

SACRAMENTO WRITER

LOCAL FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Engage with people as people, not customers

Contributed by **Ray Blain**

Those of us who attended the February 2nd networking meeting at Coco's enjoyed a special treat: we got a primer on selling books by Linda and Ken Champion with costumes and music to add to the experience.

The meeting opened on time with announcements by President Kim Edwards, followed by a discussion of how to pick material to read when you are at an open mic event; opportunities to teach and get exposure as a writer at The Learning Exchange; information about advertising on Facebook and Twitter; getting your books into libraries using New Shelves, and expanding your reputation working as a CWC coordinator, newsletter editor, and

as a speaker at the Sacramento Writers' Club.

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LINK

<http://www.championwritingcreations.com/>



FIRST FRIDAY

Linda and Ken Champion take fairy tales across the community

Continued from front page

What followed was a very informative and entertaining presentation by our own Linda Champion on her experiences, learning curve, and marketing plan for her books.

Key points included: write a great book; have an outstanding eye-catching cover; develop an Internet presence and webpage; and offer direct and on-line methods for people to purchase your works.

She and Ken have profitably attended many book festivals and other events offering opportunities to meet people, develop friendships and market.

Their strategy involved having an eye-catching booth either indoors or in a pop-up tent that presents an environment that people want to see, a friendly approachable demeanor, simple activities for all ages, and displays that entice potential customers to want to converse, ask questions and examine what you are presenting.

Engage with people as people, not just as customers. Be a good listener, do not sit passively like you are too busy or disinterested in meeting them even just to chat. Today's new friend may be tomorrow's best customer.

Get your books into the hands of



everyone who stops by, let them examine it/them. Have bookmarks, business cards, and posters so that visitors remember who you are and how to contact you in the future to purchase your wares at a later date if they reconsider. Make a short, effective pitch. Be dressed in a way commensurate with the theme of your writings helps. Be ready to accept cash, checks or credit cards. Have adequate change available for cash payments.

Have an attractive, non-threatening guest book for them to sign so that you can contact them about your future activities and offerings.

Be sure to have the necessary state and municipal permits and licenses. Always collect sales tax.

Show up early but never leave early. Be there for the people.

She also distributed a sample list of book festivals within a reasonable traveling distance, their Internet contact addresses, and entry fees. Don't forget to also contact churches, schools, chambers of commerce, and libraries as possible venues.

Join a group such as Toastmasters International, that will help you sharpen your speaking ability and become more comfortable talking to individuals and groups.

BRIEFS

Club offers members permanent name badges for networking and promotion

Gold metallic badges feature embossed name and club logo

The club is offering permanent gold-metal name badges for members to wear at meetings and at outside events for networking and promotion purposes.

The badges are two by three inches and feature black embossed lettering, the club logo, and branch name.

Members have the option for magnetic or pin backing.

The cost for participating members is \$3 by April 30. After the initial orders have been submitted, the cost of a new or replacement badge will be \$10.

Orders will be taken at club meetings, but payments are also being accepted on the club website.

The permanent take-home badges will replace paper badges now being stored in our accordion portfolio at meetings.

Deadline extended to April 30 for 2018 short story contest

The club's annual writing contest is under way with an extended deadline of Monday, April 30.

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,

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 judyprsnall@hotmail.com.

Mark your calendar for CWC Coming Events

Third Saturday Luncheon

March 17, 2018

10:20 Early-Bird Session

"Five Hints for Using Twitter"

11 am to 1 pm

Steven Nightengale

Novelist, Essayist, Poet

Why for Heaven's Sake Write at All? The Story, the Essay, and the Poem: The Quest for Examples and Answers

Cattlemens

12409 Folsom Blvd,

Rancho Cordova

\$15 members/\$20 guests

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First Friday Network

April 6, 2018

9 to 11 am

Roger Peterson

Mistakes Writers Make

Coco's

7887 Madison Avenue

Citrus Heights

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Third Saturday Luncheon

April 20, 2018

11 am to 1 pm

10:20 Early-Bird Session

Jacqueline Doyle

Essayist, Author of Fiction & Non-Fiction, Pushcart Prize Nominee

Memoir & Creative Nonfiction

Cattlemens

12409 Folsom Blvd

Rancho Cordova

\$15 members/\$20 guests

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Annual Writing Contest

Extended Deadline April 30, 2018 for Short-Stories on the theme "A Surprising Encounter."

RECIPES

The most important cook you need to please is yourself



Contributed by **Ray Blain**

Writing is a lot like cooking. Most young authors start out baking simple formula recipes in elementary school English classes in the form of essays. By the end of high school many are experimenting with creating their own concoctions, some of which are good and some horrid. We live and learn. Those with a special love for the art of cooking with words become specialists by the end of college seeking out a livelihood as journalists, magazine writers, novelists, speechwriters, poets, and short story composers. Others catch the kitchen aromas and start at later periods of life.

