



Writers  
of the

# PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

June 2016

## Smashwords Exec Offers eBook Advice June 2



Jim Azevedo

**S**mashwords marketing director Jim Azevedo will present “A Jargon-free Introduction to eBook Self-Publishing: How To Publish, Distribute and Sell Your Book” at our meeting on Thursday, June 2. As usual, the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores Ave.

Azevedo will explain what makes it “easier to self-publish an ebook than you might imagine. No technical experience necessary!”

Smashwords, the largest distributor of self-published ebooks, serves more than 120,000 independent authors, publishers, and literary agents and has helped authors around the world publish and distribute more than 380,000 titles to ebook retailers, subscription services, and libraries.

Azevedo’s program will cover the basics with an ebook publishing checklist that includes an overview of the latest publishing trends, the advantages of ebook self-publishing, and guidance on ebook creation, pricing, and distribution. Throughout the session, he will reveal some of the best practices from bestselling self-published ebook authors.

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### Mark Your Calendar . . .

#### Jim Kiggins

July 7, 6:30 p.m.  
Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church  
Remember the talented Jim Kiggins who used to teach high-tech subjects at Cerro Coso? The ever-evolving game developer, CGI lecturer, and goat rancher will return in July to speak on “The Literary Goat and World-Building.”

#### Open Mic Night

Aug. 4, 6:30 p.m.  
Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church  
Here’s an opportunity for you members — and the public — to share original works of 5-7-minutes. Please invite your friends — and bring finger food to help us all enjoy an evening of creativity.

### Report on May Meeting

## Why the Leading Ladies of History Earned My Standing Ovation *By Daniel Stallings*

**I** must admit that this report is not remotely unbiased, but it is accurate. Ridge Writers were thrilled to bring back a past favorite speaker for our May meeting and Read the Book, Meet the Author.

Kathrine Bates, an acclaimed actress and playwright whose credits are longer than human history, returned to Ridgecrest to bring a double dose of dramatic genius. Her plays specialize in historical figures, and she has a real gift for bringing to life prominent women in history, from Dorothy Parker to

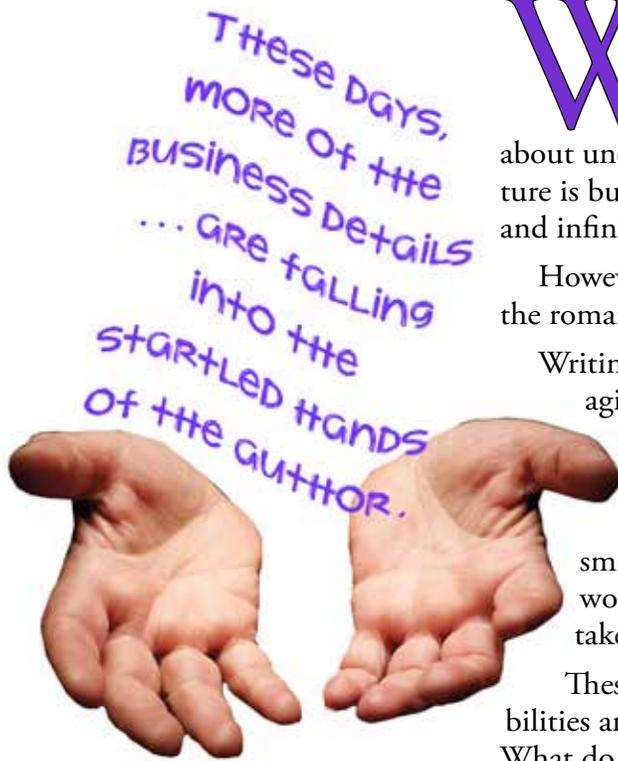
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Kathryn Bates as Dorothy Parker

Photo by Liz

# This Story Changes in Chapter Eleven



**W**riting is an art. It's about shaping the bones of a language — the bare words — into ideas, full thoughts, sentences, paragraphs, stories that speak about human nature and this great big universe of possibilities we live in. Writing is a craft. It's about understanding the way words relate to each other, the way story structure is built, the way stories are told. Writing is about imagination, ideas, and infinite realms. It's practice, patience, and perseverance.

However, there's another facet of writing that tends to get glossed over in the romance of creation.

Writing is a business. It's about taking those words and polishing, packaging, and marketing them to make a hopeful profit for all the parties involved.

An author is a businessman, a mini-mogul poised to make money by selling his or her work. To be a professional word-smith, you need to start understanding the business side of the writing world. It's not easy, and it's not foolproof. But it can be managed if taken seriously.

