



CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB BULLETIN

AUTUMN 2023

Start Now to Prep for NaNoWriMo

by Emily Wenstrom, The Write Practice

You might be thinking, “[National Novel Writing Month](#) is more than a month away. Why should I think about how to prepare for NaNoWriMo now?”



**National
Novel
Writing
Month**

Completing the NaNoWriMo challenge is no small feat—it can take years to complete a novel, and yet those who step up for NaNoWriMo each year complete an entire first draft in just a month. This averages out to 1,667 words each day.

The official rules for NaNoWriMo state that writers are not permitted to start writing until November 1. But that doesn’t mean you have to just sit and wait. You can prepare for it!

Before the month of November, take advantage of the free time you have for some NaNoWriMo prep work.

By following these four ways, you can succeed (and have fun writing) when the time of year to meet your NaNoWriMo goals comes.

4 Ways To Prepare for NaNoWriMo

Although most writers turn their attention to NaNo prep in Preptober (the NaNo community has even dubbed this nickname for the month of October), writers hoping to take on NaNoWriMo for the first time might consider strategizing for National Novel Writing Month even earlier.

1. Get to know your characters

Characters are what drive plots forward. Especially main characters, who need to make decisions and take action in order for the plot to advance.

The better you understand your characters’ motives, histories, and personalities, the more naturally the story will grow once it’s time to write.

That’s why writers who take a little time to get to know each of their story’s key characters have a huge advantage when November arrives.

2. Explore your world

Whether you’re creating an entire fantasy universe or just a small Midwestern town, the setting of your story can be powerful.

Take a walk through the streets (or fly through the galaxies) and make sure you know the history, major landmarks, and secrets behind your world.

Some authors, like J.R.R. Tolkien, take twenty years to craft their worlds, while other pantsers explore their story’s world when they write their first draft.

However, it doesn’t hurt to brainstorm world building ideas and jot down essential setting elements that will impact your character’s perspective in their world, and challenge them in their plot.

continued inside

President's Corner: Promoting the Value of CWC



by Roger Lubeck, CWC President

To members. September is the last month for current members to renew their CWC membership for 2023-2024. If you have yet to renew, I strongly encourage you to renew your active membership. The branches and the club have so much to offer. The opportunity to learn additional aspects of craft, to write in different genres, and to be published has never been greater. Branches like High Desert, Redwood, and others have expanded their offerings of anthologies, contests, workshops, and monthly speakers to include members from all 22 branches of the California Writers Club.

I recognize that a member's affiliation is with her/his branch. The branches offer the personal and social connection that writers need. Every month, the branches show (live) the club's mission of writers helping writers. It is my commitment to support the branches in any way I can as they explore new ways to affect their communities and their members. Also, I am committed to bringing more statewide (club-wide) events. Events that are exclusive to our members and events that are open to the public.

The California Writers Club has some 1800-2000 members in any year. In California, there must be ten times that number of writers; poets, memoirists, family biographers, essayists, and budding fiction writers who know nothing about our club. Writers who have never heard of the CWC or its branches.

It is the responsibility of the branch boards and the club to do everything we can to promote the value of the club, particularly in areas where there is not an established branch. I hope that our members also will take it upon themselves to "talk up" their branch. California Writers Week is the third week of October. I know several branches that have special plans for this week. The state-wide recognition of California writers (past and present) was created by the CWC. Beyond what your branch has planned, remember that libraries, senior centers, and teachers are always looking for someone to speak about writing. It isn't too late to arrange an hour-long presentation where you and other members share your knowledge and experience with various genres during the California Writers Week.

What else can you do? Remember to renew if you haven't already, and this year bring a friend or two to a meeting. Also, if you get the chance, when you sell your books at a fair, speak on the radio, or do a podcast or blog, remember to mention the list of benefits you get from your branch and the club. Do whatever you can to promote your writing and to show potential new members the benefits of being a member of the California Writers Club.



CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

A 501(c)3 NONPROFIT

OUR MISSION: TO EDUCATE WRITERS OF
ALL ABILITIES IN THE CRAFT OF WRITING
AND THE MARKETING OF THEIR WORK.

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P.O. Box 11212

PLEASANTON, CA 94588-1212


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President's Corner: continued from previous page

Jack London Award and Ina Coolbrith Award.

On October 22nd we are celebrating recipients of the Jack London Award (JLA) for service to their branch. Two members (Sandy Moffett and Carole Bumpus) are being honored with the Ina Coolbrith Award for their long service to the statewide club. These awards will be presented at a special lunch in Oakland. The list of JLA recipients with photographs appear in the next issue of this newsletter. I want to thank all the honorees, and those members nominated for their service.

CWC publications. We are creating a CWC Press imprint for future CWC publications. It is my expectation that the club will publish a member-only book (as in the *Literary Review*) in 2024 and several smaller publications in subsequent years. For example, collections of short prose taken from branch publications. Collections of specific genre, as in poetry, memoir, flash fiction, or collections of contest winners from across the club. The form of these publications is still under consideration and will be discussed at a CWC board meeting in October. Until then, file a story or poem away somewhere, so you are ready when the call goes out in 2024. 



Are You Ready for California Writers Week?




The third week in October has been designated California Writers Week by the state legislature—and it's all due to the work of your California Writers Club!

For this achievement, we owe our thanks to Anthony Folcarelli of the Sacramento branch. Way back in 1985, the State Senate had passed a resolution declaring California Writers Week, but it was only good for one year. One day in 2003, Anthony had an inspiration—why not arrange for a similar resolution, this time setting aside California Writers Week *in perpetuity*. He got the enthusiastic go-ahead from the CWC Central Board and went to work with his contacts at the State Capitol. On September 4, 2003, at 10 a.m., California Writers Club members gathered on the Assembly floor in Sacramento to receive a Joint Legislative Resolution from then-Assemblyman Tim Leslie. The resolution received the endorsement of the California Library Association.

The CWC Central Board encourages the 22 branches to observe California Writers Week, this year October 15-21. One simple idea is to approach your hometown library about a display featuring local authors. Most libraries have display cases that they make available to community organizations and they're usually open to unique ideas for content. Other ideas might be a reading of the works of well-known California authors at a coffeehouse or bookstore. A downloadable and printable poster is available at <https://calwriters.org/history/#week>. Print up a bunch and hang them up around town.

For ideas on what some of the branches have planned or have done in the past, see page 7.

The exact wording of the California Writers Week resolution is available at the above-referenced website. Among other things, the resolution and" encourages the people of the State of California to reflect upon the contributions that California writers have made to humankind." 

Prepping for NaNoWriMo: continued from front page

You don't need to have a flawless concept of your world before November, but having a general idea about how your world works will probably help you tighten your story idea. Maybe you even want to make a playlist for your book, inspired by the story's landscape!

3. Plan your plot

Star this point. Pay attention to it.

When it comes to writing and editing big ideas, you often want to start with plot and structure. Why? Because plot represents the conflicts and events your main character will face—and that they will need to make decisions about in order to move forward in your story.

Plotters have an advantage here, as you can break down your plot points as much as you want before NaNoWriMo starts. But for writers who are more fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants (pantser), it can help to at least know the major tentpole moments.

To get you started, learn and study the **Six Elements of Plot**. Or, the major events that happen in every unit of story—from an act to a scene to a beat.

A quick recap of the Six Elements of Plot:

- Exposition
- Inciting Incident
- Rising Action
- Dilemma (Literary Crisis)
- Climax
- Denouement (Resolution)

A story that doesn't include the Six Elements of Plot will lack an ability to develop characters and move the plot forward. One that includes these will likely avoid huge structural issues that will make it all the more difficult to edit your book *after* NaNoWriMo. Having at least a rough idea of where your story is headed will also help stave off writer's block—allowing you to make the most of your writing time in November.

