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President's Letter

by Janice Konstantinidis

Dear Fellow NightWriters,

When you read this I will most likely be home from my travels with many memories of my 'Parisian' family and a lovely city.

Now it's time to get back to work. We have board elections in November. Many thanks are due to the Election Committee for their time and effort getting the process underway. Kudos Tina and Pat!

The time is now to think about what we want the future of SLO NightWriters to be. What can we do that will encourage writers on the Central Coast in the years to come? Now is the time to *be* the future of SLO NightWriters by submitting your name to the Election Committee for a board elected or appointed position. You can do this at: slonwmembership@gmail.com. The nominating period is open until October 19.

The board that assembles in January will have many vital tasks to accomplish and only with the support of you, the members, will we be able to set and accomplish our goals.

Please read the Election Information in this newsletter for details. And please attend the November Zoom meeting and vote!

Australian Swift Parrot

A colorful cocky was he,
as he nibbled a succulent tree.
A Gum tree by name,
well known for its fame,
as Eucalyptus diddle dee dee .

Janice Konstantinidis



I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting. Here's to your good health!

Janice Konstantinidis



Photo by Lorraine Flakemore

General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, October 12

Forrest Gander

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Forrest Gander

Is There A Relationship Between Poetry and Ecology?

As globalization draws us together and industrialization and human population pressures take their toll on natural habitats, as species of plants and animals flicker and are snuffed from the earth, it may be worthwhile to ask whether an ethnocentric view of human beings as a species independent from others underpins our exploitation of natural resources and sets into motion dire consequences.

What we have perpetrated on our environment has certainly affected a poet's means and material. But can poetry be ecological? Can it display or be invested with values that acknowledge the economy of interrelationship between human and non-human realms? Aside from issues of theme and reference, how might syntax, line break, or the shape of the poem on the page express an ecological ethics? If our perceptual experience is mostly palimpsestic or endlessly juxtaposed and fragmented; if events rarely have discreet beginnings or endings but only layers, duration, and transitions; if natural processes are already altered by and responsive to human observation, how does poetry register the complex interdependency that draws us into a dialogue with the world?

Forrest will also talk about his experience as an editor of the poetry series at University of California Press and of Lost Roads Publishers, and to delve into literary subjects of interest to members.

Bio

Forrest Gander, a writer and translator with degrees in geology and literature, was born in the Mojave Desert and taught at Harvard and Brown Universities. Awarded the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for [Be With](#) and fellowships from the Guggenheim, Whiting and United Artists foundations, Gander has most recently published [Twice Alive](#), a book focused on human and non-human intimacies. Gander translates books by poets from Spain, Latin America, and Japan. He lives in California.

Find out more about Forrest Gander at: www.forrestgander.com



General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, November 9

Miguel A. Casellas-Gil

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Miguel A. Casellas-Gil

A Behind the Scenes Look at Earned Media to Build Your Brand

Getting the media's attention is just the first step when it comes to promoting your book or your brand through print, online, TV, radio, and podcast interviews. How you leverage your media successes is the real key for getting the most mileage out of the power of the media.

After all, you can't just wish and hope the right people will see your great interview or notice your quote in a magazine. You gained enormous credibility when the media recognized that you have something important to say. Now it's up to you to incorporate those media appearances into your marketing and let people know that when the media needed someone who could speak with authority on your area of expertise, they turned to you.

Miguel Casellas-Gil, Creative Director & Strategist at [Advantage Forbes Books](#), will take you behind the scenes and show you how PR professionals get the media's attention and leverage the results.

Bio

Miguel Casellas-Gil is a vibrant, creative, and passionate communications specialist with over 15 years of public and media relations experience.

Prior to joining News & Experts (Part of Advantage Forbes Books), Miguel worked in public relations for over a decade, managing national and international clients, including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and not-for-profit organizations.

At News & Experts, Miguel has helped authors and professionals in multiple industries build and amplify their personal brand and authority through the power of the media.

