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President's Letter

by Janice Konstantinidis

Dear Fellow NightWriters,

It has been a shock to our collective psyche to realize that we are vulnerable to an invisible pathogen that is spreading across the world with breathtaking speed. It is a time of complex emotions, reflection and, I hope, writing about our experiences.

We begin to reconsider past epidemics, whether they be a century ago or six centuries ago. We conclude that we might not be the dominant species we thought we were. What becomes of our national stereotype of rugged individualism when we are told to stay home until it is safe to come out? We will indeed be changed by this experience.

The other side of the coin is realizing that we are living in an age of medical miracles and instantaneous communication. We have tools that we can deploy on many fronts to keep most of us out of harm's way and to blunt the damage of a particularly contagious virus. We are enabled to take prudent protective actions quickly. Society can



respond much more rapidly than ever before. This is a time of hope more than despair.

While we are watching and waiting for the tide to turn, I hope you can keep up your writing activities. Virtual critique group, anyone? Webinar? Read and review another member's book? Visit other members' blogs or even start your own.

Stay safe, one and all!

Janice Konstantinidis, President

"Yum yum," said a Pelly,
"A fish for my belly.
Two more in my beak,
I'm on a good streak.
I fancy a meal of fish jelly!"

Janice Konstantinidis



Photo by Lorraine Flakemore

April 2020 General Meeting Cancelled

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the April general meeting has been cancelled. We will keep you informed of the status of meetings beyond April as we receive guidance from health authorities.

In anticipation of the cancellation of our May general meeting, some of our members are

working on providing a webinar in lieu of the meeting. We will keep you informed of the progress of this project. Many thanks to Dr. Steven Mintz and Anne Janzer for putting their time and effort into a virtual meeting for our members during this time of social isolation.

NightWriters to Speak at SLO Libraries

The SLO Library contacted Steve Mintz, our programs director, to see if any members would be willing to speak at the county libraries during the summer Adult Reading Programs. Several members sent proposals to Sharon Coronado, Adult Services Coordinator for the Library. The following were chosen to speak. Of course, this is dependent on the situation with the coronavirus.

June 25 — Patricia Gimer, Cambria: Creative Nonfiction at 4:00 pm

June 26 — Steven Mintz, Cayucos: Ethics & Civility in Society at 1:00 pm

July 13 — Jim Dietch, Atascadero: Creative Nonfiction at 2:00 pm

August 29 — Thomas Snow, Arroyo Grande: Screenwriting Workshop at 2:00 pm

Central Coast Kind Magazine Issue 7 Now Available

The March 2020 issue of Central Coast Kind Magazine is now available. Here is the link: (https://issuu.com/centralcoastkind/docs/issue7_lowres).

A number of our members have articles

published including Joe Amaral, Patricia Gimer, Judythe Guarnera, Steven Mintz, Mary Silberstein, Lili Sinclaire and Dennis Eamon Young. Congratulations to all and keep up the good work!

Coming Soon - The Golden Quill Writing Contest

On May 1, 2020, our Golden Quill Writing Contest will kick off. Our theme for this year is: THE UNEXPECTED. We will be accepting entries until August 1, 2020 in the categories of Fiction, Memoir, Creative Nonfiction and Poetry. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at our September 8, 2020 meeting. The entry fee will remain \$10, and all proceeds will be used as cash prizes for the winners. For more information please see the Golden Quill Contest

2020 page on our website: www.slownightwriters.org.

We hope you will participate!

Note: As yet, we do not have enough judges to share the judging workload. If you are interested in judging, please notify the Contest Director at: slonwgoldenquill@gmail.com

Judges remain anonymous to members and other judges.

Speakers and Events May - December 2020

by Dr. Steven Mintz, Program Director

I'm happy to share with you the speakers and events we have scheduled for the remainder of 2020. Of course, our schedule will depend on the status of the coronavirus epidemic. We will keep you informed as events unfold.

May 12, 2020

LeeAnne Krusemark

Getting Paid to Write for Online Blogs, Magazines & Websites (Even if You're a Self-published Novelist!)

LeeAnne Krusemark is an accomplished writer and speaker about online publishing opportunities. She provides advice about building your online platform and portfolio in a way that will benefit your future as a writer. LeeAnne is a former journalist, editor and managing editor of newspapers, as well as an author of countless magazine articles and several self-published books including her most recent, *Scriptwriting A-Z*, that looks at getting started in writing for television, stage and the movies. LeeAnne recently authored a screenplay and has started representing other writers as an editor and agent.

