

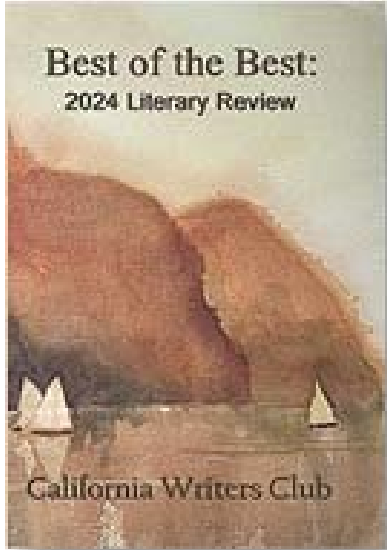


# CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB BULLETIN

SUMMER 2024

## Two New Releases from CWC Press

by Roger Lubeck, CWC President



CWC Press announces two releases for the summer of 2024: *Best of the Best: 2024 Literary Review* and *Vision & Verse, A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry*. Both books feature CWC members' literary and visual art and will be offered in electronic format as a member benefit.

Mike Apodaca (High Desert), Jenny Margotta (High Desert), Elisabeth Tuck (Mt. Diablo), Joyce Krieg (Central Coast), Roger Lubeck (Redwood), and the High Desert team have been working hard to bring you the *Best of the Best: 2024 Literary Review* by the California Writers Club. The *Best of the Best* is 383 pages with 68 pieces (half prose and half poetry). These works are from members in 17 branches. Each branch was able to choose the best prose and poetry from its members. The number accepted for each branch was based on the number of members; one prose and one poem per each 50 members in a branch. Some branches relied on their anthology editors, some held contests with judges, and others relied on their board to select poems and stories. In the

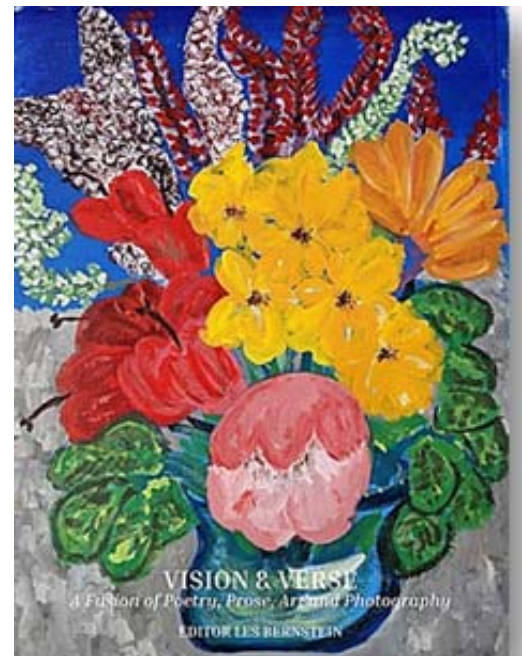
*2024 Literary Review*, you will find stories and poems that will challenge and inspire. Writing that will ignite your imagination and, we hope, encourage you to explore all of our branch and members' publications.

It is anticipated the *Best of the Best* will be available on Amazon in July. The retail price for hard copy will be \$15.00. After the first month on Amazon, branches will be able to sell the book at branch meetings with a member discount price. Details will be announced in July as to how members may access a free electronic version.

The new 2024 ekphrastic book, *Vision & Verse, A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry* is in the final stage of copy proofing. The cover art is titled "Welcome" by Briahn Kelly-Brennan (Redwood). The cover was designed by Crissi Langwell, also of the Redwood branch.

In the book, there are 15 pieces of contest winning member art and photographs with 130 member poems and prose prompted by the art. In addition, we have included images of member art that received honorable mention in the contest that preceded the book. The published book will be a high-quality softback, 224 pages, with color covers (front and back) and 20 pages of art in full color.

continued inside



# President's Corner: It All Started with Dad

by Roger Lubeck, CWC President



It is June, and we are coming on Father's Day. My dad always hoped I'd be a writer. He didn't live to read my books and stories; however, his influence is still present.


Growing up, books were a central part of our family life. My dad was a reader, accomplished writer, and newspaperman. In the 1960s and 1970s, he was the Feature Editor for the *Detroit News*. Dad didn't write a column; instead he brought features (cartoons, fashion, music, books, TV, and movies) to the reading public. For a time, my dad wrote book, movie, and TV reviews. His TV reviews caused the *News* to buy us the first color television in Detroit. I guess this was so we could watch *Bonanza* in color. Dad created the first TV guide to come with a Sunday newspaper. He won awards

for his features on President Kennedy's assassination and the first moon landing. Dad loved histories and a good thriller. Many of his favorite books are still on my shelves.

I mention this history because people often ask me how I got into books. My answer is my dad. In school and college, my inability to spell, my poor handwriting, poor grammar, and failed typing skills led my teachers to conclude that "published author" was not in my future.

What they didn't expect was the effect the Apple and IBM personal computer would have on people like me. Programs like Word allowed me to write professional academic papers. As a business psychologist I could write articles and books about management, leadership, and sales. As a novelist, I have written about distant worlds, magic and fantasy, crime, World War II, the old west, and coming of age. My short stories opened new genres for me. Poetry has changed the way I think. One of my greatest pleasures is reading one of my stories or poems to an audience. Even better is seeing my work performed on stage. All this is because of my love of reading and the personal computer's effect on my writing.

My late father-in-law was the chief librarian in Daly City. He too, loved books. He also wrote a weekly column in the *Daly City Record*. In one column he wrote, "in reading ... we insulate ourselves from the frustrations of the world." I appreciate this thought because some days are harder than others. Life and writing can take work; however, writing, like reading, can be a pleasure. If you love to read, find pleasure in writing or other creative ventures, don't keep your love a secret. Shout it to the world.

If you found my reflection on books and my dad's influence on my writing interesting, why not write your own story or history regarding reading and writing and send it with a short bio (50-100 words) to me: [president@calwriters.org](mailto:president@calwriters.org). Please keep your reflection under 400 words. Who knows, perhaps we can start an author profile page on our website. 



## 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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## New Releases: continued from front page

It is likely the book will sell on Amazon for \$35.00. We expect the book will be available for purchase on Amazon on August 15, 2024. Books may also be sold at branch meetings, with a member discount; however that has yet to be determined. Once published and on sale, the book will also be available as a PDF.

The club is very excited about this new publication, and pleased to announce that Les Bernstein (Redwood) has agreed to serve as editor on a second ekphrastic book that the CWC board approved for 2025.

The CWC is actively seeking traditional and new ways to promote writing, publishing, marketing and selling. *Vision and Verse* was an experiment. So far, it appears a successful idea. We look forward to your feedback when the book becomes available on Amazon. 


## Tips for Selling at Fairs, Festivals and Markets

by Tim Schooley, Sacramento

- Consider rounding the individual sales price of your book down to the nearest \$5 increment to make handling change easier, e.g. if your book sells for \$15.99 on Amazon, consider pricing the book at \$15.
- Bring a lot of \$5 bills with you.
- Load the Venmo app on your phone. It's quick and easy, and now has a QR code scanning function to ensure the customer is paying you instead of someone with a similar name.
- Consider creating a [squareup.com](https://squareup.com) account to handle credit card sales on your phone.
- Create a display of your book cover to set up on your table .
- Be sure to order plenty of author's copies of your book early enough to have them in time for the fair
- Also, bring supplies as needed (e.g., pop-up tent, folding table, tablecloth, chairs)
- Invest in bookmarks with a QR code leading to your sales website—[gotprint.com](https://gotprint.com) is an inexpensive and easy to use website for ordering bookmarks
- It's amazing how well a smile or hello works to bring potential customers to your table
- Finally, keep track of sales—you'll need the info to pay annual state sales tax (due in January each year).

Note: Most festivals and fairs require vendors to have a California Seller's Permit. It is easy and FREE to obtain one. Head to the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration website for information. You will need to create a logon (username and password) and follow the step-by-step application process under the link for "Register a New Business Activity," here: [https://onlineservices.cdtfa.ca.gov/\\_/#2](https://onlineservices.cdtfa.ca.gov/_/#2).



