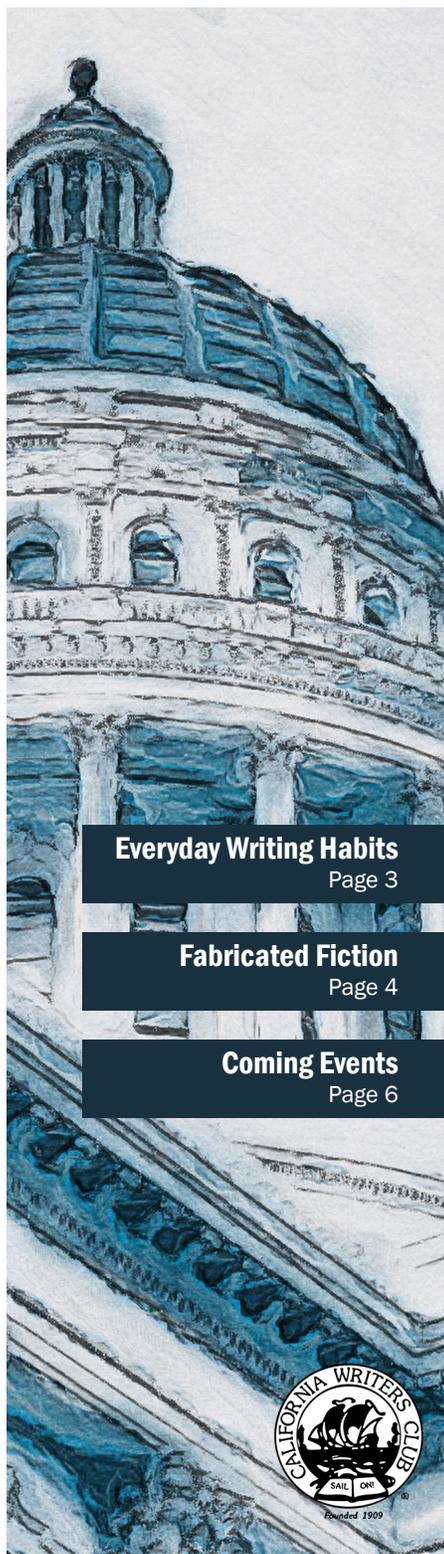


# SACRAMENTO WRITER



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## COLUMNIST JOEY GARCIA

### Getting it right: Love and sex on the page



Before you write a love scene, make sure it has a clear purpose. So says Joey Garcia, a Third-Saturday speaker in January who has written relationship advice for the *Sacramento News and Review* for more than 20 years.

Sex is a form of communication, she said, and a love scene fails if it is not carefully woven into the life of characters to advance the story line.

Don't be too eager to write the sex scene, she advised. "Restraint is sexy. Delay the kiss." Sexual tension keeps readers turning pages.

But if you do go there, don't get carried away with adjectives and adverbs. Avoid clichés. Many of the words writers use just expose the fact that the writer is actually uncomfortable herself or himself. The opposite problem is that writers become too clinical. Solve that problem by writing to reach a reader's five senses.

And if you really want to be realistic, write, knowing that not all love making has to be perfect.