As the Creative Director and Strategist, he oversees the creative strategy and execution of publicity campaigns, generating results with the most important news organizations in the US like The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, The New York Times, CNN, and Fox. Around the globe, Miguel has developed relationships with editors, journalists, and producers in The Times & Sunday Times, Financial Times, Capital, South China Morning Post, The Daily Telegraph, CNBC Asia, and Bloomberg Asia. Miguel holds two bachelor's degrees, one in Marketing from the University of Puerto Rico and the second one in Corporate Communications from the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico.



General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, December 14

Open Mic

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Open Mic for SLO NightWriter Speakers

Your Chance to Tell Your Story and Share with Fellow NightWriters

We are holding an "open mic" event on December 14, 2021. This is an opportunity to talk about the work you are doing, books published, poetry readings, story telling and more. This is an event by our members for our members and a great way to reconnect in the aftermath of Covid-19. The event will be conducted on Zoom.

What to Do

If you would like to participate, please send an email to our Program Director, Steven Mintz, at smintz@calpoly.edu. Please include a short statement about your presentation. Contact Steve if you have any questions.

Notices

Speakers Needed for 2022

Our Program Director, Steven Mintz, would like to invite members to speak at one of the meetings in 2022. One purpose is to showcase the amazing talent we have in SLO NightWriters. Addressing the members is a great way to share your ideas, accomplishments, and passion. It also is a networking opportunity. Covid permitting, we hope that our monthly meetings will be held in-person in 2022 at the usual meeting site, the United Church of Christ at 11245 Los Osos Valley Road in SLO. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month.

What to Do

If you are interested in speaking, please contact Steve Mintz at smintz@calpoly.edu and provide a couple of sentences about your topic. Also, be sure to include one or two dates that you are available.

If you know of someone in the community who would be an excellent speaker, please contact Steve and, if possible, provide their email address or phone contact.

Notices

SLO NightWriters Election Information

BACKGROUND

Did you know SLO NightWriters is holding elections for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary? Since the elected Board members appoint our organization's non-elected Board positions, this will enable us to refresh our appointed positions as well.

This is an opportunity for everyone to pitch in with the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our organization thriving. Please see the list and descriptions below of both the elected and appointed Board officer positions as well as other volunteer opportunities in the organization. If you are interested in helping with any of these, the Election Committee needs to hear from you as soon as possible at slonwmembership@gmail.com.

ELECTED POSITIONS

Our bylaws require these positions to be voted into office at our general meeting in November every two years.

- Nominations close on October 19 – email the Elections Committee at slonwmembership@gmail.com.
- You may nominate yourself or someone else – we will contact nominees to inform them of their nomination and determine their interest in running. Your name will be kept anonymous.
- Candidates must submit a 250-word statement to be published in the November newsletter and on the website.

President: The President serves as the official representative of the organization and ensures compliance with our bylaws, board policies, and state and federal requirements. The President presides over all meetings and is responsible for overseeing committee and chairperson appointments and activities. The president works with board members to develop strategic initiatives. The president

calls and conducts meetings of the board members and ensures that the board's directives are implemented and monitored.

Vice-President: The Vice-president performs the duties of the President in his/her absence and performs other duties as assigned by the President or the Board. The President may delegate special assignments to the Vice-president.

Secretary: The Secretary attends monthly Board Meetings to record the decisions and deliberations of the board. The Secretary keeps an accurate record of meeting minutes and presents minutes for examination and approval at subsequent meetings. The Secretary records the meeting time (start and finish), the place, and members and guests present.

Treasurer: The Treasurer handles all financial matters for the organization including maintaining complete and accurate records of all financial transactions and coordinating the preparation of state and federal filings. The Treasurer presents monthly reports of all income and expenditures at each Board meeting and serves as an authorized signatory on organization accounts.