*Retired from a career as an attorney and law school lecturer, Tim Schooley is a novelist, writing historical fiction. His novel, The Wool Translator, won the University of Pacific Creative Writing Conference's Jameson Award and was shortlisted for the 2021 Chaucer Book Award. Tim's forthcoming novel, The Circus of the Vanishing Elephant, is based (very loosely) on his employment many years ago as a clown with Ringling Bros., and Barnum & Bailey Circus. [www.timschooley.com](http://www.timschooley.com)* 

# How to Get Published in a Magazine

by Michael Barrington, Mt. Diablo

I am often asked how I get so many of my articles and short stories published—ten already this year. The glib answer I typically give is, “With difficulty.” I have written eleven books and published more than sixty short stories or articles, but getting published does not happen by chance.

I never intended to write short stories. I always thought of myself as a novelist, a person who would write fiction. While writing my first novel, I discovered that my publisher also produced a very successful, high class monthly lifestyle magazine, and I realized there was no article addressing books. Eager to get my name in print, I offered to write book reviews. He readily agreed. I soon expanded my reach and began writing non-fiction articles on a variety of topics. It was not what I wanted to do, but now I was a published author.



However, I still wanted to write fiction and started producing short stories, but then did all the wrong things. I had a story which I honed, fine-tuned, had a professional editor review and beta tested it with two people. It was a masterpiece, a work of art! I researched journals that published my genre, sent it off, and waited expectantly. Most rejected it; one did not respond. I was crushed. I was also very naïve! The immediate rejections were a blow to my ego and brought me back to reality.

I understood the vagaries of the publishing industry and that editors could be very subjective depending on mood, what they had drunk the night before, or whether they had an upset stomach. I knew I could write fiction and write well, but obviously not good enough for publication. If I was to take writing seriously, I needed to hone and develop my craft.

It was Hemingway who wrote, “There is very little to say about writing a short story unless you are a professional explainer. If you do it, you don’t have to explain. If you cannot do it, no explanation will ever help.” I had read Chekhov, loved the writing of Edna O’Brien, admired Alice Munro, was inspired by Annie Proulx’s “Brokeback Mountain” and wanted to write like Anne Patchett. It was obvious there was no shortcut to closing the gap between my head and my hands; success would only come, I believed, through hours of practice.

So, I decided to set up a strict writing schedule and, in addition to the novel I was working on, would write one short story each week until I was either tired of the process or felt I had nothing left to say. And I would do this for twelve weeks. I did not need prompts. There was no shortage of material in my head. I just had to express it on paper. Without deciding on length, I knew from experience each would be about 2,000 to 2500 words, since that was my typical writing rhythm, my sweet spot, and I don’t usually write to a formula. But I set no limits. It would be creative writing, pure and simple.

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## Get Published in a Magazine: continued from previous page

Whether I kept the finished product or not was not the point, it just had to be completed. I pushed myself. My intent was not to build up a portfolio of stories that one day might be published, but to simply write, to develop my talent, to hone my craft. I spent hours editing, scrutinizing each word and phrase, frequently ending up with my original version! But I wanted more. I recognized incredible writing when I read it. How could I emulate it? How was I to write the perfectly understated but emotionally whole story? Where were the words? I stretched myself using enigmatic, lyrical images, the power of ambiguous emotions. I searched for metaphors, similes and agonized over selecting a phrase. It was so difficult at first

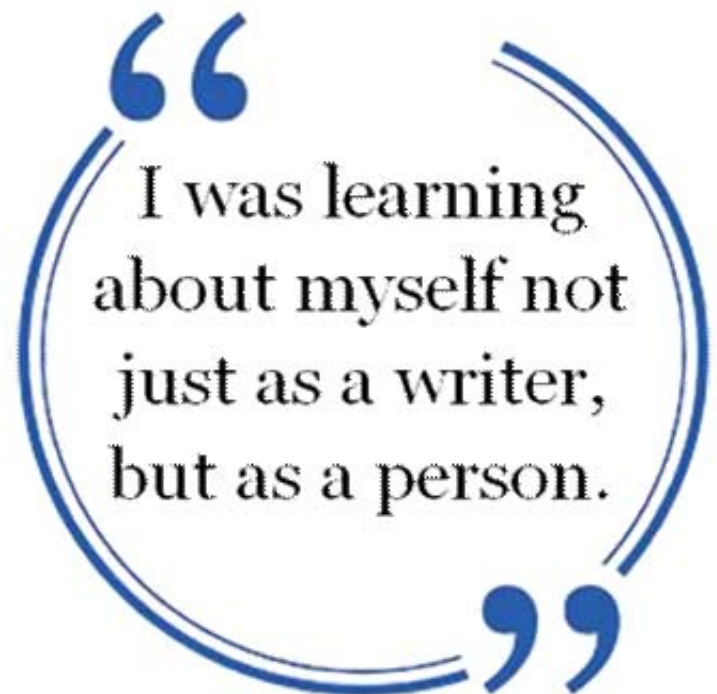
removing big strong emotions, love, hate, envy, and se for more subtle shades, too difficult to name. But I was lea After week eight, I sent out two pieces to beta readers. feedback was positive. I was improving.

I was learning about myself not just as a writer but as person. I write fast. A thousand words a day was easy, tw thousand very doable. With so many stories inside m wanting to come out, I sometimes got ahead of myself And then it all changed, not radically, not dramatically but I realized my new process was slowing me dow considerably. A lightbulb had gone off in my head. I usual got the words onto the paper as fast as I could, then start to edit and edit and edit. But now I was almost hesit cautious before putting anything down. I realized if I prc my work more carefully, took a more reflective approach w attention to the subtleties of character development, worc of phrase, nuances, and taking a less primary approach, of a much higher quality. Joyce Carol Oates-like? Not exactly, but getting there.

Writing a first draft had always been easy for me, but trying to turn it into a riveting piece of literature was not. To make it a piece of shimmering, potent prose that would stand out from masses of submitted material, needed still yet more work. So I slogged away. When I thought I had worked a story as hard as I could, when there were no more iterations to be made, I would shelve it and start another story.

When I thought I had two stories ready for publication, (I had written fifteen at the time and decided that would be where I would stop), and they had been scrutinized by beta readers, I decided to test the market again. But why two? I believed that if I could get one story published, I might be able to repeat the experience by immediately submitting a second to the same publisher. I went through the typical writer's tiresome drudge of sifting through countless journals and magazines trying to match my genre, style, and content with those of a particular editor. I scrutinized back issues and tried to envisage their readership.

Having finally identified two journals, one a quarterly publication, the other a monthly, believing that statistically with twelve issues a year, I decided my chances of being accepted would be higher in the latter. Making sure I understood the rubrics and all the requirements, I submitted the same story, a fictional fantasy (2,600 words), and waited. Both acknowledged receipt and indicated I would hear back in sixty days, but only if they were interested in publishing it. I was shocked when just two weeks later I received an unusual and rare



I was learning  
about myself not  
just as a writer,  
but as a person.

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## Get Published in a Magazine continued from previous page

email thanking me for my submittal, complete with a three-sentence paragraph of feedback explaining I had not developed my characters sufficiently and the plot was difficult to follow. Rejection was OK, but the comments! I was nonplussed and wondered what the editor was smoking when she (it was a lady) read my piece. I knew my work was good, but it seemed that my fantasy story had gone completely over her head. A little confused but undeterred, I continued to write.

Five weeks later, the other journal responded. They loved my story, wanted to publish it and were requesting permission to also use it in an anthology they were preparing! I responded by thanking them and agreeing to their publication of the story. I also submitted another fantasy fiction to them (2,700 words). It was accepted immediately.

Getting published is not as simple as finding a magazine or journal that might be focusing on your genre. There are multiple factors to consider.