4. Clear your schedule

Once November hits, getting those 50,000 words in is going to keep you busy, no matter how much planning you do. If there's anything you can take care of in the months before November, do it. Clear what you can in your schedule now and maybe write a synopsis. Join some writing sprints or write-ins, but instead of writing scenes, focus on planning instead of writing the book. Figure out how you'll avoid social media or other distractions when it counts. Practice this.

The fewer distractions and commitments on your plate while you write, the better.

And the more you practice planning, writing, and how to dedicate your time to *writing* before November 1, the more likely you'll meet your NaNoWriMo goals and come out a winner.

Writing is a Marathon

Remember, writing a novel is a marathon ... and taking on the challenge of NaNoWriMo is like trying to sprint the full distance. Help yourself along by doing what you can to prepare, pacing yourself, and taking advantage of the supportive NaNoWriMo community.



Emily Wenstrom writes science fiction and fantasy under the name E.J. Wenstrom. She hosts the Troped Out and Fantasy+Girl podcasts. www.ejwenstrom.com. This article originally appeared on The Write Practice blog, thewritepractice.com.



Mastering Picture Book Page Turns

by Rebecca Langston-George, Writers of Kern

Novel writers all know that a chapter ending which leaves the reader hanging by increasing the tension or bringing up a question propels the reader to turn the page and start the next chapter. This intentional carrot dangling keeps readers interested and engaged. The same concept is necessary when crafting a picture book for the younger set; it just works a little differently since there aren't any chapters.

To understand how to utilize page turns in a picture book, it's important to understand the structure of a picture book. The typical page count for a picture book is 32 pages. While there are longer ones at 40 or 48, the number of pages is always divisible by 8 because of the way the pages are printed, then folded and gathered at binding. Note that this doesn't apply to books designed for toddlers. Those wee chunky books for tiny hands with thick cardboard pages are called board books and they don't necessarily adhere to the picture book format.

Just like in a novel, the first couple of pages aren't for book text. The first 2 to 3 pages are devoted to the title page and copyright. Depending upon the publishing house, the last page or two might be blank or used solely for art or, in the case of nonfiction, could be used for backmatter such as a glossary or sources cited. Most children's writers plan for 28 out of the 32 available pages to be used for the book text and art.



Note that odd numbered pages are on the right and even numbered pages are on the left. The first page of a picture book text will either begin on page 3 (right) or 4 (left). Page 3 is the classic way to start because it allows for that page turning tension from the beginning. Tension in a picture book is always built on the right side—the odd numbered pages because it invites the reader to turn the page. Tension is released on the left side—the even numbered pages.

Author-illustrator Ryan T. Higgins puts this to good use in his book *We Don't Eat Our Classmates* about a dinosaur's first day at school. On page 11

the text states "and Penelope Rex was very surprised to find out that all of her classmates were . . .". The reader must turn the page to find that the answer is children.

Picture book authors also utilize space on the page to keep readers engaged by skillfully moving text around. Page after page of the same pattern of text in a rectangular block doesn't look inviting to young readers with short attention spans. Writers should consciously plan to break up some text to convey movement, rhythm, emphasis, and visual appeal. Consider the book's tone when making these decisions as quiet books need less bounce than rambunctious ones. The goal is to keep readers turning the page not to make their heads spin.

Many children's writers create a dummy to help them with their page flow. Those who are author-illustrators use a dummy to plan their art, but it is equally helpful to those who wear only an author hat. In traditional publishing authors and illustrators rarely collaborate. The editor manages them separately. But a well-prepared author knows how to plan page turns and leave room for the illustrator to add their magic by thinking in terms

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Page Turns in Picture Books: continued from previous page

of changing scenes, building tension and movement on the page. This makes the jobs of both the illustrator and the editor easier.

To create a dummy, stack 8 sheets of blank copy paper on top of one another and fold them in half vertically. This makes a 32 page blank dummy. Print a copy of your manuscript at 50% size, then cut and paste the text onto the dummy to help you plan. In addition to planning tension and utilizing space, this also helps identify where there is too much text that needs to be edited or trimmed.

