

Vol 1 Issue 3

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Elk Grove Writers Guild

Writers Helping Writers

Welcome to the EGWG newsletter.



Elk Grove Writers Guild was established as a critique group. Our main goal is to help writers become the best they can be.

To expand our efforts to reach our goal, we created this once monthly newsletter to pass on information of coming events, membership news, and offer little bits of writing wisdom, poetry, memories, writing tips, and whatever news in the publishing world we hear about.

We offer you, our readers, a chance to write and be published in this newsletter and on our website.

Submissions are most welcome, see the back page for information.

Join us on our adventure.

Contact Us

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Penny Clark - Editor

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What's Happening?

Look for the **Conference Update** column for information on how our planning is progressing. Right now, it seems our path is becoming smooth, and things are looking better.

Check our website www.egweg.org for more news and, as our fearless leader says, "Stay tuned."

"And by the way, everything is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy of creativity is self-doubt." – Sylvia Plath

The Guild meets on the first Friday of each month. Currently, we meet in a virtual setting. We gather to talk in the language of writing, to share what and how we're doing, tell what's new in the publishing world, and ask questions about problems we might be having in our works in progress.

If you're interested in joining the guild and want to visit the next meeting, contact Loy Holder at loyholder77@gmail.com and you'll be invited.

The next meetings are scheduled for May 7, 2021 and June 4, 2021.

That's enough business, read on for the good stuff.



Editor's note – That desk is entirely too clean.

Prelude to Tau Ceti Series

Road Trip

*O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
Thou river, widening through the meadows green
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“You don’t leave for a week,” my father said. “We’ve got time for a road trip.”

“I signed up for that three-day seminar on basic civil engineering.”

My father shook his head. “John, this will be our last chance. You’ll have plenty of time to study civil engineering or anything else on Seeker. In fact, you won’t have much else to do for sixteen years.”

I grinned. He had a point, and I owed him one last road trip before I left for Tau Ceti. “Sounds like a good idea. Where do you want to go?”

Road trips had become a staple of our relationship since my mother died. My father’s post in the Department of State office in Sao Paulo was a demanding one, but somehow, he always found a way to take time off when I had a break from my studies. Or, more accurately, when I could be talked into taking a break from my studies. I found everything interesting and tried to learn everything. That didn’t help in getting a career; I knew a lot about many different things but was an expert in none of them. I had never been able to find one thing to focus on, and much of the attraction of shipping out on Seeker was the fact that Tau Ceti was one place that could use a generalist like me.

Usually, we stayed in South America for our father-son excursions, although a trip three years before to Australia was an especially memorable one. This time, though, he had something different in mind.

“I haven’t visited North America in years,” he continued. “And I’ve never seen the Black Plains.”

I looked at him curiously, and I could feel my eyebrows go up. The Black Plains were the northern half of what had once been called the Great Plains. Seventy years before, a super volcano in Wyoming erupted, laying waste to much of what was the United States. The Great Plains were buried in volcanic ash, literally turning from green to black. My father liked beautiful landscapes, and I expected him to want to go someplace extraordinary, one last attempt to change my mind about leaving Earth. The Black Plains did not fit that description.

I shrugged. “Sure, Dad. Fine with me.”

The next day, we took a suborbital from Sao Paulo to Detroit. Detroit was a dirty, broken-down city, having barely survived the Yellowstone Event that destroyed Chicago and the other large cities in the path of the volcanic debris. From there, maglev trains took the curious through the Black Plains to Denver, a city sufficiently south of Yellowstone to escape most of the devastation. We spent the night in a decent hotel and boarded the train the next morning.

The first stop was just southwest of what was once the city of Sioux Falls. There was a hotel there, built since the eruption to service tourists such as us. It was dark when we arrived, but we could see what was left of the city by moonlight, gray lumps scattered across the horizon, with occasional skeletal forms of dead trees. I found it depressing and wondered what the attraction was for my father.

We had a surprisingly good meal at the hotel restaurant, taking our time to enjoy one another’s company. Afterward, Dad wanted to get to bed early so that he could be up to see the sunrise, so we retired.

Dad woke me early the following day, even before the scheduled breakfast. “There’s a view to the west from the hotel roof,” he explained. “Let’s check it out.”

I followed him up to the roof, still wondering about what had gotten into him. The hotel was three stories high, dominating an otherwise flat landscape, but what

Road Trip (Continued)

could there be to see here in the middle of the Black Plains? No one else was on the roof at that hour, and we stared out on the bleak landscape as the sun rose behind us.

Once, wheat fields had stretched to the horizon, subdivided by dusty, rarely traveled country roads and witnessed mostly by high-flying birds soaring through a pure blue sky and watching for the occasional careless rodent. Few birds flew in the gray sky now, the roads were buried under ash, and the wheat fields (and probably the rodents) were gone. Someday, perhaps, the land would recover, but I wouldn't be there to see it. There would be new landscapes for me, stranger and probably more beautiful than the one before me. I nodded to myself and looked at the man standing next to me. I thought he was lost in his thoughts, but he turned toward me.

“If we hadn't pulled back in time, we could have turned the entire planet into something like this,” Dad said quietly.