APPOINTED POSITIONS

The Election Committee will be compiling names of people interested in the following positions or helping out with them. These names will be given to the newly elected Board. Some of these positions are currently vacant. Some occupants of these positions may want to continue on, or may be willing to step down if they know someone else is willing to take on the job, and others plan to vacate their position regardless

If you are interested, please email us at slonwmembership@gmail.com.

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Notices

SLO NightWriters Election Information

(Continued from page 6)

Programs Director: The Programs Director secures speakers for the monthly general meetings. This includes coordinating speaking dates, costs, and logistics as well as providing Board updates of future meeting programs.

Membership Director: The Membership Director contacts new members to determine their goals and advise them of related organization resources and activities. Duties also include greeting new members at meetings and tracking and updating the Board of monthly membership figures.

Publicity Director: The Publicity Director oversees efforts to increase public awareness of the organization through public outreach. Activities may include coordinating and staffing an information booth at community events and networking with local print media to publicize club activities.

Contest Director: The Contest Director manages all aspects of Board approved writing contests (e.g. the annual Golden Quill Writing Contest). This includes developing contest rules for Board approval, overseeing submissions, and judging logistics.

Newsletter Editor: The Newsletter Editor oversees the publication of the monthly *Wordsmiths* newsletter. This includes soliciting and handling of submissions, formatting, review, and distribution.

Social Media Director: The Social Media Director oversees efforts to increase public awareness of the organization and its scheduled activities through electronic, and social media channels. Duties include monthly coordination with the Board to promote program speakers and upcoming events.

Critique Group Coordinator: The Critique Group Coordinator administers the critique group program, ensuring that critique groups are conducted according to SLO NightWriter

policies. Duties include assisting members to form new critique groups and adhere to guidelines, updating the website listing, and helping critique group leaders fill openings.

Webmaster: The Webmaster maintains the organization website and initiates global membership emails at the direction of the President.

Historian: The Historian creates and maintains records and/or scrapbooks of memorable organization activities and reminds the Board and members of upcoming milestones and other important dates, such as our anniversary.

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Let us know if you are interested in any of the following activities. When we start meeting in person again, we will need additional help in many of these areas.

Critique Table Facilitators: The Critique Table Facilitators run the critique table at general meetings, including establishing and implementing submission, reading, and critiquing guidelines.

Hospitality: Coordinates the purchase and setting up of refreshments at regular club meetings and club sponsored activities.

Meeting Greeter: Greets members and guests as they arrive at meetings, coordinates the sign-in process, and directs attendees to their activities of interest.

Sunshine Chair: The Sunshine Chair provides outreach to club members who are known to have become ill, experienced loss, or are going through other life changing events.

Thanks for considering how you can contribute to SLO NightWriters.

Your election committee,

Tina Clark & Pat Gimer

Notices

Monthly Online Zoom Meetings

During the pandemic isolation, we are offering online meetings and presentations via Zoom (see [page 3](#) for details of our October 12 General Meeting). We encourage interested visitors to join us. The meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month. The Critique Table will begin at 5:15 pm and the General Meeting will begin at 6:30 pm.

If you have any ideas or comments about our online presentations, please contact our Program Director, Steven Mintz, at smintz@calpoly.edu

Visitors are always welcome. For details, visit our website: www.slonightwriters.org

How to Join the Monthly Zoom Critique Table

1. If you desire to have your work critiqued, send your chosen two pages to Terry Sanville (tsanville@sbcglobal.net) by the Saturday before the meeting.
2. Login to the monthly Zoom meeting a few minutes before 5:15 pm on the day of the meeting using the link below, the link on our website, or the link provided in the email that is sent to members. You are welcome to join us even if you just want to listen and hear the critiques.
3. If you have any specific issues or questions you'd like covered at the Critique Table, just let Terry (tsanville@sbcglobal.net) know before the meeting.

The Zoom Meeting Link

[Click HERE to join the Zoom meeting](#)

Submit Stories, Photos and Ads to the Newsletter

We will publish advertisements for NightWriters' books and book writing-related events. This advertising is Free For Members. Please provide the graphic (book cover or other graphic) for the announcement.

