



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

September 2018



Kathleen Kaiser Reveals Five Mistakes Indie Authors Make

Author, marketing pro, and proud fourth-generation small-businesswoman Kathleen Kaiser will discuss “The Five Mistakes Indie Authors Make When Launching a Book” at the Thursday, September 6 Ridge Writers meeting. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. The public is invited and admission is free.

Ten years ago, she published her own novel. When she realized that she made major marketing gaffes, she decided to hone her skills by joining groups and meeting and corresponding with top industry PR experts. She next turned those learning points into actions by helping many authors as their advisor

and publicist.

For her Ridge Writers presentation, using examples from her own experiences and those of clients, she will detail the pitfalls and how to avoid them. Named Publicist of the Year in 2016 by the Book Publicists of Southern California for her contributions to the literary community, Kaiser maintains a small list of clients that allow her to continue her volunteerism, which includes being president of the national literary organization Small Publishers, Artists & Writers Network (SPAWN), board member of the Ojai Film Festival, and organizer of a monthly literary meeting in Thousand Oaks, CA, co-sponsored by IWOSC and SPAWN. She has served as past president and season producer of the Ojai Shakespeare Festival, past president of the Ventura County Writers Club, and other community organizations. She has produced the 805 Writers’ Conference for seven years. Learn more about her at www.KathleenKaiserAndAssociates.com.

August Meeting – Amy Wallen Knits Together Memory and Fiction – reported by Liz Babcock



If you missed our August meeting (and most of you did), you missed a wonderful experience in which we gained many insights from writer-editor-teacher Amy Wallen. She spoke about her book, *When We Were Ghouls*, and about the insights she gained as she wrote it.

Amy had already written a successful novel, *MoonPies & Movie Stars*, and she knew she had more stories in her that might best be captured in the form of memoir. But for a while she resisted that. “You find out a lot more than you wanted to when you’re writing memoir,” she explained.

Finally she sat down to write an essay about the day her family dug up a grave in Peru, the episode that now begins *Ghouls*. “That was the pivotal moment when I realized that all my memories weren’t true,” she said.

She vividly remembered that her adored brother had made the key discovery of a skull at the burial site. When she checked with family members, however, she found out that her brother hadn’t even been there. “So the beginning of my story was when I realized I didn’t even know the story.”

She began puzzling over the disparities in family members’ recollections of the incident. “My brother has always been my protector,” she said. That might have figured in the skull memory, which was “tattooed on my brain.”

Mark Your Calendar...

Oct. 4 – to be announced.

Nov. 1 – **Tammy Hise**, author, “Memoirs and Advocacy.”

Dec. 6 – **Annual Holiday Party**, member readings and potluck.

Staying the Course



As someone once put it so eloquently to me, “life sucks.” And it’s true that there are times when it feels like the whole universe has your name on a hit list in a back office somewhere. However, there comes a moment when a choice must be made. You can either run from it...or use it as motivation to push you to the next step in your journey.

In my life as a writer, there have been many times when I felt overwhelmed by work or a victim of some bad luck. Actors quit, tickets don’t sell, scripts don’t come to my brain fast enough, deals fall through, people get sick, and so on. It is so easy to say, “Well, today has been cancelled” and hide in my room for the next thirty years. It’s the easy choice. It’s not the wise one. Life happens. People don’t gel together. Things don’t always turn out like you want or expect. But giving up isn’t the answer. It’s so easy to say, “I can’t do this” when things start getting tough. It’s harder to admit, “I don’t want to do this.”

There are exceptions to every scenario, of course, but, in my years working with people in creative endeavors, there have been many instances where I’ve found what stops people from finishing what they started is a case of desire, more than ability. But you can. Often what holds you back is your own fear.

But if you push through, try, work, and be open to the challenge, you can overcome the obstacles and find success in the endeavor. Even when everything feels like it’s falling on top of you, if you pull your strength from within, you can climb out and surmount it all.

Business Blast

California Writers Club annual dues became due effective July 1, 2018.

True, the CWC allows a grace period through September. But please don’t drag your feet.

Last-minute payments increase and complicate our treasurer’s job.

Dues are \$45 for Annual and Associate members. If you can’t attend a meeting, please send your check to our post box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556. Thanks.

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings

Vice President – C. R. Rowenson

Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

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Member at Large – John Anderson

Historian – Maryann Butterfield

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 southern region of the California Writers Club maintains the “zine”-format socalwritersshowcase.com, containing monthly content from members, ranging from fiction, nonfiction/essays, and memoir, to poetry, interviews, discussion on writers’ life, the craft, and news.



The Writers of the Purple Sage is the monthly newsletter of the Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch of the 109-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:

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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.

August meeting report continued from page 1

The more she pondered, the more she realized that no fixed event could be identified as the real truth, since everyone involved remembered it differently. “It’s interesting to see what our brains pick up and where it goes,” she said. “We may remember things that never happened.”