A dummy will help you envision your book in a way that manuscript pages alone cannot and can help you plan to keep your audience turning the page. So, make your young readers tense. Just be sure to do it on the right side of the page.



Rebecca Langston-George is the author of thirteen nonfiction books for children including the internationally published For the Right to Learn: Malala Yousafzai's Story. She's the Regional Advisor for the Central-Coastal California region of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and she creates jewelry for writers at her Etsy store [RebeccaLG - Etsy](#). Read more at [Rebecca Langston-George - Home](#).

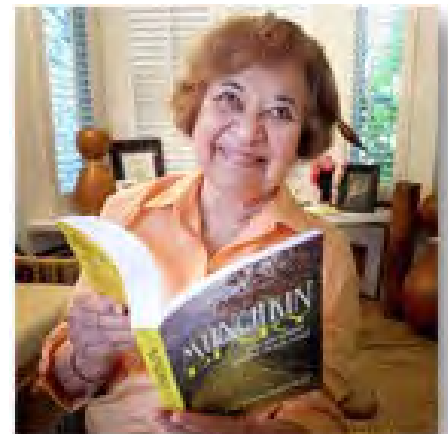


BETTY ANN BRUNO: 1931-2023

Redwood Writers member **Betty Ann Bruno** passed away at 91 on July 30. She had an amazing career as a journalist and hula dancer, but her biggest claim to fame came at an early age. She was believed to be the last-remaining actor from the 1939 classic film *The Wizard of Oz*, cast at age 7 to play one of the Munchkins. She wrote about this experience in her book, *The Munchkin Story*. Just one month before her death, she traveled to New York to be honored at a large Oz festival.

Betty Ann was born in Hawaii and attended Stanford University, where she discovered her love of journalism. That led to a 20-year career as a reporter at Oakland TV station KTVU, winning three Emmy awards. When she retired, she moved to the Sonoma County town of El Verano. There she rekindled her interest in Hawaiian traditions and founded Hula Mai, a nonprofit dedicated to teaching and raising awareness about hula dancing. In fact, she had just finished a hula performance shortly before her death.

The Redwood Writers newsletter noted, "A delightful member of our branch, this is just the final example of what an active and vivacious person Betty Ann was. Most recently, Betty Ann entertained members with a lively reading of her story about her time as a reporter at our recent prose anthology celebration."



Celebrating Calif. Writers Week

The High Desert branch has set the dates of October 17, 18 and 19 for a three-day Barnes & Noble Book Fair where twelve of its published authors will offer their respective books for sale.

There will be twelve two-hour shifts when our authors will have their books on display and available for signing and purchases from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday set aside during California Writers Week. Each member will have a two-hour slot to set up and participate in this event.


The branch will also be promoting Barnes & Noble sales of their stock, with the branch receiving a percentage of those items sold. This will be indicated by a special code that customers will give at the register.

CWC promotional material, including membership applications and publicity for upcoming events, will be featured in the store. As branch officers say, "It's a win-win situation for our writers and the famous bookseller."



Every year for California Writers Week, the East Sierra Branch Program Chair, Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, creates a display about California Writers in the Ridgecrest library's display case (see picture from the 2022 display). This year, Youth Coordinator Janis Kunz will be organizing a special celebration at the library for our student writers to share their work in readings alongside readings from our membership, celebrating how we are all California writers.

And at the Central Coast branch, an annual tradition is CWC *Bulletin* Editor Joyce Krieg's reading of the California Writers Week resolution at the October meeting.

Editor's Note: We are certain there are other branches doing something special to commemorate California Writers Week. However, only High Desert, East Sierra and Central Coast chose to respond to our request for information. 





On the Horizon

Editor's Note: Now that just about all of our branches are back to in-person meetings exclusively, we're changing the focus of this feature. The focus will now be on events beyond the regular monthly speaker meetings and that are open to members of all of our branches. These include, but are not limited to, workshops, conferences, retreats, anthologies and more. We hope to hear from more of the branches in the future. Send your items to editor@calwriters.org.