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 us know.

Send all submissions as attachments to: slonnewsletter@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.

Events in October

October 12, 2021 6:30 - 8:00 pm

SLO NightWriters Critique Table and General Meeting on Zoom

See pages [3](#) and [8](#) for details of this meeting.

October 13, 2021 6:30 - 8:00 pm

SLO Library Workshop on the Writing Process by Anne Janzer on Zoom

Sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Library, Anne Janzer is giving a 90-minute interactive workshop on the writing process. It is free to attend on Zoom, but registration is required. To learn more and to register, visit: <https://slolibrary.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=25412&backTo=Calendar&startDate=2021/10/01>

October 16, 2021 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Sisters in Crime Northern California All-Day Book Workshop

On Saturday, October 16, the Sisters in Crime Northern California chapter is hosting an all-day workshop called "Getting the Best Bang for Your Buck." It's all virtual. Anne Janzer is doing the opening session on book marketing basics. There are sessions on author newsletters, book trailers, and ads. You don't have to be a crime writer, and at \$35, it's a steal. Learn more here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/get-the-best-bang-for-your-book-tickets-166718315971>

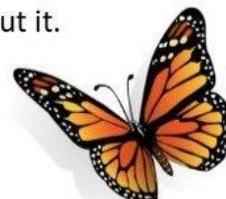
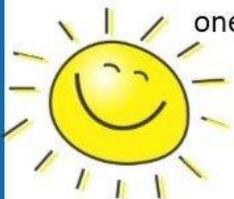
Sunshine Corner

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.

New Books By Members

33 Ways Not to Screw Up Your Business Emails by Anne Janzer

Business runs on emails, yet we rarely give them enough thought. Carelessness can lead to embarrassment, damaged relationships, or worse. And too often, our messages are misunderstood, misfiled, or ignored.

In a world filled with remote collaboration and virtual teams, people who master email writing rise above the noise. You can be one of those people.

Learn how to make your emails work *for* you rather than against you with this short, practical guide.

Topics include

- Crafting effective subject lines
- Writing emails that people respond to
- Protecting yourself from accidental misfires

Whether you're just starting in your career or have been emailing for decades, you'll find valuable advice and tips you can put into practice right away.

Read it now and see the difference you can make with a few simple practices and habits. The book is available at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09FFDC1VH/>

BIO

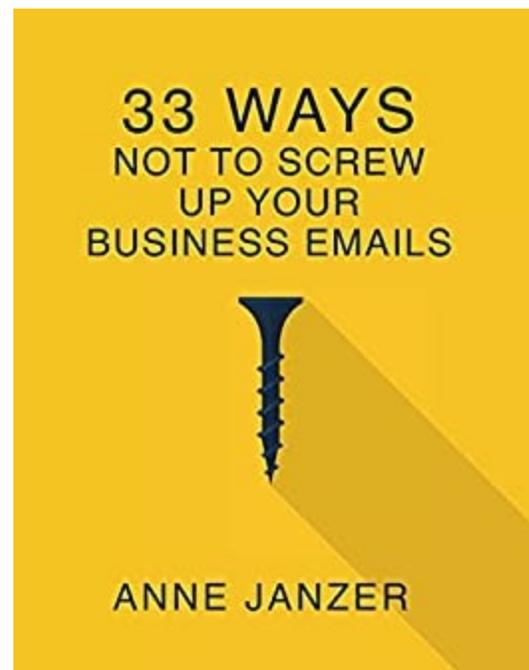
Anne Janzer is an award-winning author, unabashed writing geek, and cognitive science fan on a mission to help people communicate more effectively.

As a professional writer, Anne spent years writing for scores of technology companies. That experience led her to write her first book, about marketing for the subscription economy.

Once she started writing books, she was hooked. She has now written five books about writing.

Anne blogs about writing at annejanzer.com, where you can sign up for her Writing Practices list or online courses.