These days, more of the business details — such as editing responsibilities and marketing — are falling into the startled hands of the author. What do you do? Be patient. No overnight success happens overnight. Take things one step at a time, and do your research. Approach each hurdle with your eyes open. And believe in your abilities.

You will need a finished piece of writing before you start. Then you need to refine it. Research professional, high-quality editors to help that process. Find people who can support you and your intentions with your material. Do your homework. Learn about your rights as an author. Where does it go after you die? Who owns the foreign rights? The audio rights? Understand your market. Agents and publishers like to know where to place your book to ensure purchases. Even if you self-publish, don't skimp on these steps. You need to know where your writing belongs and how to get what you need out of it.

Then there's marketing. Even if you intend to hire someone to market your work, you should know what they need and where they are putting

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## Ridge Writers Leaders

- President** — Daniel Stallings  
**Vice President** — Julianne Black  
**Secretary** — Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
**Treasurer** — C. R. Rowenson  
❖ ❖ ❖  
**Historian** — Maryann Butterfield  
**Membership** — C. R. Rowenson  
**Newsletter** — Liz Babcock  
*lizbab@fastmail.com*  
**Programs & Publicity** — Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
**State Rep** — Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
**Youth Coordinator** — Daniel Stallings  
**Webmaster** — Julianne Black  
❖ ❖ ❖

To reach any of these leaders (except Liz), use [ridgewriters@yahoo.com](mailto:ridgewriters@yahoo.com)  
Visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters](http://www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters) and our website at [CWC-ridgewriters.org](http://CWC-ridgewriters.org)

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**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.



Congratulations to Ridge Writer Julianne DiBlasi Black, who was one of three talented authors awarded \$500 Peggy Connelly Scholarships by Writers of Kern on Saturday, May 14. The scholarship recognizes aspiring and established children's book authors who are passionate about writing good children's literature and have works in progress.

Shown (from left) are Bakersfield author Allison Crozter Kimmel, Terry Pierce (a Ridgecrest author who has presented wonderful programs to us from time to time), Juli, and her daughter, Madison (a writer or perhaps a model of the future).

Photo by Josh Black

## 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 the year's most outstanding member. Here are their names and the years they won:

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

## ◆◆◆ Announcements ◆◆◆

Here's a great excuse to take a trip to Hawaii! The **Kauai Writers Conference** will take place **Nov. 4-6** and will be preceded by **Master Classes, Oct. 31-Nov. 3**. The conference days are billed as being packed with presentations by best-selling authors, top publishing agents, and publishing professionals. You can attend these two events separately or together. Questions? Go to [kauaiwritersconference.com](http://kauaiwritersconference.com).



**Authors Publish online magazine** has a list you might want to check out: 13 publishers looking for nonfiction manuscripts and not requiring agents; you can deal with them directly, in other words.

The webpage is at [www.authorspublish.com/thirteen-great-non-fiction-manuscript-publishers/](http://www.authorspublish.com/thirteen-great-non-fiction-manuscript-publishers/).



The **Central Coast Writers Contest** is now available for you to enter. It's part of the **32nd Annual Central Coast Writers Conference**. The theme of the contest is "The Final Word," and all entries are expected to interpret this theme. Categories

include Short Fiction (1,000-2,000 words), Poetry (up to 40 lines), Flash Fiction (up to 500 words, and (a new category) Screenwriting (up to 20 pages).

You may enter more than one category, and the contest deadline is **July 15**. For information about submission guidelines and fees, see [www.CCWritersContest.com](http://www.CCWritersContest.com).



The **Ridgecrest Branch Library** offers an amazing kaleidoscope of events for writers and readers of all ages, so be sure to drop in and see what's going on!

I don't have June's list yet, but in May the library is hosting Preschool Storytime every Friday at 9:30 a.m., a Sidewalk Chalk Art event, a Photo Craft Day, a Youth Book Discussion, a Lego Club complete with building activities, Barks and Books for children to enjoy reading to therapy dogs, and an Origami event to celebrate Asian-Pacific Heritage Month.

All that is in addition to activities to publicize Proposition F, which the library very much needs passed so it can maintain its many resources. You can also enjoy the Friends of the Library ongoing book sale, and of course a cornucopia of books, DVDs, magazines, newspapers, and more.



# Standing Ovation

From p. 1

Lucrezia Borgia to Rose Kennedy.

