



Writers  
of the

# PURPLE SAGE

## Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

April 2022



### DAVID GEORGE INCORPORATES NATURE IN WRITING APRIL 7

Author and past CWC president David George will speak about incorporating nature in our writing for the Thursday, April 7, Ridge Writers meeting. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. No admission charge. Masks requested.

David's debut book, *Granddad's Garden: Stories of the Natural World*, fits into the current "climate lit" genre. Each chapter of *Granddad's Garden* stands alone as a complete story, intended for parents and grandparents to enjoy reading to their children and grandchildren. The stories relate adventures that Granddad and his grandson experience while exploring nature together. Jeremy starts as a three-year-old and grows

with each new chapter until the age of nine, showing his magical transformation into a mature child. Jeremy becomes more aware of the natural world around him as he grows, and Granddad reveals nature's most important lessons through modern-day fables. Furry fox kits, owls, turkeys, coyotes, frogs, snakes, and mockingbirds encounter challenges and threats as they learn how to survive and provide comparable lessons for little ones approaching adulthood in today's world. With *Granddad's Garden*, David has created a feel-good book for troubling times.

He has two more books in the works, one a novel based on his Irish ancestral roots, and Book 2 of *Granddad's Garden* that builds on the idea of how the natural world can impart great wisdom.

He has received the CWC's highest honor, the Ina Coolbrith Award, in 2018 in recognition for his exceptional service to help keep the ship on an even keel.

A book signing follows his presentation. We hope to see you there. Bring your friends!



### J. MARGOTTS-FERRARA EXPLORES THE TRUTH ON MARCH 3

Report on the March Meeting written by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal



J. Margotta-Ferrara authored the thoroughly engrossing novel *The Woman in Room 23*, fiction based on first-hand fact. Employing a creative blend of narrative, dialogue, and letters, it tells the parallel stories of her mother's heartbreaking and arguably scandalous journey contrasted with a coda culminating in seven years hospitalized with Alzheimer's disease, the only form of dementia that remains incurable.

#### Mark Your Calendar...

**April 7** – David George – Author of *Granddad's Garden: Stories of the Natural World*

**May 5** – Jennifer Crittenden – Beyond the Book: websites, blogging, audio versions, publishing others, consulting, podcasts...

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

Giving our March 3 Ridge Writers program, Jenny explained that each of her chapters has two parts, one the present-day and the other, the woman retracing her life in her mind. Every time the woman falls asleep in the present-day, the...

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## Oops, I Read It Again

Reading is the backbone of our craft. You could even say it built the *spine* of our industry. Cue rimshot on the drums. In all seriousness, a good writer really should read twice as much as they write. I always think of it as adding fuel to the tank in my brain. Writing, an act of creation, is an exhaustive process. Reading, an act of consumption, refuels the soul. However, there's not a lot of focus or celebration of *rereading* things we've read once before....

We should always pick up new stories and voices to explore for the first time, but there's something important and magical about rereading something you read years ago, even rereading it for the third, fourth, fifty-seventh time. For instance, I happily reread my Agatha Christie novels start to finish over and over again. You may be like, "Why? You already know who did it. All the suspense is ruined!" But I'm not reading it again to find out whodunit. I'm reading it to find out howdidit—How did the author trick me? Surprise me? Hide the clues so well? Disguise the suspect so convincingly? Every time I reread these books, I find something new.

When I first read Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death* as a teenager, I was taken in like all first readers by the traps she set. I remember the detail a suspect gave about a character's puttees (a kind of compression garment meets protective gaiter wound like a bandage about the calf, shin, ankle, and foot) being wound untidily and how that was a vital clue to the mystery. I remember reading it back then and not having a clue where this detail came from or what "puttees" even were. I wondered if I missed anything. I had. On a reread years later, I read a description of a character describing the state of his clothes exactly, down to the untidy puttees, much earlier in the book. I was immediately impressed. Christie gave us the clue right there in the face, another snare for the reader, and gleefully led us up the garden path. But I wouldn't have seen that detail, noticed that cleverness, and learned how I could do it myself in my own work if I didn't reread the book. I missed it the first time. But the second time, I caught it, gained a new appreciation for the author, and learned a new trick in writing I could use for my own work. That's why I think rereading is just as important. First, you follow the story. The second time (or third, fourth, fifty-seventh), you're following the structure, learning new tricks to make you stronger.

### Los Angeles Times Festival of Books

Since 1996, *The Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books has gathered writers, poets, artists, filmmakers, musicians and emerging storytellers. Now in its 27th year, it represents the largest event of its kind in the United States. The long-awaited gathering returns to the USC campus April 23-24 for a weekend of indoor and outdoor activities, hundreds of exhibitor booths, author signings, and performances. Lineup announced on March 16. The Los Angeles Times and USC will monitor COVID-19 guidance and protocols as planning continues

#### 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 [socalwritersshowcase.com](http://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:

- 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.

... narrative shifts to her past remembrances. Jenny only refers to her as “the woman” except for once toward the end, because the present has no relevance to the woman.

Jenny had obstacles to overcome in undertaking this project. Her sister adamantly opposed it, arguing that “we’ll have to relive the disgrace all over again.” To offset the possibility of recognition, Jenny set her action in a different state, researching her location very carefully because “the more facts you can put in, the more believable the result.” She added that a favorite aspect of fictionalizing had to do with thinking up names. She left out details that would upset her family: “The challenge is to write the truth without hurting anybody.”

