



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

September 2016

Come Experience a 'Poisoned Pen' Workshop

We will have a double treat at this month's meeting, since our president, Daniel Stallings, will not only run our meeting but also share his considerable expertise as a mystery writer.

Daniel, the founder of Master Mystery Productions, will present "Poisoned Pen: How To Design Dastardly Deeds, Puzzling Plots and Meticulous Mysteries." The meeting will be on Thursday, Sept. 1, at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church.

In Daniel's interactive workshop on the art of crafting complex yet compelling mysteries, we will help design a mystery story and learn how to balance suspects, how to craft alibis, the art of red herrings, how to organize your solutions and how to manage mystery subplots. The discussion will trade on multiple sources of mystery media from prose to television to film to theater.

A lifelong lover of mystery and detective fiction, Daniel has been writing mysteries for 12 years.

His passion for authors of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction such as Dame Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Dame Ngaio Marsh and Ellery Queen inspired him to become a mystery writer.

In addition to writing, Daniel has a long history with theater, working in areas such as acting, publicity, directing and play production. The productions he has written and produced for Ridge Writers alone include "Goodbye Hollywood" (a revised version of which also appeared at the Community Light Opera and Theatre Association's Center Stage), "Hello Out There" (with C.R. Rowenson), "Wildflowers for the Funeral" and more. He has also published two books of his poetry — *That Monster* and *Lighthouse*. Oh, and he created and published *HEAT*, a collection of his song lyrics and photography. (Whew! So prolific!)

His theatrical and writing experience led him to develop Master Mystery Productions in 2015. That same year, he received the Jack London Award from the California Writers Club for all his hard work.

Please come — and bring your friends. To echo the Beatles, a splendid time is guaranteed to all!

Daniel at "Wildflowers" for the Funeral," one of his many creative productions.

Photo by Liz



Mark Your Calendar . . .

Memoir Workshop

Oct 6, 6:30 p.m.
Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church

In a workshop aptly named "Fill that Empty Nest Write Now," we'll learn more about creating family memoirs for publication and personal satisfaction.

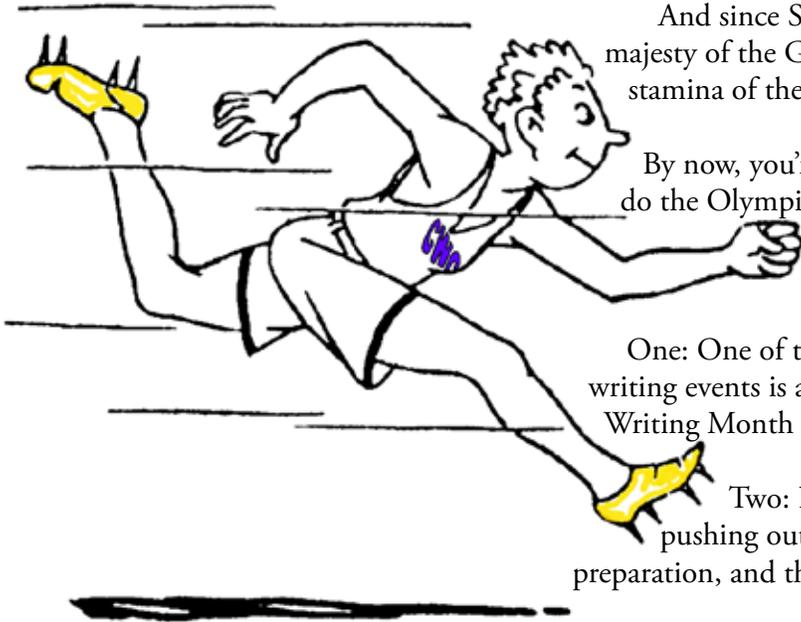
TBD

Nov 3, 6:30 p.m.
Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church

Donna's working on getting a speaker for November — so save the date and watch for an announcement at the meeting and in next month's newsletter.

Going for Gold

I'm sitting in an armchair, watching the Games of the 31st Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro. The Olympics are a family tradition ever since my dad started watching them regularly from Los Angeles 1984.



And since Salt Lake City 2002, I have been mesmerized by the majesty of the Games, the global community, and the power and stamina of the athletes.

By now, you're all staring at this President's Message asking "What do the Olympic Games have to do with my writing?" Well, as I sat on my perch watching the 110-meter hurdles, I made two realizations.

One: One of the most popular, challenging, and Olympic-sized writing events is about to happen in a few months — National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo).

