

OUR MAR. 14TH MEETING

Teresa Rhyne

“From Tragedy to Target and the Top of the Bestseller’s List”

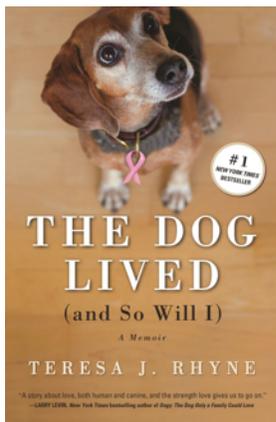
Teresa will share the journey of how she and her dog both surviving cancer turned into a blog, which turned into a memoir, which became a #1 New York Times bestseller.

She will include in the discussion Her writing process, how she found her agent, what the submission process was like for a first-time author and the extensive marketing efforts made by her publisher and Teresa herself.

Highlights were her first signing at Book Expo, Barnes & Noble choosing the book for a special display, Target's decision to carry the book, her appearance on CNN, and the day the book hit #1—eight months after its initial publication.

Not a usual author experience!

It's sure to be an informative evening. Be sure to join us at 6:30 on Tuesday, March 14. Come early for the Round Tables at 5:15 if you can... See you on Tuesday the 14th!



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NIGHTWRITERS “ROUND TABLES”

Join Terry Sanville and Mark Arnold at the Critique Table as they give feedback on pieces brought to the table. Please **keep your submission to 2 pages, typed, 12-point font, double spaced, 1” minimum margins all around**. Note at the top what the genre is, and the age of your audience.

It’s important to format your piece properly. It’s good practice for when you are ready to submit to agents/editors/publishers. If you don’t do it right, it’ll be returned to you unread. Or simply thrown into the circular file.

This is a great—and safe—way to see what the critiquing process is all about, get valuable feedback from two fantastic writers, and practice reading your work to a small audience.

More and more writers are coming to the Critique Table. If you want to make sure your piece is read, arrive before the start time to get your name on the list. The Critique Round Table starts at 5:15 pm sharp.

The Instruction Round Table for March will focus on **Creating Memorable Characters**. We’ll explore what it takes to craft characters that are believable and intriguing, characters readers will bond with and fall in love with and need to know more about, even characters who are vastly different from ourselves. Learn strategies to understand your characters even better than you understand yourself, the value of character biographies, and how to make sure your characters never act “out of character.” Come at 5:15 to the Instruction Table to discover how to make your characters truly come alive.

Critique Round Table begins at 5:15 pm, free to NW members, \$5.00 for visitors.
See you back at UCC at 5:15, or at the general meeting that follows at 6:30 pm.

Fellow Writers!

Is a writing partner sick? Need encouragement?

Getting married or having a baby?

Suffering from the loss of a loved one?

Email me at jandkvolkov@att.net and I’ll send them a card from their SLO NightWriters family.

Kalila



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: TRANSITIONS



Janice Konstantinidis

What comes to mind when you're up so early you've embarrassed the birds, navigated your way through strewn stuffed toys all over the floor, you either wear your slippers or hide them, and you go to sleep thinking about puddles? You got it! It's a new puppy.

Meet Teddy, marauder of all things that move and don't move.

Last Sunday we brought home an eight-week-old puppy. Are we crazy? A little.

Are we tired? Very.

Are we overjoyed? Oh yes.

We pretend he's here to keep our older dog, Chloe, company.

The fact is, she can't stand him at the moment. I think I'll run with the phrase, "Pets are good therapy."

We were broken-hearted in December last year when our lovely dog, Ben, passed away. I think we will always be sad. The weeks passed, the earth didn't shift from its axis, and I sit here early in the morning with the marauder at my feet.

Chloe is wiser; she's gone back to bed.

It's a beautiful spring morning, the frosty roof tops are twinkling, a haze lingers on the green hills. I hear birds chatting in the hedge by my window. The word is that 'she' (a.k.a., me) filled the seed bowls last night.

You know where this is going, I suspect. New dog, new season, new president. Hello! I'm Janice Konstantinidis, and I am indeed your new president and happy to be here to take over the reigns from Dennis. He's left me some big shoes to fill. It's likely that they're too big. I'll have to wear my own.

I immigrated to the United States from Australia in 2005. A midlife crisis, a sea change, an excuse to go to Disneyland? Who knows! It's been a great time, whatever the reason. I love to write, garden, swim, read, watch movies, knit and a whole lot more than I won't mention unless I run out of things to say. I am currently writing my memoir, some short stories and I'm compiling a book of limericks I've written. I enjoy writing limericks very much.

Transitions. What about them? Difficult, interesting scary, exciting; they certainly always equate to change. I am hoping that the transition from Dennis as president to me will be a good one for all. I am grateful to have our new Vice President, Martha Raymond, as back up. Martha brings many valuable skills to the organization.

I take this opportunity to thank Dennis on our behalf for his many years of dedicated leadership as president of SLO NightWriters. I am happy to say we won't lose his voice totally. He will be writing a column for our newsletter and will continue to take our photos when we least expect it. I will miss his newsletters.

I hope you will feel free to contact me if you feel the need to discuss anything you'd like resolved or if you have ideas about how we move forward as an organization. My door is always open.

I have been mentored and nurtured as a writer since I joined NightWriters in 2010. It is my hope as president to give some of that support and care back to all our members.

I hope you all enjoy a pretty and very green spring. Take the time to smell the new roses as they begin a new cycle of life.



Janice Konstantinidis

President SLO NightWriters.

lkon50@gmail.com

Help NightWriters stay as vital as ever. We need your energy, your talent and your ideas. Consider joining the NW Board of Directors. We have jobs big and small and everything in between. Something for everyone, so everyone will benefit. Talk to Janice, Martha or any other board member at the February meeting! And remember, board meetings are open to all; come sit in and see how it works.

NW MEMBER AUTHORS, SELL YOUR BOOKS!

Sell your books at our general monthly meetings! If you are a member of the SLO NightWriters, we encourage you to take part. We will have a table set up for you to display, discuss and sell your books.

Please note—SLO NightWriters holds no liability in this process. All authors participating are responsible for their own money exchanges and for the security of their own funds and books. Your dues with the SLO NightWriters must be current.

KUDOS... KUDOS... KUDOS...

Terry Sanville's story "The Last Time You Were Here" will appear in the upcoming issue of Dime Show Review, a print and online journal published in Folsom, CA.

The Golden Quill Awards Returns

NightWriters writing contest will return this year. Keep an eye out for the official announcement, coming soon!

We'll have three categories: poetry, flash fiction and creative nonfiction/essay. And some great prizes for each category, too.

We're deciding on the theme and the start/end dates, and in just a little while we'll be rolling out the official announcement. So, get your thinking

New on the Website

Upcoming Events, Contests, Seminars etc.

This page has been created to focus on upcoming events, contests and other activities that our members may find useful. Please note that these events are not generated by the organization of SLO NightWriters.

SLO NightWriters has a policy of not advertising any non-organization material as a general rule. However, there are times when we become aware of something that our members may like to know about that doesn't favor or advance one person over another. It is in this spirit that I will keep this page updated for you all.

I would be interested to hear from anyone who thinks they have something I can add. Email me at: jkon50@gmail.com

Janice Konstantinidis

Central Coast Kind

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 2nd issue of Central Coast Kind has been delayed. That means, there are still about three more weeks to get your submissions in. They're looking for articles on real people doing great stuff here on the Central Coast. Submit to: Kin Iribarren, email: kim@centralcoastkind.com



Congratulations to SLO NightWriters Mike Price and Darryl Armstrong

February 9, 2017 • Central Coast Life

Stirring Ashes
By David Armstrong

Experience Holistic Physical Therapy
Spirit Winds

fresh harvest Eat Better Feel Better

farmers market fresh cuisine

February 23 - March 6, 2017 • Central Coast Life

Read their stories starting on Page 25

Uncle Charlie Rocks Nightwriters By Mike Price

"You want me to do what?" I asked.

"Let go of your hand-hold," our rock-climbing instructor said.

