



*Writers  
of the*

# ***PURPLE SAGE***

## ***Newsletter of the Ridge Writers***

**East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club**

**November 2021**



### **DANIEL STALLINGS PRESENTS “LETTERS FROM ABANDONED CHARACTERS” WRITING WORKSHOP FOR NOVEMBER 4 MEETING**

Ridge Writers President Daniel Stallings will present a writing workshop called “Letters from Abandoned Characters” for our November 4 meeting, starting 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. The public is welcome, admission free, masks required.

Making character voices distinct without description can be tricky. This workshop will help writers create characters without relying on narrative descriptors to describe them by pairing up guests and letting them write fictional correspondence to each other as different characters. What would famous literary characters like Sherlock Holmes and

Hercule Poirot write to each other in letters? What tricks can we use to identify them through their voice and writing style without relying on physical descriptors or even identifying them until the final signature? Can you guess the characters simply from hearing their voice in a letter? This interactive exercise will help you escape the adjectives and adverbs and focus on what is truly the heart of the character and how to make them shine on paper.

This workshop is free for everyone, and members of the public are more than welcome to attend. We look forward to seeing you November 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church!

### **SUBCONSCIOUS AS SUPERHERO: S. KAY MURPHY WORKSHOP**

#### **Report on the October Meeting written by Liz Babcock**



*Kay speaking about her book, Tainted Legacy, at Read the Book, Meet the Author at Mac’s International Restaurant.*

S. Kay Murphy is a great example of someone who has made her subconscious her hero, as we Ridge Writers were lucky to learn when she shared two events with us on Oct. 7. After a wonderful “Read the Book, Meet the Author” session in the afternoon, she arrived at the evening meeting bearing gifts, both mental and physical.

Kay began with a raffle of writing-themed gifts and the comment that we all judge one another; it’s instinctive. “You’re all judging me, but maybe a little differently now that I’ve given out presents.”

We all judge ourselves too, and Kay has found that realization and what she does about it central to her ability to write. “Your subconscious is both a hero and a villain,” she said. “Think of it as an enormous treasure chest. Everything you write is based on everything you know and every person you’ve ever met and everything you’ve experienced. It’s all there — all you have to do is unlock it and get going.”

The problem is that your subconscious will try to keep you from writing. It’s telling you that if you procrastinate, you can’t fail. So, what is Kay’s secret to unlocking that treasure chest each day? “You start anyway,” she said. “Don’t just show up at your desk. Set a timer for 25 minutes, start writing, and keep going until your time is up.” That’s the Pomodoro Technique, variations of which have been recommended by numerous time-management experts.

#### **Mark Your Calendar...**

**November 4** – “Letters from Abandoned Characters” Writing Workshop, presented by Daniel Stallings

**December 2** - Member Holiday Party



## Everything AND the Kitchen Sink

When writers meet, we instantly want to know what the other writes, don't we? We can't help it. "What do you write?" is the opening salvo for every writer I know. We like to know who our colleagues are. Will they be best friends? Rivals? Our own personal Moriarty? Okay, okay...I jest. But writers have an incurable desire to learn about the stories their fellows create. And there's nothing wrong with that. The more we experience the wide array of stories in the world, the more we grow as human beings and storytellers.

But I recall a moment I had with a fellow mystery writer. After I told her I wrote mysteries, she asked "What do you write in mysteries?" My answer? Everything! I believe that a genre can—and should—be rendered in any media we choose as creatives. Yes, novels are popular for my genre. But why should I discount novellas, short stories, or flash fiction pieces? Everyone in Ridge Writers knows by now I write dozens of mystery scripts, everything from full-length straight plays to one-acts to radio shows to even a musical! I've written mystery letters, journals, and diaries. I even want to try my hand at a mystery poem one day. Because why not?

Writers write. That's the most elementary goal of our craft. We write and write and write some more. And guess what? Writers don't stop writing when the media changes. What I want is to encourage our members and any wordsmiths out there to embrace everything AND the kitchen sink that writing is capable of achieving. Write a script. A screenplay. A poem. A novel. An epic trilogy. An article. A memoir. A nonfiction book. A short story. A song. You'll never know how far your imagination will stretch if you don't exercise it.

### Congratulations Andrew!



Photographs of the Jack London Awards Ceremony on October 17, 2021, in Oakland. Andrew Sound, the winner of the 2021 award from the East Sierra Branch, was able to attend to accept his award. Congratulations Andrew! We're so proud of everything you do for the branch. And congratulations to the Jack London winners for all the branches of the CWC!

Pictures courtesy of Jeff LaGrange.

### Ridge Writers Leaders

**President** – Daniel Stallings  
**Vice President** – John Anderson  
**Secretary** – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
**Treasurer** – Andrew Sound  
**Member at Large** – Vacant  
**Historian** – Maryann Butterfield  
**Newsletter Editor** – 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](mailto:ridgewriters@yahoo.com).

Visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters](http://www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters) and our website [CWC-ridgewriters.org](http://CWC-ridgewriters.org).

### SoCal Writers Showcase



The southern region of the California Writers Club maintains the "zine"-format [socialwritersshowcase.com](http://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:

- 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](mailto: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.



Andrew Sound wins the door prize basket for Read the Book, Meet the Author.

Once the timer goes off, it’s important to stop, she said. “Get up, do the dishes, exercise, meditate a bit, or take care of something else you thought of before you started. Also, it really helps if you give yourself some candy as a reward.”