Two: Being a working writer, working to tight deadlines, pushing out long works under pressure requires the training, the preparation, and the stamina of a world-class Olympian.

Stamina. Commitment. Execution. Practice. To be successful at any venture, to achieve any sort of longevity, we all need to observe these elements. In an earlier message, I validated the huge amount of effort that goes into writing, the unseen work a writer puts into crafting his or her stories. And as I watched the Olympics, I saw definite links between those athletes and us wordsmiths.

We prepare ourselves in advance, doing our homework, our research, our outlines, our plotting. We train vigorously, writing and reading and writing and reading for hours and hours and hours. The more we practice, the more we prepare, the better our stamina and likelihood of success. We work hard and write constantly to increase our ability to write longer and sharper pieces.

Then comes game time: a deadline, a contest, a massive project. Maybe you have only thirty days to pump out fifty thousand words. Maybe you want to hit a defined goal of two thousand words a day. These challenges are your Olympic moment. You've trained for it; you've practiced and perfected and

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Ridge Writers Leaders

President — Daniel Stallings

Vice President — Julianne Black

Secretary — Donna McCrohan
Rosenthal

Treasurer — Andrew Sound



Historian — Maryann Butterfield

Membership — C. R. Rowenson

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Rosenthal

Youth Coordinator — Daniel
Stallings

Webmaster — Julianne Black



To reach any of these leaders (except Liz), use ridgewriters@yahoo.com

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters and our website at CWC-ridgewriters.org

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- The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
- The text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes.
- 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 e-mail at lizbab@fastmail.fm.
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.

Ray Malus of San Fernando Valley Is Ina Coolbrith Winner



Sharron and Ray Malus at our first Wierd Weekend event in October 2013. Congratulations, Ray!

Photo by Liz

CWC President David George presented the Ina Coolbrith Award to San Fernando Branch member Ray Malus at the July 24 Central Board meeting in Oakland. The organization's highest honor, it recognizes exemplary service at the state level.

In 2011 Ray received CWC's Jack London Award for service in his own branch, where he designed the San Fernando Valley website, serves as its webmaster, was longtime editor of the branch newsletter "The Valley Scribe," and represented SFV on the CWC Central Board. Last year he retired from the position of Member-at-Large on the CWC Executive Board.

Also on the state level, he created and developed the Member Record Management System (MRMS) for recording membership data and simplifying data entry. Since then he has provided user support, responding to suggestions and requests for filing needs, and adding enhancements. B

Ridge Writers may recognize Ray from his wonderful articles that appeared in our newsletter from time to time, as well as the unforgettable appearance he and his wife Sharron made in Ridgecrest at our October 2013 Wierd Weekend.

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.

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 ◆◆◆

Kudos to our own **Donna McCrohan Rosenthal**, who is now CWC's vice president, serving with the new president, **Joyce Kreig**, who you may recognize from her many years of devoted service as the CWC Bulletin's editor. Congratulations to Donna and the other people who have agreed to steer our club in 2016-17.



Here's a creative challenge from **CWC SF/Peninsula**, which invites you to submit pieces for its latest anthology. **Fault Zone: Uplift**. For consideration, enter the branch's short story contest, deadline **Oct. 31**. The \$250 first prize also includes *Fault Zone* publication; prizes of \$100 and \$50 are also offered. All of the winning entries will receive editorial notes and one-on-one consults. In this, *Fault Zone's* seventh edition, the editors seek "morally or spiritually elevating experiences, rising above surroundings ... We invite you to look at the different meanings of 'uplift' and create works that carry readers to unexpected places."

The fee is \$15 per entry, with no limit to the number of entries you may submit. For guidelines and to submit your entry, see cwc-peninsula.submittable.com.



Here's early news about **CWC High Desert's Howl at the Moon Conference, Oct. 29**. During

this full-day event in Apple Valley, nationally known author and writing teacher **Gabriela Pereira** will share her "secret sauce" outline formula and show participants other skills to help them improve their writing skills and effectiveness in using online media.

The conference will run from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at the **James Woody Community Center, 13467 Navajo Rd., Apple Valley**.

The early-bird price is an amazingly low \$35; on Oct. 2, it will go up to \$50. For more information and to register, go to www.hdcwc.com/conference-6---howl-at-the-moon-2016.html.



Nimrod, a biannual literary journal published at the University of Tulsa, seeks poetry, short stories, and creative nonfiction for its Spring/Summer 2017 thematic issue, "**Leaving Home, Finding Home**." The editors are "open to all explorations of this theme."