Well, right. Thirty minutes before, I stood with my brother-in-law, Bill, and his daughter Glenda, staring at the precipice looming over us. Our guide for this adventure was a young woman not much older than my high school students back in Kansas.

I was petrified. I tried to back out gracefully, but Master "Where's your sense of adventure?" and Little Miss "You'll be my favorite uncle," coaxed me into my first actual rock-climbing experience. This was Glenda's way to celebrate her thirteenth birthday.

Before we could start our vertical expedition, we had to sign a medical release form assuring the proprietors of Inane Adventures that we weren't about to give birth, have a seizure, faint from low blood pressure or suddenly die from a heart attack. They did not ask, "Do you have a perfectly justified fear of heights?" After signing our lives away on the dotted line, we were outfitted with vests, slings, safety ropes, hardhats, gloves, and more carabiners than I bothered to count.

"Trust your safety equipment. Let yourself dangle." Her words snapped me back to my present reality—clinging to a stone cliff, a hundred feet above the canyon floor.

"You mean like this?" My niece asked as she let herself swing. "Whoosee." I couldn't let her show me up, so I released my death grip on the rock and swung out into midair like a real live pitfall.

"Yes," our guide said, "I won't let you fall."

"That's what you say," I countered. "But Sir Isaac Newton said otherwise."

After my climbing partners stopped laughing, we continued our ascent. I was starting to get the hang of rock-climbing, by not hanging. Instead, I scrambled up the toe-holds and hand-holds conveniently hammered into the stone. An hour and eternity later, huffing and puffing, I pulled myself onto the top of the rock.

"Way to go, Uncle Charlie."

"I knew you could do it," Bill said, slapping me on the back and almost knocking me over the edge.

While I caught my balance, and the next landing. Remarkably, the color faded from the face of my brother-in-law.

"Admit it, I said, 'You've scared me.'"

"Tell me about it. You were supposed to chicken out."

After our guide attached my poor helpless body to the zip line, I faced my fears and ran for the edge.

"Thanks for the birthday present, Daddy. Uncle Charlie, you rock. Next year, I want to go skydiving."

In a previous life, Mike Price was a nuclear power plant operator and teacher. Today, he spends his time venturing with his church and community, going on adventures with his wife, and writing comic-relief tales. Mike is a member of SLO NightWriters, for writers at all levels in all genres; find them online at slonightwriters.org.



Submit your stories for inclusion in Simply Clear Marketing & Media

The name may have changed from Tolosa Press, but our column is still going strong. We need submissions, so get yours in now.

Full submission guidelines at www.slonightwriters.org

Submit your 500-600 word short fiction to Meagan at meaganfriberg@gmail.com



Meagan Friberg

Pick up copies of SLO City News, Bay News and Coast News at local stores and kiosks. Visit the SCMM on-line archives to read other NW stories published in the CC Life section of SCMM at www.tolosapressnews.com

Let's Get Social

Be sure to give us a “like” on **Facebook** at SloNightWriters and take it a step further by “liking” and “sharing” our posts.

On **Twitter**, our moniker is @slonightwriters—tweet us a hello sometime soon!

And, we have recently launched our **Instagram** account—follow us at slo_nightwriters and we'll follow you back!

Looking forward to connecting with all of you online, on your smart phone, tablet, or however you like to enjoy your social media!



July Critique Panel

Our July General Meeting will be something a little different. It's being planned by your new Vice-President, your new Critique Group Coordinator, and your Newsletter Editor/Treasurer. We promise—it'll be fun, interactive and informative. We're sure it's a meeting you'll not want to miss.

The night will begin with what we are calling a Reading Panel. This panel of in-house experts will listen to members read two pages of their work, then they will critique not what was read but *how* it was read. As writers, we will all be called upon at times to read our work aloud; in critique sessions, informal gatherings, book launches and signings, etc. Knowing how to reach our audience through effective reading helps not only our book sales and word-of-mouth marketing, but also our confidence. Tips from the panel will clue us all in to what we need to be aware of when reading our work aloud.

The second, and largest, part of the evening will consist of a Critique Panel. Again, in-house experts will listen to members each read two pages, then they will critique the writing, showcasing the tenets of NightWriters critique guidelines. Writers and audience alike will learn from the critiques of such aspects as: grammar, sentence structure, word usage, character development, scene setting, effectiveness of dialogue, etc.

Keep watching for more information on the upcoming Panel Night, and start polishing your two pages now, so you will be ready to share. We'll have signup sheets ready that night, and will publish the guidelines for prepping your manuscript in plenty of time for you to be ready for the evening.

Be aware that the day and date for the July meeting may change because UCC hosts the homeless in July. We'll let you know as soon as we set it up.

We're looking forward to hearing what you're working on at the July meeting!

REVIEW OF FEBRUARY MEETING

Four NightWriters presented two-pages for critique at Round Table One. Terry Sanville and Mark Arnold discussed the use of dialect.

One type of dialect is *eye dialect* in which a word is written as it pronounced, not how its traditionally spelled: *wimmin* instead of women.

The term was coined by linguist George P. Krapp in "The Psychology of Dialect Writing" (1926). "To the scientific student of speech, these misspellings of words universally pronounced the same way have no significance, but in the literary dialect they serve a useful purpose as providing obvious hints that the general tone of the speech is to be felt as something different from the tone of conventional speech."

Other examples of eye dialect include: *helluva* (hell of a); *whodunit* (who done it), *wos* (was); and *peepul* (people).

Susan Tuttle taught us how to write extraordinary endings at Round Table Two. Your ending should organically flow from the story events and the character's personalities. It should wrap up all subplots except, of course, the cliffhanger. There are:

1. **Symbolism Endings** which use a symbol to underscore the theme.
2. **Observation Endings** which reflect of the opening of the story.
3. **Question and Answer Endings** which directly answer the opening question.
4. **Philosophical Endings** which add a philosophical comment on the message of the story.
5. **Twist Endings** which throw everything into question.



By Jan Alarcon



6. **Closed Door Endings** which give a feeling of finality.
7. **Cliff-hanger Endings** which leave a subplot open to lead to another volume.

Here are some of my favorite last lines from well-loved books:

“Tomorrow, I’ll think of some way to get him back. After all, tomorrow is another day.” (Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*)

“Don’t ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody.” (J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*)

“As we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.” (F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*)

D. J. Adamson spoke at our general meeting on the subject of theme. Diann is the author of the *Lillian Dove Mystery* series and the *Deviation* science fiction suspense trilogy. She “breathes and lives to write and my characters wake me up.”

Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work. Theme is an element of a story that binds together various other essential elements of a narrative. It is a truth that exhibits universality and stands true for people of all cultures. Theme gives readers better understanding of the main character’s conflicts, experiences, discoveries and emotions as they are derived from them. Through themes, a writer tries to give his readers an insight into how the world works or how he or she views human life. (Literary Devices: Theme)

Examples of themes in literature include:

1. Love and Friendship: Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet*; Emily Bronte *Wuthering Heights*; Jane Austen *Sense and Sensibility*
2. War: Homer *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Leo Tolstoy *War and Peace*; Ernest Hemingway *A Farewell to Arms*



3. Crime and Mystery: Arthur Conan Doyle *Sherlock Holmes*; Charles Dickens *Bleak House*; Agatha Christie *Murder on the Orient Express*
4. Revenge: Shakespeare *Hamlet*; Stieg Larsson *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*; John Grisham *A Time to Kill*

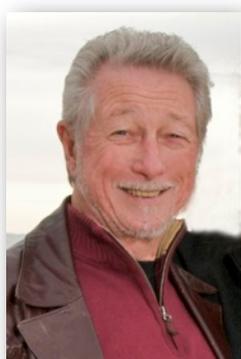
I lost my beloved aunt this month. I leave you with words that are comforting me.

"At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying, He is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on." Samuel Beckett *Waiting for Godot*

Rest in peace, Gerre McKenna, you taught me how to believe in myself. Your love sustains me.

