



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

July 2017

What is Ode to Agatha?

A clue →



JULY 6 MEETING: MASTER MYSTERY PRODUCTIONS PANEL EXPLORES WRITING WITH EMOTIONAL IMPACT

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.

The July 6 Ridge Writers meeting will feature a panel of Master Mystery Productions actors past and present including favorites such as Skeleton Key and Diamond Mask Winners, Monica Lorenz and Katie Cozine (*The Last Garden Party* and *Bury Me in Paris*), Devanne Fredette (*The Last Garden Party*, *Bury Me in Paris*), and Skeleton Key Winner Calvin Johnson (*Goodbye Hollywood*, *GH: Rainbow's End*, *Ex Luna*). We and the audience will ask them questions about how they build characters from the text and what writers can do to add intensity to their work. We will have a live demonstration of the concepts we discuss. After the panel, there will be a live preview of Master Mystery Productions' latest show, *Ode to Agatha*, starring Monica Lorenz, Daniel Stallings, Devanne Fredette, Nicole Johnson, Katie Cozine, and Nicole Cepaitis, that will perform July 15 at 2 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church.

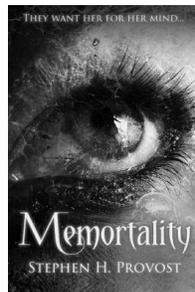
Report on June Speaker – by Andrew Sound



Our June speaker, Stephen H. Provost, gave us a new take on where writers get their ideas. His theme was “Making Connections – Using Non-fiction as an Inspiration for Fiction.” His writing career spans several genres – he is the managing editor of the weekly *Cambrian* newspaper, he has two non-fiction works

published, and a third in the works, and he had his new novel *Memortality* available at the meeting. The novel is the story of a woman who discovers she has the ability to bring people back to life through use of her eidetic (photographic) memory.

Stephen started his presentation with a long quote from Neil Gaiman in answer to the perennial question about where he gets his ideas – the punchline being that he makes them up, “out of my head,” and that ideas weren’t really important. Stephen disagreed with that last thought, and said ideas don’t have to be complex, just interesting. He then went on to tell us about his forthcoming book about *Highway 99 – California’s Main Street*. While writing



Mark Your Calendar...

Open Mic Night

August 3, 6:30 p.m.

This always popular, always fun annual event is open to members and the public. Read your original 5-7 minute work. We’ll serve refreshments.

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”) shares tips and insights.

Pay It Forward



Writers form communities. Whether it be by genre, style, or even just for the love of storytelling, writers have come together throughout the ages to support fellow wordsmiths. It's a tradition we at Ridge Writers – and the California Writers Club – have worked to maintain as we help our members grow as authors and give them encouragement and opportunities to make that transition from “Associate” to “Active.” We want our members to succeed. Across history, writers have been helping other writers through brainstorming, critique, networking, and connections that have shaped and preserved the art of writing for generations. In a way, we're paying it forward, one generation helping the next, one member helping another to continue our traditions as storytellers.

For instance, recently I have learned of the passing of CWC member of the Writers of Kern, Dan McGuire. This came as quite a blow to me as Dan was the man who spearheaded my doing a show for the Writers of Kern. In 2015, he was an honored guest and judge for our Weird Storytelling Competition for Weird Weekend. He came to see *Hello Out There*, written by C. R. Rowenson and myself, and when the show ended, he came up, shook my hand, and said “We have to bring you to Bakersfield.” In February 2017, we made it come true with *Murder at the Broken Heart Mine*. Although I am saddened by his passing, I recall with a smile how much work he put into giving me the opportunity to expand my fledgling business and share it with his beloved club.

No doubt in Dan's past there were people who gave him a chance, and he was paying it forward when he offered me one. I try to remember that and offer any opportunities I know I can give to my fellow word-weavers. This year, in fact, C. R. Rowenson, who has collaborated with me on two previous mysteries, is going solo for this September's Weird Weekend. It's all his own story and concept, and I'm so excited to not only see what he produces, but also to have been able to give him an opportunity to really shine like the star he is. I'm paying it forward. _____

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.

