



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

May 2022



Danny Nielsen

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING WITH A TINY TWIST: DANNY NIELSEN AND JENNIFER CRITTENDEN DISCUSS THE BIRTH OF A BOOK ON MAY 5

Be in on the birth of a book when author Danny Nielsen and publisher/editor Jennifer Crittenden discuss the origin and process of their collaboration to bring *Straight Flossin' and Other Stories of the American West* into the world, at the Ridge Writers May 5 meeting, starting 6:30 pm in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. Masks requested. Public welcome. Admission free.

Straight Flossin' is a collection of creative nonfiction essays about Danny's experiences working in desert landscapes, both for pleasure and for his doctoral work in Environmental Science. The essays range from hair-raising stories about skunks and fires to philosophical musings about the American Dream, water, and environmental damage. The lovely illustrations in the book were drawn by Danny's wife, Sunny Noel Sawyer.

Straight Flossin' is Danny's first book and the eighth book published by Whistling Rabbit Press, Jennifer's boutique publishing company. After publishing her own books, Jennifer wanted to use Whistling Rabbit Press to produce other worthy books by shepherding them through the same process and using some of the same vendors she had used.

It was important to her personally to protect the authors from some of the predatory or flawed practices she had seen from other publishers or author service companies. Whistling Rabbit Press uses a "traditional publishing" model in that all financial risk is assumed by the publisher, and the author is not expected to pay to be published. Other financial details will be reviewed during this evening conversation.

Jennifer and Danny will share their experience working under this model and offer takeaways for audience members about writing, editing, publishing, and how they can have a positive experience publishing their own book. We hope to see you at the meeting. Bring your friends!



Jennifer Crittenden

AUTHOR DAVID GEORGE, *GRANDDAD'S GARDEN*

Report on the April Meeting written by Charlotte Goodson



On April 7, 2022, Ridge Writers were treated to a double feature program by David George, author of *Granddad's Garden: Stories of the Natural World*. During the afternoon tea at Mac's restaurant, we had the pleasure of getting to know David and something of the beginnings and development of *Granddad's Garden*, his debut book.

More than twenty years ago David George and his wife made a move from a technology focused life in southern California to acreage northeast of the Bay area. There they became immersed in the wild oak tree woodland and a passion for organic gardening. It wasn't long before a growing love of nature underscored for them...

Mark Your Calendar...

May 5 – Jennifer Crittenden and Danny Nielsen: Birth of a Book

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

July 7 – Brett Battles – One of our favorite and most successful local authors returns by popular demand.

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Follow Through

The following was printed in an earlier edition of *Writers of the Purple Sage*.

If there's one piece of advice I could give to any aspiring writer, it's finish something. As creative people, our heads will be constantly filled with unfinished projects, scraps of inspiration, little raggedy bits of ideas we glean from life. That's how we create in the first place. But, and I hate to play the "bad guy" here, it doesn't mean anything unless you can put them out into the world. A finished story is always stronger than a great idea.

How come? Because a finished product teaches you so much more than brainstorming, outlining, storyboarding, etc. ever could. It can reveal things about your working style and work ethic. It can show you how well you plan an arc or overall storyline. It teaches you about the big picture. It's easy to get caught up in details, in the swirling pile of minutiae that seem to affect all artists. Should this character have this detail or this one? Should I change the battle scene from day to night? Should I include another character in this scene? Should I reverse these scenes? Stop. Back up. Breathe. And finish.

Because only when you finish it will you be able to see the completed picture. You will be able to assess how it flows, transitions, builds, and resolves. You can't do that in pieces. You have to plow through and put it all together first. Details come later. Details should enhance the story; They are NOT the story.

My sister once described me as a weird hybrid of a dreamer and a doer. Most people seem divided into one of those two packs. I was the weirdo who could dream up a big show idea...and then several months later you'd see the show being advertised. That's what you need to be as a writer. Dream up your world...and then make them. Don't stop. Follow through. Finish. You will be all the more richer when you cross that threshold.



Gene Schneider, In Loving Memory

We're saddened to announce the passing of one of our dearest, long-standing members, Gene Schneider. Gene was one of Ridge Writers' Life Members, and she had been a fixture at many meetings and events for our branch over the years.

She will be missed. Thank you for your years of service in our branch, Gene. Rest in peace.

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.

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters and our website CWC-ridgewriters.org.



SoCal Writers Showcase

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:

- 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. **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.

...the wisdom of John Muir’s statement that “When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

The innate drive and mechanisms for survival used by plants and animals could offer life lessons for a maturing child. Enter the George’s young grandson, Jeremy, who became the inspiration for David to write of their shared experiences in nature. From the ages of three to nine the adventures together and the ‘read-a-louds’ of two stories crafted each year enhanced the bond between child and grandparents. The conviction and hope grew that other children and adults would enjoy the emotional closeness and intellectual development that is fostered by frequent read-a-louds. Through Jeremy’s direct experience of nature complimented by Granddad’s modern fables, there were lessons learned along with a sense of wonder.

