



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

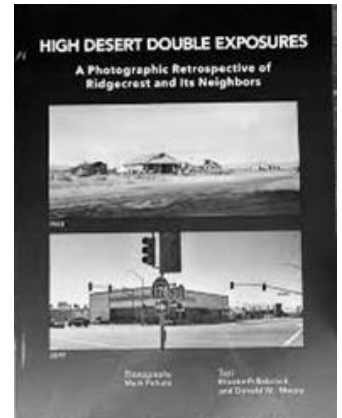
East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

June 2023

DOUBLE THE TALENT, DOUBLE EXPOSURES ON JUNE 1

Ridge Writers president Daniel Stallings will interview Mark Pahuta and Liz Babcock about *High Desert Double Exposure: A Photographic Retrospective of Ridgecrest and Its Neighbors* for our Thursday, June 1, general meeting that starts at 6:30 p.m. at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores. Public welcome. No charge for admission. Published in 2020, *Double Exposures* quickly sold out two printings.

Born in Los Angeles, Mark Pahuta received a B.A. in History at Humboldt State University and an M.F.A. in Cinema at the University of Southern California. A filmmaker and still photographer, he came here in 1976 and had a career of more than 40 years at the Film Branch and the Video Branch of the Technical Information Department and has many of his photographs in the permanent collections of the Maturango Museum. The museum has also published his audiovisual productions, “Between Two Worlds: Rock Art of the Cosos” and “Indian Wells Valley: Somewhere on the Edge of Nowhere,” and he has created numerous video productions for other organizations, including the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce.



Michigan native Elizabeth Babcock received her B.A. in English Literature from Kalamazoo College and her Master’s in Public Administration from California State University, Bakersfield. The mother of two children, she spent her China Lake career as a writer and manager and has authored *Magnificent Mavericks*, Volume 3 of the China Lake history series; *The Historic USO: 70 Years at the Heart of Ridgecrest*; and several other works on local people and history. After her retirement from the base, she transitioned to history curator at the Maturango Museum, writer for the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, and writer-copyeditor for the *News Review* newspaper.

Expect an informative and eye-opening June 1 program and bring your friends!

WRITING ABOUT VALUES FOR CHILDREN

Report on the May Meeting written by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal



*Jeff Gottesfeld shows a page from his book, **The Tree in the Courtyard**.*

Author and TV writer Jeff Gottesfeld presented our May 4 program and delivered an insightful and stimulating program about “Writing Good, Old-Fashioned Kids Books in an un-Old Fashioned America.”

Just released in May and already sold out through two printings, his children’s book “Food for Hope” details how John van Hengel launched the world’s first food bank, in 1967. Jeff writes

for ages ranging from adults to elementary-age children, having worked on such TV shows as “Smallville,” “The Young and the Restless,” and “As the World Turns” (Associate Head Writer), numerous magazines and newspaper articles, and “No Steps Behind,” winner for the 2020 NCTA Freeman Award for the best children’s book about Asia.

For children, he has also explored the tomb of the unknown soldier and the tree outside Anne Frank’s window (this tale touchingly unfolds from the tree’s point of view). His books for youngsters all underscore his emphasis on values and

Mark Your Calendar...

June 1 — Liz Babcock and Mark Pahuta, *High Desert Double Exposures: A Photographic Retrospective of Ridgecrest and Its Neighbors*

July 6 — Janis Kunz and Daniel Stallings on Historical Archiving

August 3 — Open Mic, members and guests read from their original work, light refreshments.

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This Story Changes in Chapter Eleven



Writing is an art. It's about shaping the bones of a language--the bare words--into ideas, full thoughts, sentences, paragraphs, stories that speak about human nature and this great big universe of possibilities we live in. Writing is a craft. It's about understanding the way words relate to each other, the way story structure is built, the way stories are told.

Writing is a business. It's about taking those words and polishing, packaging, and marketing them to make a hopeful profit for all the parties involved. An author is a businessman, a mini-mogul poised to make money by selling their work. You need to start understanding the business side of the writing world. It's not easy, and it's not foolproof. But it can be managed if taken seriously. These days, more of the business details--such as editing responsibilities and marketing--are falling into the startled hands of the author. Be patient. No overnight success happens overnight.

You will need a finished piece of writing before you start. Then you need to refine it. Research professional, high-quality editors. Do your homework. Learn about your rights as an author. Where does it go after you die? Who owns the foreign rights? The audio rights? Understand your market. Agents and publishers like to know where to place your book to ensure purchases. Even if you self-publish, don't skimp on these steps. Then there's marketing. Even if you intend to hire someone to market your work, you should know what they need and where they are putting your work. If you are asked to submit a bio or a clip, have you considered how you will present them to make you look the most professional and show off your creativity? Have you won any awards for writing? Learn to refine and polish your pitches and be able to sell your work in one complete sentence. Being a successful writer is about having the heart of an artist and the brain of a tycoon. If you're an aspiring author just trying to figure out your voice and what you'd like to write, don't sweat the business side yet. Develop your voice first. If you think you're ready to turn pro, seize the opportunities you have, do your homework, and find the parts of the writing and publishing experience that you do enjoy and make the most of it. Most of all, never lose faith in yourself and never keep your eye off the prize. Go out there and succeed. I know you can.