Entries must be previously unpublished stories and nonfiction up to 7,500 words, poetry up to eight pages. All contributors to the magazine receive two copies of the issues in which their work appears.

Postal submissions (*Nimrod Journal*, University of Tulsa, 800 S. Tucker Dr., Tulsa, OK 74104) are free with an SASE; online submissions charge a \$3 fee: nimrodjournal.submittable.com/submit. The **postmark deadline is Nov. 5**, with the publication date set for April 2017.

Seen at Open Mic Night



Below Ida Reese (pen name Magnolia Sage) remembers her life. "I live where the silence is so supreme that I can hear hummingbirds' wings," she says.



Shown above are a couple of our favorite guest readers. Sarah (last name unknown) reads her entertaining "How I Became a Pirate," while Rebecca Neipp editor of the *News Review*, awaits her turn to read her affecting essay on what she loves about Ridgcrest.



At left, Julie Bradford reads her "A Perfect Summer Day," a poignant tale that kept us all spellbound.



Daniel Stallings and Bob Budlong (aka Robert Mariner) enjoy learning about pirates. When Daniel's time came to share, he entertained us with his tale of "A Pauper's Grave," and, as always, left us wanting more.

All photos by
Liz Babcock

A Timeless City

by C. R. Rowenson

Here's one of his flash fiction pieces by C. R. that he read at our Open Mic Night. By the way, this is the one and only piece shared for reprinting; I much appreciate it, but where are the pieces from other talented people who read? — ed.

Five years since I left Ridgecrest, and nothing has changed.

The sun casts harsh rays onto the sleepy town. All the buildings stand untouched, and empty cars line the streets. A dust-devil swirls across a vacant road.

From a distance, it appears a timeless, secret city in the desert.

I raise my binoculars, knowing what I'll see; I find them soon enough. They climb from their homes and begin going about their routines as I watch.

Six years since the Wakening, and nothing has changed. Not for the town, not for me, and not for the shambling dead.

C. R. reads his flash fiction at last month's Open Mic Night.

Photo by Liz



OUR FASCINATING LANGUAGE

Here's a delightful word origin! "Dandelion" comes from the French "dent de lion," so named because the coarsely toothed petals were thought to resemble lions' teeth.

Photo by Liz

Going for Gold

From p. 2

performed. Sometimes the challenges appear insurmountable. They aren't. Center yourself. Set up your pre-race routine. Get your mind and your environment in the state you need it to be to perform at your best. Remember you've trained for this, all the hours reading and writing and rereading and editing and peer review and even more writing.

You've grown faster, higher, and stronger as a writer with all the work you've done.

So when the challenge awaits, the deadline looms, the personal goals stand before you, remember the stamina you've built as a writer. Remember your training. And trust in your ability to get the job done.

With NaNoWriMo approaching, where hundreds of people around the country will undertake the challenge of crafting a novel in one month, and perhaps the pressures of professional writing lying just around the bend, go for the gold!

You all have it in you to climb to the top of our podium! Go Team Ridge Writers!

DUE\$ ARE DUE

If you haven't paid this year's dues yet, now is the time to renew! The renewal fee for the coming year is \$45 per member. But waiting until the end of the month will cost you more!

You may pay in cash, check, or money order.

Make your check payable to Ridge Writers or East Sierra Branch, CWC.

Checks or money orders may be mailed to Ridge Writers, P.O. Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556. Or just bring your dues to the meeting.

You won't want to miss the renewal deadline of Sept. 30 because joining again will cost you that new member rate of \$65.

May we have a
CHECK?

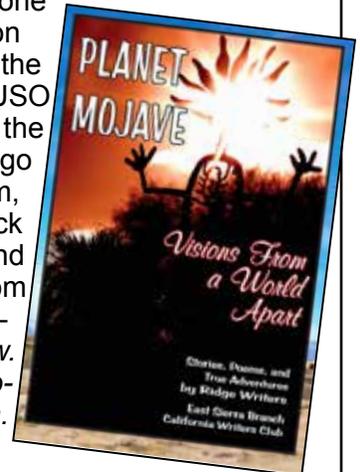


DON'T FORGET OUR WEIRD WEEK END STORYTELLING COMPETITION

The contest is on Saturday, Sept. 24, starting at 2 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores Ave. Admission is \$5 and includes participation in the competition for those who want to read, provided that the rules are observed (original, good taste, 5-7 minutes and weird!). For more on Weird Weekend, come to our September meeting . . . and watch the local papers.

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.

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.



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Don't Forget To Pay Your Dues!

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California Writers Club
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