At our evening program, David sketched his background related to software development and going forward. With an opportunity to purchase the oak woodland acreage in 1999, he and his wife found that in addition to the wonderful trees the property consisted mostly of weeds. Thus began their work to preserve the wild habitat and to garden organically. In January 2004 he joined the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club. He served as CWC president from 2014 -2016. He became a University of California Master Gardener and considers himself an environmentalist. He publishes a monthly column in the *Diablo Gazette* about gardening and his favorite topic nature. Recommended publishing sources are *Grandparents’ Magazine* and AARP for writing about grandparents and kids bonding experiences.

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

The topic for this evening’s program: **INTEGRATING NATURE into your WRITING.**

A colorful and well-organized video was presented with David’s accompanied commentary. To begin with ‘Nature’ is a sensory experience. The five senses: listen, see, taste, smell, and feel cannot be experienced by pictures on an iPad, other than perhaps seeing.

The role of nature in writing can be central or incidental but never overlooked.

WHY (incorporate nature in writing)

1. It enhances the vividness of settings
2. It can enhance the believability of characters or the world being created
3. It communicates a mood or foreshadows coming events
4. It adds appeal

HOW

1. Introduce an Incidental Character
2. Introduce a Central Character
3. Introduce a Central Theme
4. Create a vivid backdrop
5. Develops foreshadowing event(s)

Nature as an Incidental Character -

- a. Example was given comparing a simple statement and a detailed description by Tolstoy
- b. From “Scary Sounds” Chapter 10 in *Granddad’s Garden* another example was of Jeremy opening the door, the dog Zinnie bounding out, and seeking safety when frightened by three Great Horned Owls.

4. Nature as a Core Character –

- a. Can be a protagonist or antagonist
- b. Invokes natural obstacles or overcoming odds

Examples of films: “Into Thin Air” “Twister -Cat.5 tornado” “Avatar-nature in control”

5. Nature as Central Theme -central to story

- a. a Battle against Nature, “Perfect Storm”
- b. *Granddad’s Garden*, stories with related modern fables
- c. World Building, as in the Middle Earth in *Lord of the Rings*

This informative and entertaining program was closed with the encouraging words from author David George -

“Nature is all around us. Use it in your writing.”

California Writers Club Bulletin

Courtesy of the editor, Joyce Krieg, she wants the general membership to know that the newly revamped, revised, and refurbished *Bulletin* is always available for your perusal at calwriters.org, the CWC website. Joyce gave us two ways our membership can contribute to the statewide Bulletin:

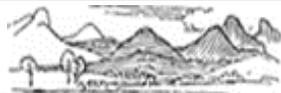
“1. If they've recently published a book, short story, poem, or article, or won a literary contest, share the good news! Send a notice of 50 words or less, plus book cover in JPEG format, to editor@calwriters.org.

2. We're always looking for articles on writing craft, publication and marketing. If your members have expertise in these areas and would like to contribute an article, have them contact me with a brief proposal at editor@calwriters.org.” – Joyce Krieg, *Bulletin* editor

The next issue will come out on June 15.
Deadline is June 1.

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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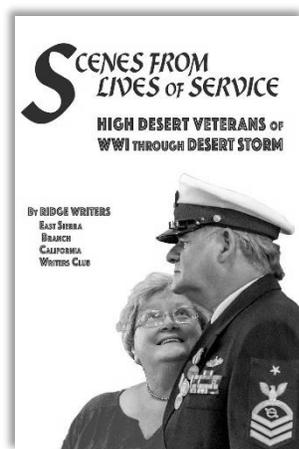
- Jack London Awards

Planting the Seeds of Learning

By Janis Kunz (East Sierra Branch)

In the classroom, the flowers grow.
There are so many things for them to know.
I want to help and guide their learning.
Their seeds need watering, their dirt needs churning.
Soon they bloom and blossom, master new skills.
I find it so awesome, and always will.
I want to know how best to tend,
to support, to love and mend,
To bring the sun upon their faces,
to be a mentor and a friend.
I build the landscape for them to flourish,
The steps and the paths on which they will nourish.
The vines and limbs, thrive and grow wild.
There’s a place in my heart for every child.
It’s all-round joy as they laugh and grow smarter,
Playing inside the Kindergarten!

The poem above as read to us by new member Janis Kunz at the April meeting. She wrote it for her Early Childhood Education seminar/field experience class, one of the culminating classes of the degree/major. The assignment was to pick a metaphor for “where we felt we are in our teaching journey and make a creative artifact off that metaphor.” She chose to do a poem and received volumes of praise from her professor.



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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California Writers Club
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