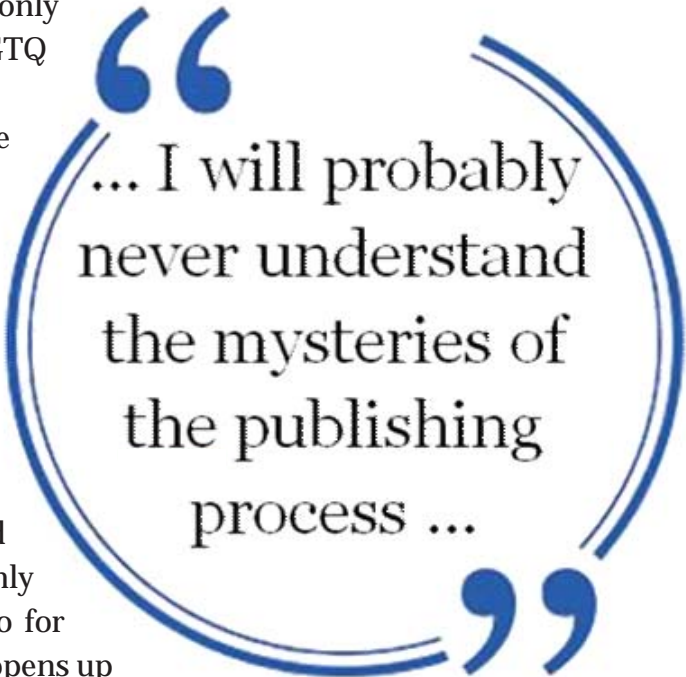
1) Until you have read several editions, you will not get a feel for the editor's focus. Sometimes, it could be a subgenre of what you write. A journal maybe states that it wants science fiction. However, it is only after reading some stories that you might discover they are looking for very dark gothic or horror. It might be a publication that has a specific theme for a particular issue, or it might only allow submissions from minority writers or solely from the LGBTQ community.

2) Who is publishing the journal? Many magazines are attached to the creative writing department of a university. I might suggest you avoid these. After reading many of them, it's clear most are attracted to stories that might appeal only to generations Y and Z, which is fine if that is your target audience. But remember, your submission will first be read by students! The competition will be stiff. If you dig a little deeper, you might also discover that only a fraction of freelance submissions actually get published.

3) Frequency of publication? This is important since it could mathematically increase your chances. A magazine that is only published annually will draw fierce competition. And so too for one published twice a year. However, a monthly publication opens up all kinds of possibilities, and even more so if comes out weekly. There are many magazines that are only online, and they offer their own solid options. I have successfully published several stories on three sites that actually publish short stories daily, and these kinds of sites are increasing both in numbers and readership.

4) It goes without saying that if you are just beginning to submit your work, you might want to wait until you have a track record before submitting to the big boys; The Atlantic, The New Yorker, The Paris Review etc.

So how do I get my short stories published? My answer has not changed; 'with difficulty.' But I will probably never understand or fathom the mysteries of the publishing process or the apparent randomness of story selection. I have also developed a skin that is almost impermeable and bulletproof to editorial rejection. But I continue to submit in the hope, belief and expectation that there is somebody out there who can recognize a



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## Get Published in a Magazine continued from previous page

well-written story worthy of publication. But at the end of the day, I have to write for that is who I am. So was my crazy, obsessive and self-imposed, fifteen-week regimen worth the effort? Absolutely. Once I was into it, it became a daily routine. I will probably never do it again, but I learned about myself as a writer and that, in turn, has caused me to write a little differently. I know my skills improved, I have a different mindset and I write at a different pace. But I also continue to write because I have to. And therein lies my pleasure. Publishing be damned!



*Michael Barrington of the Mt. Diablo branch is the author of six books, the latest being No Room for Heroes. He blogs at [www.mbwriter.net](http://www.mbwriter.net)*



## One Space or Two?

by Jenny Margotta, High Desert

Any of us old enough to remember typing classes in high school—on actual typewriters—will remember it was pounded into our heads that you always put two spaces after every sentence. And most were also taught to put two spaces after a colon. Not so anymore. Why, you might ask.

Typewriters used a non-proportional font. That is, every character took up the same horizontal space on the paper, regardless of the actual width of the letter itself. (Think of putting a letter into each separate square on graph paper.) Two spaces after each sentence or colon helped us visually see the breaks.

With the advent of computers, most fonts became proportional—that is, the horizontal space they occupy depends on the letter's actual width. Today, references almost universally agree that one space after a period or punctuation mark is correct. Microsoft was one of the last holdouts, but in 2020, even they formally settled the space debate and updated Microsoft Word to indicate that two spaces between sentences would be considered an error.



Nearly every major style guide now recommends using a single space between sentences, including:

- The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)
- The American Psychological Association (often referred to as APA)
- Microsoft Manual of Style
- The Gregg Reference Manual
- The Associated Press Stylebook
- MLA Guide (It instructs students to follow their teacher's guidelines, but uses a single space between sentences in its examples.)

CMOS Section 2.9 (17th Edition) states:

“Like most publishers, Chicago advises leaving a single character space, not two spaces, between sentences and after colons used within a sentence, and this recommendation applies to both the manuscript and the published work. In fact, a well-structured electronic document will never include more than one consecutive character space.”



*Jenny Margotta is the treasurer of the High Desert branch. She had a long career as an editor and writer of corporate documents. Writing as J. Margotta-Ferrara, she is the author of two YA fantasy novels and a cookbook, Some Like It Hot ... the Culinary Adventures of One Hot Mama and One Cool dude.*



# The Essential Book Pitch Checklist

by Lucinda Halpern, president, Lucinda Literary

A great pitch makes Alex Littlefield, an executive editor at Little, Brown, an **imprint** of Hachette, “forget all the other reservations [he] might have.” It has the ethereal quality of something we have been looking for all along but didn’t know until we saw it. A pitch can be, in other words, a dealmaker.

Use the following checklist to make sure your book pitch hits the chords agents and publishers need to hear.

## The “Wow” Factor

Many writers, particularly of memoir, business, parenting, or holistic health books, query us believing they have an important truth to share, only to learn their book has already been written.

For nonfiction, one excellent way to ensure your message is both truthful and novel is by debunking a myth we’ve commonly been led to believe. This offers your premise a fresh, surprising spin. It will help to convince the skeptical reader who believes they have read every book on the topic to buy your book.

For fiction, the “wow” factor often means you’ll need to deviate from the standards of your book’s genre, perhaps by borrowing from another genre altogether. Concisely illustrating the most interesting plot points or character development in your pitch—rather than giving a lengthy, over-detailed synopsis—will highlight the most critical and impactful elements of your book.



## An Audience You Can Count On

One belief writers mistakenly fall for is that a great idea will naturally find an audience. Publishers know from experience that even an incredible idea doesn’t always translate to incredible sales. If you’re writing a book proposal, be sure to make the case early on that you know who your audience is and what they crave.

For fiction, proof of audience can mean that you’ve been published in well-known journals, won awards for your writing, have a strong network within writing organizations, or that you’ve dissected the market for comparative titles, demonstrating the popularity of your story’s message or theme.

## An offer of a promise or payoff to your reader that’s even **BIGGER** than your idea

A big risk we see writers take, from those just starting out to those who are several books in, is choosing a narrow idea, or an idea that doesn’t have the ability to resonate on a universal scale beyond a primary demographic. While it is important to depend upon a specific audience, it’s equally important to offer a loftier promise that goes beyond the particular subject area you’ll be exploring or beyond your character’s journey, ultimately giving your reader the opportunity to meaningfully connect with your book.

For example: A book about a year-long shopping ban can actually be a book about finding freedom from the clutter of our life and belongings. You’ll want to demonstrate these grander themes and payoffs to the reader when building the argument for your book.

## An answer to “why you?”

There is probably a reason that makes you the perfect—or only—person to tell this particular story. Whether it’s a distinct voice or way of storytelling, a highly practical or accessible account that will leave readers with memorable takeaways, or an expertise in a particular subject matter, make sure an agent or publisher leaves your book with a sense of who you are and why you’re poised to own this idea.

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## Book Pitch Checklist continued from previous page

### A one-line “elevator pitch” for your book

If you think about the last time you purchased a book, it was probably one line that hooked you.

Once you’ve locked in the above aspects of your book, you’ll need to distill it back down again into an elevator pitch. Opening your query letter or proposal with that one-line umbrella statement or thought-provoking insight is precisely what an agent or publisher needs to see for possible acquisition. What’s “radically” different about your idea should come across right away.