Nail Your Story's Tone and Voice

**Presented by SF Peninsula
Saturday**

October 7, 2023

10 am – 1:00 pm

In person only. Bring your mask.

Sequoia Yacht Club

441 Seaport Ct.

Redwood City, CA 94063

Every genre has its own unique signatures readers come to expect, known as voice and tone. These elements make it possible to identify the genre within a few pages and often reflect the personality, mood, and spirit of your characters and your themes. Nailing your novel, memoir, or short story's voice and tone will ensure you meet readers' expectations while increasing your chance of publication. This workshop will explore such things as how voice emerges from character and personality; sentence structure and other voice mechanisms; how emotion creates voice; specific word choices; and much more.



Jordan Rosenfeld is author of the forthcoming novel *Fallout* (Running Wild Press, 2024), as well as the novels *Women in Red* and *Forged in Grace* and six books on writing craft, most recently *How to Write a Page-Turner*. Her freelance articles and essays have appeared in hundreds of national publications such as *The New York Times*, *Scientific American*, and *Writer's Digest*. She is a freelance manuscript editor and writing teacher. Find her at Jordanrosenfeld.net.

Cost: \$80

Includes coffee, tea, snacks

Scan the QR code to register.



High Desert Presents ‘The Story Master’



It has been said that if you're ready to graduate from the boy-meets-girl league of storytelling, meet John Truby. His lessons draw epiphanies that make you see the contours of your psyche as sharply as your script.

On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 6 to 7 PM, the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club will present story master John Truby who will discuss his latest book *Anatomy of Genres*. This remarkable Zoom meeting is free to all members of the CWC and the link to the meeting may be found below.

Truby says, "What if I told you there was a secret to story that will increase your ability to sell your stories 100-fold?"

According to John Truby, genres have more to do with how your story works *than any other element*—any other idea, plot device, character archetype, beat sheet, methodology, or prescribed structure — by far. Whether you're writing for movies, TV, or novels, *the game is won or lost in genres*.

John Truby is the founder and director of Truby's Writers Studio. Over the past thirty years, he has taught more than fifty thousand students worldwide, including novelists, screenwriters, and TV writers. Together, these writers have generated more than fifteen billion dollars at the box office. He regularly applies his genre techniques in story consulting work with major studios including Disney, Sony Pictures, Fox, HBO, the BBC, Canal Plus, Globo, and AMC.

In this book club type meeting where the participants are encouraged to buy Truby's latest book, *Anatomy of Genres*, they can submit written questions pertaining to genres in the book to Bob Isbill via email sent to HDCWC@aol.com. In the subject line, please put Genre Question. Include your name, your branch, and of course the question you would like to have John Truby address.

Join this exciting and informative Zoom Meeting at 6 PM on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86220784034?pwd=TThCMWhycoFYbjRid1JmUnZiWit6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 862 2078 4034

Passcode: 375034



Two Special Events at East Sierra



The East Sierra Branch will have a booth at the annual Petroglyph Festival on November 4 and 5. This event takes place along East Las Flores Avenue in Ridgecrest in front of the Ridgecrest branch of the Kern County Library.

Then on the first Saturday in December at 2:00 p.m., East Sierra presents a Dickens Tea at Mr. Fezziwig's Ball. Tea, treats, and festivities right out of *A Christmas Carol* are in store as East Sierra stages its annual Dickens Tea with Fezziwig flair. Get set for a holiday white elephant book exchange, holiday crafts, and a dramatic reading of the Fezziwig scene from the beloved Charles Dickens book.