LINK

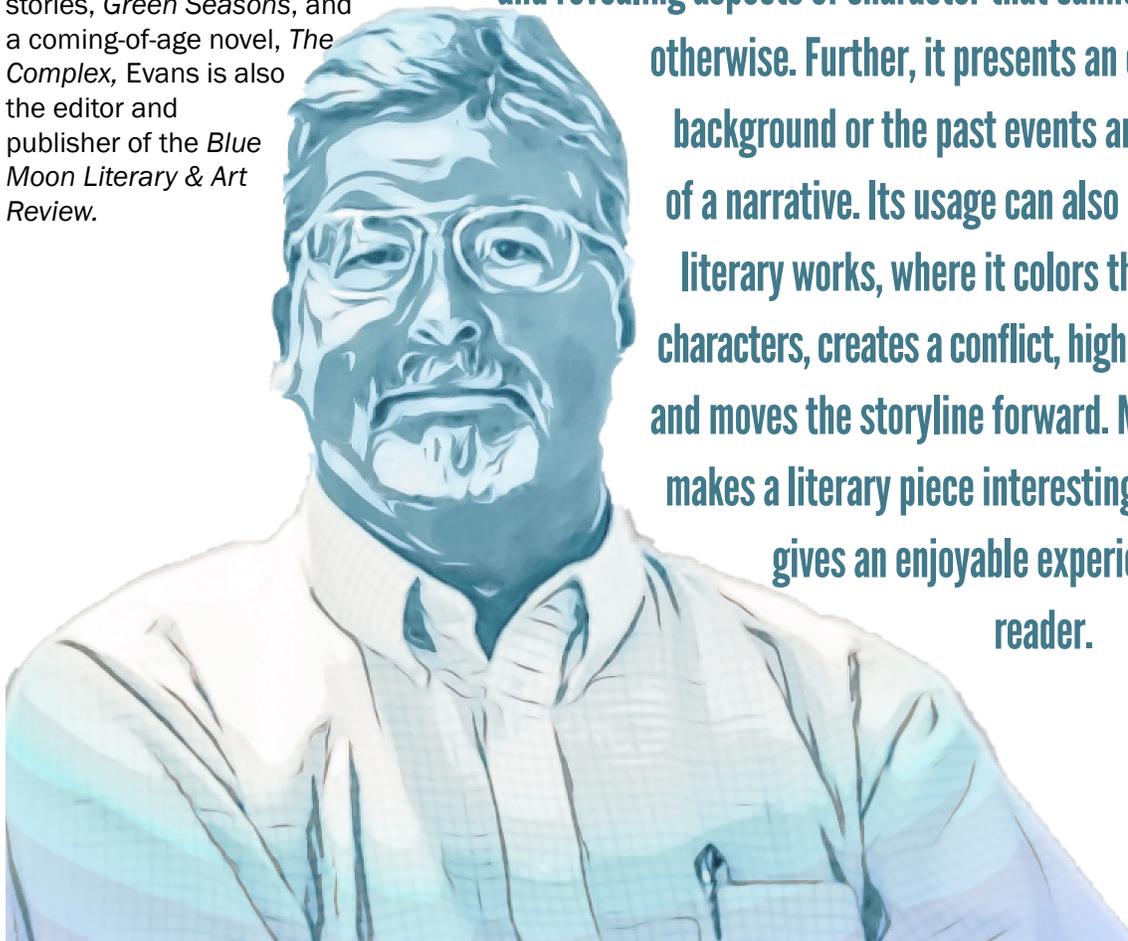
[www.joeygarcia.com/](http://www.joeygarcia.com/)

# DIALOG

## Scott Evans spends a First-Friday focusing on internal and external dialog

Excerpt from the handout distributed by **Scott Evans**

Scott Evans has taught writing for more than 25 years. He is the author of three literary murder mysteries titled *Tragic Flaws*, *First Folio*, and *Sylvia's Secret*. He also has a collection of Hemingwayesque short stories, *Green Seasons*, and a coming-of-age novel, *The Complex*. Evans is also the editor and publisher of the *Blue Moon Literary & Art Review*.



The use of dialog is prevalent in fiction, but this technique can also be found in poetry, non-fiction, films and drama. Dialog has several purposes, such as advancing the plot of a narrative, and revealing aspects of character that cannot be understood otherwise. Further, it presents an exposition of the background or the past events and creates the tone of a narrative. Its usage can also be seen in modern literary works, where it colors the personalities of the characters, creates a conflict, highlights the vernacular, and moves the storyline forward. Moreover, dialog makes a literary piece interesting and alive, and gives an enjoyable experience to the reader.

# TIME WELL SPENT

## Is it a waste of time for an author to write a scene they will never use?

Contributed by **Cheryl Stapp**

LinkedIn's The Writers' Network posted an interesting forum discussion recently. The topic: "Writing Those Scenes We Don't Need – Or Do We?" At issue: Is it a waste of time for any author to write a scene they don't intend to use in their current project?

Responses were varied. Some admitted to throwing everything into a first draft, for later weeding out. "Linda" confided that certain scenes sometimes required more than one attempt to get it right. "Loren" admitted to sometimes writing scenes that didn't make it into his final book—but said he had never written one knowing, ahead of time, that it wouldn't make the cut. Others chimed in with somewhat clichéd disclaimers about "just letting the story and characters unfold."

But there's a broader question here that went unanswered in this discussion: Is any writing effort which is not meant for specific current use a waste of time? Well, okay, maybe so if one is on deadline to deliver to a publisher and things aren't going as well as hoped. The midnight oil is burning...the brow is damp...there is no time to go cutting through the trees when the road is clearly marked.

Otherwise, all writers, from

established best-sellers on down to hopeful novices, need to constantly practice their craft by exploring new paths. And isn't writing scenes, or character sketches, or landscape descriptions, the way that writers practice? Musicians and pro athletes, who can't afford to let their skills slip, or their confidence decline, practice every day by performing and testing those skills, on-season and off, lit by floodlights or no.

Writers need to acquire this everyday-practice habit to maintain and develop their skills as wordsmiths. We must hone our vocabularies, learn to understand and appreciate the vagaries of English spelling and grammar, create winning heroines and nefarious villains; indulge in imagining complicated plots. In the process, we grow into writers who are able to sell our work.