During that break, your writing mind will keep working and you’ll be ready to start your next 25 minutes with creative solutions and ideas. One thing Kay stressed: “Once you start to write, it will come to you.” And so, your subconscious becomes your hero.

Along the way to becoming the author of *Tainted Legacy* and several other books, Kay has found valuable writing tools, among them William Zinsser’s *On Writing Well*, so foundational to her writing that her copy is now well and truly tattered. Copies of Zinsser are all over the internet, including an \$8.99 Kindle version on Amazon. And while you’re there, you can pick up a Kindle copy of *Blockbuster Blueprint*,

another of Kay’s favorite writing tools for only \$2.99 or a paperback for a few bucks more.



S. Kay Murphy speaking at the October meeting.

If you don’t have your copy of *Tainted Legacy* yet, be sure to get a copy at Red Rock Books. You’ll find that Kay is an honest, talented writer with a compelling tale to share.

### 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
- John Anderson 2019
- Andrew Sound 2021

\*With a special Charmian London Award to Fran Wersan

### CALIFORNIA WRITERS WEEK: RIDGE WRITERS EVENT AT RED ROCK BOOKS

In 2003, the California State Assembly officially declared the third week in October each year as California Writers Week. For several months in early 2003, with the expert help of Anthony Folcarelli, the Central Board of the California Writers Club worked to establish **California Writers Week**. The plan was successful and on September 4, 2003, at 10 a.m., California Writers Club members gathered on the Assembly floor in Sacramento to receive a Joint Legislative Resolution from Assemblyman Tim Leslie. The Resolution is endorsed by the California Library Association. (Source: calwriters.org.)



Member Donna Rosenthal explains our stuffed animal giveaway (with the help of a cute toy otter) to a patron at the California Writers Week event at Red Rock Books.

To celebrate this year, Ridge Writers teamed up with Red Rock Books on Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The store held a buy one, get one free sale for all used books for the whole weekend. Ridge Writers displayed info on the club, sold books from past speakers, gave out a word puzzle for the chance to win a gift basket, and a special stuffed animal giveaway – Buy a book with the animal in it, and take the critter home for free. The event was a success with several interested patrons. Thank you, Red Rock Books and Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, for creating this special event for California Writers Week!

**Writers Block Challenge**

Sometimes, trying to dredge up an idea for a story can be like sifting through the unorganized junk drawer of all the muses and memories you've collected in your life.

So why not write a story about a junk drawer? Here's what I mean: Go to your house's catch-all space—a closet, a drawer, a cupboard, a shed—and look inside. Play a game of I Spy. Pick a color and find three things in your catch-all in that color. What are they? What memories do they bring up? How do they connect to each other?

Write a flash fiction story (up to 500 words) including all three of those objects in some way. Feel free to get imaginative. Have fun!

*Ridge Writers does not endorse any contest, conference or publishing opportunity that appears in our newsletter. We merely collect and share news of opportunities for our membership. Member discretion advised.*

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.



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**THIN AIR MAGAZINE SUBMISSIONS**

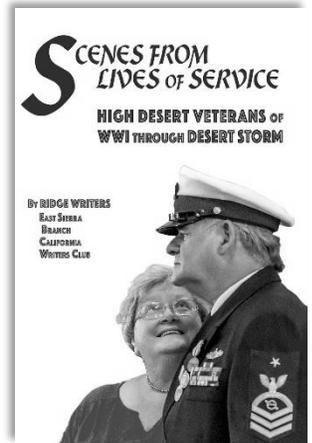
*Thin Air* invites all writers, emerging and established alike, to submit to our Spring 2022 issue. We accept fiction and creative nonfiction up to 3,000 words, up to five poems, and up to five pieces of visual art. Our editors are also interested in pieces that defy categorization. Regardless of form, we want material that feels fresh. The pieces we accept tend to surprise us and remind us why we fell in love with reading in the first place. We continually strive to publish authentic work from a multiplicity of perspectives.

We publish and circulate our journal annually.

Alongside our print journal, we also offer the opportunity for publication through our online Web Features with no submission fee, as well as a fee-less day on the 15th of every month for submissions from Black and Indigenous writers of color.

We are also excited to announce the second annual **The Bird in Your Hands Prize**: a contest that centers and celebrates BIPOC voices. This is a no-fee contest accepting poetry, fiction, and nonfiction in any form under 500 words. The winner of the contest will be awarded \$1000, published in *Thin Air Magazine*, and interviewed for *Thin Air Online*. The winner will also be invited to read the winning entry, all expenses paid for, at the Northern Arizona Book Festival held in April 2022. **The deadline for submission is 11:59pm (MST) on Tuesday, December 1 on Submittable.** This year's judge is Raquel Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez is an arts critic/writer, poet, and educator.

Please submit via the *Thin Air Magazine*  
Submittable Page: [thinair.submittable.com/submit](http://thinair.submittable.com/submit)



Cover Photo by Laura Austin

Our book featuring stories of High Desert veterans, *Scenes from Lives of Service*, is on sale at Red Rock Books and through mail order. To order through mail, send a letter and check to Ridge Writers, PO Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA, 93556; buyer should state name, mailing address, number of copies wanted, and enclose a check for \$32.50 each. Ridge Writers members can buy the book for \$25 each.

**The Ridge Writers  
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