



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

July 2022

BRETT BATTLES TO SPEAK JULY 7



Burroughs High School graduate and successful thriller writer Brett Battles will give the Ridge Writers program on Thursday, July 7, starting at 6:30 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. Public invited, admission free, masks requested.

Brett will discuss publishing platforms from print to electronic, along with pitfalls to avoid. A *USA Today* bestselling as well as Barry Award-winning author of over forty novels, including *Rewinder*, the Jonathan Quinn series, the Logan Harper series, the Project Eden series and, with Robert Gregory Browne, he has coauthored the Alexandra Poe series

His first novel, *The Cleaner* (2007), introduced recurring character Jonathan Quinn, freelance intelligence operative who specializes in making bodies disappear. His second novel, *The Deceived* (2008), won the Barry Award for Best Thriller. His third novel, *Shadow of Betrayal* (published in the U.K. as *The Unwanted*) continues Quinn's

adventures. *Publishers Weekly* described *The Cleaner* as “displaying an enviable gift for pacing and action, Battles’ debut novel is a page-turner that may remind some readers of the cult TV spy series *Alias*. Admirers of quality espionage fiction can look forward to a new series worth following.”

He will follow his presentation with informal conversation and a book signing. Read more about him at brettbattles.com. Please come, and please bring your friends.

SIBLING BONDING: Janis and Davis Kunz Interviews from Workshop

Report on the June Meeting written by Daniel Stallings, Janis Kunz, & Davis Kunz

We had a slight change of plans for our June 2nd meeting. Glenn Boozan will be rescheduled for a later date, so Ridge Writers held a quick interactive workshop about the nature of interviews to help spur fresh creativity from our guests and members. Donna McCrohan Rosenthal opened with detailed information about the Interview section of SoCal Writers Showcase, which is always looking for new material from our members. President Daniel Stallings segued into a workshop about interviews to get those pens flying. The prompt was simple: Divide into pairs and interview each other about their favorite piece of creative media (book, TV show, film, play, etc.) and how it influenced or inspired them.

The results showed the diverse array of how writers think through an interview.

Even with the same prompt, each person addresses it differently. We learned two people have Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* at the top of their reading list, while others took a more abstract approach and explored how the medium of writing as influenced them. We didn't make it a hard rule; We just wanted them to open their minds to the varying journeys an interview can take and write what they wanted to explore. And thanks to member Janis Kunz and her guest and brother Davis Kunz, we get to share a little slice of that journey. Here are the sample interviews from that meaning as a brother and sister enjoy some sibling bonding in their personal expeditions in what it means, for them, to write.

DAVIS KUNZ, WRITER FOR LIFE — WRITTEN BY HIS SISTER, JANIS KUNZ

Davis has written since the beginning—not quite of time but it feels like it—coming up with plots, titles, characters, dialogue, sequels, sequels to sequels...Almost as though if he didn't, he would fade away and not exist. Not published...yet, he is a writer at heart and a damn good one.

Mark Your Calendar...

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

August 4 – Open Mic Night – Bring your writing to read – 5 to 7 minutes – in good taste

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First Steps of the Dance



Times do exist when I feel like I am perpetrating the longest con. I have been a playwright/director/producer in the area for several years now, and I have successfully produced up to twenty-nine productions to date with number thirty happening in July. That's wild. And the origin story is that I just started doing it and people kept asking me when the next show was. So I just kept doing shows. I now find myself at the hub of my own little corner of the theatre universe, fielding messages from new actors, new clients, new venues all the time. We do our little dance to-and-fro, a little toe-to-toe, a do-si-do to figure out how I work and how this new venture will function, and we usually end up getting the work done. It's crazy to think that I would not have these opportunities if I didn't decide to start this dance in the first place.

It's never effortless to become a writer, and lately, I have seen friends and colleagues abstain from the title of "writer" or any creative title that they don't feel they've earned or are unsure if they identify with it. I get it. Sometimes, it feels like lying to call ourselves these things when we haven't fully embraced it ourselves. I used to feel that way about being called an "actor." Acting wasn't my vocation. It was something I did when I had to do it. But as the years went on and I started acting more and more, I found my own form of power and joy in it. So yes, I am now happy to say I am an actor. And a writer. And director, producer, publicist, etc. Because I am reminded of one of our past speakers who told us that all it took to be a writer was to have written.

That is a powerful lesson and an important one for all of us writers—professional, amateur, aspiring, or hobbyist—to remember and hold in our hearts. To be anything, you just have to do it. If you have written for the *Sage*, you are a writer. If you wrote articles, you are a writer. If you wrote an unpublished story, you're still a writer. No matter the media, no matter where it's found in the future—on Broadway, in Barnes and Noble, or in your underwear drawer—if you have written, you are a writer. It may feel weird at first, like learning the first steps of a new dance. I encourage you to try. It's more than okay to embrace the title. Because you have contributed—as Davis Kunz eloquently put it—to the vast "once-in-a-galaxy imagination" of the human race. And that is beautiful. Take our hands and join the dance.

NEW SLATE OF OFFICERS

At our June meeting, we held the election for the new slate of officers for the Ridge Writers Board. Thank you so much to Daniel Stallings, Monica Dwyer, Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, Andrew Sound, and Janis Kunz for joining the Board and contributing the wonderful service Ridge Writers and the California Writers Club adds to this valley. You are awesome!

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.

Janis: If writing were removed from your life, what part of your personality/soul would be obliterated?

Davis: Imagine the loss felt by Peter Pan when he lost his shadow. That’s the feeling that jumps to my mind. I would still be a good person, friend, etc., but I would be en-saddened as I would be leaving less in the world.