Until next month,
Jan Alarcón, PhD





*by: Dennis
Eamon Young*

NIGHTWRITER ALL-STARS

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Janice Konstantinidis

Change is in the air, from an early rush of Springtime flowers from the sudden appearance of rain for the Central Coast, to the election of our new SLO NightWriters President.

Janice was elected by a unanimous vote at our February meeting. She has already hit the ground running with a Board of old and new members to help share the duties and fun of making SLO NightWriters continue to be the premier writing group on the Central Coast.

Let me introduce this highly energetic lady who manages to run our website, present our programs and oversee our membership.

Janice hails from Tasmania, Australia, and exhibits not only the world-renowned Australian sense of humor, but also a penchant for wicked limericks. There is a book of said limericks somewhere in development. There are only about five hundred so far. We may yet all find ourselves in one or two.

After having earned a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Letters and a Graduate Diploma in Education, she managed to take a sharp left turn into the health care industry. She set up and ran a special care residential facility focused on alcohol related brain damage. It sounds to me like the perfect background for dealing with an organization of writers! She even specialized in delirium and dementia.

"I can't remember a time when I haven't written," she tells me. "I received a special mention in school assembly for a composition about the sea. I recall being asked to explain what the word 'ebb' meant, since I had written it into the composition. This was a terrifying ordeal for me."

Struggling through a difficult childhood and adolescence fraught with extreme hardships, she wrote poems, then later moved on to short pieces. Determined to push through to her goal of being well-educated, she found succor in the helpful mentoring of some kind folks who admired her fortitude and sense of commitment.

Having migrated to the United States in 2005, she lives on the Central Coast with her husband and dogs. Janice joined SLO NightWriters in 2010, albeit hesitantly, being in awe of the many talented and enthusiastic writers she found herself amongst.

“I am extremely grateful to many NightWriters,” she says, “for their acceptance and support during the development of my writing. I don’t think I would be anticipating publication of my memoir without the wonderful support of NightWriters, access to so many wonderful speakers and the benefits derived from being part of a critique group.”

As president, she feels that she will be successful if she can do for our members that which has been done for her - the ideal act of paying it forward.

From the time, she volunteered to help out on the Board as Assistant Secretary, she has been a valued member of the NightWriters team. When our previous

Webmaster suddenly had to step aside due to ill health, Janice stepped forward into the breach, learning the new program Steve Kliever helped me to institute. She has studiously applied herself over the course of countless hours, with nary a complaint to be heard.

Since that time, she has taken over the vacated position of Programs Director and even folded Membership into her busy schedule. She is a prime example of someone who is given a task and conscientiously gives it 110%. She is happy to take on the challenge and loves learning. I know she will make a great president and I feel very pleased to turn the reins over to her. She will make us all quite proud.

(To contact Dennis about being featured in the Spotlight On... column, email him at: photodennis44@gmail.com)



Ride Needed

Debbie in Santa Maria is searching for a ride to our general meetings. She has hearing problems and no cell phone, but a message can be left for her at 805-710-1570 if you might be able to provide a ride for her.

A Fun Writing Contest

The Killer Wore Cranberry: A Fifth Course of Chaos Anthology. All stories must be about murder and mayhem happening at Thanksgiving, and it must be funny! Make people laugh while they enjoy a great mystery short. The anthology will be edited by Untreed Reads Editor-in-Chief Jay Hartman. (www.untreedreads.com; <http://store.untreedreads.com>)

1. All stories must be between 1500-5000 words, for an adult reading audience (no YA).
 2. Deadline: May 31st, 2017. No submissions after this date will be considered.
 3. All submissions should be sent to Jay Hartman at jhartman@untreedreads.com with the word THANKSGIVING in the subject line.
 4. Submissions must be in DOC, RTF or ODT format.
 5. We will not publish individual stories, only the anthology, both print and e-format. You must agree to both our regular ebook contract and our print addendum to be included.
 6. Authors will receive royalty, but not upfront payment. Authors will each receive a share of royalties of 50% of net (net = cover price - vendor commission) based on the number of authors in the final anthology.
 7. Characters appearing in other Untreed Reads series or other series not published by us are strongly encouraged. If you are published outside of Untreed Reads, please check with your publisher to ensure you have the rights to create a new story for a different publisher with your character(s). If you are represented by an agent, please provide that information with your submission if we'll need to work with them should your story be accepted.
 8. Your story **MUST** have **humor** in it, feature a **Thanksgiving dish** (turkey, stuffing, mashed spuds, pumpkin pie, etc.) and have a **great mystery or crime** at the heart of the story.
 9. Stories not accepted for the anthology may be resubmitted for other submission calls.
 10. All stories must be original and cannot have been published or self-published elsewhere or previously submitted to Untreed Reads.
 11. There are no restrictions whatsoever on age, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc in the work. Just tell us a great story! We do, however, discriminate against licorice. Look, we all have our thing.
 12. Lisa Wagner returns with all new recipes to accommodate your stories!
- Please direct any questions to Jay Hartman at jhartman@untreedreads.com. We recommend looking at the original *The Killer Wore Cranberry* and its sequels for an idea of the types of stories we're looking for.
- All decisions on material will be made by June 30th, 2017. Every attempt will be made to notify all authors of the status of their submission at that time. Please **do not** inquire about status prior to July 15th, 2017. The anthology has an expected publication date of Sept. 5, 2017, or earlier.
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Quote of the Month

“I don’t wait for moods. You accomplish nothing if you do that. Your mind must know it has to get down to work.”

~Pearl S. Buck

Word of the Month “lenitive”

Definition: N: a brown speckled European lark noted for singing while in flight
V, intr.: to play actively and boisterously

Synonyms: V: frisk, frolic, gambol, romp cavort, sport, lark about, run around, disport

Usage: He couldn’t help but smile as he watched the young woman skylark around the field, among the wildflowers.

SLO NW e↔Line Edit Exchange

Can’t find a critique group? Don’t have time for meetings? Have specific needs for feedback on your work? Our Electronic Peer Review Line Edit Exchange is perfect for out-of-town members, or those with restricted time schedules.

All E-Exchange Partners are SLO NW members.

- Exchange views with other writers
- No fees charged, no credit expected or required.
- Participants contact each other, set their own rules and time frames.
- Use your own style of editing / commenting.
- If you don’t find value in the feedback, try someone else on the list.

To be added, **contact our webmaster, Janice Konstantinidis, (jkon50@gmail.com)** with: Your Name, Email, Genre (if you desire a specific one), Skill Level (if you require a specific level). She will add you to the list. Then you can reach out on a one-to-one basis and find the right writing partner for you.

“I had been a humor writer all my life, but when I was writing this novel, I said, ‘Ah ha, because this is important, I can’t be funny.’ A great fallacy.”

~Judith Martin



A WRITER'S PROCESS

Wine, Sex and Suicide

by Patty Blue Hayes

by: Liz Roderick

Q: This is a raw book; its story is taken from your journal during the year after your husband asked you for a divorce.

Could you tell us a bit about how the book came about? How did you get the idea to write it? You said that you originally wanted it to be a self-help book about how you used philanthropy and volunteer work to get through a hard time. At what point did you realize it would be something more?

A: Since I was 11 years old, I wanted to write a book that would help adults. I remember feeling very frustrated that I was too young to impart any wisdom. Strange how perhaps my inner self knew I had a lot more life experience to live before I could meet that calling.

I'd been working on a different memoir about the loss of both my biological and adoptive mothers to lung cancer, and the intertwining of my relationships with both of them. Before that, I'd written screenplays and short stories, and had always journaled, but never attempted memoir.

My husband and I were on vacation when I discovered sexting the night before we were supposed to attend a wedding. He admitted he'd been with multiple other women and he didn't want to be married anymore.

Seventeen years together gone in an instant. When I was sitting at the airport waiting for my early flight home, it must have been my 11-year-old self who said, *pick up a pen. This is your book.*

My intention was to write about doing volunteer work as a means of healing a broken heart. I had it all figured out. Shouldn't be too hard—just do good for others and I'd get over it quickly. But that was not my reality. My reality was that I felt broken, lost, terrified and consumed with grief. I numbed my pain with alcohol, which led to a lot of bad choices.