June 9, 2020

Lili A. Sinclair

Should You Use Kickstarter to Publish Your Book?

Lili A. Sinclair shares her experiences with a Kickstarter Campaign, the online crowd funding platform, that helped her to publish her hard-bound, full-cover book, *The Fork in the Path*. She will discuss how to start a campaign; the ways it can help you get published; and how to tell people about your Kickstarter. Her self-help books are about relationships. Lili has studied relationships and communication for about twenty years,

working as a crisis phone counselor for The Parent Connection and for Stand Strong, formerly The Women's Shelter.

July 14, 2020

John Hampsey, PhD

The Process of Writing a Memoir

Dr. Hampsey will discuss his memoir, *Kaufman's Hill*. Amazon describes it as a profound and intensely moving boyhood memoir. Kaufman's Hill opens with a prosaic neighborhood scene: The author and some other young boys are playing by the creek, on of their usual stomping grounds. But it soon becomes clear that much more is going on; the boy-narrator is struggling to find his way in a middle-class Catholic neighborhood dominated by the Creely bullies, who often terrify him. It's the Pittsburgh of the early and mid-1960s, a threshold time just before the counter-culture arrives and a time when suburban society begins to encroach on Kaufman's Hill, the boy's sanctuary and the setting of many of his adventures. John will also briefly discuss his new book, *Soda Lake*, which is a novel and mix of existential mystery, autobiography, and fantasy.

August 11, 2020

Jeanie Greensfelder

Gaining a Better Understanding of Oneself Through Poetry

Jeanie seeks to spread the pleasure of poetry, both reading and writing it. She's pleased to talk with writers skilled in narrative about using that skill in creating poems and to be sure they are aware of the market for poetry.

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She will read some of her poems, talk about her journey as a poet, becoming the poet laureate of San Luis Obispo County, the therapeutic value of poems, and provide tips to members interested in poetry – and writing in general. Jeanie wants to rouse some enthusiasm for writing poems and reading them at local readings.

September 8, 2020

Note: This night's meeting will begin with the Golden Quill Writing Contest awards and reading ceremony. Our speaker will follow the ceremony.

Wendelin Van Draanen

Keeping Hope in the Mail

Wendelin Van Draanen will share insights from her twenty years in publishing, including story (finding ways to avoid the sagging middle and get to a strong ending), revision (its importance and how to learn to love it), "a peek behind the curtain" of traditional publishing (agents, editors, copy-editors, design), and will inspire you to keep writing no matter the obstacles.

October 13, 2020

Mara Purl

Using Multiple Media Formats to Tell A Story: A Journey in Milford-Haven, USA

Mara Purl pioneered small-town fiction for women with her popular and critically acclaimed saga, *Milford-Haven*. Her best-selling Milford-Haven Novels, Novellas & Novelettes, are set on the Central Coast and brought international attention to the region when her original radio drama became a hit on BBC radio with 4.5 million U.K. listeners. Her books published in the Milford-Haven Saga include: *When the Heart Listens*, *What the Heart Knows*, *Where the Heart Lives*, *When Hummers Dream*, *When Whales Watch*, and *When Otters Play*. One-hundred of the Milford-Haven episodes were also

performed for radio drama. Having been part of the all-star cast of Milford-Haven USA, she is now a noted audio book performer.

November 10, 2020

Marilyn Meredith

A Journey Down the Road to e-Book Publishing

Marilyn Meredith is the author of 40 plus published books, including two series, the Deputy Tempe Crabtree mysteries, and under the name of F. M. Meredith, the Rocky Bluff P.D. crime series, as well as novels in other genres. She's taught writing for Writers Digest School and at many other venues. As a writing teacher, Marilyn has been a featured speaker at several writers' conferences. She is a member of Mystery Writers of America, three chapters of Sisters in Crime, EPIC, and the Public Safety Writers Association.

Marilyn will tell us about her writing journey and her first encounter with e-books and being verbally attacked for promoting them. Coming to a crossroads in her Tempe Crabtree series, Marilyn has some big decisions to make. She wonders if it will soon be time for the same kind of decision for the Rocky Bluff P.D. series.

December 8, 2020

To Be Announced.

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WORD PLAY

by Morgann Tayllor

INSIDE OUT

Anagrams and *palindromes* go bump in the night. Sometimes they even run into each other with the aid of the *emordnilap*. Unless the reader is looking for them, they won't know how to shine the spotlight on these quirky critters or where they will next pop up.

