcomes. Today, writers must be marketers as well. Every tip and trick helps. Building platforms through social media is important once your target audience has been identified.

In August, our speaker will be mystery writer Glen Erik Hamilton who will give pointers on writing the mystery thriller.

We have noticed many new people attending our meetings which we attribute to our Facebook presence and Meet-Up membership. We hope this will translate into adding new members once dues have been tabulated.

~~ Jeanette A. Fratto

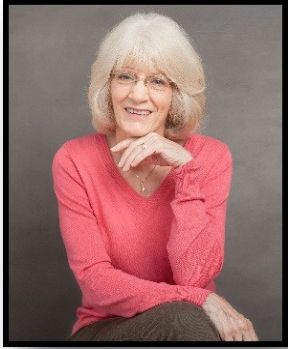






## *Branch News continues*

### North State



**Kathi Hiatt**

Kathi Hiatt was selected for the North State's Jack London recipient. Many of their members were busy with their June Chocolate Fest / Book Signing event, an annual fundraiser for youth organizations on the Ridge.

Pictured below are NSW Members- Jim Moll, Gary Carver, Steve Ferchaud, Brian Marshall, Hope Hill, Nick Hanson.



~~ Kathi Hiatt, Publicity



### *Well Said*

"Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on."

~~ **Louis L'Amour**



## *Branch News continues*

### **San Francisco / Peninsula**

We announced branch election results at the fair: Audrey Kalman, president; Geri Spieler, vice president; and Jean Morrow, treasurer; and, Korie Pelka, secretary.

Carole Bumpus received the Louise Boggess Award, given annually to the member who has performed the most valuable service to the branch in the preceding year. Carole served as NorCal representative, coordinated our "Writers Helping Writers" local library series, and hosted our new member gatherings, among many other contributions to our writing community.

Our members led monthly community writing groups at the San Carlos and San Mateo libraries. Former President Carole Bumpus led a session on writing descriptively. Laurel Anne Hill presented "Getting the Point" about character point of view. Megan McDonald led a session on outlining. Melanie Shook led a session on using the "Story Grid" method to edit your novel. We also held Open Mic nights at the San Carlos library on the fourth Tuesday of each month.



In July, we held our annual picnic at the Twin Pines park in Belmont, where some of our members read from their writings and members enjoyed good food and conversation. Photo courtesy of Doug Baird.

In August, writer Kevin Fisher Paulson, columnist at the San Francisco Chronicle, will speak on the craft of writing from the perspective of purpose and structure.

We cordially invite all CWC members to attend our half-day memoir workshop on September 28, led by memoir expert Brooke Warner. More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/CWCMemoir>.

**Members enjoy their annual picnic day in Twin Pines Park.**

~~ Melanie Shook



## **CALL FOR WRITERS**

Share your expertise with our readers by submitting your article covering topics that will enhance writer's understanding of the craft. Send submissions to [Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com). Place "Expertise" in the subject line. Words: 250-500, MSWord format, 11 pt. Arial. A short bio that explains your level of expertise & a small, thumbnail mugshot. All articles can be edited for space. Most articles will be held for future *Bulletin* issues due to are limit of 30 pages. No compensation is given. You will be donating your article to help others.

## **How Do You Celebrate??**

**Send us your branch's creative or spookiest décor and Halloween costumes from October for mid-November *The Bulletin* issue. Just have it added to your regular news by email and be sure to give us captions with each photo if possible.**



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## In Memoriam

### **Bardi Rosman Koodrin: San Francisco / Peninsula**

We are very sad to announce that our dear friend and long-time CWC member and board member Bardi Rosman Koodrin passed away on June 15 after a two-year battle with jaw cancer. She left this earth only hours before our meeting and all-day “Writers Block Party” at the San Mateo County Fair. It was a fitting farewell, as we celebrated writers and writing, community, the creative spirit, and various partnerships on the CWC Literary Stage that Bardi founded and created.

When Bardi first took on this annual task eleven years ago, the Literary Arts department at the Fair was just a three-ring binder that held the winning contest entries and sat on a table, largely ignored. Today it is a CWC-sponsored division of the fair that hosts panels, readings, performances, workshops, and other literary events for eight days every June, along with expanded literary contests with printed entries of stories, poems, and more, decorating the walls all around the stage. Bardi was with us in spirit on the 15th, no longer bound by illness to her bed.



### **Chris Dews: Fremont Area Writers**

Our members are sad to announce the passing of our friend and member Chris Dews. Chris was a very talented writer and a good friend to many of us. He was active on our Board, both as our Membership Chairperson and our Web Master, and at one time served as our NorCal Representative. He had published three books: *Aengus Amused*, *The Druid and the Bracelet*, and *Antler Jinny and the Raven*, and was hard at work on his next book. He was waiting to hear about *Antler Jinny's* standing in the International Book Awards and the Ozma Awards for Fantasy and Science Fiction.