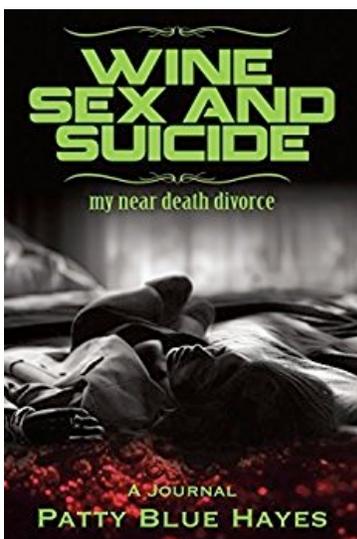
Picking up strangers to have sex felt empowering in the moment. It softened the rejection by my husband, but it made me hate myself later.

I desperately wanted to skip over all the pain and be like one of the women profiled in magazines about starting over. They all seemed so put together. I was falling apart. But that's the reality for so many people who have to face the betrayal of their partner, emotional abuse, and an unwanted divorce: low self-esteem, and using substances to cope.

Q: How long did it take you to write and edit *Wine, Sex and Suicide*?

A: It is an edited journal. I wrote every few days if not every day. It's strange, in the years I was working on it and editing, I'd never printed out a single page. It wasn't until I printed a proof copy that I was a bit overcome with emotion, seeing all those pages of pain.

I tried to edit about two years after I'd moved to my new city, but it was too painful to read. My emotions were still too raw. It was a slow process because my mental health was more important than completing the editing within a certain timeframe.



Q: Did you do much editing/revising, or did you basically just print your journal verbatim? Are there certain things that you left out or changed?

A: I had a hard time with this because I wanted the book to include *everything*. To be real. At the same time, after talking with my editor, she made me realize I did not have to include the three trips to the east coast when for story purposes and length of the book, profiling just one would suffice.

I combined some of the activities from the three trips to the east coast into one trip. I did combine aspects of a few people from the psychiatric hospital into one character. It would have been too confusing for the reader to follow along.

At first when I was editing, I thought I had to make it read like a polished novel. I was using the thesaurus way too much. My editor also helped me understand that keeping my writing as it was gives it greater impact.

I did leave out a few random guys I had sex with.

Q: I'm assuming when you were writing this book, you had no idea how it was going to turn out. Did you ever see yourself as living in a story, as if you were a protagonist, and that you had to have your happily-ever-after for the sake of the story? (This might be a strange question, but I've had this feeling writing real-time memoir...)

A: I totally get this question! When I would write, I often felt like I was writing about someone else's life. What I was doing felt so out of character for who I thought I was that it didn't even seem like me.

I think I was very fixated on the happy ending. I even recall asking someone who'd been divorced how long it took them to *get over it*. I cringed when they said a few years. I had

given myself one. But now, six years later, I still have occasional sadness over the loss of my family. And when my ex got remarried a few years ago, that was an emotional dip, too.

At the point I decided to end the book I was much better than I'd been but I still had a lot of healing to do. I hope it doesn't come across as too happy and all perfect.

[Liz: I think the ending is just right.]

Q: Were you frightened about putting this story out into the world?

A: Terrified! But at the time I published I felt like I had no one to judge me. There had been no contact with my ex and contact with his family was sparse. If my parents had been alive, I'm not sure I would have published. I would have been too embarrassed. But my brother and cousins wouldn't love me less because of my experience, and I knew deep within me that I could not possibly be the only one to experience what I did. I felt it was my duty to share this story.

It's kind of funny but being in the psychiatric hospital after my suicide attempt was when I felt accepted for who I was. We all understood the pain. That was our common bond. And we didn't feel shame for trying to end the pain.

I try to advocate for suicide awareness and divorce because the rates are 3-5 times higher for divorced people. Almost all of us know someone who has been affected by suicide. It's important for people to know the signs and risks and to reach out and communicate with the person going through a divorce.

Q: Do you know if your ex or any of your ex in-laws have read *Wine, Sex, and Suicide*? If so/if not, did you/do you want them to?

A: In the very beginning of the separation, my in-laws asked me not to talk about my feelings or anything to do with the divorce. They said they could not be a support to me. The fact that I was writing never came up because it was all about my feelings and the turmoil I'd created in my despair. I think my former in-laws know about the book and I don't know if my ex is aware. I wouldn't want them to read it.

Q: What is your editing process?

A: It seems long and perhaps convoluted but it worked for me. At first I started every edit session from page 1. I soon realized this was ridiculous and I would never finish.

I went through the entire manuscript, which was originally around 150,000 words. I cleaned stuff up and sent it to my developmental editor.

Working with an editor was the absolute best decision I could have made. Her feedback was invaluable. She was able to show me sections I could omit and she gave the story structure to break it down into sections.

Once I had her developmental edit I went through and added more texture and tone and showing not telling. I think my experience writing screenplays was an asset in writing this because I wanted to document the smells, tastes, sounds and textures.

You can write about a hospital being cold but adding that it always smelled like pea soup gives the reader a more sensory experience.

I noticed I tend to use certain filler words too much so I did a document search for them to see if I could reduce those.

When the manuscript was nearing completion, I set it aside for 4-6 weeks before starting on several polish edits. During those edits I developed a nice routine of starting in the morning while I had tea. I sat in silence for about 5 minutes before typing anything. I lit incense and spoke out loud, *please guide me to choose the words that most effectively communicate my experience to the reader*. I found when I did that, I had a really good writing flow.

And then I had the totally stressed out times editing frantically 'til 2 in the morning.

It's hard to come to the decision that it's done. You have to accept there will always be better words to use or ways of expressing something but I realized if I tried to edit so fastidiously then my work wouldn't truly be mine in my voice. It would be me trying to write like someone else.

Q: Could you tell us about your publishing journey? Did you consider traditional publishing?

A: I would have loved to have a traditional publisher to help with the marketing. Years ago, it took me a long time to get a screenwriting agent and then he had a nervous breakdown and left the business. I guess I felt like I could write all those query letters again in the hopes of getting an agent, or I could study self-publishing and just do it myself.

I got burned by one of those hybrid publishing companies that promise the moon, but I did get a refund.

My advice is to research all about self-publishing and the hybrid publishers. If you're going to work with one company that charges a flat fee, have them do certain tasks as milestones before payment. Make sure your contract states that if you're not satisfied you can terminate without financial penalty.



Patty Blue Hayes

Q: Tell us about your marketing process. Which is your favorite marketing method?

A: I really enjoy doing radio shows, blog talk and podcasts. Because I try to educate people about the higher risk of suicide with divorced people, I like to speak with interviewers and share my story.

I also like doing the Goodreads giveaways and Kindle promotions. I'm going to explore Facebook ads.

I loved doing a library reading and I'd really like to do in person readings and discussion at psychiatric hospitals, women's shelters or community groups.

Q: Could you tell us a bit about why you decided to pursue a writing career? Any advice or encouragement for those struggling to do the same thing, or considering it?

A: It's funny. I don't think I had a choice but to be a writer. It just took me a long time to finally realize it.

I really love the *published journal* genre. Memoir is wonderful, but there's something so immediate and transparent about the reader being with me in the moment; before the insight, growth and healing. The reader is on the journey with me as it's happening. I think if I were writing my story today I would have glossed over all the dark matter and I think it's the dark matter that is universal to all of us human beings.

My advice to anyone struggling is to stop struggling. Write what you like to write. Don't overanalyze your writing, let it be a process you enjoy for the sake of doing it. I stopped writing for a few years because I wasn't enjoying the process. I was focused on the outcome and unless I was going to produce my own movie, I wasn't going to see an outcome. Now with self-publishing, we can write and publish whatever we'd like. There's tremendous freedom in that.

I've had clients on UpWork that I've really enjoyed working with. It's surprising how many people don't like to write or are scared of it. So, if you can write decent web copy, blogs, grants, marketing material, technical papers—there's a lot of work available.