Congratulations to Our 2023 Allison Aubin Scholarship Winner!

by Janis Kunz

I am happy to announce that the winner of the 2023 Allison Aubin Scholarship for Young Writers is: Mahnoor Ahmad! Judges found Mahnoor's essay to be "the strongest entry," and it also "showed a great deal of maturity and reflected the current times," and Mahnoor expressed "noble writing career goals." Mahnoor will be presented the scholarship at the Senior Awards Ceremony at Burroughs High School on May 15 by East Sierra President, Daniel Stallings.

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:

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- 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.*

relevant, factual events, rather than fuzzy bunnies – this because he wants to “make better members of their communities and better citizens of the most amazing nation on the planet.” He considers his approach not political because “left, right, or center, I don’t care. Values are transcendent.”

He stressed as an intrinsic benefit of writing that “if you can’t write, you can’t think. There’s even logic to writing poetry. If you’re a mere mortal like me, you write logically. Cherish your writing because as you’re writing, you’re thinking.”

He concluded with observations regarding the current WGA writers’ strike in Hollywood. The last one impacted his career but not this one because he has transitioned away from TV. He called the last one relatively simple “because the issues were clear but it’s very different now. Series don’t go as long. There’s more TV but less work. And they’ll have to address AI and ChatGPT which will be tough issues to resolve.”

Thursday afternoon, he had led a “Read the Book, Meet the Author,” and Friday morning, spoke to sixth-graders in Trona to an enthusiastic reception.

He has two new projects ready to roll, and when they hit the shelves, we’ll bring him back.



VP Janis Kunz assists Jeff in showcasing the illustrations in his new book, Food for Hope.

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

Junior Writers’ Story Bootcamp

*Four 1-hr sessions *Free *Writer’s Kit included (notebook, pencil, etc.)

WHERE: Ridgecrest Branch Library, 131 E Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

WHEN: During the Library’s summer program’s storytelling week: July 5, 6, 7, 8.
Grades K-5 @ 3-4pm each day
Grades 6-12 @ 4-5pm July 5, 6, 7; 3-4pm July 8

Day One: “How to Write Characters and Dialog”

An experienced writer and RW member gives a brief talk about what goes into designing, naming, and creating backstory for a character and tips on how to write convincing dialog. Then the JW’s create their own characters and share what they’ve written as desired. Ideas are available in three levels: Novice has full ideas, Intermediate has fill in the blanks (like MadLibs), and Artisan has prompts.

Day Two: “How to Write Plot and Action”

Armed with the characters from the previous session, JW’s learn how to write compelling plots and action sequences. An experienced writer and RW member will give a talk and advice on how to avoid common pitfalls. JW’s decide on their genre and work to write a storyline.

Day Three: “How to Write an Ending”

JW’s discuss endings to favorite stories (movies, cartoons, video games...). An experienced writer and RW member goes over the nuts and bolts of what makes for satisfying endings. JW’s create an ending for their story.

Day Four: “Putting It All Together”

Time to bring all the pieces together of the original stories! Details are revised and polished as needed. An experienced writer and RW member discusses editing your work. Stories may be read aloud and JW’s can critique and review.

Finished stories can be brought back to the Library’s book-making workshop for inclusion in the honors checkout selection.

DUES WILL BE DUE SOON

Membership dues for the California Writers Club, of which Ridge Writers is the East Sierra Branch, will be due starting July 1st. The dues are \$45 for the year (July 1st to June 30th) and grant you special perks such as newsletters, membership discounts for branch events, *The Literary Review* published by the CWC, access to be published on SoCal Writers Showcase, and more. If your membership expires, you will have to pay the additional \$20 initiation fee for a total of \$65 to rejoin. So plan to renew those memberships soon! Dues must be collected by September 30th at the absolute latest.

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.

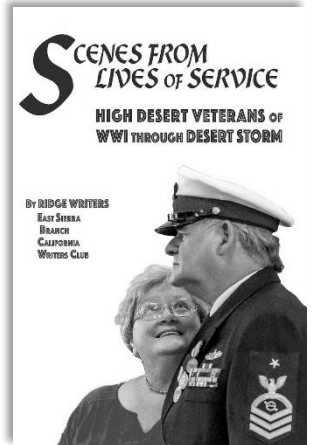


Redwood Branch Seeking Submissions for One Universe to the Left, a Prose Anthology

From the editor: “Pointed ears. Pointed teeth. Eyes that glow with magic or electricity. Aliens, robots, magicians, eldritch beings disguised as trees; what else might you find in a world different from ours? You are invited to explore the possibilities in this year’s prose anthology, which has a theme of fantasy and science fiction. Submissions will be open from May 1 to June 30. OPEN TO ALL CWC. Excitement is in the air. Give us a glimpse of what’s happening one universe to the left!

Information at redwoodwriters.org/2023-one-universe-to-the-left-anthology

If you're not sure where to start and would like a multitude of ideas, as well as a breakdown of what makes a good story, then join us at the **anthology workshop on May 20**. Anthology editor Mara Lynn Johnstone will discuss all things speculative fiction. Past anthology editor Roger Lubeck will go over anatomy of an excellent short story. And past editor Crissi Langwell will cover the specifics of submission requirements and how to submit to the website.”



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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