The writer's traditional cooking utensils used to be: pencil, eraser, pen, ink, colored pencils, charcoal for sketching, paper, typewriters, dictionaries, a thesaurus, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and photographs. Some of these have been largely replaced, except among the most impoverished or oldest writers, by word processors, electronic sketching pads, and cell-phone photography.

A wise man once told me that it is not the tools that make the difference, but the skill of the carpenter. The same can be said for both the cook and author. Better tools just make the task easier, but they

do not guarantee that the product will be better. Time, practice, experience, training, and learning from others, all play vital roles in all skills.

The appetizers, entrées, side dishes, desserts and seven course banquets of writing can be found in tweets, essays, blogs, newspaper and magazine articles, poems, picture books, short stories, novellas, and novels. Those with insatiable appetites can find their fill in *War and Peace*, *The Man of La Mancha*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Crime and Punishment*, and similar novels, in bookstores and online.

The genres of writing have their counterparts in the genres of cooking: beef, lamb, pork, fish, seafood, vegetables, pasta, etc. Each reader has his/her preferences in both arts.

The recipes of the mature writer mix plots, subplots, major and minor characters, comic relief, complex circumstances, tragedy, and triumph, to name a few.

Seasoning comes partially from the nature of the plot and characters, partially from the action and dialog, but the subtle flavors that determine the overall complexity of the gourmet dish come from the flavors of the chosen words, the punctuation, the arrangement of paragraphs and chapters.

The presentations of our attempts at gourmet literature are found in the scenes, settings, covers, fonts, and styles. Some catch our eye and please, some don't. Just as in cooking, no one dish pleases everyone. Some prefer poetry: traditional, modern rap, etc. Some prefer comedy, others like tragedy. Some want the basting of scenes until the poultry has a golden shade worthy of the cover of a gourmet journal.

As a former professional cook and now a writer, I can assure you that the key when cooking is to remember three things that are also true for writing: each to his own taste, the most important cook you need to please is yourself, and no recipe ever turns out perfect.

So why are you still reading this? Get up, move to your writer's kitchen, sit in front of your word processor, or just pick up a pad and paper, and begin putting your ideas into a manuscript, you can revise and improve it which is a big advantage over cooking. A badly prepared or spiced dish feeds the garbage disposal. A poor initial try at writing should motivate you to add, cut, revise, polish, get feedback and plunge on. Most of all, have fun.

FOLLOW-UP

CWC seminar speaker Stuart Horwitz offers four strategies to get your book going

Contributed by **Stuart Horwitz**

Greetings, California Writer's Club of Sacto! I can call it that now, right, since I've hung out there? It's hard to believe some weeks have already slipped away since I was in your energizing presence for our workshop "Plan Your Perfect Book." First off, I would like to thank you all for bringing your A-game during our time together. I have given that presentation to enjoyable (and, ahem, less-than-enjoyable) crowds over the past few years. The CWC Sacto easily rises to the top of my list of enjoyable crowds. I hope you had as good a time as I did!

By now you have had a chance to process some of the vast amount of information I shared with you during the workshop, and hopefully you're figuring out how to practically apply some of the concepts and mantras to get "from First Draft to Final Draft" and still love what you've written. Just because I'm going through Sactowithdrawal, let's go over a few of the key ideas again.

1. Your creativity is inexhaustible – When it's first draft time, don't spend time editing or censoring yourself. Get the words out onto the page. Don't worry about being repetitive or getting things in the right order yet. You're still figuring out what it is that you're trying to say. Repeating yourself in the first



draft is good. You're telling yourself what is important.

2. BUT... You don't get to completion by putting in everything you can think of – the second draft is time to take stuff out. What comes out is just as important as what goes in. Use the exercise of writing your scene list from memory to help you figure out what's good, what's missing, and what still needs work if you're going to keep it. And spend some time really thinking about the scenes you forgot to include on your list. Were they repetitive?

Unmemorable? Expendable?

3. Your book can only be about one thing. – The value of a theme is not in its originality, it's in how much you believe it. What is your book about? Figuring this out as soon as possible will help you make quick work of the rest of the revision process. Whatever scenes, characters, settings, etc., don't serve that theme have gotta go.

4. When you're looking for beta reader feedback, remember you want transparent subjectivity – No one is going to be completely objective. You want a neutral audience, individuals who will offer you honest feedback on the work you've done so that you can use it to improve your final draft. But don't forget, your book is not a democracy. You get to accept or reject any feedback you're given based on how it resonates with you. You know your book better than anyone and you're the only one who can know when your book is "done."