Member Spotlight



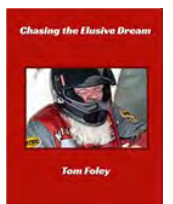
NEW RELEASES



David Alpaugh (Mt. Diablo) has had his fourth collection of poetry published by Word Galaxy Press (an imprint of Able Muse). *Seeing The There There* includes 89 visual poems that combine his verse with photographs, paintings, and graphic art from 115 artists, all printed in full color. Available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other outlets in paperback and digital form or from the publisher at: <https://www.wordgalaxy.com/>



Lupe D. Dunn (Orange County) has released *The Book, Poems, Short Studies, and Essays*. In a collection of poems, short stories, and personal essays, the author Lupe Dunn begins with free verse shared to lift spirits and encourage souls while reflecting on past moments, present events, and everything in between, including the Navajo people, and the beauty of Old Glory carried at the Battlefield at Gettysburg. Illustrations are included that transcend culture and time. This author captures different genres in which the reader will discover an unexpected, exciting journey that unfolds with each written word.



Tom Foley (High Desert) invites readers to follow along as he works Navy A7 in *Follow the Elusive Dream*. Meet a cast of characters from every continent. Ever been to Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, land-speed racing at El Mirage or the Bonneville salt flats? Who could have foreseen a life of motorcycles and jet engines? Join me as Tom as he chases a dream.



Thonie Hevron's (Redwood Writers) Meredith Ryan Mysteries have been published by Rough Edges Press. The mystery/thriller stories follow a courageous sheriff's homicide deputy investigating crimes in Sonoma County. Titles of his fast-moving series are *By Force or Fear*, *Intent to Hold*, *With Malice Aforethought*, *Felony Murder Rule*, and *Without Due Caution*. www.thoniehevron.com



Bradley Earle Hoge's (SF Peninsula) second full-length book, *The Drake Equation*, is now available from Vraeyda Media at <https://www.vraeydamedia.ca/bookstore/p/the-drake-equation>. His newest chapbook *A Human Lifetime* came out this summer from Finishing Line Press. <https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/a-human-lifetime-by-bradley-earle-hoge> to order online.

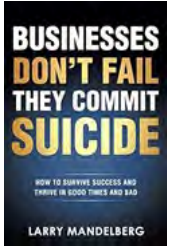


Rebecca Langston-George (Writers of Kern) announces *Virginia Hall: Clever Spy of World War II*, an action-packed full-color graphic novel for young readers about one of the most courageous spies of World War II. It was published August 1 with Capstone Press, illustrated by Samantha F. Chow. Learn more at www.rebeccalangston-george.com



Jo Lauer (Redwood Writers) has released *Unarmed*, the last in her Little Old Ladies mystery series. Quirky retirees Amanda and Marion discover a missing body part on a secluded beach, and they make a life-or-death decision when a cursed fish stuffed with gold enters their life.

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Member Spotlight: continued from previous page

Larry Mandelberg, (Sacramento) has published *Businesses Don't Fail, They Commit Suicide*. Most businesses fail, not due to external forces, but because their success brings change and creates unfamiliar problems their leaders and managers don't know how to solve. Based on 23 years of primary research, Mandelberg explains why businesses fail and how they can survive their success and create sustainable growth in good times and bad.



Josephine Mele (Mt. Diablo) announces the newest book in her Travel Mystery series, *Incident in India*, a rich blend of discovery and danger, as two friends—Helen and June—tour India's most beautiful forts, palaces, and wildlife sanctuaries. Dripping with fascinating cultural detail, *Incident in India* also tackles the disturbing practice of honor killings. Dauntless guides and brave champions for justice, Helen and June will take readers on the safari of their lives. Highly recommended, says James Ziskin, Anthony, Barry, and Macavity Award-winning author of the Ellie Stone Mysteries and *Bombay Monsoon*.



Michael Raff (High Desert) has released *The Seventh Stranger*. Jake and Lindsey McKay move into the newly restored Breckenridge Mansion, despite warnings about the six *non-dangerous* ghosts. Almost immediately, the unknown “seventh stranger” repeatedly attempts to murder them. Katherine Price—a clairvoyant with suicidal issues—is recruited to help. “A thrill ride!”



Richard Spencer (High Desert), writing as Richard S. Thomas, published his debut novel, *Earther Wizard, the Rise of Colin Duncan* on Amazon.com. In book one, Colin Duncan encounters wizards from a parallel planet, intent on killing him. In a running battle across two continents, Colin must decipher mysterious images in his mind. To survive, he must become the most powerful wizard on two worlds.