Q: What else are you working on that you'd like to tell us about?

A: I have two projects in the works. One is a cookbook to help people heal from heartbreak. I'm happy to take recipe submissions from anyone who's been through the wringer on that one. It's a fun project and I hope to include people's comfort food recipes.

The next life experience book concept is one where I work with twelve different NGO's for a period of a month each and write about my experience and their work in the world. My first project has come together with a trip to Thailand where I will be volunteering with Elephant's World, a sanctuary in Kanchanaburi, Thailand for old and abused elephants.

I'll be blogging about this trip in addition to writing the longer form book. I'm amazed it's all come together and I'm trusting in the process that the rest of it will!

Thank you for your time, Patty!

[Wine, Sex and Suicide on Amazon](#)

(If you would like me to feature your book, please contact me at elizabethroderick@att.net!)

I will read your book and contact you via email with questions about your writing process.

To Buy or Not To Buy

by: Judythe Guarnera

At the Central Coast Book and Author Fair this past fall, I had a great time, although book sales were minimal. Many nice people were selling books—probably many more than were looking 'for,' or should I say 'at' books. Friendly people stopped and chatted, but very, very few bought anything.

Although we all jumped to attention when potential 'buyers' appeared, much of the time was spent chatting with each other. Now a more interesting group of people than these authors would be hard to find. Although writers are reported to be solitary individuals, when they emerge from their writing cubicles, they love to talk.

During the book fair and the following two days of the writers' conference, I posed a question to my writer friends and acquaintances—a question that has occupied my thoughts, since shortly after I became involved with the writing community.

When my husband, Steve, and I went to our first author fair, in my usual looky-loo manner, I walked around, picked up books, chatted with the authors and moved on. I also introduced Steve to the authors I knew.

Finally, he pulled me off to the side and asked, "Aren't you going to buy books from your friends?" I looked at him, startled enough to open and close my mouth a couple of times.



“Why?” I said. (Of the two of us I’m the money-cautious one.)

“To support your fellow authors.” The look he gave me with this comment could best be described as “Duh!”

As my community of writing friends expanded, I began to spend more of my social time around authors, so the number of people to support grew faster than my budget allowed.

I would love to say I always buy a writing acquaintance’s new book. But I don’t. When I go to a NW or a SinC meeting, I usually buy the presenter’s book. Since they present for free, I think the least I can do is buy their book. (I do love it if they have a special price.)

Again, I can’t afford to buy the books of all my author friends, but I do support those I’m close to. Kindle prices enable me to purchase more than paper back. This doesn’t totally please me, because I really prefer the feel and smell of real books.

Getting back to the book fair, I used it as an opportunity to ask my fellow authors how many do buy their friends’ books and do the friends return the favor.

I didn’t do an exact count, but I do know that those who said they support their friends, often don’t see the favor returned. Of course, people have different amounts of discretionary funds to spend.

We’ve all faced the expectation of family and friends that they’ll be given a free book. But most authors hope to at least recover some of their expenses. It’s also very cool each time a book is sold. It’s like being published each sale.

Besides the cost of self-publishing, I’ve already spent over \$450 purchasing copies to sell and give away. I received my first 1099 from Amazon. It didn’t quite make it to \$50, but sales keep trickling in each month. (Must get a Kindle version out very soon.)

Of course, I’ve sold more in person than on Kindle and I’ve probably given away more than I’ve sold. That works for me. I never intended to support myself on my book income. But most of us do appreciate book sales.

Twenty-Nine Sneezes, my fiction book, is part of my mission to raise awareness regarding victims of abuse. Too often, we breathe a sigh of relief when victims are rescued, wanting to believe life will be good for them. Yet, their struggles continue, sometimes for a lifetime. Both victim/survivors and their families need ongoing understanding and support.

But, for all the reasons above and others, authors need the mental and financial boost of books sold.

Consider making a pledge today to support your fellow authors. If money is an issue, help them to promote their books via social media. If you belong to a book club or know of one, suggest they read a friend’s novel. Let’s be creative and find ways to be supportive.

And, if life is fair, your fellow authors will return the favor.

Memoir Workshop

Franz Wisner will conduct a Memoir Writing workshop at UC Santa Barbara on Saturday, March 11. Click the link below for more information and to register.

<http://extension.uscb.edu/search/publicCourseSearchDetails.do;jsessionid-D59984282C871851FAA8BCEE4433D415?method=load&courseId=29341255>

Darryl Armstrong has room for 5 in his car, for any NW member who would like to share a ride. Please email: jkon50@gmail.com if you are interested in Darryl's offer.



NW Facebook Group

Dear NightWriters,

For those of you who would like to socialize and get to know each other better, but can't attend our monthly meetings, we have created a Facebook group.

Facebook groups are dedicated spaces where you can share updates, photos or documents and message other group members. Just click on the link below and hit "join group" in the top right corner. Once our administrator approves your request, you are in!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1701340913423099/>

Invite other NightWriters and get going. Swap ideas, encourage each other, share your events and so on.

We hope that you will find a group of writing peers beneficial!

Sincerely,

Joanne Feeney

SLONW Social Media Coordinator

joannef007@gmail.com



Q&A with NightWriters Darryl Armstrong and Mike Price

February's published authors of Simply Clear Marketing & Media

By Meagan Friberg

*During the month of February, two of our NightWriters members, **Darryl Armstrong** and **Mike Price**, had stories published in the three Simply Clear Marketing & Media newspapers:*

SLO City News, Coast News and Bay News. Both authors have been nice enough to share some insight into their story-writing process as well as their experience working with our NightWriters editorial committee.

My hope is that by opening up to their fellow NightWriters, these authors will inspire each and every one of you to work on a story of your own.

Many thanks to Darryl and Mike – here's what they had to say:

Darryl Armstrong, author of Stirring Ashes:

NW: *Where did you come up with the idea for your recent story, Stirring Ashes?*

Darryl: I lived in Colorado, previously, and as a sympathizer of the American Indian I have thought about this for many years. I regret how America was founded over the rights of a sovereign people.

NW: *How was the editing process with the NW editorial team?*

Darryl: The editing process is both difficult and helpful. Difficult, because you have to leave so much on the edit-room floor in order to make it within the 600-word count, but helpful because of the worthwhile suggestions from fellow writers. All criticism, if viewed properly, may be helpful. You do not have to follow suggestions but it is so interesting to see alternative perspectives and methods to accomplish similar goals.

NW: *What did you learn during this process?*



Darryl Armstrong

Darryl: To be more concise in statements. Being wordy has no benefit in writing. If you can say it with one or two words, eschew the paragraphs. Herein lies the challenge though, because many times an advanced vocabulary will allow you to write something with only a few words but becomes so stilted in its language that you omit a large segment of your potential readership.

NW: *Will you consider submitting stories for Simply Clear again in the future?*

Darryl: Yes. As the whim sets in, why not write an article for SLONW and for the local readers of our publications. I have two large projects, one of which is finishing a novel, at present and will be constrained by this activity. Like so many of my fellow members of SLONW, writing is not a choice, it is impelled by an unstoppable muse, whether published or not.

Mike Price, author of Uncle Charlie Rocks:

NW: *Where did you come up with the idea for your recent story?*

Mike: Uncle Charlie Rocks is a sequel to Uncle Charlie Versus the Pacific Ocean, which was published last year. I liked the characters so much that I decided to send them on another adventure. Uncle Charlie represents all sane grownups while his niece represents the Young and Indestructible.

NW: *How was the editing process with the NW editorial team?*

Mike: I first ran the story past my critique group. After implementing their thoughtful suggestions, I submitted it to the NW editorial team. At first I was surprised they didn't fall in love with my story as written, but alas, that was expecting too much, or too little. But after pondering their suggestions, I made the suggested changes. I even made another improvement that was entirely my idea.



Mike Price

NW: *What did you learn during this process?*

Mike: It pays to listen to honest feedback. A diamond in the rough isn't a jewel until it has been cut and polished. The same is true for a work of literature.