That's where the fun begins. Letters in these words and phrases skitter behind or in front of other letters, rearranging themselves in creative ways, often turning language inside out:

United we stand; **untied** we fall: an *anagram*. **Anna** has her **eye** on **Bob**: a *palindrome*. **Harpo** Productions Inc. has been **Oprah's** mirror: an *emordnilap*. Also an *anagram*, a pseudonym from the real name written backward.



A '*gram* is a word, phrase or sentence using the same letters in different arrangements. Wit and humor are often found peeking between these letters: **debit card** - **bad credit**; **punishments** - **nine thumps**; **dormitory** - **dirty room**. In his novel *Lolita* (1958), the character **Vivian Darkbloom** is an *anagram* of the author's name, **Vladimir Nabakov**. A famous anagram for **William Shakespeare** is **I am a weakish speller**.

A word from *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) crossed the Pond and landed in American English dictionaries as an adjective: **Brobdignag**(ian), from a land occupied by giants. It is an *anagram* of three words: **big**, **grand** and **noble** (excluding the letters l, e). Note that sometimes anagrams add or subtract a few letters from the original borrowed word(s).



A '*drome* reads the same forward or backward: **civic**, **deed**, **racecar**, **level**, **kayak**. Perhaps the longest common-use *palindrome* word in English is **tattarrattat** from *Ulysses*, by James Joyce (1922). The word imitates the sound of a knock on the door.



But consider this trickster: *That **devil** lived a life of daring-do (derring-do) and a lot of daring-don't's*. The **devil** is in the details; it has the same letters in the same arrangement, but when read backward it becomes an *emordnilap* and a different word. *Emordnilap* is an unofficial word that spells *palindrome* backward. An e'lap word, in a sense, is also a mirror.



These examples are **101**, but the excitement comes when "puzzling" words are more complicated and challenging. So the next time you read a sentence with hidden clues, just make a story out of it, whether it's **101** or **predicated** on **propaedeutics**:

Marc's mom will **scram** to get him to school, only to remember that it's Saturday. Her husband's surprise birthday party is tonight and there are still many preparations, including a tidy-up of the garden.

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She **heads** outside for **shade** where the flowerbeds are, but stops. Because she's now **stressed**, thoughts of party **desserts** in the fridge arouse her cravings. As she walks back to the kitchen, she sees Marc with **bat** and glove. She knows he's going to the nearby

baseball diamond and she can keep a **tab** on his whereabouts. Or so she thinks...

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Rest in Peace: Destry Ramey

Two days ago, a longtime member of SLO NightWriters and a dear and valiant friend set her pain aside and, as some suggested, gained her wings on her first eternal flight.

Destry Ramey met her cancer head on, over and over for all the years I knew her, always smiling, her positive outlook never slipping. She and her little buddy, Feather, who inspired her most touching children's book, were an inspiration.

Not all of us have the strength and the desire to keep "carrying on," but it was Destry's MO. I don't know how many times I mentioned someone who had been diagnosed with cancer and she insisted I give them her phone number. And it didn't matter if it was cancer or some other disease. I've heard mention of many people she encouraged. Even though her desire to face every cancer event of her own and beat it, she never forced those expectations on others, but supported them as they needed.

For more inspiration, go to her [Facebook page](#) and read all the notes of condolence, but be sure to scroll through her pictures. Did Destry have quality of life despite her cancers? When you look at those photos, you will see a woman who thrived on living, on being with others, on helping others. Her glorious smile lights up those pages.

I think Destry's best friend was her son, Chris, with whom she traveled, who offered her support and inspiration. They shared so many things, including their love of pugs and Feather.

We will miss her energy and love, but know her spirit is either writing books with Paul Alan Fahey and Anna Unkovich, or starting up a dog rescue. A spirit that lives on and leaves so much goodness behind.

If you see a feather in the days to come, I can assure you it's a Destry sighting. She found them so many times when she needed a boost. To her they were a sign of an angel close by, ready to help her. A small memory is the time, years ago, when NightWriters gathered feathers and sent them to Destry when she was having a tough time.



Judythe Guarnera

THE ETHICS SAGE

by Steven Mintz, PhD



ARE WE HANDLING THE CORONAVIRUS THE RIGHT WAY?

I'm changing the format of my newsletter this month because of the importance of the coronavirus to all of our lives. I've blogged and spoken about personal responsibility and leadership many times. These are the keys to dealing ethically with the virus.