Authors tend to live life inside their heads, where the real drama is. All too often, disembodied scenes or dialogue, an interesting turn of phrase, or the exact adjective to describe a Milky Way candy bar, pop into consciousness when least expected—and the urge to commit this sparkling tidbit to paper is overwhelming. You write it, maybe



spending hours wavering over subject development, sentence structure, or point of view. But then... The Great Idea refuses to blossom into a full-blown treatise or The Great American Novel. So what? Whether the words on the paper came to you through a dream, an incident observed while parked at a stoplight, or a stray thought while trolling supermarket aisles, you haven't wasted your time.

One can never know when that practice exercise—with a bit of tweaking—will be the perfect fit for a future book or article.

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# FIRST FRIDAY

## Kathy Boyd Fellure: Does your critique group respect your voice?

Contributed by **Robin Ginley**

At the California Writers Club meeting on January 5, Kathy Boyd Fellure spoke on her topic, “The Real World of Fabricated Fiction.”

Kathy is a children’s writer, novelist, and photographer. She is also the founder of Amador Writer’s Critique Group and member of the Amador Fiction Writers. Kathy authored four children’s books in her series of, The Blake Sisters Lake Tahoe, Adventure Stories. They include: *When the Birdies Came to Tea* (2010), *Mr. Snowman Ate Our Picnic Lunch* (2010), *Bear Club Adventure* (2011), and *Nana’s Tin of Buttons* (2011).

She is also the author of contemporary women’s novels in her trilogy, On the Water’s Edge Lake Tahoe Stories. Her first book is titled, *The Language of the Lake, Sometimes When the Lake Speaks...I Hear Its Name* (2017). Her second novel, *Lake Cottage Book Haven* and third novel, *Azure Shores* (releases 2018 and 2019).

Her fourth novel, *Across the Pond* (releases January 2018).

Kathy began her presentation discussing marketing. The essential points she covered included: The

importance of the appearance of a book along with its tagline. She says, “The cover and tag line are why people pick up your book.” Also, utilizing local media as a venue for promoting books, articles, columns, photographs, and stories; attending writers’ conferences. In addition, writers should consider participating in a critique group. Kathy says, “Be wise and choose a group that offers constructive criticism not destructive criticism.” She adds, “Ask yourself, is this group a respecter of my voice?” Also, writers should try to interview people one on one. Kathy says, “You get the visual context face to face.”

In using the avenue of social media for marketing, Kathy suggests it is a good for fiction writers to build their platform. Yet she acknowledges for memoir writers, social media does not accurately represent their real presence. She comments, “There’s more to you than just your presence on Facebook. It’s all about the reader.”



“

Character driven stories are hardest to write and plot driven books are easiest because they are more action-oriented.

The middle of our presentation focused on a review of character, plot, setting and dialogue. Kathy describes her books as, “deeply introspective and layered.” She enjoys writing character-driven books. She suggests character driven stories are hardest to write and that plot driven books are easiest because they are more action oriented.

Kathy adds, “Characterization is everything.” Her essential points include:

- Love your characters, so readers will love them too.
- Give characters, “Flesh and Bone.”
- Build characters that gain the sympathy of readers and make them care.
- Incorporate symbols and inanimate objects to add a layered deeper meaning to the story
- Develop both a powerful protagonist and antagonist.

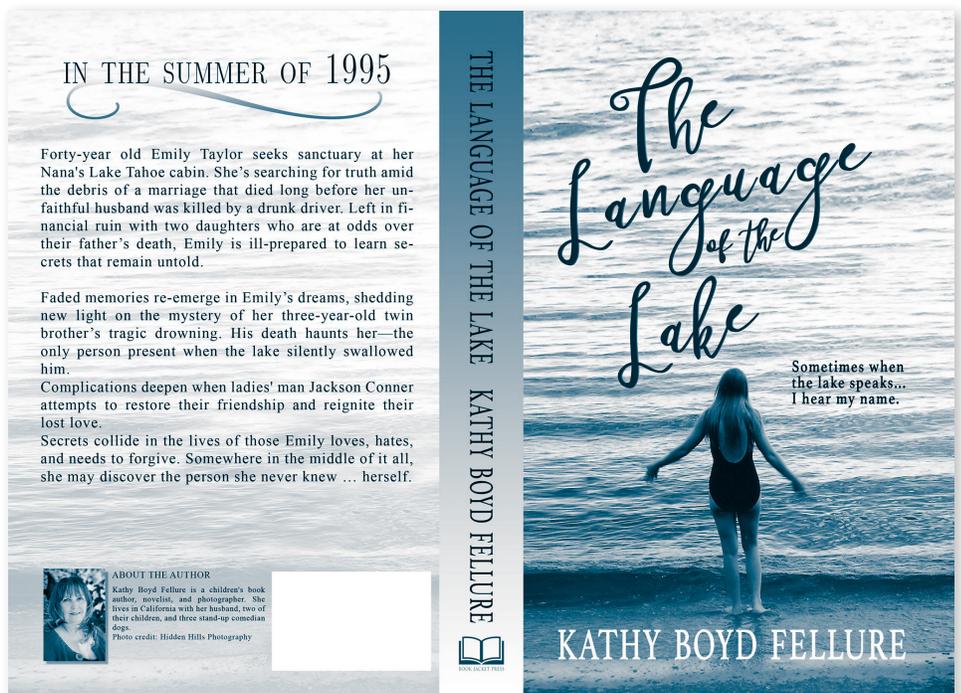
With respect to setting, Kathy stresses the importance of research especially for historical accuracy. She mentioned researching a Catholic cemetery and discovering the local records did not match up with the historical records. To cover herself, she included both