I had never seen Kathrine Bates perform before. Her last Ridge Writers visit was in 2010, so I was excited to see her in action.

As a theater kid, I adore performances of all types, and at Read the Book, Meet the Author, I got more than I could ever wish for. Bates made a grand entrance as the wicked wit, Dorothy Parker, to cast her insights into the book we read, J.J. Murphy's *A Friendly Game of Murder* (Algonquin Round Table Mysteries #3).

Over delicious tea and scones, we traded wry witticisms, sharp insights about the book, and tasty history. We learned spades about Dorothy Parker and the infamous Algonquin Round Table.

Bates never dropped character, had me in stitches, touched my heart with Dorothy's story, and at the end of the program earned something from me I haven't given a live performance in some time: a standing ovation.

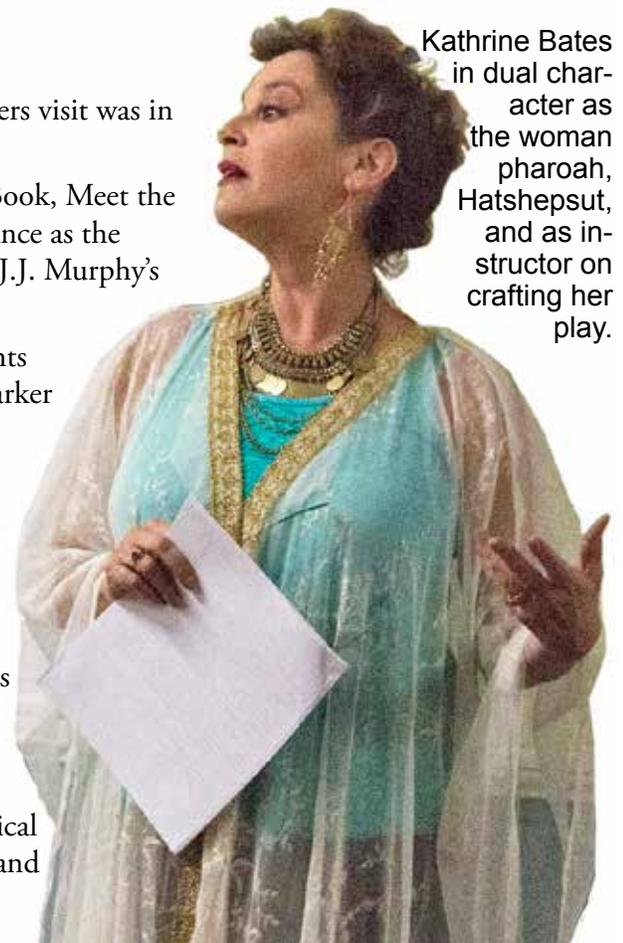
Needless to say, I was bouncing with excitement to see her evening program for Ridge Writers. For that meeting, Bates went from an actress playing Parker to a dramatist crafting a play about one of my favorite women in history: Hatshepsut of ancient Egypt. Bates took us through the entire journey of the play's creation from the small seed of an idea about filming a series about famous women in history to a grand theatrical performance of the Pharaoh Queen complete with costume and music and our own members (including yours truly) reading some of the parts.

As the drama unfolded, Bates gave us little hints and tips about crafting the story, in turn helping us craft our stories. She talked about the range of characters — from the pharaoh queen to the smallest servant — and how each one served the story in important ways. She talked about how she started forming the play, particularly a historical one, by sorting all the known facts and using the evidence to fill in the blanks.



Daniel Stallings gets his opportunity to play Thutmose III, be-  
ratering his "evil stepmother," Kathrine Bates as Hatshepsut.

Photos by Liz



Kathrine Bates  
in dual char-  
acter as  
the woman  
pharaoh,  
Hatshepsut,  
and as in-  
structor on  
crafting her  
play.

Her strongest piece of advice was one she received from another writer: Be Bold. Don't be afraid to take the risky path or include the dicey element in your stories if it enhances and furthers the plot. Be bold and brave in your choices as a writer.

By the end of the night, we were all picturing the amber sunrise over Egypt, the golden palace of Hatshepsut, and the Pharaoh Queen — the first significant female ruler of Egypt, the one nearly struck from all historical record.

I had never known until that night that I had a secret wish to play Thutmose III, Hatshepsut's stepson who had her reign eliminated from history. I had a blast playing alongside such an accomplished player.

Kathrine Bates was truly an amazing actress and astounding dramatist, and I hope we're all looking forward to hearing what's next from this leading lady.