NW: *Will you consider submitting stories for Simply Clear again in the future?*

Mike: Absolutely. This is my fourth story. I love entertaining friends, family, and the public with my humorous tales.

Stirring Ashes

By Darryl Armstrong

I was deep into the Colorado woods for a cleansing hike. I couldn't tolerate myself, my family, my work, my community or people anymore. I walked with no direction, down into a slot canyon, following a small, dried up, and sandy stream bed. Feeling the rush of cold air against my left cheek, I turned in the direction it was coming from and noticed an aspen tree and coyote bush covering the opening of a smaller canyon.

Pulling back the brush I could see the passageway was only three feet wide but after several yards, it opened up. Curious, I entered the open area. To the left was a Ute Indian in tribal clothing made of buckskin, feathers and jewelry made from beads and shells, reminiscent of clothing of the early 1800's. He was crouched and stirring cold ashes in the sandy soil, a method of concentration.

"Tell me what you seek traveler," he said, without looking up.

Astonished to see anyone out here, I replied, "I was just walking to clear my head of the pressures of work, family, and my life.

Standing near the entrance, I considered leaving after responding but somehow did not feel apprehensive.

"This peace you seek cannot be found in the world you are living in today. Your life is built on frustration, greed, competition, and sadness. This has been since the white man came to our land. Now you walk among the soil of my ancestors and want to find what was here when you arrived. It was here for you to enjoy. You took much, slaughtering the buffalo, killing our people and pushing us away. Now you come to this ground to find what you destroyed." Shaking his head, he continued stirring the ashes and finally looked up at me.

"I am not sure I can understand what happened here. My ancestors came to New York and I was the first one to migrate to the West," I said. I found it inconceivable that I was out in the open grounds of Colorado, apologizing for actions of early settlers.

"The world you have created, live in, and pass to your children has become more and more confusing to everyone. You have created labor-saving devices that you have to labor long and hard to afford—washing machines, cars, plumbing and electricity. You spend untold amounts of money on chemicals for your health and beauty and then dump them into the earth, causing a caustic harmful environment from which you have to protect yourself."

He focused his attention back on the ashes as he continued.

“You spend large amounts of money to maintain a military to ensure peace. Imagine, making bombs that will kill millions of people to ensure peace. That is confusing. You print paper money and then work, steal, kill and do whatever you have to in order to get these worthless paper dollars. Your food is treated with chemicals. Terrible lies are written on package labels to convince people they are eating something natural. Real, natural food was what they had before they began killing everything and processing it. You passed many laws. The laws of nature, laws of God, and laws of common sense have been replaced by the laws of men.”

I was more confused than when I began my hike across the open land. Turning, I started to leave, but feeling a need to apologize again for what had been done in this land, I turned and he was gone. I crouched down and began stirring the ashes...



Uncle Charlie Rocks

By Mike Price

“You want me to do what?” I asked.

“Let go of your hand-hold,” our rock-climbing instructor said.

Yeah, right. Thirty minutes before, I stood with my brother-in-law, Bill, and his daughter Glenda, staring at the precipice looming over us. Our guide for this adventure was a young woman not much older than my high school students back in Kansas.

I was petrified. I tried to back out gracefully, but Mister “Where’s your sense of adventure?” and Little Miss “You’ll be my favorite uncle,” coaxed me into my first actual rock-climbing experience. This was Glenda’s way to celebrate her thirteenth birthday.

Before we could start our vertical expedition, we had to sign a medical release form assuring the proprietors of Insane Adventures that we weren’t about to give birth, have a seizure, faint from low blood pressure or suddenly die from a heart attack. They did not ask, “Do you have a perfectly justified fear of heights?” After signing our lives away on the dotted line, we were outfitted with vests, slings, safety ropes, hardhats, gloves, and more carabiners than I bothered to count.

“Trust your safety equipment. Let yourself dangle.” Her words snapped me back to my present reality—clinging to a steep cliff, a hundred feet above the canyon floor.

“You mean like this?” my niece asked as she let herself swing. “Wheeee.”

I couldn’t let her show me up, so I released my death grip on the rock and swung out into midair like a real live piñata.

"See," our guide said, "I won't let you fall."

"That's what you say," I countered, "but Sir Isaac Newton said otherwise."

After my climbing partners stopped laughing, we continued our ascent. I was starting to get the hang of rock-climbing; by not hanging. Instead, I scrambled up the toe-holds and hand-holds conveniently hammered into the stone. An hour and eternity later, huffing and puffing, I pulled myself onto the top of the rock.

"Way to go, Uncle Charlie."

"I knew you could do it," Bill said, slapping me on the back and almost knocking me over the edge.

While I caught my balance, and breath, I enjoyed the magnificent vista from our perch in the sky. I looked down into a deep canyon covered with towering pines.

"What are those?" I asked, pointing to a pair of cables spanning the chasm between our rock and a tower several hundred yards away. A man on the tower waved at us.

"You don't know?" our guide asked. "That's our zip line. More fun than the stairs."

"A zip line? I'm supposed to pretend I'm a bird and jump off this perfectly solid rock? No way, Jose."

"Where's your sense of..."

"Bill, my sense of adventure is in Kansas, where I belong. If you're so brave, you lead the way."

"No, I insist you go first. You're our guest."

Click. I looked over to see the guide attach Glenda's harness to the zip line.

"Watch me, Uncle Charlie." With that, she pushed off from the cliff and zipped away, laughing and hanging upside down.

As we full grown macho men watched, Bill's little girl flew over the forest to the next landing. Remarkably, the color fled from the face of my brother-in-law.

"Admit it," I said, "You're scared too."

"Tell me about it. You were supposed to chicken us out."

After our guide attached my poor helpless body to the zip line, I faced my fears and ran for the edge.

"Thanks for the birthday present, Daddy. Uncle Charlie, you rock. Next year, I want to go skydiving."

"Any work of art, provided it springs from a sincere motivation to further understanding between people, is an act of faith and therefore is an act of love."

~Truman Capote

"Critique Group Connections"

NW Members—Please, email critique requests to: Janice Konstantinidis (jkon50@gmail.com) We'll print your specific request in this **Critique Group Connections** section of the newsletter for all NW members to view, increasing opportunities for NW critiquing. Use this information to find a match for your needs, make contacts, or to start a new group or critique partnership. Contact Janice for assistance if needed and she'll get you to the right people. And, if you form a group, please let Janice know so she can list it on the website. She can also forward your group's information to the newsletter. Critique Group Guidelines are available on the website at www.slouidnightwriters.org.

***SLO NW cannot guarantee critique group formation or availability but do we strive to facilitate connections between writers so they can initiate and develop their own writing affiliations. While we cannot be, and are not, responsible for any outcomes from these associations, we hope they lead to great creative magic and magnificent literary works!

CRITIQUE GROUP REQUESTS

Holly Thibodeaux works in fiction, non-fiction, screenwriting, memoir and experimental fiction. She is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange with writers in a more structured environment with accountability to boost productivity. Intermediate level preferred; no location restrictions. She would also like to find others interested in exploring the philosophy of writing and the psychology of storytelling. Contact her at:

Katie is seeking a critique group for YA and FICTION. She is interested in either a critique group, or 1:1 electronic peer exchange. She has some writing experience and prefers SLO City location. Contact Katie at: dreamsofcitylights@gmail.com.

Tony Taylor is seeking a critique group for FICTION, YA, CHILDREN'S MIDDLE GRADE or VARIED GENRES, preferred skill level is advanced/experienced writers. Preferred location is SLO City area. Contact Tony at 805-704-3528 or by email: tony@anthonyjtaylor.com

Rolynn Anderson wishes to organize a **NEW PLOTTING GROUP** for LITERARY FICTION with elements of suspense and mystery. Preferred skill level is advanced. Preferred location is Arroyo Grande/Los Osos/SLO area.

Contact Rolynn at 805-473-5847 or by email rolynna@earthlink.net

Griselda Rivera is seeking multiple critique groups: MEMOIRS, TEEN & CHILDREN'S, ACADEMIC/EDUCATION/LINGUISTICS.