To stay up to date on her latest books, follow Anne on Amazon at [amazon.com/Anne-Janzer](https://www.amazon.com/Anne-Janzer).



In Memoriam

Ruth Starr

We are sad to inform you of the passing of our friend and fellow NightWriter, Ruth Starr, on September 16. Ruth joined SLO NightWriters in 2015 and was noted for her wit and good humor. She counted writing, music, art and golf among her many activities. She is shown here with her beloved dog Shelly, who died just a few months before Ruth.

If you have any memories of Ruth that you would like to share, please send them to slonnewsletter@gmail.com, and we will post them for everyone to read.



Critique Groups Are Up and Running

Are you looking to join a Critique Group? Many have begun to meet in person again or have been meeting on zoom and are looking for new members. Check out the website listing [SLO NightWriters - SLO NW Critique Groups](#) to see if one is a good match for you. (Make sure to refresh your browser to make sure you are seeing the most current listing – there are five groups listed.)

President: Janice Konstantinidis
Vice-President: Vacant
Secretary: Leonard Carpenter
Treasurer: Steve Derks
Program Director: Steven Mintz
Membership Coordinator: Jim Aarons
Critique Group Coordinator: Tina Clark
Social Media/Publicity Coordinator:
 Meagan Friberg
Contest Director: Vacant
Welcome Committee: Vacant
Sunshine Chair: Judythe Guarnera
Website Master: Janice Konstantinidis
Web Assistant: Steve Derks
Newsletter Editor: Steve Derks
Photographer: Vacant

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.

TIPS AND TIDBITS

by Judythe Guarnera

AN ENTRY FOR AN INTENDED BLOG

Written in 2017



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Few of my writing columns focus on publishing and or marketing. When I completed my novel, *Twenty-Nine Sneezes: A Journey of Healing*, and self-published it on Amazon in 2017, I made a conscious decision not to spend much time on marketing. I also decided I would concentrate on shorter works from that point forward.

Already seventy-eight, I didn't regret the time (2-3 years) it took me to write my fiction novel. But I'd always enjoyed writing essays and short fiction, memoir, and occasional poetry. I wanted instant gratification—the joy of writing and completing work in a matter of days or weeks.

So, I played at marketing my book. I spoke to book clubs, attended author fairs, and presented for writing organizations where I could sell my novel. I gave away copies and I did sell some books. I was content with that choice, although it didn't serve my purpose for writing the book very well.

I wrote *Twenty-Nine Sneezes*, because I wanted to help victimized people, as well as the general population, relate to the struggle of the victim in my story and gain an understanding of their trauma and recovery through a medium other than technical writing on the subject.

For those of you, especially younger NightWriters, you'll likely take a more aggressive approach to marketing your work. I applaud those efforts.

Yet, I would recommend you use your blog, or groups on Facebook, to make contact with those whose life experiences might make them likely readers of your story. I did find a group, and even started one geared for my targeted audience—victims, their families and friends, and anyone with a compassionate heart.

Following is the first blog I wrote and published on my author page on Facebook. I'm hoping it might give you ideas on how you might use your own blog to gather readers.

* * *

Ah, the celebration when rescuers find and return a kidnapped young woman to her family; the joy, when doctors release a "wounded warrior," who has spent months in a VA hospital, to his or her family; the sweet relief when a coed raped on a college campus returns to classes.

Viewers share a collective sigh in the first instance. This can be experienced, not only by the family, but by the millions of people who'd read of the horror of a survivor's trauma, and may have experienced the all-too-real fear that the victim might already be dead when the news hits the media.

The plight of the soldier is different these days given the marvels of modern medicine which takes a shattered body, amputates appendages, and nurtures that body back to what resembles health. People who would have died in previous wars, return to civilization, less than whole in body, and often

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shattered in mind and spirit.

The college student walks the campus where her attack took place, conscious of the stares of others who know of her plight, wanting only to melt unnoticed into the hordes of *normal* students.