### A killer marketing plan

Now that you have your exceptional idea, your audience, and your clear explanation of who you are, what are you willing to do to see your book become the next big thing? A publisher can tell from a writer’s marketing strategy how motivated a writer will be to promote their book before, during, and after publication, and for many years to come.

Give an agent or publisher an indisputable reason to take you on. Do you already reach a number of dedicated followers on social media or with an email list? How does a book fit into your greater business, mission, or the current landscape? You need to reach your audience first or show you have the capacity to reach one before you formulate your plan and present it to agents or publishers. Fortunately, there are many ways to do that, which go beyond social media.

*Lucinda Halpern is the president of Lucinda Literary. She is the author of Get Signed: Find and Agent, Land a Book Deal, and Become a Published Author (2024, Hay House). Her website offers a free workbook for authors, from which the above checklist was excerpted. Download it at [lucindaliterary.com](http://lucindaliterary.com)*



## What, Exactly, Is an Elevator Pitch?

It’s called an elevator pitch because it’s supposed to consume no more time than a quick elevator ride, assuming you’re lucky enough to share an elevator with a top literary agent or big-time publishing executive. Nowadays, it refers to the short and persuasive case you make for your book at conferences, pitch-a-thons, and “agent speed-dating” events.

Keep in mind this is not social chit-chat. It’s business. The agents are looking for specific types of products that they have a market for. If they don’t need what you have to sell, you need to move on and keep moving until you find your possible connections.

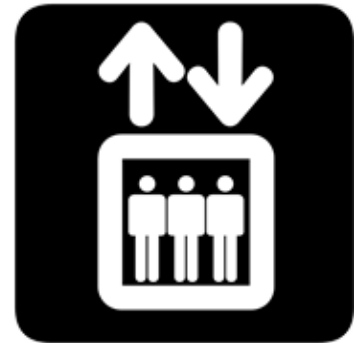
Once you’ve each introduced yourself with your name and role (Author, Agent, Publisher) you have 30 seconds to let them know what you have to offer: Your book’s genre, target audience, plus a couple of interesting details and what support you’re seeking. If that’s what they’re looking for, you exchange more information. If not, you exchange quick pleasantries and move on until you find a more suitable match.

You may need to present to many, many agents before you meet one who’s after exactly your project. While it’s important to be congenial, it’s not time for normal socializing. After thirty seconds, if you haven’t already moved on, your contact will either be interested or be scanning the room for their next prospect.

**THIRTY SECONDS!** Going over that time at a conference risks losing your new contact’s interest or creating a situation where they feel like they can’t get away from you.

The takeaway: write your elevator pitch before the conference. Use a timer and practice reading it out loud until you’ve got it down without having to refer to your notes.

*A version of this article appears on the website of Fremont Area Writers.*



# Exploring CWC's Rich Literary Past

by Kimberly Edwards, Sacramento

Several years before the California Writers Club came to be, the Pacific Short Story Club thrived in San Jose. This club began in 1904 with a beloved teacher at the State Normal School at San Jose, now San Jose State University. The professor, Henry Meade Bland, would become California's second Poet Laureate and a member of the California Writers Club.

Dr. Bland visualized a club "to study and work in the rich free life of our Coast, where the prophets have foretold a great literature, all its own, purely western in color, background freedom, swing and dare." Out of Bland's composition class arose The Pacific Short Story Club.

Born in 1863 in Fairfield, Bland grew up near the Suisun Slough and the Sacramento Valley. From an early age the sights and sounds of the river and marshes caught his attention. These lasting memories would nourish his writing throughout his life.

Bland felt it important to study the literary masters. He befriended Joaquin Miller, hosted poet Edwin Markham, visited the Ruskin Club with Bohemian George Sterling, and hiked with Jack London. Bland wanted to absorb "how the trick was done."

In October of 1906, Jack London shared advice for write letter to Bland: "short story writers ... be careful not to v any masterpieces. The magazine editors are the arbiters of t field ... They don't want masterpieces. You see, they interfere with their circulation; lose subscribers for them; and then the business manager gets hot and fires the editors for running down the circulation ... They will talk about shape, and grip, and power ... if you want to write masterpieces, for goodness sake, don't write for magazines."

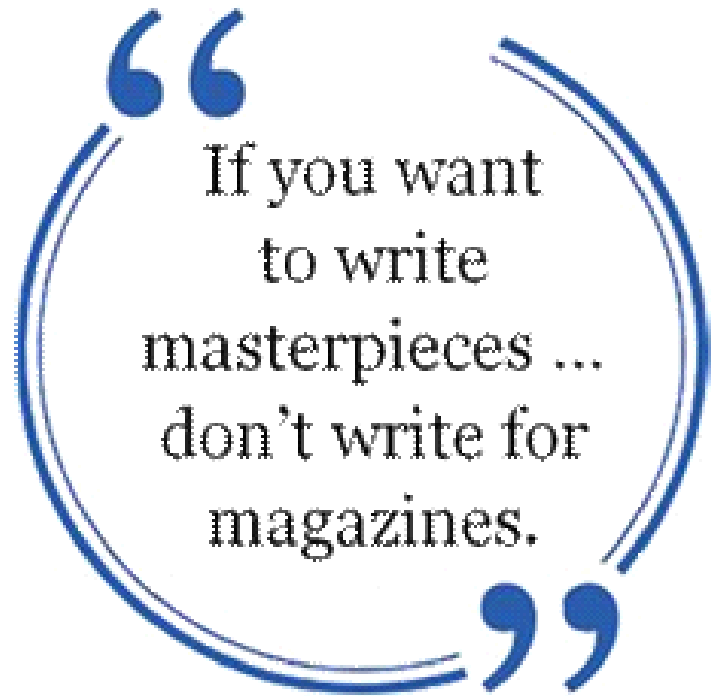
Ina Coolbrith, who would become the "mother" of the California Writers Club and California's first Poet Laureate wrote. "Alas! I wish I could spin yarns; long ones, short one funny ones, serious ones, any kind of a yarn, and I envy you the Pacific Short Story Club the faculty...Dear story-tellers all my heart I thank you and I am glad in your youth your an your California heritage, to all of which you must and will

In 1911, Bland was invited by Joaquin Miller to live on his property, "The Hights" in the Oakland hills. These six months were among the most energizing. When Miller died, Bland felt downhearted, as he had developed affection for the temperamental Miller. Bland sought solace in writing. Poet Markham came to the rescue, bringing Bland back "among the bards." Bland would soon pay visits to Muir and London and meet Luther Burbank.

When London died in 1916, Bland again found consolation in writing. He wrote in the 1916 *Quarterly Bulletin* of the California Writers Club:

"In October of this year when I was about to leave the Valley of the Moon after a brief sojourn, this kindest of all good friends handed me a volume of his short stories in which he had written, 'Tell me which one you like best for the best of old sake's sake.' I did not get a chance to tell him, for before I had finished my careful reading, every English book-lover knows what happened. But I am now prepared to say that

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## CWC's Literary Past: continued from previous page

*Just Meat* is not only the best of this book ... but it is one of the best English short stories – balanced and harmonious in plot, true in character, clear and striking in style, rich and strong in imagery...”

Bland felt he was “closer to Jack London’s heart of hearts in this our last hour together than ever before. He analyzed his literary ideal which he said was to adhere to ‘unity and reality’ ... He was even then working on a story ...”

Bland wrote that he would never forget the image of Jack London the Sunday before he died. “Dressed from top to toe in immaculate white, he moved around among his employees directing his plans and breathing intense pleasure in what he had already accomplished. I fully believe, though he said nothing about it, that Jack London intended so to combine the real in his Valley of the Moon farm, as to show to the world a working modern Utopia; and I say now, our greatest loss in the early death of our friend, is in the fact that this his dream came to so early an end.”

In the next few years, Bland became friends with Senator James B. Phelan, who desired to propel California into a golden age of art and letters. The senator opened his villa in the Saratoga hills for Bland’s students to hold poetry contests for a volume published at the senator’s expense.