perspectives as “rumors.” She referred to the book, *The Sisters Mortland*, by Sally Beauman as an example of incorporating three historical perspectives.

In regard to dialogue, Kathy says, “If dialogue is not believable you’ve lost your reader.” She suggests a writer needs one or two phrases and not to overdo syntax or dialect. A main goal of dialogue is to develop the dominance of one character over

another.

In closing, Kathy read vignettes of her own writing while members wrote using an object of a house. The overall theme of this presentation was writing not just what you’re most passionate about but also what you are good at writing. Kathy appeared delighted with the participants’ creativity and willingness to experiment writing from a different genre.



# BRIEFS

## Another appeal for members to submit copies of their book covers for display

### Directions on how to send your book covers for club display

Our old traveling posters featuring your published work are being retired. New boards are being made.

It is time to resubmit or provide us copies of your latest book cover or clips of your published work.

Send your book covers in their original size as a PDF or as a JPG picture. JPG files should be formatted with at least 300 dots per inch. Otherwise your cover will look blurry.

If submitting magazine articles, screen shots, or clippings, please send your sample as a PDF file.

Submissions are limited to two covers or clippings per person.

Include them as attachments to an email and send your contribution to TedWitt@Epylon.com.

Please include the words "CWC Book Display" as the subject line of your email.

### Submit your short story for our 2018 writing contest by March 1

The club's annual writing contest is about to get under way with a March 1 deadline in sight.

The category is short story, and

length is limited to 1,000 words.

The topic theme is "A Surprising Encounter." However, entrants should develop their own story title.

Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format or Adobe PDF, and the manuscript itself should not contain your name, because judges will be reading, blind to the name of the author entrant. Entries must be double-spaced in 12-point Times Roman font, using standard 1-inch margins with page numbers in upper right hand corner.

Work must be original and not previously published.

The entry fee is \$15 for members and \$30 for non-members. Fees will be paid at the club's online store accessible from the club's website at [www.SacramentoWriters.org](http://www.SacramentoWriters.org),

Writers may make multiple submissions, but each requires an additional entry fee.

Club board members are not eligible to enter.

Prizes will be \$100 for first place, \$50 for second, and \$25 for third.

Specific directions will soon be paced on the club's website.

The contest chairperson is Judith Presnall, whose email address is [judypresnall@hotmail.com](mailto:judypresnall@hotmail.com).

## Mark your calendar for CWC Coming Events

### Third Saturday Luncheon

February 17, 2018

11 am to 1 pm

10:20 Early-Bird Session

### Cristina Deptula

Bay Area Publicist

### Promotion for All Authors

Cattlemens, 12409 Folsom

Blvd, Rancho Cordova

\$15 members/\$20 guests

•••

### Intensive Publishing Seminar

Sunday, March 4, 2018

9 am to 2:30 pm

### Mark Coker

CEO Smashwords

### Strategies for Success in

### Publishing plus Tutorials on

### E-book Formatting

Cattlemens, 12409 Folsom

Blvd, Rancho Cordova

\$25 members/\$50 guests

(includes lunch)

•••

### First Friday Network

March 2, 2018

9 to 11 am

### Anne DaViga

### From Fact to Fiction: Creating

### Stories from Real Events

Coco's, 7887 Madison Avenue,

Citrus Heights

•••

### Third Saturday Luncheon

March 17, 2018

11 am to 1 pm

10:20 Early-Bird Session

### Steven Nightingale

Palo Alto writer of novels,

sonnets, and long essays,

### Motivation and Writing

Cattlemens, 12409 Folsom

Blvd, Rancho Cordova

\$15 members/\$20 guests