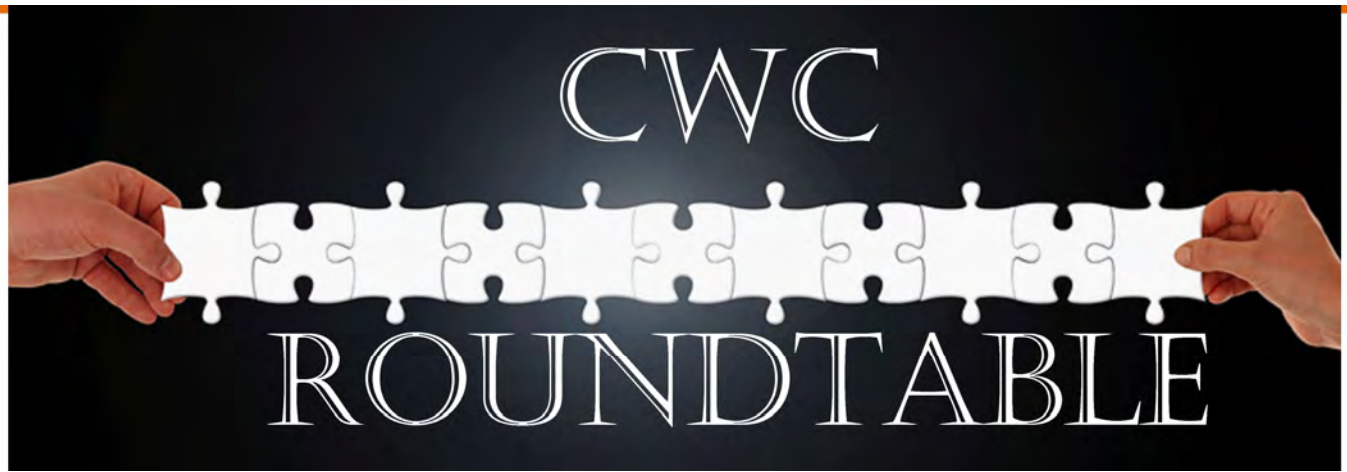
ANTHOLOGIES, ARTICLES, AWARDS AND MORE

Reena Kapoor's (South Bay) flash fiction, “Prayer Beads and Samosas,” has been selected by San Jose's Flash Fiction Forum. Reena read it at their upcoming 10th anniversary celebration on August 23. <https://arrivalsanddepartures.substack.com>



Put Your Work in the Spotlight!


Just released a book? Had a short story, poem or article appear in a magazine or anthology? Won a literary contest? Share your good news with your fellow CWC members. Send an announcement, 50 words or less, to editor@calwriters.org. Put “Member Spotlight” in the Subject line and don't forget to let us know which branch you belong to! Covers should be submitted in JPEG format as an attachment to the email. Deadline for the Winter 2023 issue is December 1.



This Is How Your Editor Feels Right Now

C'mon, guys! Your editor is not happy. Why? Because she only heard from FOUR of the 22 CWC branches in response to the latest Roundtable discussion topic. That's a pretty pitiful roundtabler. Not enough to make a decent sharing of ideas, as far as your vast editorial team is concerned. We are weary to the very bone of the never-ending need to nag, cajole, harangue and beg.

Yes, we're all dancing as fast as we can just to keep our branches alive and thriving. We're all volunteers with good intentions, doing the best we can. But still ... if life gets in the way and you really and truly cannot respond to a simple request for material in a timely manner, at least let us know. It's the silence that is the most annoying and discouraging.

So here's the deal. We'll give it a second try for the December issue of *The Bulletin*. The four branches that got their work in on time will be given a pass. As for the rest of you—we will be coming after you and will expect to hear from you in a timely manner. You have been warned! 