Recognition that the virus had spread to the U.S. and is a big problem was slow. Our government did not react immediately to stem the tide of outbreaks even though China knew about it in December 2019. We received mixed messages about its severity at the outset. I believe that ushered in an early period of confusion about what to do and the credibility of federal officials took a hit. It's not a stretch to say many Americans are scared and not sure what to do. Our leadership at the highest levels failed the test of ethical behavior.

Most Americans responded to the crisis in a responsible way: washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds; using sanitizers; practicing social distancing; and isolating themselves when called for.

There were some who acted in their own best interests to the detriment of others:

A man in Tennessee bought 17,700 sanitizers and sold them at a steep markup. He was charged with price gouging. He then gave away his remaining product. This is an example of doing the right thing only after being caught.

Skirmishes broke out at stores like Costco and Target as shortages of what some people think are "essentials" were purchased in

huge quantities and left some stores with no product. Personally, I don't think it's necessary to buy enough toilet paper to last through 2020.

A man boarded a Jet Blue plane after taking the test for the virus and not knowing the results, inconveniencing 114 passengers and the crew who were stuck on the tarmac for hours as health officials spoke to everyone on board. He has been banned from all future Jet Blue flights.

So far we have been saved from violent skirmishes but here's one from Australia that makes me wonder about personal responsibility and treating others the way we wish to be treated. This You Tube video shows one of those skirmishes. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVHYTdGUAZM>).

There were lots of good deeds such as NBA players donating their money to pay the salaries of employees at dark arenas. A woman in Toledo offered to shop for the elderly and homebound that need supplies and groceries during this health crisis.

If there is one takeaway from the coronavirus and how we are handling it is we need to get back to civility and civic duty, two ethical values of a responsible society.

What can you do in these trying times with our freedoms limited? Pick up the phone (don't text) and call a friend or family you haven't spoken to for some time.

TECH TIP

by Brian Schwartz



THE AMAZON PRIME TRICK FOR ADVANCE READER COPIES (ARCs)

Want overnight shipping for review copies of your own book?

\$2.39 for Overnight Shipping?

ARC = Advanced Reader Copy

In fact, it's possible if you have an Amazon Prime account and set your books up with KDP.

I just published a 228 page B&W paperback.

The cost to print it is \$3.59/copy.

The lowest price you can sell it for on Amazon is \$5.98.

When you do set your price at \$5.98, you will not earn a royalty, but you will get the ability to order your book via Amazon prime which is 1-day shipping!

The cost to print the book is part of the \$5.98:

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$3.59 to print
$2.39 1-day shipping (Amazon Prime)
-----
$5.98 Total
```

I recommend this route for the first 30 days of the 'soft opening' of your book while you are gathering reviews. Then, when you are ready to 'launch' your book, you set the price back where you want. The more reviews you have, the higher the price you can charge, but I recommend aiming for a [\\$5/book profit](#).

The bonus of this 'Prime ARC Trick' is that your reviewers can get books within a day, and if they buy them through Amazon, it'll show up as a verified purchase.

There's nothing to stop you from [publishing an ARC edition](#) on Amazon.

The Amazon Alternative - Snowfall Press

An alternative is [Snowfall Press](#), who I love to use for ARCs and printed proofs, but the lowest cost shipping they offer is Media Mail (which takes about a week) @ 3.67 plus the cost of printing (\$3.96). They typically ship orders within 3 days of receiving the order. But the total cost to ship one book to one reviewer (228 pages) is \$8.48.

Also, unfortunately the books you buy at Snowfall won't reflect the cherished 'verified purchase' on Amazon (which carries more weight in their ranking algorithm).

Hope you find this helpful!

Brian Schwartz
brian@selfpublish.org

TIPS AND TIDBITS

by Judythe Guarnera

TIME TO SPARE



In the midst of all the health and political stress we're experiencing, all of which fill my inbox, I discover goodies from the many writing columns I subscribe to. Many of them have a similar theme—pointing out that during this period of social distancing, I now have time to write. I think they're warning me that if I don't, when I stand in front of the big desk in the sky, I'm going to be held accountable for wasting time.

After all, having a firm hold on the high-risk age of 80, I can't even go shopping. I have nice younger neighbors who have promised to keep us supplied with necessities, except for toilet paper, of course. I'm sure by now, you're familiar with the desperados called HOARDERS who have cornered the market on TP.

If not, go to one of the Next Door sites and you'll learn everything you need to know about the hoarders and the people they annoy. Neighbors of mine and probably yours, swimming in fear, become apoplectic about empty shelves. Nothing leads to taunting words faster than leaving one of the food warehouses with a cart full of TP.

I recognize and share a bit the frustration of the people the hoarders annoy. It's simple logic that if we would each purchase one four-pack, there would be plenty for everyone. NOT! Going. To. Happen.

If you have a family of eight like a relative of mine in Ohio, a four pack would last about twenty minutes. Then there's the problem for older people, who knew this was their last trip to the store as they shelter in place, and they had no choice but to stock up.

Anyhow, I worry about the hoarders, who, when we come out the other side of this, will certainly be shunned for the foreseeable

future. But also worrisome are the people, who have a good supply of toilet paper, but feel compelled to write long paragraphs ranting about the TP hoarders.

I try to give people the benefit of the doubt. I guess they're just worried about us old people not having any TP, or maybe they heard about my relative in Ohio. I imagine the ranter blood pressure sky-rocketing, hands shaking, their dogs hiding under the bed as their fears take over.

When you get right down to it, I see both sides, or I should say all the opposing sides. When life changes as drastically as it has, it's almost impossible not to feel fear, reasonable and/or unreasonable. We don't know what's next and no one can tell us how long the isolation will be.

Everything becomes symbolic—something or someone toward whom we can direct our fear/anger. Sometimes it's toilet paper.

If you think my attempt at humor is inappropriate, I apologize. The message I'm promoting here is to take advantage of all the material, available right from your home, for future writing topics. On the topic of hoarders, I've already written a poem and this piece. When I finish this, I'm going to begin a list of COVID-19-related topics to write about in the coming days of social isolation.

Pause for a moment, close your eyes, and let your mind wander through what you've read in the newspaper, online, the discussions you and spouses or friends have shared on the

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phone, texting, or in an email, and make a list. If, as you're making that list, anything on it immediately triggers additional thoughts, make some notes. When you come back to it, you might have a story idea.

If you are interested in politics, you have tons of material to expand upon in relation to the coronavirus. If mental health is your thing, imagine what social isolation is doing to many people, who are daily becoming more depressed, anxious and possibly even suicidal. This might be the beginning of a novel, or with some research on enforced isolation, might make a perfect piece for *Psychology Today*, or for a women's magazine.

I've written a novel, which I finished a few years ago, just in time to decide that it was the first and last novel I planned to write. At my age, I'm into instant gratification. My writing ranges from 6 words to about 20,000.

I so wish I could wave a wand and make this pandemic go away, but since I can't, I'm working on my own list of topics for essays, short stories, pieces to entertain or convince others. Throw in a little comedy and I will have plenty to do during my confinement.

If you're a history buff and decide to record what's happening from the perspective of an older person, or a hoarder, or a hoarder hater, you can take all the notes you've gathered and sit down and outline or just start writing, whichever is your style.