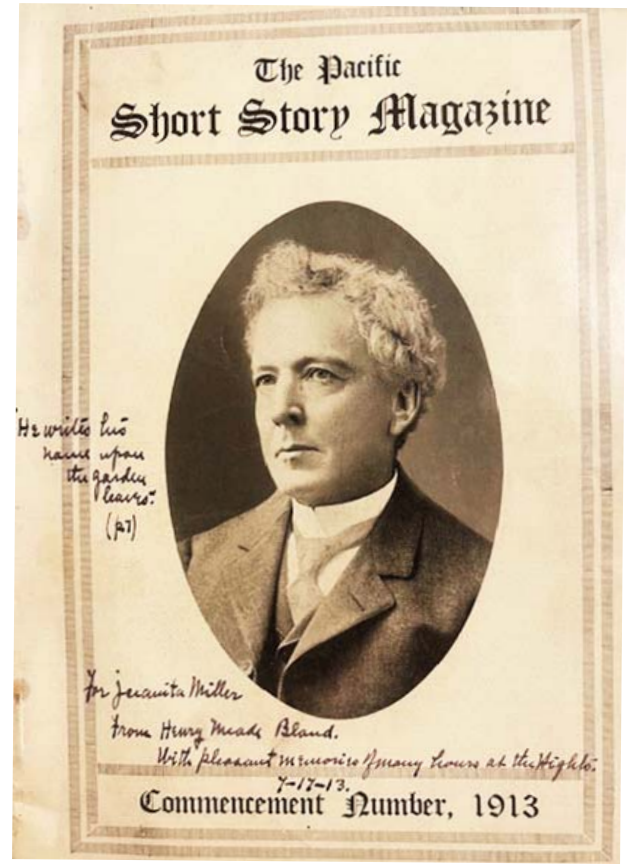
In 1925, the California Writers Club’s anthology *Westwinds A Book of Verse*, included three of Bland’s poems: “In Camp at Tahoe,” “Love’s Purpose,” and “Sunrise Over the Sierras.” Bland was known to compose verses in parks, on streetcars, and on benches near City Hall. His technical mastery was legendary. He wrote ballads, odes, Spenserian stanzas, couplets, triolets, and sonnets, often with California as a setting.

Again Bland wrote to soothe his soul. His philosophy was, “We go on a search for truth and we ultimately find the beautiful. Then we know that beauty is truth.” He believed that expressing truth brings out beauty in verse and in the hearts of readers.

In 1928, a committee of friends began advancing Bland’s name as Poet Laureate of California following Ina Coolidge, who died earlier that year. On March 22, 1929, Senator Herbert C. Jones introduced a Joint Resolution in the California Legislature stressing that the Poet Laureate should be a Californian “filled with its spirit, its history.” Mrs. Leda Jackson sang some of Bland’s poems set to music by Merrill Knighton, including *The River* and *Sierran Pan*.

In these later years, Bland was known around the San Jose State campus for a cap that he wore. As his clothes grew shabby, he was as revered as ever, characterized as never bragging, nor acclaiming himself with loud voice and sweeping gestures, but as expecting great thing of students and rejoicing in their success.

On April 30, 1931, Bland died. *Westward Magazine* paid tribute in August 1931, noting that he “loved California as the late Senator Phelan loved it, as not merely a territory of this earth, but as a field of cloth of gold spread out over the asphodel of the Elysian Fields.” Bland’s memory was honored posthumously with *The Laureate’s Wreath*, a 1934 anthology published by The Edwin Markham Poetry Society Chapter of the Poetry Society of London. The book includes poems by Bland, some found in his desk after his death. A plaque containing



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## CWC's Literary Past: continued from previous page

his poem "The College Tower Speaks" was placed on the west side of Tower Hall on the San Jose State campus where he devoted so many years.

Bland left a literary legacy in the thousands of students he inspired. A 1908 letter from George Wharton Jones eloquently sums up his contribution: "...more power to our pens, more fire to our brains, more discernment, as to our ability, in our publishers, more craving for our work, from the public more craving for our work, more cash in our purses and more joy in our souls both in the doing and in the reaping."



*Kimberly Edwards is devoting many hours to researching the early years of California Writers Club and sharing her "finds" in The Bulletin. She is the chair of the CWC NorCal Network, a past president of the Sacramento branch, and a Jack London Service Award honoree. She is the author of Sacramento Motorcycling: A Capital City Tradition (History Press, 2021).*



## Digging for History at Joaquin Miller Park

by Kristen Caven, Berkeley

*Editor's Note: Joaquin Miller Park in the Oakland hills is considered to be the birthplace of California Writers Club as the venue where Jack London and his literary pals gathered for picnics and readings of their works in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Long-time members may recall the barbecue at the Fire Circle when we celebrated our centennial in 2009. CWC continues to maintain a presence on the board of Friends of Joaquin Miller Park. Our current representative, Kristen Caven of the Berkeley branch, penned this report on her blog, "Walkin' with Joaquin." <https://kbc-cwc-wir-jmp.blogspot.com/>*

As we prepared to send in our proposal to give the Fire Circle a makeover last week, something wasn't sitting right with me. Was it seeing those little Wednesday outdoor school kids climbing around on the cracking, crumbling cement structure? Was it having somewhere to hang our CWC banner at our Earth Day poetry event? Was it the gentle backdrop to all those amazing poets (Nanette Deetz, Richard Loranger, Lucille Lang Day et al)? Was it the way Bob Stephens curled up like some drunken beat poet in the sliver of shade that slab provided?

**Yes. YES. So much yes!**

The way we all interacted with the space—food on one side, poetry on the other—made me realize this spot was thoughtfully designed for parties. I listened to Berkeley branch President Keith Gaboury deliver his puzzled, hilarious description of meat shopping for meat, and while staring at the shapes behind him, realized...

**Those are ziggurats!**



The Art Deco design element known as ziggurats, discovered "hiding in plain sight" by Kristen Caven at the Fire Circle at Joaquin Miller Park.

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## Digging for History: continued from previous page

Yes, this classical, geometric stair-step pattern is an iconic Art Deco detail. How had I missed that all these years? We had guessed this structure was built in the 1960s with its groovy curved slots for trash cans, quite typical of hippie era cement. No one on the Facebook history forums could tell us any different. The park historian and the Oakland Historical Society all shrugged their shoulders, unsure of this structure's origins or importance. But it kept nagging at me. People have been coming here for decades. It's a familiar place for people of all colors who like to gather and eat food to gather and eat food. This is a time when so many familiar places in Oakland just disappear ... would it be fair to just disappear it? And the thought that Juanita Miller did readings of her father Joaquin's work nightly, staged plays yearly ... it wouldn't be unreasonable to think that she built this. *Well if she did, I wouldn't want it torn down on my watch!*

I went back to my books and poured through the Oakland Wiki. I found, in the very end of Splendid Poseur, this report: "Each year, thousands of people climb Joaquin Miller Road to reach the highland area that is now a memorial Joaquin Miller Park. There are hiking trails, community kitchens and picnic grounds.

### Community Kitchens?

That must be referring to what we call the Fire Pit. I went on a very deep internet dive into community kitchens and, though little is written about them, discovered that sure enough they were kind of a signature structure of WPA parks. Usually they have roofs on them. This one is kind of unique. But as a sometimes food historian, I love the idea of an outdoor kitchen for the community. Which left me wondering: *Could this old thing be as old as the Cascade?*

Today before going to the park I took my flannel shirt to the Bancroft Archives and the Oakland History Room. I watched the park's history unfold before my eyes ... the letters written, the money raised, hundreds of newspaper articles chronicling its development from an idea to a reality. Or as one person wrote, "A Million-Dollar Dream Come True."

### And bingo, I found it.

An article about the opening of the Park. In both libraries. In the automotive section of the *Oakland Tribune* in the Sunday paper in October, 1941, there it was, a spread about the new Woodminster Amphitheater. And a photo of, voilá, the community kitchen and picnic ground.

So this old concrete lump is not just 83 years old but a juicy piece of history!