Chris was a kind, generous, patient, and witty guy, who would offer his help when needed and was always willing to give honest and constructive criticism when you shared your work with him. He took his writing seriously and was always striving to improve his craft and help those who wanted to improve theirs. He truly exemplified the vision of Writers Helping Writers. He is sorely missed.



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“Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy  
is etched into the minds of others and the stories  
they share about you.”

— Shannon Alder

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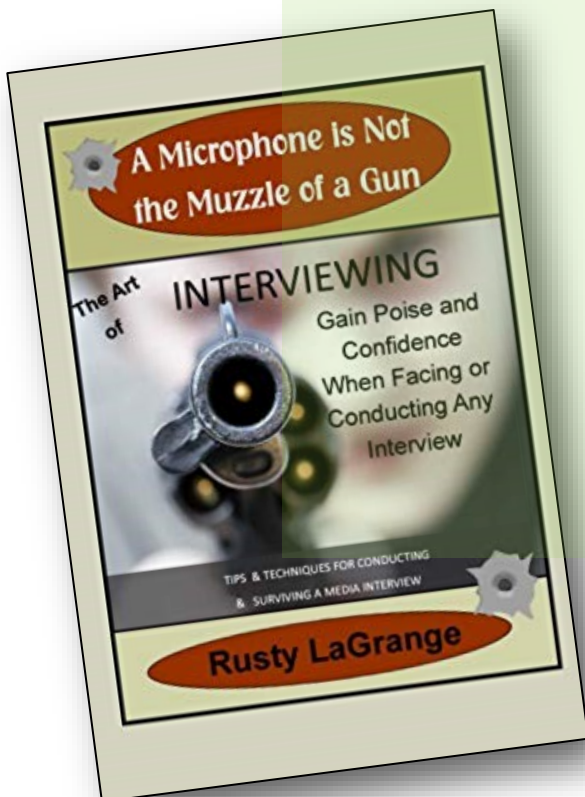
# CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

## Mission

1. The California Writers Club (CWC) shall foster professionalism in writing, promote networking of writers with the writing community, mentor new writers, and provide literary support for writers and the writing community as is appropriate through education and leadership.
2. The club supports all genres, writing styles and related professions such as editing, publishing, photographic journalism and agents.
3. The branches provide an environment where members can obtain critique of their efforts, attend workshops, and share experiences. Branches are encouraged to mentor writers of all ages by providing educational programs for adults and fostering youth programs.

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March, August &  
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Advertising content must be for businesses related to the writing and publishing field. Any CWC member in good standing, and individuals who wish to reach our target market may place an ad. We offer reasonable rates. (See sidebar at left)

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Space is limited, and appropriate ads will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. A copy of *The Bulletin* will be emailed to advertisers upon publication. Remember to include your preferred email address along with your ad submission.

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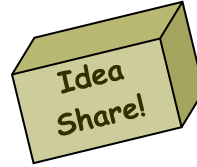
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- ♦ **Mark the payment type & the amount, if you choose PayPal, Please state amount on the hard copy placed in your envelope! Either way you pay, we MUST have the hard copy mailed to us along with your email address and phone contact, and the confirmed size of your ad. (Size isn't always indicated on your scanned copy, but it matters!)**

# THE BULLETIN BOARD —

## CALL FOR WRITERS:

Share your expertise with our readers by submitting your article covering topics that will enhance writer's understanding of the craft. Send submissions to [Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com). Place "Expertise" in the subject line. Words: 250-500, MSWord format, 11 pt. Arial. A short bio that explains your level of expertise & a small, thumb-nail mugshot. All articles can be edited for space. Most articles will be held for future *Bulletin* issues due to our limit of 30 pages. No compensation is given. No kill fee. You will be donating your article to help others.



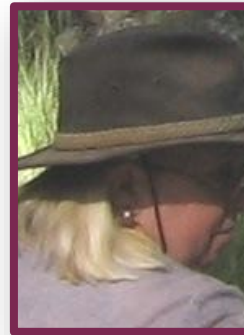
This simple icon points to an idea that you can share with your branch.



## A Word From the Editor

Summer is often the season of being busy with other things that take us away from our commitment to writing. We have family outings, amusement parks to take the grandkids, and special events we can't bare to miss.

So, with that in mind, take those cherished moments and enjoy. Avoid sunburns that will keep you from sitting at your desk or laptop when you do return to write.



Now's the time for research with road trips that offer colorful places to recharge your mind's eye.

Bring some sketch paper or your camera along to capture ideas you can bring home for later.

Everything you do and say, each fond memory you capture, is just the perfect fodder for the brain to ruminate.

~~ Rusty LaGrange, editor

**This digital full-color news magazine is available to all members for free. It can be read from a link at [www.CalWriters.org](http://www.CalWriters.org) anytime. We now have a new up-graded server that offers faster upload speeds and seamless compatibility with more devices. Pass the Word.**



## Web Posting & Links Policy

**Events and Contests listed on this page must be:**

- sponsored by a branch of California Writers Club
- sponsored by writing organizations in which CWC members are active
- sponsored by legitimate writing organizations that are recognized or sponsored by accredited educational institutions, the CWC, or professional writing organizations, posted at the discretion of the editor.

