



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

September 2022

JEANNIE BARROGA CROSSES THE LINES, DOTS THE TEASE FOR SEPTEMBER 1st MEETING

Award-winning playwright and author of “Turn Right at the Water Buffalo” Jeannie Barroga will speak about “Crossing the Lines and Dots the Tease: When Fiction Mirrors Memoirs” for our general meeting, Thursday, September 1, in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. Visitors welcome. Admission free. Mask requested.

Jeannie explains that “An early beta reader asked ‘Was this memoir all true?’ I said ‘Turn Right at The Water Buffalo’ was not a memoir; it’s a trip with ‘fictionalized facts.’ My notes were thirty years old; the trip, five years older. Listeners said my verbal details seemed fresher than my written descriptions. As in *pitching* plays, a practice nurtured for 40-plus years *writing* them, I creatively layer fiction among facts. Review what elicits audience responses, on screen and onstage: ‘truths’—like the contrasting crunchy and chewy textures of a bagel—should already engage readers. Integrate *carefully* selected fiction—like ‘fresh lox or unspreadable cream cheese.’ “Internally I argued whether any writer needs to tag what is fictitious or not; I say, no. With seams undetectable between fact and fiction, a writer needs to tell a gripping, relatable, infuriating story, to cross a line, to tease, cap, and package. Determine in your ‘sandwich,’ how.”

Jeannie, Lifetime Dramatists Guild member, is a published, award-winning playwright whose works are in Stanford’s Special Collections. Among many plays, she received the NEA Artistic Excellence Award. Twice a Literary Manager, she has also directed at LaMama NY, and acted in the cult film “I Am a Ghost.”

Her talk will conclude with Q&A and a book signing. We’ll look forward to seeing you there, and bring your friends.

Why I Love Writing: Allison Aubin Scholarship Essay written by 2022 winner Tucker Anderson



President Stallings awarding the 2022 Allison Aubin Scholarship to Tucker Anderson.

At our July meeting, we had a rare full circle moment. Tucker Anderson first won our My Once Upon a Time Storytelling Competition seven years ago while in elementary school. Now, a senior in high school, he accepts the Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers with his early passion for writing still going strong. Below, we’ve shared his winning essay:

“Poignant, scrumptious, moniker, semblance, felicity...

Why do I write?

Well, it’s hard to put it into words. I chuckle at the irony, not finding the words to eulogize writing. Perhaps it’s best, then, just to describe it.

I don’t remember when I first fell in love with writing. The writing bug’s just always bugged - an insatiable desire to create with words, even when I was barely learning how to trace letters. I do remember, however, the first book that really shook me. Percy Jackson was excellent, of course, and every book of the *Redwall* series was a treat. But Eoin Colfer’s *Artemis Fowl* series converted me to the art of language.

The freshness of the idea and the execution of such novelty was what really stunned me about *Artemis Fowl*. Colfer had the creative audacity to meld the science fiction and fantasy genres. The result? Three-foot laser-beam-toting magical fairies living under the crust of the earth, unbeknownst to humankind.

Sounds stupid, doesn’t it?

Mark Your Calendar...

September 1 – Jeannie Barroga, author of *Turn Right at the Water Buffalo*

October 6 – Iris Hattersley, author of *Lucky Thirteen: Memoir of One of the First Female Deputy U.S. Marshals*

The Mic is Yours



I'm keeping my message short but sweet this month. We just had our Open Mic Night this past month and having so many people come to the microphone and share their beautiful, precious words with us is something I treasure. I recall someone once saying it's sort of optimistic to assume people ever want to read their work aloud since they don't really enjoy it. And I want to encourage all of you to do the opposite. Take the mic when it's offered to you. Take that chance. It's not going to happen all the time, and it may be your only chance to share your work and let it resonate with readers. Don't let opportunities slide past you.

Below I've shared the pictures of those writers who shared with us at Open Mic Night. Bravo!



NEW MEMBER

The East Sierra Branch of the California Writers Club is excited to welcome a new member to our growing family! A big welcome to Davis Kunz for joining our branch! We are delighted to have you joining us and look forward to seeing more of your work and growth as a writer.

Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – Janis Kunz
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
Member at Large – Monica Dwyer
Historian – Maryann Butterfield
Newsletter Editor – Daniel Stallings
Programs & Publicity – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
State Rep – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Youth Coordinator – Janis Kunz
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:

- The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
- The text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes.
- 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.

And yet, Colfer wrote a masterpiece of young adult literature. It had everything - adventure, heroes, villains, humor. For the half dozen hours it took to pound through one of the *Artemis Fowl* books, I LIVED in that world. It was so vibrant, so creative, so stunning and unexpected. I knew then, while in the thralls of Colfer’s brilliance, that I wanted to write stories of my own.

