



Writers  
of the

# PURPLE SAGE

## Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

February 2022



### MONICA DWYER SHARES HER EXPERTISE ON “WRITING FROM LIFE” FOR FEBRUARY 3 MEETING

Local blogger, columnist, and playwright Monica Dwyer will talk about “Writing from Life” at our February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Thursday evening, 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. Public welcome. No charge for admission. Masks required.

Monica’s writing career began as a popular blogger with her blog, *Fluttering About: Musings of a Social Butterfly*, that later became a column for *The Daily Independent* newspaper. Her columns were personal stories about moments of her everyday life, be they heartwarming, heartbreaking, or just plain hilarious. Her work showed her to be a keen observer of life and all the wonderful quirks it has, mining on her experiences as a mom, a best friend, an actress, a co-worker, a Bigfoot fan, and more. She went on to pen her first play, *Close Encounters of the Hairy Kind*, produced by Master Mystery Productions for Ridge Writers’ Weird Weekend 2019 to sold-out audiences. Her shrewd observations about life in our city, the local characters, and funny memories from her own life infuse every word of her script, giving her story a lighthearted, natural, memoir feel.

Drawing from this experience, Monica will talk about how to identify those special moments perfect for stories, how to incorporate them in your writing, and how these slices of life work in both non-fiction and fiction. Most of all, she will do what she does best: share her true stories about her journey as a writer who uses the real world around her as her inspiration. We will see you on February 3<sup>rd</sup>! Bring your friends!

### M-A-G-I-C BY KELSEY NORTON

#### Report on the January Meeting written by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal



Fantasy novelist (and our newest member) Kelsey Norton gave our January 6 program, Mother of an “imaginative son and logical daughter,” ages 6 and 3, she described her path with ADHD from childhood into adulthood when she studied to teach English and learned to teach hand signing. As Kelsey grew up, her mother used reading, music, and writing to help her through her ADHD.

Kelsey found that writing would carry her through good times and bad, including an abusive marriage. Fantasy themes served as escape. At one point, her therapist told her, “Your eyes light up when you talk about writing. It’s not just a hobby. You’re a writer.”

Her first book took her 10 years to complete. She hoped it would lead teenage girls to appreciate their self-worth and know their power, even if they think they don’t have any.

#### Mark Your Calendar...

**February 3** – Monica Dwyer – “Writing from Life”

**March 3** – Jenny Margotta – Novelist and editor, author of *The Woman in Room 23*.

**April 7** – David George – Author of *Grandad’s Garden: Stories of the Natural World*

**May 5** – To be announced

**June 2** – Glenn Boozan – Emmy-nominated author of *There Are Moms Way Worse Than You*

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## Challenge Accepted

Writers should read. That's a rule touted across the ages and all the way down the publishing chain. Reading, I always think, functions like refilling the wellspring of your imagination. You are absorbing new ideas, new words, and new ways of telling stories. And usually, there are no issues in convincing people who love books to read more. However, sometimes it's nice to give yourself an extra incentive to read new things. I'm not talking bribery, but the thrill of achieving an accomplishment.

My best friend is a total film buff. So, several years ago, he took on the challenge of watching every Best Picture Academy Award winner. That's not as simple as it sounds. Even though we live in the age of streaming, it gets more complicated the further back in time the movies were. Some of the older ones that have gained little to no traction in modern times he had to find on YouTube. But last month, he announced he had done it. He had watched every Best Picture winner—from 1927/28's *Wings* to 2020/21's *Nomadland*. I wish he blogged about the experience a la *Julie and Julia*, but that's a story for another day.

I have been feeling rather listless in my reading in recent months. Pandemic woes have made reading mysteries not as enjoyable as years past, and I wanted to do something fresh and different. Modern mysteries in the style I enjoy most haven't lived up to their Golden Age predecessors. If you ever knew anything about me, know that I love theatre beyond just attending plays and musicals. I also read scripts and librettos often, enjoying what the actual words and ideas set down by the authors were. Inspired by my best friend's challenge, I am going to read all the Pulitzer Prize winners for Drama starting from 1918's *Why Marry?* by Jesse Lynch Williams to 2021's *The Hot Wing King* by Katori Hall. And I think this is a great thing to do for us word-lovers in the world. Challenge ourselves with something fun. I was told one member planned to read biographies of all the U.S. presidents. A wonderful reading challenge. You could read one novel from your favorite genre set in each of the seven continents. A mystery in Africa? A romance in Antarctica? You could read all the National Book Award recipients. You could read all the non-fiction books written about your favorite historical figure. Reading is vital to our learning and understating as human beings. By giving yourself a fun challenge, you will feel like a champion when you finish. Who doesn't love the feeling of accomplishment? Do you accept the challenge?