**We will provide reciprocal links to:**

- California Writers Club branches
- free, writing-related resources that are of a professional quality.
- writing services offered by CWC members, guest speakers invited by CWC branches
- all links are made by the discretion of the editor unless vetted by Central Board review

*The Bulletin does not list Internet contests available to a national readership.*

**To the PR Chair or Branch Rep:** All submissions for *The Bulletin* digital news should be sent to [Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com) email address in the form of text or an attached MS Word file (sorry, no hard copy submissions can be accepted). Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for a contest or an agent. Use Arial 11 point font; no tabs; no colors; no double spaces between sentences; and, only single-line spacing. Send photos separately as jpg files. Please — No embedded text and cropped photos pasted directly from your branch newsletter or PDF pages. All submissions will be proofed and edited before publication. Editor reserves the right to create or select titles and headlines. In order to share space with other members' submissions, keep your submitted items under 500 words.

~~ Thanx. The Editor.



## GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Next issue appears  
in mid-November



For instructions how to open a digital copy of this issue, please go to the club's website — [www.CalWriters.org](http://www.CalWriters.org). You can also find a PDF version of each issue that can be downloaded or viewed directly from our website. As the contents of each issue has grown over the years, it becomes necessary to use digital devices and advances to keep the publications in a format many can enjoy.

CWC's main site archives all issues & makes them available at [www.CalWriters.org](http://www.CalWriters.org) under our Publications page. This is a club benefit.

### ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Advertisements in  
*The Bulletin* magazine  
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**Oct. 28th**

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## California Writers Club

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3. The branches provide an environment where members can



Get the latest version of our CWC logo that proudly shows the registered R within a circle. This protects the logo and the name from infringements. Download it from the [Calwriters.com](http://Calwriters.com) website. It must be black on a white field.

California Writers Club publication *The Bulletin* is digitally printed and sent out to 22 branches statewide. Issues are representative of the membership and covered as a benefit to paid members in good standing.

Editor-in-Chief ..... Rusty LaGrange  
Advertising Director ..... Bob Isbill  
Proofreader... ..... Angela Horn  
Questions & Comments .....

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Donnee Patrese Harris,  
vice president at  
Writers of Kern

# The Final Word

by  
Rusty LaGrange  
Editor

*Occasionally I chose a well written essay/editorial from our branch newsletters. Donnee captured the true feelings and the embroiled angst that many new and aspiring writers fall victim to when preparing to write.*

***“Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction.” ~~ Pablo Picasso***

I ran across this quote by Pablo Picasso and I had no clue what he meant. I never saw being creative as destroying things. It always seemed to me that an act of creating was beautiful.

Despite my disagreement with his quote, his words seemed to stay with me. They struck a chord and I didn't know why.

Years later, I found myself staring at a blank sheet of college-ruled line paper. Pen in hand, I didn't know where to begin. I was attempting to formulate a story for the Writers of Kern Fall Writing Contest. I was terrified that whatever I wrote wouldn't be good enough to compete with the other entries.

*If I put myself out there to be judged and if I didn't win...what would that mean?*

I knew Writers of Kern celebrated rejections. It meant you put yourself out there and gave it your best shot. But...that didn't help me as I stared at that empty page.

*Was I a good writer? Was I enough?*

I learned I'm not the only creative person who has had these moments of self doubt. It is common when you create something to feel like no one will appreciate it the way that you do. My thoughts tormented me and left me paralyzed. I knew I had stories in my head, a myriad of tales (what writer doesn't), but I just couldn't get them down on paper.

As I sat there feeling like I wanted to give up... that Pablo Picasso quote came to me. I wondered why it presented itself to me now. In that moment of despair I thought of his words.

*“Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction.”* Picasso had returned.

Then it hit me...it was one of those proverbial light bulb

moments. I understood what he meant.

To be creative, to be an artist, to be a writer, you had to knock down those negative thoughts. You had to destroy the insecurities, the self-doubt and the pessimistic mindset.

I had to blow up the walls and rid myself of the constructs in my mind that would stifle my creativity.

*It WAS an act of destruction.*

With the fall writing contest coming up, it reminded me of how I felt when I tried to write up my entry. There are writers out there not sure if they should give it a try. Those feelings come to me every time I have to put myself out there. Every blog post, every novel I write, every poem or short story I submit...doubts corrupt me.



Donnee Patrese Harris

*Author and spiritualist Byron Katie says that “a thought is harmless unless we believe it...”*

So, I wipe out those barriers knowing that every act of creativity means annihilating and bravely powering through. Even when those unconstructive feelings make me afraid. It's okay to think them, but letting negative thoughts sit there and take up space is the problem.

I eventually wrote that story. I submitted it and...won 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

So, let's destroy something. Let's demolish those doubts and fears. Let's put ourselves out there and show the world we are here and we aren't going anywhere.

And, if we lose, if we fail, if we are rejected...let's celebrate!