



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

March 2023

JERI WESTERSON TAKES US FROM HISTORICAL MYSTERIES TO MODERN MARKETING ON MARCH 2

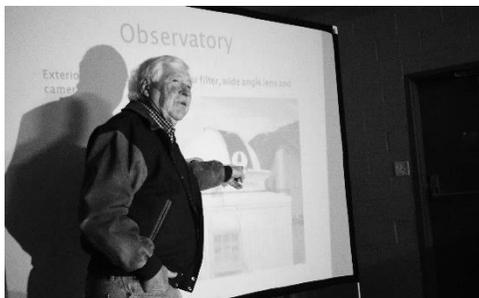
Creator of very popular medieval capers and mysteries Jeri Westerson will address “Historical Mysteries to Modern Marketing” for our Thursday, March 2, meeting that starts 6:30 pm in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 West Las Flores, public welcome, no admission charge, masks requested.

Launching from the premise that “It’s all right to have your writing sensibilities set in the past, but marketing your book must be most definitely in the present,” she will discuss how “the industry has changed and it’s no surprise authors have to change with it. Over and over again. Where should you focus your attention? Are you getting the most out of your advertising budget? Are you spending your time wisely or frittering away your opportunities?” She will share tips and a way to focus your energy productively and with an approach for whether you write historicals or not.



She tells us on her website, “Los Angeles native Westerson was born the same day the first nuclear bomb was tested...though not the same year, so she isn’t responsible. She muddled around in life, first thinking to become an actress, woke up during a real world audition and said, ‘Nope, Nerp. Not doing THIS the rest of my life,’ and instead, embarked on a successful career as a graphic designer. But instead of staying there, she made a lateral move to being a writer and found herself the author of fifteen Crispin Guest Medieval Noir novels, a series nominated for 13 national awards from the Agatha to the Shamus. She works in other genres as well including the Gaslamp-steampunk fantasy trilogy “Enchanter Chronicles.” She will bring insight, expertise, and anecdotes gleaned from an impressive literary life, and a book signing will follow the program. We hope to see you there, and please bring your friends.

BEYOND THE BLUE MARBLE: Jerry Bradley Shows Us the Stars **Report on the February Meeting written by Daniel Stallings**



Jerry Bradley discusses details on his homegrown backyard observatory he built.

Renaissance men seem to love Ridgecrest as Jerry Bradley—engineer, artist, sculptor, little library keeper, Friend of the Library, museum supporter, and space photographer—proved when he came to speak at our February 2 meeting. In his charmingly titled program “Backyard Astronomy,” Jerry showed us the stars (and galaxies,

nebulae, planets, eclipses, solar transits, satellites, etc.) with a slideshow highlighting his hobby as a backyard astronomical photographer. Writers should always stay curious about the universe around them, so our February meeting was a chance to let out members feel inspired by the realms beyond the blue marble called Earth and allow them to wonder “What is it like up there?”

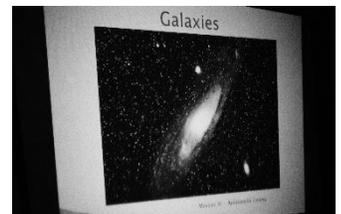
Bradley opened his program with a glossary about astronomical terminology and celestial objects. He posed the question “Why do astronomy in the first place?” and offered answers such as to gain knowledge about the universe, to appreciate the splendor of outer space, and to have fun. Then he got into the specifics of his own hobby of photographing objects in space, saying of himself that he’s “crazy enough to build his own backyard observatory.”

Mark Your Calendar...

March 2 — Jeri Westerson, *Oswald the Thief*

April 6 — Jill Hunting, author of *For Want of Wings*

May 4 — Jeff Gottesfeld (*As the World Turns* writer, playwright, novelist and author of *Food for Hope: How John van Hengel Invented Food Banks for the Hungry.*



Continued on page 3

Good Readers Make Great Writers



I hope our amazing and talented Youth Coordinator and Scholarship Chair Janis Kunz doesn't take umbrage with my borrowing her genius turn of phrase for the upcoming Junior Writers Book Swap as a muse for this President's Message. "Good Readers Make Great Writers." It's a philosophy I have championed for years and years, a way of life I have taken to my very core as a creative person. Expose yourself to as much of your creative medium as you can. See the good, the bad, and the "What were they thinking?" Enjoy work that challenges your perspectives, tests you emotionally, tries your nerves.