Let's say it appeals to you to write a short story about two women whose carts collide in a grocery store. One's cart is full of essential items and the owner is headed to the check-out. The other's cart is empty, because the shelves were empty, and an argument erupts. Maybe a little pushing and shoving or hair pulling, although that's not my thing. The hoarder pays for her stuff, leaves the

store, and sees the other woman holding a hammer right above the hoarder's windshield. Now there might be a story here, but don't you think it needs something else, something that eludes you?

You might try the What If method.

What if, when the woman raises the hammer as the other rushes toward her car, the hammer holder falls backward, unconscious.

What if the hoarder picks up the hammer, shoves the woman's body aside, loads her groceries and drives off—later to be arrested for possible assault or neglect or something.

Or, what if after the woman falls, the hoarder rushes up, drops to her knees, recognizes the woman isn't breathing, and begins CPR.

What if later she finds out that the woman to whom she gave CPR was infected with COVID-19 and she knows in her heart, she is now harboring the disease, also.

Or what If the unconscious woman responds to CPR and both parties hug each other, share toilet paper and become life-long friends.

What if it turns out that the revived woman is the mother of the young man who is dating the hoarder's daughter.

If something catches your imagination as you write your 'what ifs,' expand on that one and let them take you in a different direction. I start out just listing. Often a member of the list intrigues me and I continue with that one. Suddenly I realize I have an outline for a plot and off I go to write my piece.

You get the idea. Start a list in a journal or on your computer of funny things you hear, or sad things, or stupid things you read or listen to. If one thing you jot down triggers some ideas for a story, poem, informative essay, make notes to go with that. Or, if so

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inspired, begin writing the poem, etc. right then.

You may end up with a list that will supply you with story ideas that will last you for the duration and then some.

When I was taking a memoir writing class many years ago, each person would bring something they'd written about a memory from their lives. As they read to the class, I jotted down trigger words of memories of my own.

At the end of the class, I added some detail, but kept each member of the list down to one or two lines. I ended up with four pages, single-spaced on both sides of my memoir list. Over time, that generated many memoir pieces. To this day, if I feel out of ideas, I pull it up on my computer and choose one to write about.

One year I went back to Ohio to visit my brother and we spent a delightful evening discussing some of the 'memories.' Turned out his memories and mine of the same events were very different. We had fun arguing about whose memory was correct.

When I began writing this column, although I didn't have a clear theme, I hoped what I wrote at the beginning would make people smile. I also, as I do with most of my columns write to inspire you, dear readers/

We Need Your Help

The success of non-profit organizations like SLO 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: jkon50@gmail.com

writers to take advantage of life, good moments and bad moments to write fiction, non-fiction, memoir, essays, a novel, a short story, a poem.

Look for venues to post your stories. Writing columns, including Anne R. Allen's blog are good sources for that. Post it on your blog or your FB author page.

We all pray COVID-19 doesn't become, like the Black Plague, a three-century pandemic. Hopefully while we're gathering material for potential stories, we'll muddle our way through and eventually come out the other side. Our lives will forever be changed.

Part of the good changes can include a new awareness of how to gather material to write about and what to do with it once you have.

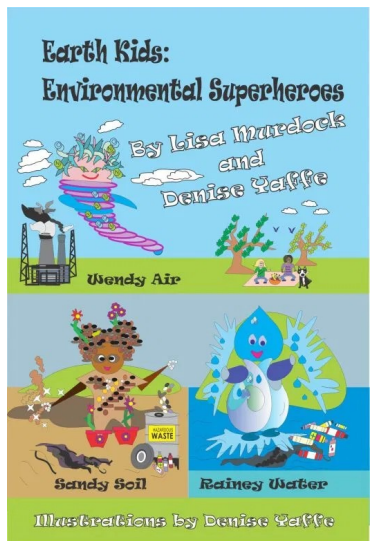
*In the Rhythm of Writing,
Judythe Guarnera*

SLO NightWriter Officers

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New Members

Denise Yaffe



Denise Yaffe is a new author and illustrator of children's environmental fiction. She is from California and has a doctorate degree in chemical engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles. Denise has 30 years of environmental experience. She has written and published technical papers and scholarly articles for national conference proceedings and various peer-reviewed journals such as *Risk Analysis*, *J. Chemical Information Computer Science*, and *Industrial Engineering Chemistry Research*. She is currently writing the Earth Kids series of books addressing various important environmental issues. This project is being written in collaboration with Lisa Murdock. Through ecological and environmental science fiction, we have the opportunity to educate our youth about creating a sustainable lifestyle, with clean water and air, biodiversity, and environmental justice. Please visit our website at <https://earthkidssuperheroes.com>.

Earth Kids: Environmental Superheroes_Story 21 is the first book in the series and is available on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/1070544027>.

Leslie Jones



Leslie has written for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara based newspapers and magazines for over 25 years. She's also written for national / international wildlife and travel magazines. She recently published two books which were promoted by the University of Hawaii's (at Hilo) Heritage Center and was invited for a book signing. She was also included in a book of short stories for the Island of Hawaii's Cultural Center. (Her family has strong, historic ties with the sugar plantation industry.) Currently, Leslie is working on a natural history book highlighting coastal areas between Santa Barbara and Monterey. Her writing publishing credits can be found in her blog [The Roaming Pen](#).