For these individuals and for many who survive their victimizations and attempt to resume a *normal* life, the rescue is just the beginning.

As a society, trauma and tragedy bombard us, often more than the human psyche can absorb and deal with. Individuals can become so inured to daily doses of murder and mayhem, they may feel little or no response to the latest reporting.

A hopefully smaller segment of the population seems drawn to the media reporting of violence with a sense of excitement, as if they were reading a novel, not connecting to the victims with empathy.

There have always been those who, for whatever reason, ignore the stories of tragedy around them, unable or unwilling to engage their minds in the misfortunes of their fellow travelers along life's path. These days with the immediacy and speed of the media, that group has increased.

Others today feel great empathy and compassion toward those victimized but find themselves so overwhelmed by the negative news they hear and read, that they tune it out in order to maintain balance in their own lives.

In *Twenty-Nine Sneezes* the story deals with the struggles and challenges in the life of a teenager rescued from her abusive father at the age of ten. She struggles to overcome her early trauma, and to learn to trust that she is more than the sexual acts perpetrated on her.

PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, is not a new term, but I strove to shed light and understanding on what a complex process it is and the need for awareness, understanding and support from family, friends, and the general population. Only with that kind of support will victims successfully travel that perilous journey, which sometimes lasts for the rest of their lives.

Watch this blog for further insight into that journey.

Note:

Although the last line promises more, this was how I ended the 2017 blog, so this is the end.

To travel the protagonist's journey with her, you can check out my novel and anthologies in which I've been published at amazon.com/author/judythegarnera

In the Rhythm of Writing

Judythe Guarnera

THE WRITER'S CORNER

by Judythe Guarnera



LAST CHANCE FOR A FREE 3-5 PAGE EDIT

Write your own piece or write to the prompt below

What's not to like about this FREE offer?

- Your work is published in the Wordsmiths newsletter, and you earn a writing credit for you writing resume/CV.
- If you haven't been published before, you'll have the pleasure of being read and applauded by your fellow NightWriters.
- You receive a free edit of your work by a professional editor who has edited four anthologies, books, and shorter works

This month's Prompt: Placing Blame

A character of your choice gets accused of something, whether it's not completing a task, cheating on a test, murdering another character, or a range of different possible problems. Feel free to use a true story.

(You may respond to the prompt or submit a story you've written that meets the guidelines.)

Deadline: October 15.

Guidelines:

Entries must be double-spaced, Times Roman 12 pt., at least 750 words and no more than 1000 words. Please spell-check your work before submitting. Stories may be fiction, non-fiction, essay, memoir. Be funny, serious, angry—whatever.

Be sure to add your name and contact email.

Send submissions for the November issue to judy.guarnera@gmail.com by October 15. Be sure to put "Free Edit" in the subject line.

Moved or Changed Email?

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.slonightwriters.org and pay with a credit card.

Kudos, Kudos, Kudos...

Terry Sanville

Terry Sanville's short story, *Silence*, will be published online by [Open Ceilings Magazine](#), a print and online journal published by UC Davis.

Terry's short story, *Old Man Hands*, will be published in the upcoming print edition of [Avalon Literary Review](#), a quarterly literary journal from Orlando, Florida.

Have Kudos to Crow About?

Do you have an article or story published, or soon to be published, in a local, national or 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.

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

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

Jackson's Plan

by C S Perryess

Sharp stabs of lightning bloodied the blue-black sky, throwing shadows and streaks and danger across the hunched backs of the laboring men. Their blue cotton work shirts were dark with rain and sweat. The shovels and picks in their hands swung rhythmically, the metal glinting in the silver flashes from above, as did the cold iron of the shackles linking them ankle to ankle.

They toiled, the mud sticky and thick in their boots. Even the full moon couldn't pierce those bullying clouds. Jackson stood and wiped his wide brown brow, looking out over the valley to the vulnerable little town in the vale. Jackson's determination doubled as his pick flew at a new pitch, recognizing the irrelevance of the car he had stolen back in '44, ten years ago, and those three dead boys, and the manslaughter conviction.