Why? Because that is the soul of a good reader. Thus, it will make a stronger writer. Sometimes, it's not enough just to read a lot. We should embrace work that challenges us and where we stand in the world. Because in this way, we learn more about the world and its multitudes, and we learn more about ourselves. Why did I like this piece over that piece? What were the elements that I didn't care for in this work? Does that touch base with something about myself I need to examine? Did I dislike something due to an ingrained prejudice? What can this teach me about the quality of my own work moving forward? What can I learn from this?

These answers start to build the DNA of your authorial voice. I've seen and read hundreds of plays by this point. Each has their own heartbeat, and I have liked some and disliked others. After each one, I ask myself the same things. How did I feel about the show? Did I like it? Why did I like it? What didn't I like? And why? Each question builds on the ones I've asked before, and it starts to develop what I like in theatre and what I want to explore in my own craft. I like plays where action happens, but there are moments of humanity and introspection. I like the language to be real but suffused with its own natural poetry. I'm not a big fan of conversation without plot or lyricality without reality. Plays that beautifully scratch that itch have been works such as Lynn Nottage's *Sweat*, David Auburn's *Proof*, and Marsha Norman's *'night Mother*. And the more I read, watch, and explore, the more I find I love. And the deeper my voice as a creator grows.

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We want to celebrate some wonderful accomplishments made by our members recently. First, Janis Kunz, our Youth Coordinator, just won the 2022 Firecracker Award from the Community Light Opera and Theatre Association for a stellar debut year with the organization. Second, our Member-at-Large Monica Dwyer will open her hit play, *Close Encounters of the Hairy Kind*, which first premiered for Ridge Writers Weird Weekend 2019, on the CLOTA Center Stage starting March 3rd in its biggest, most lavish production yet. And Janis Kunz will premiere her first play, *How to Solve a Murder*, this November. Bravo to our amazing members who continue to grow and shine! We're so proud of you!

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.

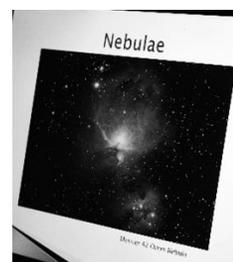
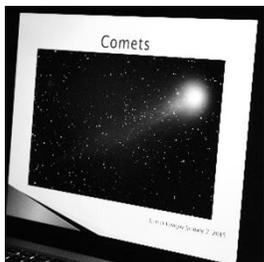
The Writers of the Purple Sage is the monthly newsletter of the Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch of the 109-year-old California Writer Club. Except where otherwise stated, all articles in this publication may be printed without special permission in newsletters of branches of the California Writers Club and in the State Bulletin, subject to the following conditions:

- 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.

And he did. The structure is a wooden building mounted by a telescope dome made by a company that specialized in calf shelters...until they saw the demand of their shelters being retrofitted into home observatories. Ten to fifteen years ago, Bradley built this structure with the help of Gary Arnold, ROP Construction teacher at Burroughs High School. He describes its door as being “just the right size for hobbits,” and the observatory is filled with a 14” tracking telescope, digital cameras, computers, and filters. “You spend more time post-processing than actually sitting in the observatory taking pictures,” Bradley told us. He shared the challenges of astronomical photography from atmospheric conditions, long exposure times, thermal noise, light pollution, locating objects for an hour—which he described in a glorious mixed metaphor of “finding a ghost in a haystack”— and the admittedly late hours you keep.

Jerry Bradley than shared his collection of photographs. We got to see objects such as the Andromeda Galaxy, the Seven Sisters, the Orion Nebula, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, the Sombrero Galaxy, Comet Lovejoy 2015, the 2017 Solar Eclipse, sunspots, Mercury and Venus, and more. As his hobby continued to flourish, the pictures became more magical.