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New Members

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Teresa Rhyne



Teresa Rhyne is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of numerous dog-related memoirs, including *The Dog Lived (And So Will I)*, *The Dogs Were Rescued (and so Was I)*, and *Poppy In The Wild*, which will be released on October 6th, 2020. *The Dog Lived* not only hit #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, but also #1 on the Wall Street Journal bestseller list and #6 on the USA Today best-seller list, has been printed in six different languages, and was on the bestseller list in Brazil for seventeen weeks. She lives in Paso Robles with her partner Chris and their 3 adorable beagles. Teresa's writing can be followed at www.teresrhyne.com, www.facebook.com/thedoglived, and @teresarhyne on Twitter.

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Please notify NightWriters of any change in address or email: jkon50@gmail.com. Join NightWriters and send dues or renewal checks (payable to SLO NightWriters) to: SLO NightWriters, PO Box 2986, Paso Robles, CA 93447. Or join/renew online through our website: www.slomightwriters.org and pay with a credit card.

Monthly Meetings

NightWriters' Evening Meetings: the second Tuesday of every month, year round. We encourage interested visitors to join us. Admission is free; refreshments served. Next Meeting: TBD, at United Church of Christ, 11245 Los Osos Valley Road, San Luis Obispo 93405.

General meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Round Table presentations start at 5:15 p.m. Writers' Critique Groups: Free for members, \$5 for non-members. These groups read and critique each other's work and discuss the business of writing. Visitors are always welcome. For details, visit our website: www.slomightwriters.org.

Kudos, Kudos, Kudos...

Terry Sanville

Terry's short story, ***A Street Without Secrets***, will appear in the June 2020 issue of [The Santa Barbara Literary Journal](#).

Terry's flash fiction story ***Diet Margarita*** will be published online in an upcoming edition of [Writers Resist](#). This is a dystopian story about armed bands of crazed seniors (GLA - Geezer Liberation Army) who are disgusted with their treatment by the federal government during the Covid-42 pandemic.

Jim Aarons

Jim has published his second podcast ***Perfume and Gasoline***, a chapter from his autobiography ***Fear of Failure***. Listen to his stories at [Fear of Failure Podcasts](#).

Have Kudos to Crow About?

Do you have a recent article or story published in a local, national or even international print or online magazine? Or a book published?

How about a review, or an award, honor or recognition of your writing?

If so, we'd like to know about it. To have your literary kudos included in *WordSmiths*, send an email to slonnewsletter@gmail.com by the 20th of the month.

Sunshine Corner

Need a Little Sunshine?

Into every life a little rain might fall, times when we long for sunshine, but no one notices.

NightWriters would like to send a card to any of its members who are ill, have lost a loved one, had surgery or an accident, but we don't always hear about it.

So, Fellow Writers, we need you!



Please email me, Judythe Guarnera: judy.guarnera@gmail.com and let me know when someone you know needs a little sunshine.

Last Bar Standing

by Judith Amber

Her Song

The hard core supporters of conviviality
And boozy cheer gather
At the last bar standing.
Where else can I write poetry
To a live jazz trio that also plays
Bossa Nova and hard rock?

Certainly not in the silence of home
Where I might sequester, self insulate..
There no one belts out "*Baby You're No Good.*"
No one is there to ogle my ass,
No meandering bar conversations
With instant friends.
In the silence of home I hear
An echo of a snatch of song,
"*The Sound of Silence*" and my breathing,
Sneeze or cough go unnoticed, unremarkable, harmless.

His Song

I need a new song, like "*Corona Blues*"
Or "*Virus Got Me Laid Down Low.*"
But no, you can't keep this good man down.
Or that good woman over yonder, now locked up
In an ivory tower called 'social distancing!'
So I say to that woman:
"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair
And I will climb up to you
Bearing a bottle of premium scotch
Or an award-winning zinfandel.
I'll plug in my instrument
And sing you a song
Like "*Sweet Baby James*" or
"*The Night They Closed Old Dixie Down.*"
Cause a little booze, carefully tended,
Goes a long way and together
We'll be the last bar standing."

The Child

by Susan Tuttle

Never again will I trust that child. I thought we had an understanding, a meeting of the minds, so to speak. But it didn't take long for me to realize that Aradon would do only what Aradon wanted to do. And damn to anyone else in the universe.

I know what you're thinking. I'm his mother, it's my job to train him, teach him. Control him. But I'd like to see you try it. I lost control early on, though I didn't realize it, and there's no way to regain it. I don't think anyone can control my little imp.

It started small.

"I can't stay long, I need to drop this little guy at the sitter. I just hope the weather holds. If it rains today," I said to Listia as we ambled with the kids in strollers, her daughter, my son, along the forest pathway, "I won't be able to get to Dravia to choose the flowers for Kembla's wedding." I looked up at the lowering sky and shuddered. "She'll be so upset if I don't have the flowers she wants."

"It'll be fine." Listia touched my arm and calmness flowed through me—one of her many talents. "The forecast doesn't call for rain until late tomorrow. You'll have plenty of time to—"

A huge, fat drop plopped on the top of Listia's head. My son clapped his hands. Another drop hit her forehead, ran down into her eyes. A dozen or more other drops drenched my head. Aradon squealed with delight; my heart caught in my throat. I leaned down and looked him in the face.