NEWS FROM JULIANNE BLACK

We hear from our newest Jack London Award Winner that she finished the last princess in her Kingdom of Cool (princesses wearing glasses); has gone “completely nuts” on her latest project Book Turnip, a book review and author interview blog (“gives me tremendous insight into the production and pre-release circus that goes on in mainstream publishing”); signed on as a staff writer for *Story Monsters Ink*; redid her website; and has immersed herself in “painting up a storm on the reclaimed wood series.” We applaud her energy and accomplishments.

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.

it, he visited failed resorts by the Salton Sea, which had been given up when the sea proved too toxic to attract visitors. He thought that if you were on the run and trying to elude your pursuers, the abandoned RVs and motels around the Salton Sea would make a good hiding place. Likewise, he talked about his first book *Fresno Growing Up – A City Comes of Age 1945-1985*, which is partly a history and partly a memoir about growing up in and at the same time as Fresno (birthplace of Top 40 Radio and test city for BankAmeriCard – did you know that?). He thought about what he was trying to do with these two books, and realized he was trying to bring an era back to life through memories – and thence came the basic idea for *Memortality* – bringing people back to life through memory.

Finally, he gave us a piece of writing advice: his only rule of writing is “if you do something, it has to work for your readers.”

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

*With a special
Charmian London Award
to Fran Wersan

COMING ATTRACTIONS:



WEIRD WEEKEND

Friday-Saturday, September
22-23

celebrating the stranger side of the desert –
Third Annual Weird Storytelling Competition
on Saturday afternoon and a Master Mystery
Productions interactive murder mystery on
Saturday evening, both at Ridgecrest
Presbyterian Church.

DUES ARE DUE

In fact, they became due effective July 1.
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.

The figures:

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

CONTEST: Reminder! Good money to be won!! We do not have enough background to endorse it, but it looks interesting. Aesthetica Creative Writing Award – prizes include £1,000 Poetry Winner, £1,000 Short Fiction Winner, publication in the *Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual* for 60 finalists, consultation with Redhammer Management (Short Fiction Winner), full membership to The Poetry Society (Poetry Winner); short fiction should be no more than 2,000 words and poetry entries should be no more than 40 lines. Works previously published are accepted. Deadline for submissions: 31 August 2017. For full entry requirements and to submit, visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/cwa.

Planet Mojave at Book Expo

Book Expo 2017 displayed our own *Planet Mojave* in June

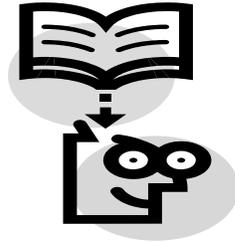
The BookExpo New Title Showcase, June 1-4, an official exhibit of BookExpo, the country's major book industry event, prominently exhibited our anthology, plus we had listings in both a fully searchable online catalog and database, and in the print catalogue. We now officially have Bragging Rights.

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



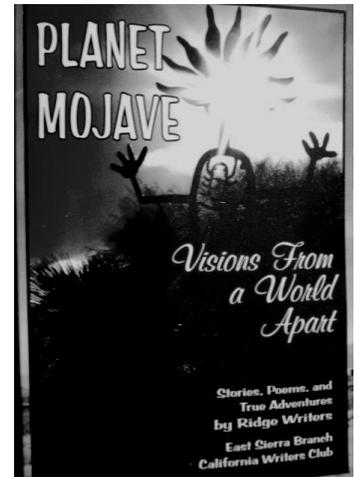
THE SAGE NEEDS AN EDITOR!

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.

As seen at Book Expo (see left)

Inside ...

Page 1:

July Program:
"Writing with
Emotional Impact"
and
Report on June Speaker
by Andrew Sound

Page 2:

President's Message
by Daniel Stallings
and
Ridge Writers Leaders
and
News from Juli Black

Page 3:

Jack London Awards
and
Coming Attractions
And
Dues Due!
and
Contest Notice

**The Ridge Writers
East Sierra Branch
California Writers Club
P.O. Box 484
Ridgecrest, CA 93556**