Blades of lightning played on Acton's glasses as he fought the sticky clay mud, scooping soggy shovelfuls up the embankment, as did Parsons, Hinejosa, Squeak, Barret, and LaMonde, and further down the line of shackled men, Andrews, Bright, and Little Ben. The stubborn grating sound of pick and shovel on wet scree would have filled the air if the thunderclaps and downpour would have let up at all. The rain nearly screamed—its cry the never-ending scream of the violated, battering the men's ears like shrieks from a tortured past.

Of the fifteen inmates, Martens alone was free of shackles. He pushed the wheelbarrow up and down a muddy, flowing rut as the others filled and emptied, filled and emptied. Martens' streaked and soaking

shirt fit tightly around his giant arms and muscular back, his face and hands imperceptible in the black night. The thunder cracked and the huge man flinched—too much like the shotgun he had used on another long ago rainy night.

They slaved on. Like a precision machine they worked in the downpour—fifteen imperfect men and one imperfect cell block captain. The thunder rattled its chains, and on occasion each man looked down toward the quiet, vulnerable town, and up toward the hills, where the dam would soon burst—up toward the lake and the prison, then higher still to the onslaught from the heavens.

Jackson's plan just might work. Maybe this huge trough, this banked pile of rock and rebar and mud, these seven and a half straight hours of labor, Barrett's pulled quad, and Squeak's bloody foot would be worth it all. Maybe, right here where the canyon narrowed and branched, maybe this monumental last-minute effort would divert the waters from the defenseless town. Maybe LaMonde's wife, and Barrett's and Jackson's folks, Hinejosa's girl and Bright's little boy, maybe that volunteer who'd worked so hard with Squeak and Martens. Maybe the whole town would survive.

Captain Mayfield had been crazy to agree to this team—this group of men out at night—a wild night at that—but Mayfield also had kin in town, and he was as soaked, his muscles as strained, working as hard as the rest. He shoveled feverishly from ditch to barrow—thinking maybe Jackson's plan might work—maybe these men and their idea-- maybe.

Elegy for Ruth

by Janice Konstantinidis

A bird stood on his feeding post,
waiting for his gentle host.
Alas it heard she was no more,
her spirit flown from yonder door.

Her songs unwritten, unconstrained,
flowed melodic, as ordained,
her soul flowed gently through the air,
pain now gone; she has no care.

Fallen leaves lay, in shades of brown,
atonement for the summer's frown?
Or was it just the time of year,
that God would take our Ruth so dear.

Yom Kippur dawned and bid goodbye,
O blessed one who doth comply,
with songs fit to the great Mahzor,
repentant soul, as is the lore.

Pallbearers winged in feathered glory,
carrying tomes - her every story -
while birds of every size and hue,
sustained her gently as they flew.

Flower petals formed a line,
of phrases written - very fine.
Adding up to countless words,
some we know, some unheard.

A golden arch of mandolins,
caught the sun and warmed our skins.
Guitars in hundreds struck a chord,
and played Ruth's songs, a just reward.

Twenty golfcarts formed a guard,
for Ruth was held in high regard,
her handicap was never told,
her love of golf was never old.

Shelly watched with welcome heart,
'twas not for them to be apart.
Her passing caused a mighty blow,
or even fatal, who can know?

We give our thanks to our dear friend,
whose time on earth is at an end.
A higher journey yet unfolding,
graceful forms for her beholding.

Three is a Magic Number

by Steve Kliewer

One is the loneliest number. Two is a pair and leads to three. But three — Three is a Magic Number!

There are 3 aspects of this magic:

1. Counting:

When we count, we have three methods:

1. We make a one-to-one correspondence to a memorized list – one orange, two oranges, three oranges...
2. We group things.
3. We use math tricks.