"Are you doing this?"

I spoke in a low tone I hoped only he could hear. He blinked at me and waived his chubby little arms like a sweet innocent waif. But I saw the gleam in his eye, the self-centered ego that flashed across his dewy face, and I shook my head.

"Stop it right now, Aradon. It's dangerous to fool around with the weather."

He blinked his big blue-green eyes at me and grinned. The light patter turned into a downpour, then into a flood. I never did get those flowers, I was too busy keeping us from drowning. And obtaining a boat so we could get home.

I thought maybe his father could help, but Jonahel just shook his head, patted Aradon on the head and said, "That's my boy."

Three weeks later, Listia and I met again in the forest, this time for coffee at the cafe that had opened at the foot of the waterfall that cascaded in the place where we'd stood when the rains first started. Before we left I pleaded with Aradon to be good. No abrupt changes in weather patterns. No adjustments to geology, geography or astronomy.

"Promise me," I ordered, my index finger raised in front of his face. "Or you can't go with me to meet Listia. You promise?"

He'd learned four new words that week: Mama, Dada, yeth and no. He smiled, said "yeth," and hugged my neck.

Stupid me, I believed him.

"I lost the wedding," I told Listia as I sipped coffee and watched the cataract spill down the cliff in the ongoing rain. "Not just because of the flowers. The chapel and the reception hall got flooded out."

"That's too bad. But at least it's pretty here, prettier than it was. And look; aren't those skeeto flowers growing out of the waterfall? How did that happen? I thought they didn't like too much water."

I peered into the distance. She was right. Lovely red and fuchsia desert skeetos pushed up from the water, their petals shining with moisture. I looked at Aradon. He grinned back at me.

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"No, don't," I whispered. "You promised."
Aradon giggled, waved his hands and the entire cafe gasped. Around the base of the waterfall lovely globes began to float, entire worlds that until that second had revolved around one star or another somewhere in the cosmos. I had the feeling that if I had a magnifying glass I would have been able to

see miniature people going about their business. Or racing around in panic.

So, you tell me. Could you control a child like that? A child who can rearrange the universe at will? Because, obviously, I can't.

No matter how many times Aradon says, "yeth," I never again will trust that child.



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Contact me at: editme1@yahoo.com

Sheep Gut Strings

by Martha Stromberg

Grazing on pastoral land, behold the
Gentle sheep, silent as the sun does fall

All your life, your little heart was beating
Content on nature's bounty you thus fed
Without care, your little tongue a-bleating
When human hands quickly grabbed your head
Chemical thrills ran through your modest frame
As the steely blade gave you your last breath
Entrails spilt on the earthen ground
Scooped up pieces of the butcher's art, alas
thy fate had turned towards the art of sound
Quickly, send thy pieces up ahead

Cold water for meat and fat separating
Machine pressing and liquid spewing
Squeeze elastic mucosa from the tubing
Measure casing and salt for curing
Soda ash, lye or wine rehydrating
Smooth and rough side on the horn a-splitting
Sulfur dioxide for the whitening
Polishing, twisting, a bit of resting
Then oil and cut and thread the ends
Coil up in package and meet new friend

Musician toils long and hard for glory
Hearts and strings the two doth marry
Now you bleat on an antique wooden frame
The supreme glow of Stradivari
Kissed full on by the horse's noble tail
And master fingers gliding on their tips
Round drops of honey notes pour forth in gales
The breathless crowd, the thrilling elation
With thoughts of you at pasture, little lamb
For your sacrifice, the standing ovation

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We will also accept original photographs, and unpublished Flash Fiction between 400-800 words from current members. Excerpts from published works, if they stand alone as their own mini-story, are also acceptable. We are also interested in articles, kudos and event notices. And if you have any other ideas for content, please let me know.

Send all submissions as attachments to: slonwnnewsletter@gmail.com, and put NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION in the subject line. We're all writers... so, take advantage of this opportunity to be published in your newsletter.

Steve Derks, Editor

NightWriters REVIEW BOARD

As writers, we need to read in order to see what others are doing. We also find out what works and what doesn't, what we need to avoid and what we want to incorporate into our own bag of skills.

So, as long as we're reading, why not read other members' books and write reviews for them? It's a win-win for everyone: we learn by reading, and authors garner those all-important reviews for their work.

NightWriters has set up a Review Board, where we connect member readers with member writers' new works. Below you will

find a listing of members who are willing to read and review (on Amazon, Goodreads, or their other favorite review site) specific works by other members. You must be a NightWriter member in good standing to take advantage of this board. If you have a new book for review, just contact the reader(s) listed here, and arrange to have a book sent to them. Please check carefully to make sure your genre fits the genres each person reads. Have fun!

Review Board Members*

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****To be added to our Review Board listing, write to: slonwnnewsletter@gmail.com and put Review Board in the subject line.***