Cue the standing ovation.

# Smashwords Exec \_\_\_\_\_ From p. 1

Prior to joining Smashwords, Azevedo had high-tech public relations expertise that led him to Mark Coker in 1994. They worked together for eight years before parting ways for another eight years.

From public relations Azevedo moved into industry analyst relations, positioning clients favorably in the eyes of the high tech researchers who recommend multimillion-dollar software packages to large corporations. Toward the end of this stretch he began consulting. When Coker launched Smashwords, he asked Azevedo to come aboard.

In his spare time for the past 16 years, Azevedo has been the drummer for Rivals, a popular San Francisco Bay Area hard rock band.

His forthcoming book, *How To Get Your Band out of the Garage*, will show fledgling musicians/bands how to transition from hanging out to playing their first live events. It comes out later this year.

We hope to see you at the meeting, and please bring your friends.

# This Story Changes

From p. 2

your work. If you are asked to submit a bio or a clip, have you considered how you will present them to make you look the most professional and show off your creativity? For example, while knowing about your family is nice, shouldn't you include the number of works you've published, the kinds of works they are (novels, short stories, plays), and the genres they are in to help boost traffic?

Have you won any awards for writing? Learn to refine and polish your pitches and be able to sell your work in one complete sentence. If you can't yet, refine some more.

This process can seem cumbersome, and at times, it can be. But it's business. Being a successful writer is about having the heart of an artist and the brain of a tycoon.

If you're an aspiring author just trying to figure out your voice and what you'd like to write, don't sweat the business side yet. Develop your voice first.

If you think you're ready to turn pro, seize the opportunities you have, do your homework, and find the parts of the writing and publishing experience that you do enjoy and make the most of it. Most of all, never lose faith in yourself and never keep your eye off the prize. Go out there and succeed. I know you can.

Because you don't want to know what happens in the infamous Chapter Eleven ...

## I BEFORE E

Except when eight feisty  
neighbors seize a surfeit of  
weighty heifers.

## Nominating Committee Proposed 2016-17 Slate

Below are the people who have agreed to run again for expiring positions on the Ridge Writers' board. All of them are hardworking current boardmembers — aren't we lucky that they want to run again?

- ◆ Julianne Black
- ◆ Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
- ◆ C. R. Rowenson
- ◆ Daniel Stallings

If you so choose you can nominate someone else from the floor at our June meeting, when we will vote on the slate. In order to make that nomination, though, you need to get the individual's permission to run.

If nobody else is nominated, we can elect the slate by acclamation. The positions taken by each member of the board will be decided by the board.



# Independent Bookstore Day

by Daniel Stallings

**R**ed Rock Books had a big celebration on April 30 in honor of Independent Bookstore Day, and that gave Ridge Writers a wonderful, unique opportunity to get involved in the festivities.

Red Rock Books was at its most magnificent, giving a huge range of activities for everyone — free cookies for guests, a literary temporary tattoo parlor where you could get images of Sherlock Holmes or *Pride and Prejudice* applied for free, a kids' drawing contest, a scavenger hunt that proved to be a worthy brain teaser (Can you find a book with a tree on the cover?), and all the used books offered at 50-percent off.

Ridge Writers had a table where we raffled off two baskets — one for adults and one for kids — and had a word search puzzle containing California writers. And Ridge Writer Julianne DiBlasi Black held a book signing and demonstration of the magical 3D app for her book, *Sleep Sweet*.

Red Rock Books is interested in repeating the event in the future, and we have already been tapped to get involved.

It was a fantastic and fun day where customers left with armloads of books, Ridge Writers spread our message to word lovers everywhere, and we got to honor a wonderful Ridgecrest institution. Long may it thrive.



At left is Julianne DiBlasi Black at her table for signing and demonstrating the 3D app for her book, *Sleep Sweet*.

All photos this page by Daniel Stallings

At right, Ridge Writer Rick Tobias sits with the raffle baskets and other materials provided to the event by our branch. Also attending were Ridge Writers Danie Stallings and Donna McCrohan Rosenthal.



## Report on Local Author Showcase

by Julianne Black

The second-ever Ridge Writers Local Author Showcase was held at the Ridgecrest Branch Library on April 9, and it was a shining example of creative minds working together to help and support our writing community.

While the first showcase focused on each author doing a 10-minute introduction and overview of his or her work or work in progress, this showcase took us deeper into the craft in an open discussion format. Authors were able to explain and compare their experiences with each other on topics that ranged from critique groups to publishing to editing tips.