Jenny chose her unique shared-lens approach because “I never want to write what somebody else has already written.” If people ask her how much of her story is true, she replies, “It’s always true” (*but she tells the truth the way it should have been*).

An extremely active member of the CWC’s High Desert Branch, Jenny started spinning imaginative yarns as soon as she could talk, and she began writing as soon as she could pick up a pencil. Her subsequent efforts led to technical articles, opinion pieces, short stories, two young-adult fantasy/adventure novels, *Retribution* and *Resolution* that she co-authored, and the cookbook *Some Like It Hot...the Culinary Adventures of One Hot Momma and One Cool Dude* that she co-authored with her husband. She has also edited nearly 150 full-lengths books and has designed over 50 book covers. Well-versed in today’s publishing scene, she closed her presentation by cautioning us that modern publishers expect authors to do everything, including their own promotion and publicity. (So attend meetings to learn more and more.)

### **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.

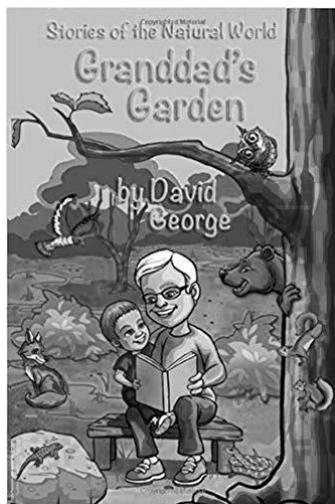
The award was presented annually until 2005, and subsequently only once every two years.

- 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

### **2022 Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers**

This year, the Eastern Sierra Branch of the California Writers Club (Ridge Writers) plans to award the Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers to local students interested in becoming writers. For the first time, we will be opening the contest to students who graduated in 2020, 2021, and 2022 to submit their essays. The winner will earn a \$500 cash prize. Students will write a 500-word essay on the topic “Why do I write and what do I want to do with my writing career?” Entries should be double-spaced in 12 pt. Times New Roman font and include the student’s real name (no pseudonyms), school, and grade at the top of the essay. All entries should be submitted by email as a Word document to [ridgewriters@yahoo.com](mailto:ridgewriters@yahoo.com). We will start accepting entries on April 1st and all entries are due on April 30th. Judging will occur in May, and the winner will be informed in June. If you know any student writers, let them know about the scholarship contest!



### **Read the Book, Meet the Author**

We’re pleased to announce the next “Read the Book, Meet the Author” author, David George on Thursday, April 7, 1:30 p.m. at Mac’s International Restaurant.

Note the time: 1:30, not 2 as in past years. Masks requested except while eating and drinking.

Red Rock Books has the book in stock, *Granddad’s Garden: Stories of the Natural World*. To remind you, you buy and read it in advance of our get-together. The ticket price of \$32 includes tea at Mac’s with tea sandwiches, cheesecake, beverage, a copy of the book that the author will autograph to you, entry in a gift basket drawing, and convivial discussion with the author. Sign up and get your ticket at Red Rock Books.

David will also give the Ridge Writers program on Thursday evening at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 6:30 p.m., no admission charge. This will not be the same as the afternoon’s presentation (see page 1).

**Women's National Book Association  
San Francisco Chapter Virtual Pitch-O-Rama**

From the organizers: "Pitch-O-Rama is returning in 2022! After our amazing session last year, we are happy to announce that we will be hosting the next Pitch-O-Rama session on April 30th, where writers will have the chance to pitch their works to agents and editors for publication. Includes pre-pitch coaching."

**Saturday, April 30, 2022  
8:00 am – 1:00 pm PT on Zoom**

\$65 WNBA members, \$95 Non-members.  
Info and register: [wnba-sfchapter.org](http://wnba-sfchapter.org)  
All genders are welcomed!

*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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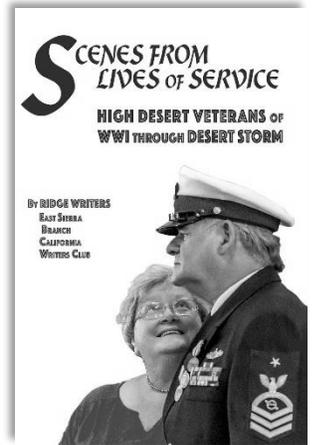
Jack London Awards  
Read the Book Meet the Author  
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**50 Ways to Bust Writer's Block**

Ridge Writers is working on a new handout to pass out at events such the Petroglyph Festival for the Riverside Dickens Festival. We want the handout to be a fun writing aid for those interested in jumpstarting their own work. The idea we germinated was "50 Ways to Bust Writer's Block," and we want you, our members, our Ridge Writers, to contribute your own ideas for beating the dreaded Block for this handout. We want this handout to come from the branch as a whole.

Do you have any tips or tricks on defeating writer's block? How about fun, quick writing prompts you found enjoyable? Send them to us at [ridgewriters@yahoo.com](mailto:ridgewriters@yahoo.com).

The tips need to only be a blurb—a few words long or a couple short sentences. You don't have to write long passages. And you can share everything from sincere tricks that helped you battle with the blank page to funny writing prompts you tried to honest time management tips and so much more. We want our membership to build this handout with their contributions. A prompt could be: "Write a letter to the raccoon that knocked over your garbage can." A tip could be: "Write backwards. Start from the ending of the story and work up to the beginning." Let your imagination soar!



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.

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