



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

August 2017

Open Mic, and Competitions on the Way



Our popular annual event returns as “Open Mic (Share Your Hidden Talents with The Rest of Us)” on Thursday, August 3, starting at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. Participants will have 5-7 minutes each to present their original writings (nonpolitical and in good taste). Prose and poetry of all genres will find an appreciative audience, plus light refreshments to add to the high spirits.

This autumn, Ridge Writers will host two related events Friday-Saturday, Sept. 22-23, during Weird Weekend with an indie film shorts festival on Friday and the Third Annual Weird Storytelling Competition on Saturday afternoon. Films must reflect or relate to the stranger side of the desert. We haven’t quite worked out the rules for the filmfest, but we can reveal that for storytellers, truth is optional. Filmmakers and storytellers interested in participating must sign-up in advance at Red Rock Books. The weekend will conclude Saturday evening with “The Silent City” set in Ridgecrest 2063 A.D., a Mastery Mystery Productions interactive mystery by C.R. Rowenson.

Report on July Program – by Daniel Stallings

The Play’s the Thing

For our July meeting, Ridge Writers welcomed my company, Master Mystery Productions, as its speaker. I brought in the cast of our then upcoming production of *Ode to Agatha* – Monica Lorenz, Devanne Fredette, Nicole Johnson, Katie Cozine, Nicole Cepaitis, and myself – and we held a panel about writing with emotional impact and how we as actors divine emotional choices simply from the text. We also provided a live demo of concepts we presented in the panel and held a live

preview of *Ode to Agatha*.

Striving for emotional connection with your readers is so important. You want your readers to care about what happens, to become invested in the story and characters. You want there to be intensity in the emotions without telling anyone what



they are. Actors and directors are the same way. Oftentimes, with very little stage direction, they must pull out the emotion, tension, and tone of piece through nothing more than dialogue.

Writers work the same way. They have to put on solo shows and be actor, director, and producer all in one to have their characters and storylines resonate with readers. So thinking like an actor and director and how they create gestures, movements, and vocal qualities from a script can help create the drama you need in a story.

Mark Your Calendar...

The Four Steps to Building Marvelous Magic Systems

Thursday, September 7, 6:30
C. R. Rowenson, one of the co-founders of the new *Alive & Writing* podcast (“Writing is Hard; Being an Author is Harder”).

Oct. 5, **Samantha Dunn** – Executive Editor, *Orange Coast Magazine*

Nov. 2, **Jim Ardaiz**, retired California State Judge and former deputy district attorney talks about “Law and the Mystery Novel.”

I Believe in You



I want to tell a story. At the curtain call for a sold-out performance of *Ode to Agatha*, I presented awards created by my company to individuals involved with the production. One of these is the Diamond Mask Award for Excellence in Performance. It's awarded by audiences who vote for their favorite performances and is designed to recognize the huge talent in our valley.

One of my actresses was a clear winner. She put so much heart and work into her role, actually her first major role onstage. She charmed the crowd and was much loved by her cast and director. She totally earned it and was totally surprised when she won.

Afterwards, she told me that someone she loved told her she "couldn't act" just before she began *Ode to Agatha*.

I hear this story a lot, and it never fails to break my heart. Her loved one wasn't the only critic. I heard some too from "well-meaning" colleagues who warned me about casting her because of a speech issue she's had all her life. As a result, most directors in town often relegated her to the background and ignored her. I didn't listen. I cast her anyway. And audiences loved her.

A frequent attendee of those prior shows told me after *Ode to Agatha*: "Seriously, where has she been all this time? She blew me away! She was fabulous!" I wanted to say "In the background where people like to place her." As I said before, I hear these stories all the time. I've had actors who are blind, deaf, need supports to walk, and so on. I still cast them. Because they are wonderful to work with and give it their all.

So what is the moral of this story? Throughout your careers as writers, there will be people who do not believe in you. They may be strangers, loved ones, or even the little critic that lives in our heads. But someone will believe in you, will let you shine like the stars you are. It may be tomorrow. It may be in a couple of years. But it will happen.

Above anything else, I believe in all of you. _____

DOES ARE DUE

The California Writers Club allows a grace period through the end of September, but *please* do not drag it out. Give our treasurer a break! Pulling together the financial report demands time and effort.

Active members \$45/fiscal year July 1 – June 30
Associate members \$45/fiscal year July 1 – June 30
Youth members \$10/fiscal year July 1- June 30

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – position open
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
Historian – Maryann Butterfield
Member at Large – John Anderson
Newsletter, Interim editors – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal & Daniel Stallings
Programs & Publicity – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
State Rep – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Youth Coordinator – Daniel Stallings
Webmaster – Julianne Black

To reach any of these leaders, use ridgewriters@yahoo.com
Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters
and our website CWC-ridgewriters.org.

The Writers of the Purple Sage is the monthly newsletter of the Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch of the 108-year-old California Writer Club. Except where otherwise stated, all articles in this publication may be printed without special permission in newsletters of branches of the California Writers Club and in the State Bulletin, subject to the following conditions:

- a. The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
- b. The text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes.
- c. You must send a copy of the newsletter bearing the reprint to the author.