Now we're re-writing the proposal as a restoration and renovation project to polish up a long buried treasure and who knows, maybe even update it for an electrobohemian future. (That's a new literary genre I want to invent, btw.) There's an Eagle scout who I want to believe is a descendant (or at least a long lost relative) of Lord Byron, Joaquin Miller's literary crush and model, and he's going to be fixing up the tables and repairing cracks and taking out all the fire elements, because, well ... let's just say *things have changed*.



*Kristen Caven of the Berkeley branch is the CWC Writer in Residence at Joaquin Miller Park. She is the author of seven books, several plays and an award-winning cartoon collection. Her many projects include identifying the trees planted in Writers Memorial Grove, a CWC tradition from the early 1900s until the 1980s. [kristencaven.com](http://kristencaven.com)*



Kristen Caven is on the hunt for history!



# The Zoom Room



## FREMONT AREA WRITERS

**June 22:** Jessica Olgilvie, “Grabbing Openings and Chapter Closing Cliffhangers.” 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**August 24:** David W. Bemer, “What Makes a Great Essay and How to Know Where to Submit It.” 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**September 28:** Christine Meade, “Finding a Path through the ‘Mushy Middle’ of a Novel.” 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**Second Saturday of the Month:** Zoom write-in, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Ten minute writing sprints using a photo prompt, then sharing. No write-in in July.

Fremont Area Writers’ Zoom events are free and open to all. Zoom link: [scottfrombayside@yahoo.com](mailto:scottfrombayside@yahoo.com) and put “FAW Zoom” in the Subject line.

## HIGH DESERT

**June 25:** Al Watts, “The 90-Day Memoir,” follow-up session to previous presentation on January 30. 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Free to all CWC members. Zoom link will be sent to all CWC branch presidents in June for distribution to their members.

## SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

**July 13:** Dan Kiefstad, “Book Promotion: Finding Readers without Spending Money.” Noon-2:00 p.m.

**August 10:** M.L. Hamilton, “Everything You Wanted to Know about Modern Publishing But Were Afraid to Ask.” Noon-2:00 p.m.

**September 14:** Pauline Wiles, “Author Website Starter Kit.” Noon-2:00 p.m.

Free and open to all CWC members. Zoom link: [aliasbvp@gmail.com](mailto:aliasbvp@gmail.com)





# Member Spotlight

## NEW RELEASES



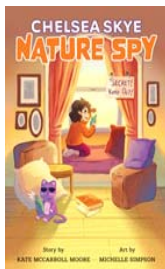
**Michael Barrington** (Mt. Diablo) announces the publication of *Magic at Stonehenge & Other Stories*, in March in the US. It was optioned by a British publisher and will be available in the summer as *Not Harry Potter & Other Stories*. His short story, “The Storyteller,” appeared in an anthology *Surrendering To The Surreal* (March: Aether Ave, Press).



**Lynn Goodwin** (Mt. Diablo and Tri-Valley Writers) announces her newest book, *Disrupted*, available online and by ordering at bookstores. After a 7.1 earthquake, Sandee Mason faces two disruptions: fallout from the quake and her brother’s death in an IED attack. How will she cope when school closes, her best friend moves away, and the new boy disappears regularly? Great book for anyone who’s lost a sibling or an opportunity.



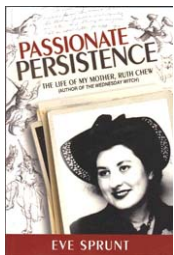
**Mara Lynn Johnstone** (Redwood Writers) has re-released an anthology of science fiction, *We're the Weird Aliens*, written by multiple authors on the exciting theme of “What if humans weren’t the boring race lacking scales/tentacles/etc, but instead were widely regarded as the strangest things among the stars?”



**Kate McCarroll Moore** (Tri-Valley Writers) is thrilled to announce the publication of her new picture book, *Chelsea Skye, Nature Spy*. This is a story about hope, love, and paying attention to the beauty around us—and doing our part to help those in need.



**Ginny Rorby** (Writers of the Mendocino Coast) has published *Girl Under Glass*. Can a young girl with a juvenile record convince the authorities a greenhouse full of plants are the witnesses to a crime —and that she can prove it? A rootless, rebellious young girl sinks deeper into juvenile delinquency. Given one more chance to avoid juvenile hall, a judge assigns her to community service with a cranky botanist studying plant communication.



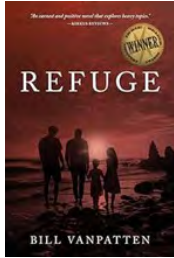
**Eve Sprunt** (Tri-Valley Writers) has released *Passionate Persistence, The Life of My Mother, Ruth Chew* (Author of the *Wednesday Witch*), now for sale on Amazon. When Eve was a child, her mother was a frustrated, overwhelmed housewife with five kids. During the pandemic, she read her mother’s diaries and gained a better appreciation of how she achieved success after Eve left home.

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# Member Spotlight (continued)

## AWARDS AND HONORS

**Karen Gorback** (President of San Fernando Valley, is happy to announce her poem titled “Tomorrow” will be published in the CWC ekphrastic anthology *Vision and Verse, a Fusion of Poetry, Prose, Art and Photography*. Karen is also looking forward to the fall publication of her picture book titled *Mazel’s Mishpacha* by Red Penguin Books. The book celebrates the diversity of families through the story of a small schnoodle seeking acceptance — which he had all along!



**Bill VanPatten** (San Joaquin Valley) has received awards for two recent works of fiction—the Eric Hoffer Award for *There Go I* and the Indie Readers Discovery Award for *Refuge*. His collection of short stories, *There Go I*, was awarded best self-published book and was a grand prize finalist for the Eric Hoffer 2024 Book Awards. Bill’s latest novel, *Refuge*, received first-place honors in the category of LGBTQ fiction for the Indie Reader Discovery Awards. 

## Put Your Work in the Spotlight!

Share your latest book release or other literary achievement with your fellow CWC members. Send an announcement, 50 words or less, to [editor@calwriters.org](mailto:editor@calwriters.org). Covers should be submitted in JPEG format as an attachment to the email. Deadline for the Autumn 2024 issue is Sept. 1.



Redwood Writers  
2024 Poetry Anthology

ONE DAY



Open to all CWC members  
Deadline June 30

For details: <https://redwoodwriters.org/2024-poetry-anthology/>





Our topic for this issue is **Summertime Traditions**. Specifically, does your branch hold regular meetings in the summer months? How about barbecues, picnics and other summertime traditions? [rs.org](https://rs.org).



**Keith Gaboury**, President, Berkeley: We have an Author Showcase event on June 15. Branch members who have had a book published in 2023 or 2024 are welcome to attend. The hybrid event will be in person at Books on B in Hayward and on Zoom. The event is open to all CWC members. The Berkeley branch is having a summer social on July 21 at the California Writers Circle in Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland. As members socialize in nature, there will be food, drinks, and a literary reading from Berkeley Branch's esteemed members. The social will be a colorful time for members to gather in the same park where Joaquin Miller once went walking.



**Sarah Pruitt**, President, Central Coast Writers: We hold regular meetings in June and July. In August, we offer an annual picnic. Usually it's a potluck in a park. The last two years we have been able to meet in a member's back yard.



**Daniel Stallings**, We continue to hold meetings throughout the summer months. These meetings range from out-of-town speakers to workshops and programs delivered by branch members. Last year, for example, we had two branch members speak to us about historical archiving and the importance it has to a writer's research, complete with artifacts from their work as entertainment historians. In August, we have our annual Open Mike Night for members and guests to read their works. We provide light refreshments and give everyone a chance to share some of their writing with the club and the public. East Sierra has partnered with our Ridgecrest Branch Library on their summer reading programs designed for local students. Each July, there's a different theme, and we design a special event. Last year, the theme was Finding Your Voice, so we created a Junior Writers Storytelling Bootcamp, where kids could learn about building settings, characters, plots, dialogue, and editing to create their finished stories. This year, with the theme of Mindfulness, we'll be hosting the Dear Journal Writing Retreat. Students will learn tips about types of journaling, epistolary stories, and more before being given a quiet place to sit and write.