The largest group that we can directly recognize is three. So, we mentally or physically organize things in groups of 2 or 3. Five is a group of two and three. For larger numbers we group groups.

Groups can then be added or multiplied:

1. Two groups of 5: $(2+3) + (2+3) = 10$.
2. Five groups of 3: $5 \times 3 = 15$.
3. A case of canned corn has 2 layers with 3 rows of 5 cans:
 $2 \times 3 \times 5 = 30$ cans

Thus, we start to use tricks of math that we learned instead of direct perception - addition and multiplication.

2. Measurement:

A single measurement of anything - air temperature, cookie weight, price of gasoline - gives us very little confidence in what to expect next. Only after three or more measurement do we have an idea of its random variation and trends.

As Auric Goldfinger told James Bond,

"Once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, but three times is enemy action".

Open a box of 100 chocolate chip cookies. You want to know how many chocolate chips went into making that boxful.

You count one cookie and find 12 chips. Not satisfied, you count another and find 10. So far, this is an average of 11 chips per cookie.

How many chips are needed to make those 100 cookies? You might guess 1100 chips per box. However, you still have no idea how good a guess this is.

You measure a third cookie and find 14 chips. Now the average is 12 chips per cookie with a variability of 2 chips higher or lower. More measurements will give even better information but at least 3 are required.

Understanding variability or trends provides real meaning far beyond a single measurement. For example, election polling of 45.3% gives one very little information about the meaning and likelihood of any predicted result especially when the "margin of error" (i.e., variation) is ± 10 percentage points. Such a poll is much more informative if the margin of error is ± 2 . A margin of ± 2 would almost guarantee a loss but ± 10 leaves it up in the air.

3. Pattern Recognition:

A pattern is a composite of characteristics shared by a group. Pattern recognition and grouping are essential to all forms of human creativity such as science, music, and

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writing.

Human language is constructed using words. Words are merely collective symbols for patterns of things.

Example: "Anger washed over him"

"Anger" and "Him" are collective symbols (groupings) for common types or patterns of emotion and individuals. "Washed" is a metaphor for a typical pattern of water flow.

One example cannot define a pattern. Two may begin to show a trend although this is often misleading. Three examples can show that a pattern may or may not exist. This is often used in jokes, writing, or rhetoric. It is the punchline, the hook, or the plot twist that forms the core of all of these.

The Rule of Three:

This shows up in many creative areas all using triplets of words, phrases, or sections.

In jokes, the first two lines suggest a pattern that the third line — the punchline — turns on its head.

Example of a Joke:

1. A dog walks into a bar and asks the bartender, "Do you have any jobs?"
2. The bartender replies, "Why don't you try the circus?"
3. The dog replies, "Why would the circus need a bartender?"

In story plots, the first two sections of a story build a tension that the third section — the twist — releases unexpectedly.

Story Plot examples:

In Oedipus Rex,

1. Oedipus kills the King and

2. Marries the Queen, thereby becoming the King.
3. Then the twist — He learns they were his parents.

In the "Time Enough at Last" episode of Twilight zone, Henry Bemis (Burgess Meredith) is a far-sighted bank teller and avid bookworm:

1. He is nagged about his reading by his wife and his boss.
2. He is the sole survivor of a nuclear war and now has time enough at last to read to his heart's content.
3. Then the twist — his glasses are shattered.

Slogans, mottos, & titles — Rhetorical devices — are often structured in threes, a tradition that grew out of oral storytelling and was first defined by Aristotle.

Rhetorical device examples:

1. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
2. Friends, Romans, Countrymen
3. Government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Generally, the repetition of a trio of comparable items is more satisfying, effective, and engaging for the reader or audience. Typically, brevity and rhythm combine in the most memorable or catchy phrases.

The Latin phrase "*omne trium perfectum*" (everything that comes in threes is perfect, or every set of three is complete) conveys the same idea as the rule of three.

Yes, three is a very magic number.

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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

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