Before I wrap up here, I want to refresh one final point: The point is not to go through life writing the same book the whole time. Trust yourself to know when you're done, when it's time to release this work to the world and then — move on!

MARCH 17

Why, for heaven's sake, write at all? The story, the essay, and the poem: the quest for examples and answers

Come hear Bay Area's Steven Nightingale, one of the most talked-about motivational presenters on writing, share lucid and graceful language from many

sources and centuries.

He will speak 11 a.m., March 17, at the third-Saturday meeting of Sacramento Writers at Cattlemens Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd,

Rancho Cordova. Cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for guests

Takeaways:

- Beautiful sentences to hold in mind
- The most enlivening & surprising way to practice
- Ancient tricks of the trade

Steven Nightingale is the author of ten books: two novels, six books of sonnets, a long essay on the city of Granada, Spain, and a book of short fiction.

His interests include the medieval art of Spain and Italy, the wild country of the American West and the Caribbean, cooking for his wife and daughter, astronomy, venture capital, and Emily Dickinson, whom he loves. Chief among his pleasures is teaching by invitation in schools and universities in Nevada and California.

He is a graduate of Stanford University, and divides his time between Palo Alto, California, his beloved home state of Nevada, and the beautiful Albayzin, a barrio in Granada, Spain.



PRESIDENTS DESK

A visit with historian leads to appreciation of a rich literary tradition

Contributed by **Kimberly A. Edwards**, President

The other day I visited branch historian Julie Bauer, who maintains club newsletters from as far back in the 1940s

I was amazed at the activities our predecessors brought to this branch. They wrote many genres, published books, and sold to national magazines. Together they formed a kind and caring community. They met in each other's homes. They mentored each other. They talked over triumphs and defeats. I inhaled this respected literary tradition and renewed my determination to be the best member and writer that I can be.

In a world full of meet-ups, Facebook announcements, and dizzying schedules, it's important to stay connected. As writers, we can become discouraged – if an agent thinks our writing is mediocre or our emails to an editor fall into an abyss. But a kind and caring community is always present, providing the strength and patience needed to continue forward towards our goals

What makes a kind and caring

community? Listening, contributing ideas, sharing meals, mulling over new techniques or publishing leads, showing value to each other whether new or experienced. One of the greatest gifts for me is having lunch with members! I cherish this time you give me. Sometimes I wake up in the morning feeling overwhelmed, but the minute I remember the community, I literally sit taller. That is the rich literary tradition of this club.



WRITING CONTEST

2018



April 30, 2018 Deadline

Our annual writing contest is open to members and non-members for original work, fewer than 1,000 words, not previously published in print or online. The deadline is March 1, 2018. Member fee is \$15 and the non-member fee is \$30.

Send us a fictional short story under theme of 'a surprising encounter'

Email your entry with subject line: 2018 Contest Submission. Body of email must state manuscript title, author's name, phone number, email address, and assurance that the story has not appeared in print nor online media. A

Attachment: Submission. Author's name and contact information must NOT appear anywhere on manuscript. The CWC Sacramento Branch reserves the right to make final determination on issues related to published work. Entries must be double-spaced in 12-point Times Roman font, using standard 1" margin with page numbers in upper right hand corner.

Rules and Directions

Eligibility

Open to CWC members and non-members; branch board members excluded.

Awards and Recognition

First Place: \$100 ~ Second Place: \$50 ~ Third Place: \$25

Winners will be recognized at or before the June, 2018, luncheon meeting.

Entry Fee

\$15.00 per entry (CWC members); \$30 nonmembers. Entry fee to be paid online (SacramentoWriters.org) at time of submission. Writers may submit multiple entries, each with a separate entry fee. CWC Sacramento may, with author's permission, use a portion of entries in publicity materials.

What to Submit

Email, subject line: 2018 Contest Submission. Body of email must state manuscript title, author's name, phone number, email address, and assurance that the story has not appeared in print nor online media.

Attachment: Submission. Author's name and contact information must NOT appear anywhere on manuscript. The CWC Sacramento Branch reserves the right to make final determination on issues related to published work.

Entries must be double-spaced in 12-point Times Roman font, using standard 1" margin with page numbers in upper right hand corner.

Deadline and Submission Address

Payment must be made by March 1, 2018 to the SacramentoWriters.org, online store. The deadline is absolute; no exceptions. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.

Submit entries or questions to Contest Chair Judith Presnall, judypresnall@hotmail.com.



Prizes

\$100 First Place

\$50 Second Place

\$25 Third Place

Submit by email; pay fees online at www.SacramentoWriters.org