Contact Griselda at grissilvarivera58@yahoo.com

Critique Group Connections, Continued

Colin McKay is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for COMMERCIAL FICTION – CRIME, YA, or SCREENWRITING. Preferred skill level is advanced. No location restrictions for meetings but would prefer Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria. Contact Colin by email: mckay01@gmail.com

David Flamm is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange or 1:1 writing mentor/partner or editing fee for service, for COMMERCIAL FICTION. Preferred Skill Level is Intermediate to Advanced. Preferred locations for meetings are SLO City, South County/Santa Maria, Orcutt. Contact David at 805-868-3779 or by email: david.flamm@yahoo.com

Christina Grimm is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for VARIED NO GENRE RESTRICTIONS. No skill restrictions. Preferred location for meetings is SLO City, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria, but can travel to other locations. Contact Christina at 805-459-4923 or by email: grimmpsych@gmail.com

Jill Stegman is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for LITERARY FICTION or LITERARY HYBRIDS WITH THRILLER, SUSPENSE, MYSTERY. Preferred skill level is advanced. Preferred location for meetings is SLO City, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria or North County. Contact Jill at 805-466-1956 or by email: jastegman@gmail.com

Deborah Brasket is seeking a critique group, online peer edit exchange, or 1:1 writing partner for ADULT LITERARY FICTION, NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES, AND FOR CHILDREN'S MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL. Preferred experience level is intermediate to advanced. North County is preferred. Contact Deborah at 221-5405 or by email: dbrasket51@gmail.com

Alycia Kiley is seeking a critique group for VARIED GENRES but primarily POETRY, NON FICTION and ARTICLES; skill level is intermediate. SLO City location is preferred. Contact Alycia at 602-7075 or by email, alyciakiley@gmail.com

George Klein is seeking a critique group or 1:1 writing mentor/partner for COMMERCIAL FICTION; No particular skill level or meeting location restrictions. Contact George at 712-3378 or by email, fangio@charter.net

Steve Bowder is seeking a critique group that concentrates on true stories embellished to make them interesting, but that stay true to the facts that are known. Contact Steve at: sbowder@live.com

GREAT BEGINNINGS

...INFORMATION FOR BEGINNING WRITERS (AND EVERYONE ELSE TOO)

YOUR AUTHOR BIOS

Did you know your author bio can either help or hinder your book sales? An author bio on the book buy page that screams “amateur” can make prospective buyers turn tail and run.

Anne R. Allen, on her wonderful blog (www.annerallen.com) gives some great advice on crafting effective bios. Readers want to know if you’re qualified to: teach something, entertain them, or make them laugh. If your bio doesn’t convey this, readers will pass you by.

An author bio isn’t about you, it’s about your experience. Many authors have no bio at all, or one that reads like an amateur. Authors need three standard bios:

1. **A Standard Author Bio:** for your author page on Amazon and other retailers, to accompany guest blogposts and interviews. Always in the third person, 80-100 words (if asked for a one page bio, you can go to @240 words). Here’s the format:

Name is a Occupation who lives in City / Area and does Whatever showcases your expertise. Add one or two of: is a member of Writing Orgs; has won writing awards (not too long ago); has been published in; has a degree in Whatever from College / Univ. Then a sentence or two that makes you stand out, what qualified you to write this book. And last, add something personal about where you live or who you live with so readers see you as human.

You want to sound knowledgeable, professional, and interesting. For nonfiction, stress the knowledge. For fiction, stress the interesting bits. And a touch of humor is always good.

2. **A “Byline” Bio:** this is the one or two sentences at the end of an article or short piece in a magazine or online zine (think Simply Clear Marketing & Media flash pieces). It’s also in the third person and includes your biggest achievements as a writer.

3. **A Query Bio:** This is the personal information for a query letter to an agent, publisher, reviewer, blogger, etc. It’s in first person and for fiction only about 50 words; nonfiction may be a bit longer because credentials are needed to be laid out. List two or three of your most significant accomplishments that relate to the query. Lead with your strength.

4. **Update Your Bio Regularly:** Many authors (and Anne admitted she is one of them, as is your newsletter editor!) forget to update their bios when they come out with a new book or win a new prize. Wherever your bio is posted, all the various retailers, they all need to be updated. If you an indy, it’s up to you. Even small and mid-sized presses don’t generally keep this up. They expect you to do it. Put “Bio Update” on your to-do list when planning your new book launch.

Anne has lots of other great information on bios, and Amazon Central, too, so pop on over to her blog and immerse yourself in it. www.annerallen.com

We Need Your Help!

The success of non-profit organizations like NightWriters depends on its members. We all have talents other than writing that any organization could make use of.

NightWriters has many special opportunities for members to get involved, working “behind the scenes.” If you’d like to assist in any capacity, email: slonightwriters@yahoo.com

President: Janice Konstantinidis
 Vice-President: Martha Raymond
 Secretary: Jim Aarons
 Treasurer: Susan Tuttle
 Program Director: Janice Konstantinidis
 Contest Committee Chair: **Open**
 Critique Group Coordinator: Patricia Gimer
 Social Media/Publicity Coordinator: Joanne Feeney
 Simply Clear Submissions: Meagan Friberg
 Welcome Committee: **Open**
 Sunshine Chair: Kalila Volkov
 Website Master: /Membership Janice Konstantinidis
 Web Assistant: Steve Derks
 Newsletter: Susan Tuttle, Elizabeth Roderick
 Art Director: Dennis Eamon Young
 Member at Large: Darryl Armstrong
 NW Historian: **Open**
 Hospitality: (Coordinator: **Open**) Baxter Trautman, Brian Schwartz

About Our Monthly Meetings

NightWriters’ Evening Meetings: the second Tuesday of every month, year round. We encourage interested visitors to join us at 6:30 pm. Admission free; refreshments served.

Next Meeting: March 14th, at United Church of Christ on Los Osos Valley Rd, San Luis Obispo 93401. General meeting begins at 6:30 pm. Round Table presentations start at 5:15 pm.

Writers’ Critique Groups: For paid members only. These groups read and critique each other’s work and discuss the business of writing. Visitors welcome; phone ahead to make arrangements. See details below, or visit our website: www.slownightwriters.org

Notify NW of any change in address or email:

slonightwriters@yahoo.com. Join NW and send dues or renewal checks (payable to SLO NightWriters) to: SLO NightWriters, PO Box 6241, Los Osos, CA 93412-6241. Or join/renew online through our website: www.slownightwriters.org and pay with credit card.

Email all correspondence to: slonightwriters@yahoo.com or snail mail to: SLO NightWriters PO Box 6241 Los Osos, CA 93412-6241. We must have your **current email address** in order to send the Newsletter and other important NW announcements.

Newsletter Submissions: Send by the 15th of the current month for next month’s publication. Send in kudos, writing articles, quotes, facts and tidbits, etc. Mark email “for newsletter” and send to: slonightwriters@yahoo.com

Have You Checked Out Our Website Lately? Control Your Own Information!

Post your bio, picture, book covers and ordering links! Contribute a writing blog post! Free publicity!

MEMBER SITE LINKS!

List your website(s) and blog(s) with live links — makes it easier for the public to find you and helps build your platform!

BOOK REVIEWS!

Get your book reviewed. Write a review—it’s a valid publishing credit!

WRITERS SERVICES!

Do you have a writing or professional skill? Get listed on our new Services Page.

FACEBOOK!

Become a “Fan” of NightWriters! Visit NW’s Facebook page and sign up today! Also, link your Facebook page and your websites and blogs to NW sites!

LinkedIn!

New! Connect with NW on LinkedIn! Help build your author platform with writing professional connections.

CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

NW Critique Groups are a wonderful benefit of NW Membership. Some groups are full, but many welcome visitors. Always contact the group leader listed for specific information regarding group availability and visiting options. SLO NW cannot guarantee critique group formation or availability but we do strive to facilitate connections between writers so they can initiate and develop their own writing affiliations. While we cannot be, and are not, responsible for any outcomes from these associations, we hope they lead to great creative magic and magnificent literary works! Contact our webmaster and the newsletter editor at slonightwriter@yahoo.com to list your critique group and critique needs in the NW Newsletter and on the NW Web site.