To figure out how to structure the scenes she wanted to include in her book, Amy began studying works that focused on the nature of selfhood and how it ties into perception and memories. In that respect, she highly recommends the books of Siri Hustvedt, a renowned novelist and essayist.

Another work Amy found helpful was *The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative* by Vivian Gornick.

Amy’s compelling book is all the more memorable for the insights it may give us in how our own memories can play tricks on us. “Every time you retell a memory, your role in it becomes more important.”

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



WEIRD WEEKEND INDIE SHORT FILM CELEBRATION

Indie Short Film Celebration on Friday, September 21, at 2 p.m., calls for short films – weird, quirky, highly creative, up to PG-13 rating, horror, sci-fi, fantasy, Death Valley, Twilight-Zone-ish, your grandkid dressed like bigfoot – in good taste, no longer than 15 minutes. To submit, send name, contact info, length of film, and brief synopsis to ridgewriters@yahoo.com with an unlisted Youtube link to the film for consideration. Deadline closes September 15, midnight

WEIRD STORYTELLING Saturday September 22, 2 p.m.
Entries must involve the stranger side of the desert (lost goldmines, haunted hideouts, aliens, ghosts, bigfoot sightings), run 5-7 minutes, be original and in good taste. Truth optional. Both the Indie Short Film Celebration and the Weird Storytelling Competition will be held at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church. Prizes and bragging rights will be awarded.

**PLUS BOTH NIGHTS 7:30 P.M. THE
MASTER MYSTERY PRODUCTIONS
INTERACTIVE MURDER MYSTERY
WHAT HAPPENS AT SUNDOWN
SET IN 1960S HOLLYWOOD**

For both contests, sign up in advance at Red Rock Books (206 W. Ridgecrest Blvd, 760-375-3454). Last-minute entries may sign up at the door on the day of the event on a space-available basis. Participants do not have to be local. Everyone is welcome to attend, watch, and enjoy refreshments. With paid admission, anyone may also compete, provided that the rules are observed.

Admission is \$5 per contest; \$20 for “What Happens At Sundown.”

Note: We cannot formally endorse any offering. However, the Authors Guild has listed these upcoming contests.

Machigonne Fiction Contest: Eligibility: all writers; prize \$1,500 plus publication; entry fee \$22; deadline: September 24 (www.newguardreview.com/tng-contests/). **Dzanc Book Prize for Fiction:** Eligibility: all writers; prize \$5,000 plus publication; entry fee \$25; deadline: September 30 (dzancbooks.submittable.com/submit). **Dzanc Book Short Story Collection Prize:** Eligibility: all writers; prize \$2,500 plus publication; entry fee \$25; deadline: September 30 (as for the Book Prize). **Toni Beauchamp Prize in Critical Art Writing:** Eligibility: all writers; prize \$3,000 plus publication; deadline: September 15 (<https://gulfoastmag.org/contests/the-beauchamp-prize/>).

Our Newest Member

Having written a book and with her own designated shelf of Cambria’s Recommendations at Red Rocks Books, Cambria Rizzardini (seen here with Daniel and Santa last year) has joined our ranks.

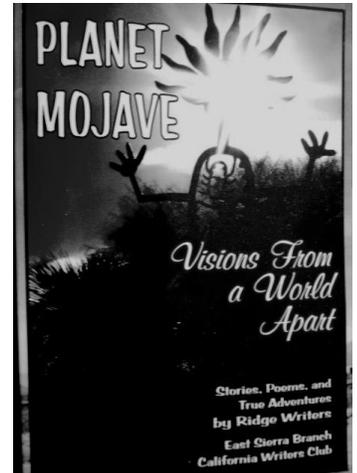


The East Sierra Branch (Ridge Writers) is the California Writers Club branch serving the eastern part of Kern County. Over the mountains on the west side of the county is our Bakersfield-based sister branch, Writers of Kern.



NEA Funding Passes

As chronicled late this summer by the Authors Guild, “The Grothman Amendment to slash NEA and NEH funding was soundly defeated in the U.S. House of Representatives ... by a vote of 297 to 114.... Representatives on both sides of the aisle spoke out in support of the NEA. Representative Calvert (R-CA), who chairs the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, argued for the importance of NEA funding, describing an art therapy program for military veterans that has helped them recover from PTSD.... While artists can breathe a (temporary) sigh of relief, the fact that this amendment was brought to the House floor after the organizations’ funding had been approved is a sign that we must all remain vigilant to ensure that these important cultural institutions, and the arts in general, continue to be supported by our government.”



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

Inside ...

Page 1:

September meeting – Kathleen Kaiser, “Five Mistakes Indie Authors Make”
and
Upcoming Speakers

Page 2:

President’s Message
and
Ridge Writers Leaders
and Dues Due!
and
socialwritersshowcase.com

Page 3:

Jack London Awards
and
Weird Weekend Sept. 21-22
and
Contests

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California Writers Club
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