**Terry Tosh**, President, Fremont Area Writers: We have a July party, but otherwise regular meetings in June and August. The summer party is a BBQ atmosphere, different locations yearly. This year we are considering doing a three-part event, a tour of original silent movie house, followed by a pizza party at local pizza place where we'll do some games and open mic, then on to local park for a session of Taiko drums (our members have connections with the Movie House and the Taiko drumming group.)

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## CWC ROUNDTABLE (CONTINUED)



**Daniel Bacon**, President, Marin. We have a regular meeting in June. In July and August we host Summer Salons where members read their work.



**Mary Vensel White**, President, Orange County: We hold regular meetings on the first Saturday of the month all year 'round. We host a quarterly mixer for members at a variety of locations throughout Orange County. Members can grab something to eat or drink from a local restaurant and socialize with their fellow writers. These events are a great opportunity for members to get to know each other in an informal setting, and to check out some of the great venues Orange County has to offer.



**Bernard Wozny**, -President, Sacramento: Summertime is a good time in Sacramento. We take time out from our regular meetings in July and August, the reason being, members tend to take their vacations. We do special things together, where we meet to discuss our work. It's a little like a round table where we openly discuss our ups and downs. This year, we started something unique, in fact we started a couple of new projects. Every Tuesday evening for the months of June and July we have a booth set aside in Vernon Street Market in Roseville where members can sell their books. In addition to that we began an annual event for the Sacramento Book Festival! This year was a one-day event in McKinley Park. Next year we intend to grow into a 'Capitol Event'!



**Crissi Langwell**, Vice-president, Redwood Writers: We continue to hold regular meetings in the summer months and do not schedule any special activities.



**Vibha Akkaraju**, President, SF Peninsula: We have regular meetings in June and August. In July, we have a picnic instead. Our amazing chair of hospitality, Sue Barizon, organizes this annual event. She finds a park, reserves a table in a shady area, and manages everything, the communication and the food and drink, etc. – all without breaking a sweat! The picnic offers a wonderful, relaxed atmosphere for branch members to just meet and mingle. This year we are catering food from a local Mexican place.



**Karen Gorback**, President, San Fernando Valley: We go dark in July and August. We have no special summer events planned at this time.



**June Gillam**, President, San Joaquin Valley: We have regular meetings throughout the summer months. We're also hosting an all-day workshop for all CWC members, Saturday, June 15, "The Ins and Outs of Self-publishing." At Valley Brew in Stockton. Details at <https://www.sjvalleywriters.org/workshop>



**Edie Matthews**, President, South Bay Writers: South Bay Writers have meetings all year. However, in July, we have a Potluck BBQ and in December we have a Potluck Holiday Party. There is no charge for either of those events.



# NorCal Network: Volunteers, Member Renewals


by Kimberly Edwards, chair, NorCal Network



At the May 13 NorCal Network meeting, branch representatives brainstormed ways to rally volunteers. Among the ideas: Invite members to sit at meeting check-in table, considered the “gateway” to the club. This small assignment may give members the confidence to continue. One branch noted that some members are “transactional,” focusing on their current project and what the speaker can do for them, rather than on helping the club to carry out meetings. Some members response affirmatively when they realize how volunteering can add to their writing résumé.

Another topic of interest is membership renewal. Some branches are considering auto-renewal, a time-saving practice that many businesses and non-profits are using except for members/constituents who opt out.

A final topic of interest is spreading the word to members about the Central Board’s great quarterly *Bulletin*, distributed by email in December, March June and September. To save money, this valuable publication now comes by email rather than regular mail. Members should be reminded to open the email. Contents include articles, tips, and first-hand experiences by author-members. Branches can consider giving a copy to prospective members.

Before the meeting wound down, NorCal reps acknowledged the loss of Kymberlie Ingalls, a long-time presence in the NorCal Network. A personal note and a card is being sent to her husband. NorCal reps shared Kymberlie’s many contributions to the club, including her zest for encouraging fellow writers to pursue their dreams. These comments will be forwarded to her husband. As noted elsewhere in this issue, Kymberlie is being nominated for the Ina Coolbrith Award. 


# Good Causes Benefit from CWC-South Grants

by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, chair, CWC-South



As in past years, CWC-South has a mini-grant program drawing on our regional stipend. For this, branches partner with local organizations, primarily nonprofits, on initiatives that reflect our mission. Grants range from \$100-\$300 each. Requirements include publicity for the CWC. We have voted on, approved, and now awarded four \$300 mini-grants: Motion Picture and Television Fund Grey Quill Society’s Review, to help them to continue to write and publish (through San Fernando Valley branch), San Bernardino County Library Adult Literacy Program Hesperia Branch (with High Desert Branch), San Bernardino County Library Adult Literacy Program Apple Valley Branch (with High Desert branch), and Ridgecrest Branch of the Kern County Library for our part of their Summer Reading Challenge Program (East Sierra branch).

On a region-wide level, we might try to hold an in-person meeting at a location that combines business with pleasure. Details will follow as we investigate what we can arrange. We also proudly continue our monthly “mag-format” website [socalwritersshowcase.com](http://socalwritersshowcase.com) that features pieces by region members in the categories fiction, non-fiction/essay, poetry, memoir, writer’s life, and craft.



# Kymberlie Ingalls: 1971-2024



Shock waves reverberated throughout the CWC community as word began to spread about the death of Kymberlie Ingalls on April 9. Kymberlie's home branch was Mt. Diablo, but at various times she held dual memberships at six other branches: Tri-Valley, South Bay, Berkeley, Napa Valley, Central Coast and Redwood. For Kymberlie, this was far more than a commitment on paper. She loved to drive around the Bay Area attending branch meetings and even volunteering to chair committees and serve on branch boards. She spent one year as president of the Berkeley branch, and was the 2023 Jack London Service Award honoree for Berkeley. She was also an active member of NorCal Network, especially when it came to helping out at the San Francisco Writers Conference and the NorCal leadership conferences.

Kymberlie had her own small publishing company, Rainfall Press, and for a time was an instructor for Pleasant Hill Adult Ed.

She started her media career as an on-air talent and operations manager for KVHS, the radio station of Clayton Valley Charter High School. She hosted a retro, old-school over-the-air program complete with music by request and listener call-ins, and considered radio to be "the original social media."

When Covid forced all of us into Zoom meetings, Kymberlie could often be seen knitting or crocheting during those Zoom calls. This was more than a hobby. Over her lifetime, Kymberlie donated thousands of handmade socks to homeless shelters.

Barry Hampshire, president of the Mt. Diablo branch, recalled, "Kymberlie was always willing to help the branch. When we returned to in-person meetings after Covid, she volunteered to video the meetings for those who were out of state. We were delighted when she offered to donate one of her crocheted bedspreads, which we auctioned during our December meetings."

The website of Tri-Valley Writers has this to say about Kymberlie: "The numbers of writers statewide whom she had personally supported could be counted in the hundreds, if not more. She was a tireless advocate for CWC statewide: as a volunteer, holding many branch board positions, and serving on the NorCal Network. Kymberlie was a champion for the Northern California literary community. Her compassion for others, expertise, and tell-it-like-it-is (better known as her "beware of falling opinions") spirit will be missed."

Amber Starfire, President of Napa Valley Writers, posted to Kymberlie's husband on Facebook, "On behalf of the Napa Valley Writers and myself, I want to express how sorry we are for your (and our) loss. Kymberlie was an amazing, talented, and generous person. We will miss her."

Dita Basu of the Mt. Diablo branch summed up Kymberlie's spirit well: "Memories swirl like an indigo nebula with its fiery sparks. Images of Kymberlie emerge with her humorous tone and her dry wit."

In light of Kymberlie's many contributions to CWC, the Central Board voted on April 28 to honor Kymberlie's memory with the Ina Coolbrith Service Award. "The Ina" is similar to the Jack London Service Award, but honoring volunteer service to the entire California Writers Club instead of an individual branch. This is the first time in CWC's 115-year history that such an award has been made posthumously.

Kymberlie's husband, Roger Ingalls, is planning a celebration of life on or around her birthday on August 9. She would have been just 53 years old.



