



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

June 2019



NEWS FROM THE IMAGINATION LAB on Thursday, June 6 and a visit from “Mary Austin”

Noted High Sierra poet Eva Poole-Gilson won fans here several years ago at a “Read the Book, Meet the Author” tea coupled with an evening program. She will present the Thursday, June 6 Ridge Writers talk with information about exciting new developments from the Imagination Lab in Bishop. The meeting starts 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.

Activities of the Imagination Lab include the Eastside Writing Circle, conversation and music, yoga, Tai Chi, and Qigong. Building on the Lab’s achievements, Poole-Gilson has announced a campaign to launch the High Sierra Arts Museum, a permanent venue to honor local artists in their many diverse genres. It will be designed and blueprinted by a brain-storming network of area individuals and organizations.

For a bonus at the June 6 Ridge Writers meeting, she will bring Gail Swain who created and will perform a sneak preview of the premiere of the first High Sierra Cast of Characters film, “Mary Austin.”

Eva taught writing and literature for 20 years at Cerro Coso College. With California Arts Council grants, she was poet-in-residence at two High Sierra high schools. She has particularly enjoyed serving as a teaching poet via California Poets in the Schools, housed in San Francisco.

Please come for this wonderful evening, and please bring your friends.

May speaker: Steven Rowley’s Perils and Joys of Autobiographical Fiction

Reported by Linda Saholt



The highlight of May’s meeting was Steven Rowley of Los Angeles, whose latest book, *The Editor*, served for the third “Read the Book, Meet the Author” event of 2019 at My Enchanted Cottage.

Rowley’s first novel, *Lily and the Octopus*, catapulted him to the National Bestseller List, and is currently being made into a movie.

“We all draw from our lives when writing,” said Rowley. After a background in screenwriting, in which writers can make a living while never seeing any of

their work make it to the big screen, he decided to try his hand at writing a book. His process centered on writing at home in the company of his faithful dog, Lily—until she developed cancer. He envisioned this spreading disease as a small octopus stuck on Lily’s head. As Rowley struggled to deal with his unexpectedly deep sorrow over his dog’s illness and death, the imaginary octopus became a character in the book. Quickly, the book turned into an expression of his need to understand. “What I was writing about is attachment and how difficult it is to let go,” said Rowley. “I made it deeply personal as part of the healing process, not expecting anyone to read it.”

Mark Your Calendar...

July 11 – Norma Ashby looks at writing about Taboo vs. Survival.

August 1 – Open Mic – Members and public read from their original works no longer than 5-7 minutes. Refreshments too!

Originally he planned to self-publish the book, but an editor he hired offered to send the manuscript to Simon & Schuster.

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How Does Your Garden Grow?



Summer is almost here. The daylight stretches further, and we are inclined to stay out later and enjoy balmy summer evenings. This is the time that many kids adore. A sense of freedom. A sense of wonder. Of possibility. This is the time when stories are born.

Writers have wonderful imaginations and can seem to create whole worlds from a vacuum. But imaginations are like gardens. We need to take care of them, give them the food and water they need to flower. We need to feed our imaginations ideas and inspirations from the books we read, shows we watch, experiences we enjoy. We need to hear other people's stories, not just the ones written in books, but the ones told from friend to friend and generation to generation. We need to go out and live life. There are days I just go to Red Rock Books for a little artistic therapy. I don't write anything while there. Nor do I read. But being around all those books and colorful people and things does my soul good. It reenergizes me. It feeds the garden of my imagination.

We, chained to our desks and computers and notebooks as we are, need to find time to get out and explore and experience and do fun things that have no connection to our work as writers. Go to the beach. A theme park. A play. A state fair. A music festival. A camping trip. Whatever feeds our souls and makes us happy. Because that is where the stories are born — the experiences and emotions that fuel us as human beings.

I'm giving you, oh dedicated wordsmith, permission to go out and just have some fun this summer, like a kid on his vacation, and refuel your imagination. Your garden of ideas will thank you and blossom into new and wonderful stories.

Slate announced at the May 2019 meeting:

Candidates presented for 2019-2020 Ridge Writers officers and member-at-large: John Anderson, Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, C.R. Rowenson, Daniel Stallings, Andrew Sound. We vote at the June meeting. At that time, we open the floor for any additional nominations.

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – C. R. Rowenson
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
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 socialwritersshowcase.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.

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Again, he did not expect anything to come of this. That was on a Friday. Monday morning, he got a phone call—they were interested! And so began the process of getting the manuscript through its journey to becoming a book. After making the National Bestseller List, “Lily” was translated into 20 languages, and the movie rights sold.