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

Bradley’s hobbies have tended to influence each other as his astronomy led him to create kinetic sculptures that orbit. And when asked what his bucket list photo would be, he mentioned wanting to track and photograph the International Space Station, which moves so fast it goes from “horizon to horizon” in two minutes. With inspiring images, Jerry Bradley’s program made us look at the stars in a new way.

* * *

CELEBRATING NATIONAL READING MONTH!

Ridge Writers Junior Writers Book Swap

Good Readers Make Great Writers!



Open to grades K-12
One entry donation per family
(Donations fund JW’s workshops.)
\$5 advance sign-up / \$7 @ the door



Bring books to swap with other young readers & writers - find undiscovered gems!

Join the Poetry Read-Aloud! Bring your own poem to read, or read a favorite, in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birth month!

Enter or judge the Story Title writing contest!

Meet the leaders of Ridge Writers - the East Sierra Branch of the 114 year old California Writers' Club (CWC).

Learn about upcoming Junior Writers' writing workshops.

Sign up to receive email reminders of future Junior Writers events.

Enter prize drawings - 3 winners!

WHEN:

>>> Saturday, March 25th, 2023, @3pm-5pm <<<

WHERE:

>>> Red Rock Books <<<

206 W Ridgecrest Blvd, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

~ Refreshments will be served ~

Thinking Funny '23

Online Humor-Writing Conference

Learn about humor-writing from the pros at ThinkingFunny23. This online conference offers sessions that range from standup comedy to songwriting and tips on how to create and sustain a humor column and even publish your own series of books for fun and profit. Attendees will learn how to prepare a book proposal to snag an agent and get their work published. There's something for writers of all levels. **Date: April 1, 2023.**

This year's sessions include expert advice from columnists, publishers, stand-up comics, songwriters, newbie writers, and professional agents looking for new talent.

Questions? Write us at info@thinkingfunny.com.

Register here:

<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/ThinkingFunny23/register>

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.



Inside ...

Page 1:

March Program:
"Jeri Westerson"

"Beyond the Blue Marble"
by Daniel Stallings

Upcoming Speakers

Page 2:

President's Message:
"Good Readers Make
Great Writers"

Member Accomplishments

Ridge Writers Leaders

Page 3:

Jack London Awards
Junior Writers Book Swap

READ THE BOOK,

MEET THE AUTHOR

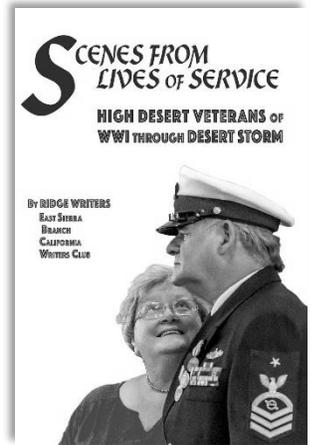
Buy your book and read it in advance at Red Rock Books. The ticket price of \$35 includes tea and scones in the party room of Pizza Factory, beverage, a copy of the book that the author will autograph to you, entry in a gift basket drawing, and convivial conversation with the author and group. If you purchase a ticket but cannot attend at the last minute, please cancel by noon Wednesday. If you do this, we can refund part of the ticket price, and if you leave the book for us, we can have the author autograph it to you or to a name of your choice.

THIS YEAR:

March 2, Jeri Westerson, *Oswald the Thief*,
a medieval caper that leads to the Crown Jewels

April 6, Jill Hunting, *For Want of Wings: A Bird with Teeth and a Dinosaur in the Family* –
Part detective story, part memoir, an eminent paleontologist's great granddaughter sets the record straight on a forgotten expedition.

May 4, Jeff Gottesfeld (*As the World Turns*
writer, playwright, novelist and author of exceptionally insightful children's books) –
Food for Hope: How John van Hengel Invented Food Banks for the Hungry.



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
East Sierra Branch
California Writers Club
P.O. Box 484
Ridgecrest, CA 93556**