THE CWC BULLETIN

THE OFFICIAL MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB
PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR: MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER AND DECEMBER
SENT BY EMAIL TO ALL CURRENT MEMBERS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
JOYCE KRIEG (CENTRAL COAST)

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SANDY MOFFETT (WRITERS OF KERN)

ADVERTISING/PROMOTION
BOB ISBILL (HIGH DESERT)

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Member Spotlight: For new book releases, short stories, poems or articles, or news of literary honors. 50 words or less by email to editor@calwriters.org. Put "Member Spotlight" in the Subject line. Send a copy of your book cover in JPEG format as an email attachment.

Articles on writing craft, the writing life, marketing and publication: Send a proposal to editor@calwriters.org. Contributors will receive a short blurb to promote their books and/or services.

"CWC Roundtable" and "On the Horizon": Instructions on contributing to these features will be sent to all branch presidents, newsletter editors and publicity chairs approximately one month prior to the deadline. Watch for an email from Sandy Moffett, sm@sandymoffett.com.

Photographs: JPEG format, sent separately (not embedded in a Word doc or PDF). Please provide complete details in the caption, including names of people pictured.

Deadlines: First day of the month prior to publication. March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1.

Advertising Opportunities in *The Bulletin*

- ✓ Reach nearly 2000 writers in 22 branches throughout California four times a year.
- ✓ Increase your visibility, sell your services, promote your book, increase speaking engagements, pump up web traffic, and more.
- ✓ Affordable rates—as low as \$30 for a business card-size ad, up to \$200 for a full page.

Details: Go to calwriters.org/bulletin and scroll down to the section on advertising. Or contact Advertising Director Bob Isbill, advertisingcwc@gmail.com, 760/221-6367.

From the Editor's Desk



The Idea That Won't Let Go

True confession. I've never actually read *Moby-Dick*.

I know, right? College educated, voracious reader, published author. Never read *Moby-Dick*, nor any Shakespeare play in its entirety, nor any of the other classics, from *Canterbury Tales* to *The Great Gatsby*. How could this be?

I trace my lack of culture to being bitten by the newspaper bug in my early teens, when I happened to catch an old movie called *Deadline U.S.A.* on late-night TV. When a trench-coated, fedora-wearing Humphrey Bogart snarled, "It ain't the oldest profession, but it's the best," I was hopelessly and irretrievably hooked.

At my high school, we were allowed to substitute the school newspaper for the more traditional English classes during our junior and senior years. Thus, while my classmates were slogging through Melville, I was breezily penning a gossip column for the Blackford High *Lance*. The pattern continued through college. All other classes took a backseat to *The Spartan Daily*.

Years later, one of the speakers at my branch's monthly meeting asked us to name the book that made us want to be a writer. When it came to my turn, I was like, "Uh ... *Little House on the Prairie*?"

I wasn't joking. When fourth-grade me discovered the Little House series on the shelf at the Country Lane Elementary library, it opened up a whole new world of possibilities. Laura's childhood was so *ordinary*. Nothing particularly thrilling or dangerous ever happens in those books (well, they almost starved in *The Long Winter*, but other than that...). And yet, her tales are engaging and enthralling. If Laura Ingalls Wilder could weave magic out of her mundane life, why couldn't I? *Little Tract House in the Suburbs*?

I grew up, had that journalism career I so desperately wanted, and kept reading. But my tastes continue to be decidedly low-brow, mysteries and thrillers mostly with an occasional foray into mainstream literary fiction.

And yet, the idea of *Little Tract House in the Suburbs* never quite left me. Not so much a chronicle of my life in particular. Rather, the world I grew up in, which I like to describe as "The South Bay before it became Silicon Valley." As far as I am concerned, no one has yet written The Great Silicon Valley Novel. Many have tried—none have nailed it. The problem is, they all focus on tech and never dive deeper into the secrets lurking beneath all those circuits and chips.

Call it my passion project, the tiny seed of an idea that won't let go. The story that haunts me, keeps me up at night.

You might say it's my Great White Whale.

—Joyce Krieg