# Camille Minichino: 1937-2024

Camille Minichino, a much-published mystery writer and longtime, dedicated member of the Mt. Diablo branch, passed away on May 6 after a brief illness.

In an era where young women were discouraged from pursuing subjects now known as STEM, Camille was fortunate to have parents, teachers and mentors who saw her natural talent for mathematics and science and actually encouraged her to enter those fields. At Fordham University she obtained a Ph.D. in physics in 1968, one of three women in a department of nearly 80 students. She moved to California, and during her 30-year career at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory worked in high-temperature, high-pressure physics, provided technical support to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in pre- and post-Three Mile Island, and consulted at commercial reactors throughout the country.




As an educator and professor, Camille developed and taught physics, mathematics, philosophy, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary courses at all levels and at numerous academic institutions.

Camille was the author of nearly 30 published mystery novels, plus numerous short stories and articles in both technical and popular magazines and websites. Her mystery series included *The Periodic Table Mysteries*, *The Miniature Mysteries*, the *Professor Sophie Knowles Mysteries*, *The Postmistress Mysteries*, *The Alaskan Diner Mysteries*, and the *Sister Francesca Mystery*.

She was a member of Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime, as well as the Mt. Diablo branch of CWC. She held the office of president at Mt. Diablo and in 2009, was the Mt. Diablo Jack London Service Award honoree for her volunteer work at the branch.

On her blog Camille described herself as "... a factory worker, a translator, a teacher, an experimental physicist, a nuclear safeguards engineer, a writer, a waitress, a miniaturist, a paralegal, a nun, a minister, a short order cook, a ticket-taker, an editor, a crafter, and a cotton candy twirler ... plus a wife."

Camille's beloved husband of nearly 50 years, Richard (Dick) Rufer, died just two months before Camille. The NorCal chapter of Mystery Writers of America notes, "Although her death certificate states a medical cause of death, all who knew Camille and supported her for those months after Dick's death know that she really died of a broken heart." 

## Meet the Slate of CWC Candidates

Just as your branch has conducted an election of officers for 2024-2026—or will do so soon—your parent organization, California Writers Club, elects officers on an annual basis. This year's election will take place at the July 28 Central Board meeting via Zoom. Each branch is allowed to send one representative to the meeting and cast one vote.

At a special Central Board meeting on June 9, the board voted to amend the governing documents (the Policies and Procedures) to permit the candidates for President and Secretary to come from the same branch. Previously, the Policies and Procedures required all four officers to come from different branches.

Nominating Committee Chair Bob Isbill (High Desert) is presenting the following slate for consideration by the Central Board:

continued on next page

## Meet the Slate: continued from previous page

### **President: Roger Clarke Lubeck**

Roger C. Lubeck, PhD is in his second year as president of the California Writers Club. He is a past president of Redwood Writers and membership chair for Redwood. Roger received a Jack London Award for Service in 2021. As president, Roger's goals are to increase membership, add more opportunities members to write and be published, and create statewide events that will add value to our members and the communities they serve. Roger is the author of 11 published novels, 2 business books, two dozen short stories and poems, and two preformed short plays. Roger is a psychologist with 22 years in university teaching and 25 years as a business and leadership consultant. He is the publisher of It Is What It Is Press. His blog, <http://www.rogerinblue.com>, includes examples of his writing, photography, and art.



### **Vice-president: Deborah "Jordan" Bernal**

Jordan was raised in what is now known as Silicon Valley, so it's no surprise she chose a career in high tech. After receiving her AAS in Electronic Technology, she spent 15 years working for a variety of companies: a five-person sweatshop, TRW (in both Sunnyvale and San Luis Obispo) and ending with Hewlett-Packard. Her career started as a technician and ended as a product coordinator/technical writer. Multiple bilateral arm injuries and the fact that HP dissolved her work team cut her career short. She went back to school and received her B.S. in Business Management with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship. After several years of wondering what she could do with her physical limitations, Jordan was born. She began writing as a means of sanity in the continual anxiety of dealing with Worker's Compensation. And while she had been a technical writer, writing fiction was a completely different ball game. At HP, she initiated a workaround to her injuries by being the first techie to adapt voice recognition software. Jordan uses that technology today to write and publish her fantasy novels.



### **Secretary: Crissi Langwell**

Crissi Langwell is a romance author who tells stories of the heart. She has 15 published novels, including her latest, *Savior Complex*, the third book in her Sunset Bay series. She joined Redwood Writers in 2012 and has served as the club's anthology editor, vice president, secretary, newsletter editor, and social media manager. Currently, she is the club's incoming president and web editor, and most recent recipient of the Jack London Award. When she's not writing or serving Redwood Writers and CWC, she's working as Communications Director for Oakmont Village Association in Santa Rosa, or enjoying family life at home in Petaluma. Find her at [crissilangwell.com](http://crissilangwell.com)



### **Bill Baldwin, Treasurer**

I joined the South Bay branch of CWC around 1997. By 1998 I'd been elected branch president. By the time I left that position, nine years later, I'd helped revive the branch and lead it through a series of East of Eden Conferences in league with the Steinbeck Center in Salinas. I had served five years as Central Board Secretary during the period when the California State Assembly proclaimed the third week in October to be California Writers Week. I have previous experience at being the Central Board Treasurer, having held that position from 2016 to 2019. I have served on both the South Bay Writers branch board and the state CWC board almost continuously for over twenty years. To the Central Board Treasurer position I bring my previous experience in that role plus my experience as Finance Officer for a local church. I have served in this position for three years previously; I would be honored to serve in it again.





# 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

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**Articles on writing craft, the writing life, marketing and publication:** Send a proposal to [editor@calwriters.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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# From the Editor's Desk



## One Writer's Wake-up Call

The news began to circulate in the local writing community the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. "Have you heard ..." "... that story on the news last night ..." "You're kidding. Really?"

A man from Monterey, on vacation at Lake Tahoe, had lost his life while driving on Highway 50 up in the Sierra. He'd apparently suffered a heart attack and managed to safely maneuver his vehicle to the shoulder before he expired. His passenger was unhurt.

That driver happened to be a member of Central Coast Writers. J.T. Rethke had never been an officer or a committee chair, but he was one of those stalwarts, an enthusiastic and loyal member who attended almost every meeting. He could always be counted on to pitch in when it came to setting up tables and chairs. The last time any of us saw him, he'd been as excited as a kid on Christmas morning over having his memoir accepted by a hybrid publisher. Okay, his tales of adventure as a bush pilot in Alaska wasn't in the publication pipeline until 2025, but other than that, J.T. was over the moon.

When I heard that J.T. had been "that guy on the news last night," my first thought was: "How sad that he passed without seeing his book in print."

The end of one year and the start of a new one is a time of reflection for many of us. On New Year's Day, I downloaded *Plan Your 2024 Writing Career*, a free workbook from best-selling indie author Sarra Cannon. I took it to my favorite place to write, the social hall at the Asilomar Conference Grounds. The very first question—"How did your writing go in 2023?"—gave me pause. By the time I'd finished filling out the 12 pages of questions and journaling, the truth set in. I was putting my own writing dead last, languishing behind what I refer to as OPP: Other People's Projects.

One free workbook, plus the shocking news of J.T.'s sudden death—it all added up to the wake-up call of all wake-up calls. This year, my work comes first.

Meanwhile, lurking in my desk drawer is a flash drive with all that remains of the prodigious output of a long-gone member of the Central Coast branch, Walter Gourlay. When he died in 2013 at age 92, he left no one to care about his many short stories and academic works. Just before the court-appointed estate administrator showed up to clean out his apartment and take away his laptop, I downloaded as much as I could. But when I go, then what happens? More than likely, that flash drive will end up at the e-waste dump.

J.T. had been the same age as me. Most of us in CWC are seniors and any one of us could be next. We don't have the luxury of waiting for an agent to take three months to make a decision on our pitch, or a hybrid publisher's production backlog—or an estate administrator who will throw everything away. We've got to get our stories off of our hard drives and out into the world now! Thanks to the digital revolution, it's possible to do just that. We can post a book online in a matter of days, not weeks, months or years. All it takes is the determination to say, "My work comes first."

—Joyce Krieg