J: If the Earth were exploding, what would you shove into the space capsule first?

D: Well, the puppies of course! I’m tempted to say the world’s stories or its selfies—anything that can convey the unique character of the human spirit and its once-in-a-galaxy imagination.

J: Is there a struggle to writing that you’ve overcome? Or a special technique that helps you?

D: My struggle is staying motivated when the “film reel” of my mind’s eye flaps to the end, and I’m not sure if there’s another reel. I hate to say I’m one of those writers who can’t write without inspiration, because a professional finisher of works is someone who can use structure and discipline to create their own drive when they need it, based on seasoned experience. But yeah, I still need inspiration. I tried making my own story encyclopedias hoping that knowing everything about my worlds would make it easier to create within them, but the weeds were too fun to play in, and suddenly I had lost momentum. Plus, I had all this *mythology* I felt intimidated by and beholden to. Influential favorites of mine like *The Lord of the Rings*, and *His Dark Materials* must have required such supporting documents, but I knew I needed a different method to help me write pulpy genre adventures with a constant forward energy. For example, I can’t enjoy a vocal performance as much if I can tell each verse was recorded at a different time. The breakthrough for me for maintaining my “story voice” and keeping motivation alive was when I tried ending each session when I still had *one more thing* I was desperate to write down and preserve. Sure, I risked losing a perfect moment, or metaphor, or line of dialog, but keeping this “seed” over until the next day was *fire* as far as getting me back swinging at the keys. I was warmed up immediately for the rest of the day’s efforts, and all I had to worry about now was overheating the projector!

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

JANIS KUNZ: WRITING WITH MOTION LINES WRITTEN BY HER BROTHER, DAVIS KUNZ

Janis is a dynamic person in everything she does, and it surprises me not at all that, as a performer and a writer, she brings an impressive energy. Since joining Master Mystery Productions, I have been privileged to see this amazing glow-up of accomplishments.

Davis: Janis, was being a “writer” something you felt foremost as a part of your authentic self?

Janis: Actually, I resist the label of writer because I don’t like writing or relate to the archetypes of writers, such as someone happy to squirrel away with a typewriter for days at a time. But I love creating characters and stories, which goes nicely with plays and acting.

D: Well, the gravity well may pull you close at some point, but it sounds like you are no stranger to creative media. Is your favorite medium influenced by what you can create within?

J: Definitely. I like to watch the things I like to create. For example, I would write further episodes of my favorite (cancelled) TV shows, just for the fun of it and to share with my sister and other fans, but I wouldn’t read/write that much without the initial push of the other media that inspired me.

D: Do you feel such “fan-fictions” are as satisfying as original works and any fan fictions that have strongly influenced you?

J: I think the good ones where the writer took care with it are definitely as good as original works. My sister and I wrote further episodes of the series *Miracles* that starred Skeet Ulrich and Angus MacFadyen and put those on Fanfiction.net. Yes, we already had the two main characters and their first 13 episodes prewritten for us, but we went into a lot of depth to flesh out areas of their backstories that were never covered on the TV show, and we came up with a new story arc, dozens of brand-new side characters, five original plots, and some super cool paranormal action! It was a good creative period for me, and some of the only writing my sister has done because she isn’t interested in doing fully original stuff. Fan-fiction franchises that have inspired me are *Miracles*, *White Collar*, and *Numb3rs* just because these shows resonated strongly with me, I wanted more stories, and the fanbase writers for these wrote some excellent further adventures with real artistry in the words as well which is a pretty cool bonus!

Dues will be due starting July 1st. Membership renewals are \$45/year. You can send your dues to the P.O. Box. Make out any checks to Ridge Writers. Deadline is September 30th.

**Red Rock Books Wins
Business of the Year Award**

East Sierra Branch President Daniel Stallings nominated Red Rock Books for the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce’s Community Awards for Business of the Year. And they won! Pictured below is Ann Rizzardini, owner, and Jenny Storruste, manager, with their award.



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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**Eastern Sierra Book Festival
—5th Anniversary in Mammoth Lakes—**

On Sunday, July 17, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., the Eastern Sierra Book Festival will be held. From the website: “The book festival is a one-day celebration of books, writing, reading, and publishing. It is held annually in July at the beautiful Mammoth Museum at Hayden Cabin in Mammoth Lakes, California, on the Eastside of the Sierra Nevada.

The book festival opened in 2018 and grew significantly in 2019. In 2020 it moved online but ran for six wonderful hours of author presentations and interviews. For 2021, the festival was (a)live again and set attendance records despite being baptized with some afternoon sprinkles.

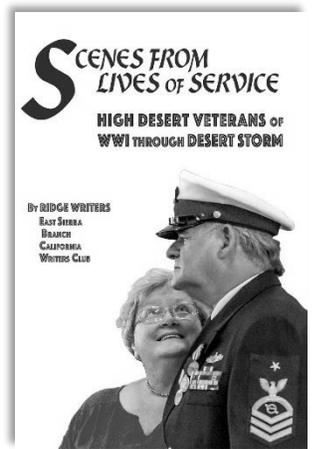
For our FIFTH year, in 2022, we’re planning on being in person and bigger and better than ever!

It is sponsored by Whistling Rabbit Press and is hosted by the Southern Mono Historical Society. Book sales benefit the Mammoth Museum.

Speakers, food & drink, music, games, books for sale and giveaway, and vendors. Entrance and a good time are free.”

This year, both Ridge Writers and East Sierra-based Master Mystery Productions will have booths at the festival. MMP will do a free show.

Ridge Writers would like to invite its membership to join us at the booth and festival.



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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