### NEW MEMBER

The East Sierra Branch of the California Writers Club, lovingly known as Ridge Writers, is excited to welcome a new member to our growing family! A big welcome to Kelsey Norton, our January speaker, for joining our branch! We are delighted to have you joining us for 2022. We've grown by five members in the past few months! Thank you so much.

#### 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.*

She concluded her presentation by assuring us, “We’re all magic” and offered this five-prong approach to releasing our M-A-G-I-C.

**M:** Movement. Take a walk. Remind yourself of your “why.”

**A:** Affirmation You’ve got what it takes.

**G:** Gratitude. Do your kids kick up too much distraction? Okay, but you have these fabulous, happy youngsters.

**I:** Imagine. Imagine your plot. Imagine your characters. Imagine how you’ll feel when you succeed with your project.

**C:** Create. That’s what you do.

Kelsey’s two books—*Dragon Scale Prophecies: Truth* and *Dragon Scale Prophecies: Courage*—are on sale at Red Rock Books and online through Amazon.

We thank Kelsey for an instructive, energizing, and *magical* evening.

## 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

## LITERARY REVIEW SUBMISSIONS

Sent to us from the statewide California Writers Club:

“The deadline for submissions to the 2022 *Literary Review* is January 31. As a member, you still have time to submit a story or one or two poems to the *Literary Review*. We want your story or poems.

The *Literary Review* is the CWC’s annual collection of the best poetry and prose submitted by our members. It is meant to represent our best writing as a club. We want pieces that are entertaining, funny, emotional, changeling, and thought-provoking. Most of all, we want examples of great writing. The only limit for this year’s publication is the quality of the pieces submitted by our members.

This year, submissions are limited to two poems or one short piece of prose (fiction or non-fiction.) The work must be original and unpublished. To be considered for judging, the piece has to be free of spelling and grammar errors and in the prescribed format. Each poem submitted requires a separate submission form. Check our website for submission requirements. <https://calwriters.org/publications/>”



## FIELD TRIP

*Presented by Daniel Stallings*

Who doesn’t love a field trip with a literary twist? On January 8, my sister and I took a trip to Lone Pine to talk to a new theatre there about partnership opportunities between them and my company, Master Mystery Productions. That all went well. But I hadn’t been in Lone pine for over a decade, so we explored some of the main street area. Our mom told us about the community library they had, and lo and behold, we found it (pictured left). My sister brought one of my books to donate to it. I just love these kinds of secrets and surprises in places, and I think it’s good for writers, readers, and general book nerds to know about these kinds of places. Do you have a book you’ve published that you want to share? Favorite books you have too many copies of? Find community libraries like this one and see what stories you can explore and share.

**2022 Riverside Dickens Festival**

Celebrating the life and works of author Charles Dickens and his impact on society, our Dickens Fest is the brainchild of a small group of people who wanted to promote the cultural arts. Many vendors sell Victorian-era clothing in case guests feel inspired to dress up. There is also traditional food from across the pond, including fish and chips, meat pies, Scones, Welsh cakes, Scotch eggs and of course Tea.

The California Writers Club has had a booth at the festival for several years so come on by, help out, and check out the fun!

**February 26 and 27, 2022**

*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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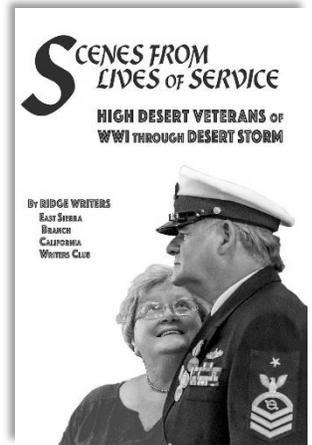
Due to the recent surges, the San Francisco Writers Conference has been postponed to summer 2022, but they are still offering two free passes to every CWC branch throughout the State for their all-day Poetry and Screenwriters Summits, now to be held on July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Each and every branch has been asked to select two members from their branch to represent them in each of the two summits. The date for the Summits will be Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> in San Francisco at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero. The free passes give your members free entry to the all-day event and the privilege of mingling with top poets and screenwriters who will be teaching classes throughout that day.

Travel to and from plus accommodations will be handled by those who attend.

The names for your branch’s choices must be submitted by the branch president on or before June 15, 2022.

Email your interest in attending the Summit to Daniel at [beinmyhaus@hotmail.com](mailto:beinmyhaus@hotmail.com) by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The passes are first come, first serve, so please send us your name if you are interested soon.



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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