“Now all the deeply personal stuff is out there,” he said ruefully, leading into a discussion of how people react when they assume characters are based on them. “Where does your story end, where does it overlap with others, when are you out of line? Do I have the right to talk about others and tell their stories?” He and his mother had issues at first, but they worked through it. “Now she’s my biggest fan,” he said, but noted he lost some friends in the process.

His life changed in profound ways after the publication of “Lily.” Looking for a subject for his next novel, he chose to write about an author writing a book that spirals out of control and what happens in the process, which became *The Editor*. He chose to base his editor character on an historical figure—Jaqueline Kennedy Onassis, who actually was a book editor for some 15 years. He did a great deal of research on her, to be sure he got her character as true to life as possible.

“We all have our oddities—and the more specific they are, the more universally understood they are,” said Rowley. He urged writers to include these quirky details when possible, as these make the story more human and accessible.

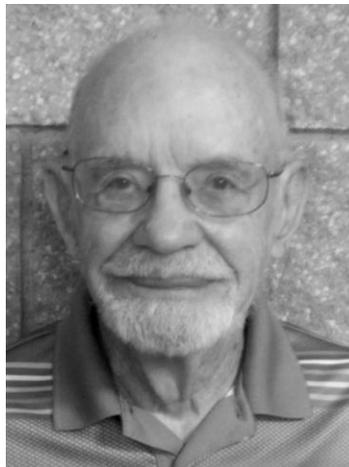
He is now working on the screenplay for *The Editor*. “I started writing books to get out of screenwriting, and now I’m right back in it,” he said.

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



Our Newest Jack London Award Winner

In the few years since he joined Ridge Writers, John E. Anderson has thrown himself into helping us in many, many ways. He became involved immediately, volunteering to help with events and serving as member-at-large on our branch governing board.

When he heard that nobody had come forward to chair our veterans book project, he promptly stepped in and has been hard at work at it ever since.

Before joining Ridge Writers, John managed the rare/collectibles/vintage book sales for the Kern County Branch of Ridgecrest Public Library, netting more than two thousand dollars for them in the process.

John has authored the history of the Over-the-Hill Track Club, has contributed several pieces that appeared in *Ridgecrest Death Valley Magazine* and, with his daughter, maintains the website father-daughter-poetry.com.

We cannot endorse the opportunities that cross our desk, but love to pass along those that appear promising, such as this from the Authors Guild Foundation: “The application period is open for The Breakout 8 Prize (authorsguild.org/the-breakout-8) now in its second year. In partnership with *Epiphany*, the Authors Guild Foundation launched the prize in 2017 to honor and support outstanding emerging literary voices and bring visibility to future authors. This year, eight student writers will receive a manuscript review and year-long mentorship, publication in *Epiphany*'s Breakout 8 special issue, a one-year membership to the Authors Guild, a one-year subscription to *Epiphany*, and a \$250 cash prize, and more. Entries must be received by June 24.

GREEN KIDS, BETTER BRAINS

As reported in *Spry Living* May 2019 (from *Parade Magazine*), “Children who grow up near green spaces are 55 percent less likely to develop mental health disorders later in life, according to a study in the journal *PNAS*. It’s not just the little ones who’ll reap the benefit – exposure to nature has been shown to boost moods and lower blood pressure in people of all ages. Find a state park near you by visiting nps.gov/findapark or by contacting your local parks department.”

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.

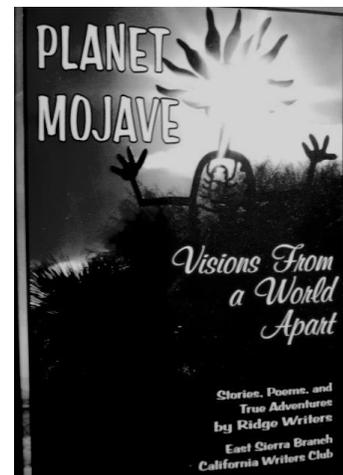


Authors Guild and Others Ask Copyright Office to Waive the Expedited Registration Fees

Announced by the Authors Guild April 2019: “The Supreme Court recently held that a copyright holder cannot bring an infringement lawsuit until the Copyright Office has finished processing the registration application.

“The only way to expedite the registration process (which can take up to ten months) is to pay an additional fee.

“So the Authors Guild wrote a letter to the Copyright Office asking it to waive this fee, joined by the American Society of Journalists and Authors, Novelists, Inc., Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and The Songwriters Guild of America.”



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.

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