That’s why I write - operating on just the merest hope that someday I’ll have the capacity to create such a vibrant world. I want to invent stories that entertain. I want to write something that MEANS something. I want to change how people view the world. That is, of course, the purpose of writing - to allow the reader to see more than they could before.

When you read the title, did you get little thrills? I get little thrills when I read great words like those. The ones that just sound good. The evocative ones. They’re little explosions, little fireworks of *rightness*. That’s the other big reason I write - the structure of it, the work of it - it’s intoxicating. There’s something unspeakably satisfying about writing until every carefully chosen word belongs, every painstakingly crafted sentence is as perfect as can be, and you don’t think, you KNOW, that there is no more to write. To paraphrase the great Charles Johnson, writing is the one opportunity we have in this world to create something perfect.

So that’s what I’d like to do in my writing career. Write beautifully. I would prefer to be a creative writer, but obviously the dream is far-fetched. Really, my writing goal is simply to do it as much as I can and as long as I can, especially professionally, whether that means creative or technical writing. For me, there’s no substitute for writing; to do this, permanently, would be my most fulfilling dream come true.” — Tucker Anderson, 2022 Allison Aubin Scholarship Winner

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

Lifting the Choir by Davis Kunz

Could they hear the Choir yet?

they’d travelled so far to get to it
and feel the promise of its **song**
so long the heart of their People
making them equal
beating strong

First read at Davis’s college graduation in 2016.

Then read at Ridge Writers Open Mic Night on August 4, 2022.

As they climbed from their small craft

their sea-splashed life raft
to their destination at **last**
onto the white beach sand
of a new and challenging land
so happy they laughed

Reprinted with permission from the author.

They heard then the silver tones drifting in

and with them sensed an open hand
a giving palm they trembling **clapsed**
which pulled them out to look upon
a noon-lit world so full of song
They blinked and danced

They then made a sudden chorus

and joined the Choir with solid purpose
chiming in with golden **tongues**
to lift the hymn with ringing lungs
adding music from where music comes
swift and sweet the rhythm runs

Who owns the fingers and thumbs that wrapped the oars

that rowed those sonant boats to choral shores
to calm the water’s drums like balm and **stilled**
the loud storm clouds with a lilting psalm
like all the trials they’d overcome
making each mountain a molehill

Those voices now added to the Choir

a victory of hard work and desire
painting new notes into its scores
enriching its gardens like the flowers
fellow singers those voices are ours
mine and yours



Next month, we’ll share another poem from Open Mic Night.

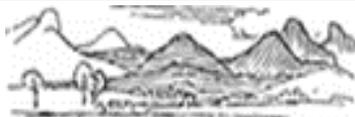
Read the Book, Meet the Author

In addition to giving our general meeting program at 6:30 in Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, Jeannie Barroga will chat informally about “Turn Right at the Water Buffalo” at 2 p.m., Thursday, September 1, in the back room of the Pizza Factory.

For this, sign up and pay in advance at Red Rock Books; \$32 includes the book autographed to you or someone of your choice, plus tea and scones, discussion, and entry in a raffle drawing.

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.



Poetry Postcard Fest

Sent by the organizers: “Do you love to write? Want to expand your horizons?”

Join the Poetry Postcard Fest!

Organized by the Cascadia Poetics Lab, the Poetry Postcard Fest is an annual event where writers dedicate 56 days to composing original 31 poems and sending them to other participants. The Fest was initiated in 2007 by poets Paul Nelson and Lana Ayers and has grown to include poets participating worldwide.

Writers are asked to create a daily, spontaneous poem on the back of a postcard that is then mailed to a fellow poet. At the same time, the sender will also receive a postcard with a poem from a fellow participant. It’s a great way to jump-start your creative spirit and enhance your writing career.

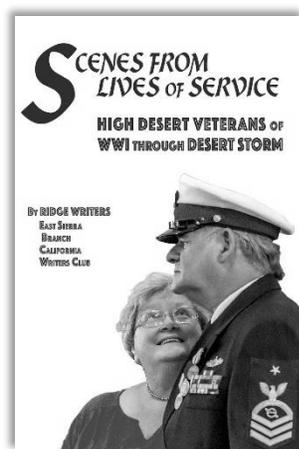
The fest is open to people who contribute at least \$20 U.S. to the Cascadia Poetics Lab.

But I’m not a poet! Can I still participate in this event?

Yes! Writers who already create poetry will naturally gravitate towards poetry events and contests, but what about writers who have never written a poem? This event is for you as well.

We believe that poetry is the nexus at which self-knowledge, bioregionalism and expansive creativity converge. Cascadia Poetics Lab is a vibrant community whose workshops, festivals, and opportunities for connection can open the door to transformative experiences.

Join us by registering here:
<https://ppf.cascadiapoeticslab.org/register/>”



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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