



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

April 2023

JERI WESTERSON TAKES US FROM HISTORICAL MYSTERIES TO MODERN MARKETING ON APRIL 6

Given the severity of the storms earlier in March, we have adjusted to have Jeri Westerson speak in April. Creator of very popular medieval capers and mysteries Jeri Westerson will address “Historical Mysteries to Modern Marketing” for our Thursday, April 6, 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.



WINTER STORM WORKSHOP

Report on the March Meeting written by Janis Kunz

With the magnitude of the winter storms in Southern California this season, they were bound to throw a monkey wrench in people’s plans. Well, they did just that at our March general meeting. We and the scheduled guest speaker thought it best for them to *not* drive into town through the densely snowy mountains and their guest spot was rescheduled to a future (and hopefully more meteorologically welcoming) date. However, writers can be very resilient and the now-free time in the meeting was instead filled with a lovely workshop.

Ridge Writers’ secretary Donna Rosenthal had put together a thought-provoking list of writing prompts. The handful of prompts ranged from serious: “What would you write in your last letter to a loved one?,” “Describe the rest of your life in five words,” and “What is your earliest memory”, to light-hearted: “What’s the magic word?,” “Describe an encounter with a celebrity,” and “Cat person or dog person? / Window seat or aisle seat?” The assembled members and guests put pencil to paper and the resulting answers that they chose to share aloud were a nice eclectic set of remembrances, poetic narratives, and humorous anecdotes. One member remembered her mother helping her into leg braces at 2-3 years old, and how she wasn’t concerned - for all she knew this was normal for everyone - until she saw how it troubled her mother.

Mark Your Calendar...

April 6 — Jeri Westerson, *Oswald the Thief*

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*).

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#29,038



Vacations are something I rarely take. And out of town trips aren't cost-effective for me. So as a young playwright, theatre creator, and Agatha Christie superfan since I was a teenager, I could only dream at a distance. I directed my first Agatha Christie play before I ever saw one being performed, which probably feels backwards to many people. In my life, usually I would have to bring the material I loved into my world in order to get to see it. Since I was in high school, I dreamed of one day seeing *The Mousetrap*, the longest running play in the world, onstage. And thanks to the overwhelming generosity of my sister, a childhood dream came true. And the end of February, we flew to London to see West End shows. And our last show of the trip was Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* at St. Martin's Theatre. Performance #29,038. A number that will stick with the theatre kid in my heart as much as 24601 or 525,600.

I am, shockingly, at a loss for words to describe the moment. The play was superb. One of the few productions I wouldn't change a thing to. It was light, funny, effortless, and felt as familiar as a favorite hug. I sat Dress Circle Center, one of the best seats in the entire house. I could see everything. All the history on the walls of the West End theatre. The old programs. Original

director's script. Photos. I could weep thinking about it. I love theatre and Agatha Christie so much, and to be in the home where both worlds blend harmoniously in one record-shattering embrace was incredibly moving. I wish I didn't have to leave. The three plays and the new musical I saw that trip were some of the best theatre I enjoyed in years.

So, you may ask yourselves, what does this tale have to do with being a writer? Because, after this much-needed vacation, I feel renewed as a theatre artist. It's so easy to lose sight of joy when the passion becomes work. Pieces of your heart can deaden from stress, exhaustion, mishaps, etc. But to see those shows, to see the excellence of my field, it just made me want to go out and make great theatre. And I urge you all to rekindle your own joy. Find that excellence in your genre or medium. Remember why you love to write. Get re-inspired. Fall in love for 29,038th time. It's worth it to feel that joy again.

Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers

Thanks to the tremendous work of our new Youth Coordinator and Scholarship Chair Janis Kunz, we are holding the annual Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers again this year. The essay contest runs from April 1 to April 30. Ridge Writers members judge the entries in May. We award the scholarship in June. We ask our membership to please volunteer to help judge the student entries this year. We keep the judging process simple and straightforward, and we want the club as a whole to award the prize. Volunteer at the next general meeting or in an email to ridgewriters@yahoo.com.

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.
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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.

Then a guest read her memory of untacking her horse, concluding with an amusing ending, in what could easily have been an article rather than an impromptu response, it was so engagingly written and recounted. Member Janice Lindgren told of her encounter at a bar with a man that she mentioned her favorite Jimmy Buffet song to – only for him to turn out to be Jimmy Buffet! Member Davis Kunz opted for both levity and grandeur in describing the rest of his life in five words, beginning his list with “Productivity” and ending it with a firm declaration of “Pizza!”

Addendum by Donna Rosenthal: For magic words, others had: *love, thanks, and please.* For *please,* Janis Kunz offered, “If I hear it, it brightens my day. If I say it, I like to brighten people’s day.” Liz Babcock added the very effective impact of asking, “I don’t know. What do you think?”

Janis Kunz: The variety and breadth of the responses, both in content and style, only goes to illustrate the personal nature of writing. Everyone has something different to bring to the table, and the words they choose to express it reflects their tastes, experiences, and unique personality. It was nice to have this workshop, even unplanned as it was, and get the chance to explore some nooks and crannies of our thoughts that were fun to share with others and get their reactions to our words.

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

HAPPY NATIONAL READING MONTH, EVERYONE!



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.

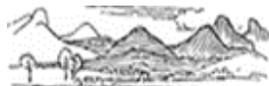
Questions? Write us at info@thinkingfunny.com.

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.



I DIDN'T KNOW THIS WAS IN TOWN

Report on Farmer's Market by Janis Kunz

No one likes to toil in obscurity, and there's something rewarding about giving back to the community. Ridge Writers had a booth at the Ridgecrest Farmers Market on Saturday March 4th, and it gave the club a chance to gain some visibility and connect with writers at heart.

Curious patrons wandered up to the booth, each drawn to the display in celebration of the written word. Children perused the assortment of Junior Writers donation books, the promise of an engrossing story sandwiched between each set of covers. One person proclaimed, "I have been trying to get to meetings. I'm glad you're here today!" Another said, "Wow, I didn't know this was in town." Event flyers and writing handouts were collected - extra flyers too to pass on to acquaintances who might be interested. In general, the topic of conversation at the booth was the coolness of having this club for gathering to share a love of all things written.

At its core, Ridge Writers is about connecting through shared language and a love of writing. If we sparked even a little of that on that windy Saturday, then it was a good day.



SCENES FROM LIVES OF SERVICE
HIGH DESERT VETERANS OF WWI THROUGH DESERT STORM

By RIDGE WRITERS
EAST SIERRA
BRANCH
CALIFORNIA
WRITERS CLUB



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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California Writers Club
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