Can't find an existing group? START ONE. It's easy! If you're new at this, don't be intimidated. It's fun and there are no lofty requisites. All it takes is two or more folks committed to reading/hearing the work of others and providing honest, constructive feedback. Critique groups are not teaching sessions. They are writers learning from reading and critiquing each others' works. Effective formats may include exchanging the review/editing service by mail or electronically, or meeting face-to-face and reading aloud to each other, or any combination that works for the group. One of our groups takes a lesson/learning approach and does practice writing exercises every meeting. Some groups focus on a particular genre; others accept all kinds of writing. Each group is different depending on their needs and interests. **Group members set their own times, dates, meeting locations, and parameters.** We have **Critique Group Guidelines** on our website to help get you started and we can provide a mentor to attend a few sessions if needed. www.slonightwriter.org. Contact slonightwriter@yahoo.com with your critique needs and genres and we'll do our best to assist you.

CRITIQUE GROUPS WITH OPENINGS

WRITE NOW

These bi-weekly Wednesday critique meetings are for more experienced and tech-savvy writers. Submit up to 3,500 words of your current project to Dropbox by Sunday night, and then, using track-changes in Word, upload your reviews of each other member's work to Dropbox by 6:00 pm Wednesday. Meeting time is used to cover discussion-worthy items: logic issues, theme problems, etc. Commas, punctuation, and spelling are left on the written page. We follow these [Rules of Conduct](#). Recommended reading is [Story](#) by Robert McKee.

Meetings are every other Wednesday at 6:00 pm. Email moderator for location and dates.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Moderator: Cynthia Replogle
cynthia.replogle@gmail.com

PISMO SATURDAY GROUP

New group starts Saturday May 10. All levels and genres, short stories, poetry, novels and memoirs. Work is exchanged one week prior to group meetings. 1500 word limit on submissions. Meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 9:00-11:00 am. Contact moderator for location.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Moderator: Tom Snow
coinerbop@gmail.com

MEMOIR AND NON-FICTION

Disbanded until there is more interest. If you would like to explore re-starting this group, please contact Judith directly.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Contact: Judith Bernstein
ryewit@live.com
805-904-6365

CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

CRITIQUE GROUPS WITH OPENINGS

HI HOPES

This group was invented to fill a need for a Los Osos/San Luis Obispo group that incorporates writers who generate stories, essays, novels, poetry—you get the picture—writers of any description. Whether or not you wish to publish, we'll help you with ideas to improve your writing. Led by Sharon Sutliff, we meet on the **2nd and 4th Mondays at 9 AM and usually wrap up in time for lunch.** We meet in various locations. Call one of the moderators to arrange a visit, or get more information. **CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderators: Sharon Sutliff, 544-4034
Audrey Yanes, 748-8600

NORTH COUNTY RACONTEURS

This group has disbanded for various reasons until further notice.

SOUTH COUNTY WRITERS

Meets on the **second and fourth Saturdays from 9:30 AM to noon in Grover Beach.** This group thrives on variety, writing short stories, articles, poetry and novels, all genres from fiction to biography and memoirs. Members exchange work by email at least one week before the meeting in order to receive in-depth critiques aimed at eliminating weaknesses and increasing strengths in everything from plot and character development to grammar and proper manuscript preparation. Intermediate to advanced writers are welcome. We meet in a casual and fun atmosphere and are serious about fully developing each member's writing talent, whether for publication or self-satisfaction. Visitors are always welcome.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Moderator: Judy Guarnera, 474-9598
j.guarnera@sbcglobal.net

WRITE IT RIGHT WRITING GROUP I (Wed. a.m. Group)

Meets every **Wednesday morning in 5 Cities area from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm.** Not a traditional NightWriter critique group. Work is produced in each session, then analyzed according to the objective of the day's goal. Based on writing exercises designed to jump-start the creative process (based on the lessons and exercises in the *Write It Right* Series), these sessions take writers through the process of writing fiction from inception of idea to the final resolution. This group is for all writers who want to learn the process of crafting a well-told story while developing their own voice and style. We explore such topics as ideas, character, story arc, tone, voice, POV, tension, dialogue, resolution, writing mechanics, etc. There is a small monthly fee involved for this class to cover materials.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS.

Contact: Susan Tuttle: 458-5234
aim2write@yahoo.com

WRITE IT RIGHT WRITING GROUP II (Wed. p.m. Group)

For all writers of fiction and creative non-fiction, a writing instruction class that meets weekly and takes about a year to complete. **See full description under Wed. a.m. Group.** Meets from 3:00-5:00 pm in Los Osos. Current members are presently getting their work published after only six months or so. **CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Contact: Susan Tuttle, 458-5234
aim2write@yahoo.com

CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

CRITIQUE GROUPS WITH OPENINGS

THE THURSDAY GROUP

This group meets at 9:00 am every other Thursday at The Coffee Bean in Pismo Beach. Anyone interested in joining them can email the moderator for full details.

CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS, and visitors are always welcome. Contact the moderator for details.

Moderator: Mark Rusczyzky
zsur@aol.com

FULL CRITIQUE GROUPS: CALL TO VISIT

PISMO WEDNESDAY GROUP

New group began Meeting on May 1. All levels and genres: short stories, novels, poetry, memoir. Work is exchanged one week prior to each meeting; 1,500 word limit on submissions. Meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 9:00-11:00 am in Pismo Beach.

CURRENTLY FULL—NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS. Visitors welcome. Contact moderator for location.

Moderator Tom Snow
coinerbop@gmail.com

LO PROSE

Meets in Los Osos on the first and third **Wednesdays at 7pm till usually 10pm.** Charlie Perryess and Anne Allen share hosting responsibilities, running a tight ship so that everyone can read. No cross talk permitted. At the beginning and at our break we socialize. We're all serious but fun-loving. Presently the writing covers several genres: YA novels; short stories; short stories woven into a novel; fantasy; humorous mystery novel; political satire novel; and personal essays. We write just

CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

FULL CRITIQUE GROUPS: CALL TO VISIT

about everything except poetry. **CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS** but guests are welcome. It may happen that space could be made for a compatible writer.

Moderators: Charlie Perryess, 528-4090
Anne Allen, 528-1006

LONG STORY SHORT

Flash Fiction/Nonfiction only meets the 2nd & 4th Fridays every month, from 10 am to 12 noon in Arroyo Grande. Bring paper and pencil, or your laptop if you are so inclined—flash pieces, 1000 word strict maximum.

CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS – call or email Diane to be placed on a waiting list.

Moderator: Diane Smith 858-414-0070
mdcomposes@yahoo.com

FICTION/NONFICTION

Meets on 1st and 3rd Mondays from 9:00 am to noon in San Luis. Members bring original work to each session and read aloud to the group. The group provides constructive suggestions for improving the writing and the structure of the stories. Prose forms of literature—short stories, novels, memoirs, essays, newspaper and magazine articles, travel—are this group's forte. It welcomes writers who are serious about producing work for publication. Those interested in attending or who need more information should telephone. **CURRENTLY FULL — NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderators: Terry Sanville, 541-0492
Gloria Pautz, 543-2049

NORTH COUNTY CRITIQUE GROUP

Meets twice a month on Thursday from

1:30-4:00 pm at the Atascadero Library. the group includes intermediate and advanced level writers of fiction and non-fiction, both published and unpublished. Our critique process is upbeat and constructive. We send around pieces in advance, and read aloud at sessions. Potential new members are encouraged to visit to see if we are a mutual fit.

CURRENTLY FULL—NOT OPEN NEW MEMBERS

Moderators: Lillian Brown, 215-6107
lilliofslo@aol.com
Mike Perry, 466-8311

dmperry1012@att.net

POETRY CRITIQUE GROUP

This group is currently inactive.

Contact: Irene Chadwick, 481-3824
irenekooi@gmail.com