Loosely led by a series of questions on specific areas of the writing experience, the discussion quickly transcended the outline and became an expression of support and camaraderie, enveloping those in the group with less experience and offering new eyes and solutions to the more seasoned authors. With a wide variety of genres and jumping-off points, it was clear that getting like-minded writers together to share lessons and resources was as entertaining as it was productive.

If you were not able to attend the event, the listing and details are still available on the website or Facebook page, and the next event will be in the fall, specific date TBA.



Creative cookies celebrating Independent Bookstore Day, and made by Red Rock Books' owner, Ann Rizzardini.

# Relish the Mustard

by Julie Bradford

**M**y parents moved to Arizona to enjoy a well-deserved, leisurely lifestyle upon their retirement. Their favorite pastimes include traveling in their RV when feeling a bit adventurous and visiting a nearby casino when feeling a bit lucky. It's a modest casino near Phoenix, nothing big and fancy, but a pleasant escape nonetheless.

Mom plays the slots and Dad plays blackjack.

Sometime during the evening, Dad brings Mom a mocha to sip while she splurges on nickel machines, then he disappears back into the smoky haze of the casino. Mom tends to stay put in a small area, striking up conversations with those in her vicinity.

During their last trip to the casino, Mom started chatting to a woman in her mid-30s, who was sitting at an odd angle on her stool. The woman said that she's suffering from a bad stint of leg cramps.

I know how that goes. Once or twice a year I'll get a bad stint of leg cramps, myself. They'll come in clusters, bother me all night for a week, then disappear for 7 or 8 months.

I told my mom about it, who told my Aunt Anna, who said that she had the perfect cure: a spoonful of mustard. Just regular yellow mustard, the kind you put on sandwiches. Luckily, I like mustard, so I could stomach the thought, let alone the taste. Silly as it sounds, it just might work. It's no different than trying wacky cures for hiccups like, "Plug your nose, turn your head upside down, gulp sugar water while someone inquires about the last time you saw a white horse."

As fanciful treatments go, a spoonful of mustard seems downright pedestrian.

Desperate to make leg cramps cease, I'd give anything a whirl. By 1 a.m. on Night 4, I was in the kitchen with a spoonful of mustard at my lips, no longer finding it whimsical, but rather a desperate last hope.



Not 10 minutes later, those leg cramps vanished and never returned.

You've got to be kidding me! I thought it was an old wives' tale. I thought it was a folk remedy from a bygone era, like the absurd cure for jaundice — "Scrape cow horns, boil the scrapings, then drink."

Hey, whatever works, right? Even if it's a placebo, that's fine by me.

Well, Mom passed along this advice to the casino woman, who was so intrigued that she buzzed over to the buffet to grab a packet of mustard. The buffet didn't have any packets; however, they did have tiny paper cups to squirt condiments into. She fixed herself a cup of mustard, grabbed a plastic spoon, and headed back to the slot machine stool that Mom had saved for her (proper casino etiquette, you must know).

The woman was hopeful yet hesitant. She didn't want to look silly doing it. Plus, she was afraid of smelling like mustard the rest of the evening. Mom reassured her that it was rather unlikely she would smell, and besides, it was worth a shot.

The woman nodded and decided to go for it. She grabbed a spoonful of mustard, bent over,

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# Relish the Mustard

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pulled up her pant leg, then moved to smear the mustard on her calf.

“Wait! No, you have to eat it!” Mom stopped her then chuckled, as did a few nearby onlookers watching the experiment unfold.

The woman was good-natured about the incident, laughing over her misunderstanding, then tried again. With the onlookers rooting for her, she mustered her strength to swallow a glob of mustard. It’s best to go about it quickly, like ripping a Band-Aid.

She gulped it down and waited.

Much to everyone’s surprise, the leg cramps disappeared and didn’t return the rest of the night. She was thankful for the advice from a kindly stranger sitting in a casino at a nickel machine. Luck, be a lady tonight. That lady being my mom ... and in a roundabout way, my Aunt Anna.

It’s the turmeric in mustard that does the trick. Or the acetic acid. Or maybe it’s just a placebo. To the sufferer, it doesn’t matter, as long as it works. What’s the harm in trying? If you feel a leg cramp coming on, break out the mustard. And if the mustard has you feeling a bit yellow, I recommend you start by scraping cow horns.

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, [www.planetmojave.com](http://www.planetmojave.com).



**T**he 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.

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