Contact the editor by mail at P.O. Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556 or by email, ridgewriters@yahoo.com. **SPECIAL NOTICE:** Photographs for publicity and newsletter uses are taken at all Ridge Writers events. By entering the venue, members and guests are granting permission that their likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.

Our actors discussed all the various methods they used to create the emotion in their characters-- from cold readings at auditions to performance. Some start with voice, others with body language. Some base it on the character's backstory and build them up from there. We talked about finding relationships between characters and learning how they all react to different situations. And for writers, we discussed tricks such as using the full human body to describe an emotion, which we demonstrated live for the crowd, and using active verbs and actions to broadcast how a character is feeling. A resource mentioned in the panel was *The Emotion Thesaurus* by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi, a wonderful book designed for writers that gives gestures that relay different kinds of emotions.

We ended the panel with a Q&A and the preview of *Ode to Agatha*, which went brilliantly. *Ode to Agatha* went on to sell out completely. It was a great panel, and thank you to the cast for being our guests at Ridge Writers!

Our Jack London Award Winners

We're proud of the Ridge Writers who have won the Jack London Award, the highest recognition each branch of CWC can give outstanding members.

The award was presented annually until 2005, and subsequently only once every two years.

- Maryann Butterfield 1997
- Casey Wilson 1998
- Rlee Peters 1999
- Judy Dutcher 2000
- Curt Danhauser 2001
- Judy Martin 2002
- Donna McCrohan Rosenthal 2003
- Holly Dworken Cooley 2004
- Liz Babcock 2005
- Allison Aubin 2007
- Steve Wersan 2009*
- Margaret Luebs 2013
- Daniel Stallings 2015
- Julianne DiBlasi Black 2017

*With a special Charmian London Award to Fran Wersan

SPOTLIGHT ON C. R. ROWENSON:

Not only will Clark give our September 7 program, but he has written the new interactive murder mystery "The Silent City," set in Ridgecrest 2063 A.D., for this year's Weird Weekend (see below).



Clark has spent the last several years distilling his experience into a Four-Stage System for Building Marvelous Magic Systems.

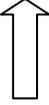
His process has already helped several authors strengthen their fictional magic systems and can be applied to any audience, medium, or genre.

WEIRD WEEKEND

Friday-Saturday, September 22-23

celebrating the stranger side of the desert –
A new indie shorts film festival on Friday, Third Annual Weird Storytelling Competition on Saturday afternoon and a Master Mystery Productions interactive murder mystery on Saturday evening, all three at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church.



CONTEST: Don't forget we have two of our own at Weird Weekend.  Come join us and be sure to tell your friends. Sign up in advance at Red Rock Books with your indie short film and/or to tell your story to win prizes, applause and bragging rights.

Planet Mojave at Book Expo

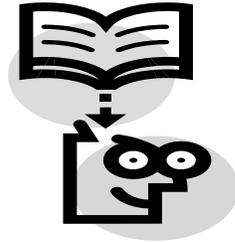
CONTEST: We do not have enough background to endorse it, but be advised of Aesthetica Creative Writing Award – prizes include £1,000 Poetry Winner, £1,000 Short Fiction Winner, short fiction should be no more than 2,000 words and poetry entries no more than 40 lines. Works previously published accepted. Deadline: 31 August 2017. For details and to submit, visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/cwa.

The East Sierra Branch (Ridge Writers) is the California Writers Club branch serving the eastern part of Kern County. Over the mountains on the west side of the county is our Bakersfield-based sister branch, Writers of Kern



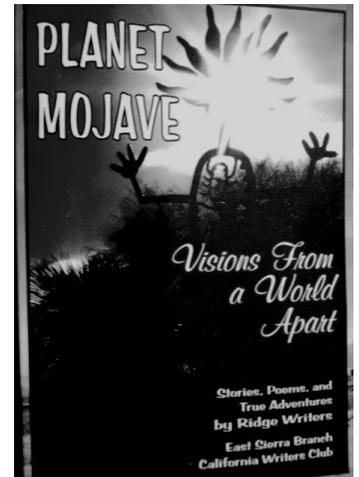
THE SAGE NEEDS AN EDITOR!

The wonderful, gifted, talented Liz Babcock served as editor of the *Sage* for a very, very long time. Recently, after giving us plenty of warning, she retired. We wish her rest, relaxation, and a world of exhilarating new activities and challenges.



*BUT,
BUT,
BUT...*

She leaves us with a gaping chasm. We sincerely hope to find a new editor for the *Sage*, and soon. Liz has offered to train her replacement, and the assignment represents an excellent opportunity to add to your set of literary and editorial skills and credits. If this prospect interests you, please contact president Daniel Stallings without further delay. Thanks.



Our book *Planet Mojave: Visions From a World Apart* is available at Jawbone Canyon Station, the Historic USO Building, the Maturango Museum, Red Rock Books, and online from our website. *Planet Mojave* went to Book Expo 2017!

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