Nature had created this devastation, but I knew what he meant. Humanity was still cleaning up the mess created by the foolishness and short-sightedness of the twentieth century. Dad looked up into the sky.

“Seeker is up there now, waiting for you,” he said.

I smiled and put my arm around my father, who never wanted me to leave but was supportive to the last. I now understood why we were there. Seeker, and perhaps a purpose to my life, was waiting for me.

By George Hahn



Poetry Corner

Poetic Expressions

Triolets

A triolet has eight lines and repeats key lines three times. Triolets date back AT LEAST TO THE 13TH century in France and have a formal, sophisticated pattern.

Study the pattern and read the example aloud to get the best feel for this type of poetry.

Line rhyme

1 _____ a

2 _____ b

3 _____ a

4 _____ a - repeats 1st line

5 _____ a - repeats 3rd line

6 _____ b - rhymes with 2nd line

7 _____ a + repeats 1st a line

8 _____ b + repeats 2nd line

Example

Lightning flashed and thunder roared
As people dashed for shelter
Keep us safe, my heart implored
Lightning flashed and thunder roared
Keep us safe, my heart implored
The pets rushed helter-skelter
Lightning flashed and thunder roared
As people dashed for shelter

By *Jan Covel*

A Haiku for Your Pleasure

Haiku is a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

My Example:

Birds, blue, brown, and black

Singing, chirping in my tree

Spring in harmony

PL Clark

Coming in 2021

The Summer Academy of Writing

This is the first year for the guild's exciting and informative **Summer Academy** consisting of three Zoom classes.

Save These Dates

June 19 at 2:00pm – Branding and marketing – This enlightening class will be presented by ML Hamilton, a prolific mystery author. She has published 56 novels and sold over 270,000 books.

July 17 at 2:00pm – Pen Names and Finding Your Niche – Cheryl Stapp will present this informative topic. Cheryl is a Northern California Historian and author. She has published 6 non-fiction books that uncover California's vibrant and sometimes seedy past.

August 21 at 2:00pm – Journey of a Self-Published Author – Margaret Duarte will present this insightful topic. She is the author of an award-winning psychological fiction series "Enter the Between."

Registration begins on May 15, 2021. Go to the event page at www.egweg.org to register

Costs for Classes

For all three classes - \$25.00

For individual classes - \$10.00 each

Registration will close at 5:00pm 7 days in advance of each class. June 12th – July 10th - August 14th.

Please check out the presenters on the guild's website Author's Page. Just click on their pictures.



Editor's note: This should be a terrific series, and I'll be registering as soon as it's open. Hope to see you there.

Awards and Congratulations



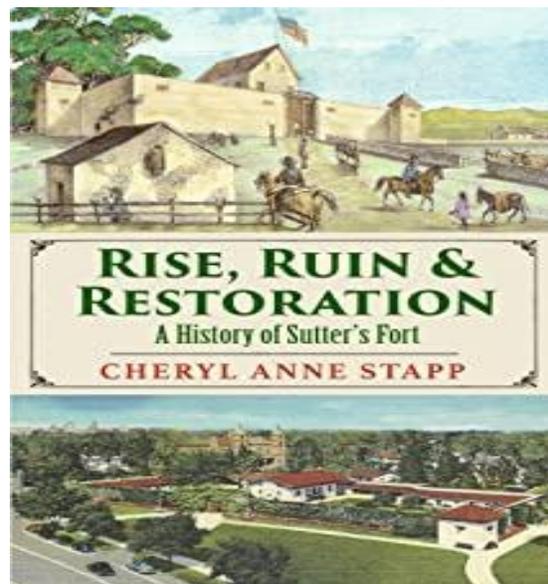
Each year the City of Elk Grove Arts Commission presents the Iris Award to professional artists who have made outstanding contributions to promote visual, performing, and literary arts in the community.

On April 18th Loy Holder was presented the Iris award for outstanding promotion of Literary Arts in the Elk Grove community. **Congratulations, Loy!**

Independent Press Award

Cheryl Stapp has won as a Distinguished Favorite in the category of History: United States.

Congratulations Cheryl!





From the Bookshelf

Mother's Day Memorial

UNSUNG AND UNTHANKED

Whenever I visited my Aunt Lucille, my mother's sister, she told me stories about them when they were young. Not too long after my mother died, my Aunt talked of the time when my parents divorced.

When I was almost eighteen months old, my folks and I were in a bad car accident. My father and I got off lightly with cuts and bruises. My mother wasn't so lucky.

While she was in the hospital, my father dropped me off at my aunt's house and went on with his life, collecting a serious girlfriend in the process. When Mom got out of the hospital, she was not pleased. She was a natural redhead and didn't lack a redhead's full complement of temper. She told him a few basic truths about himself—and found a lawyer. Her attorney wanted to get her alimony or at least child support from my father, but she refused. Mom stated, clearly and unequivocally, that no man was going to provide for her daughter, she'd see to my needs herself.

I sat in silence unable to comment as that one statement changed my past. The accident changed my mom's personality from a warm and loving person to someone with all the touchy, warm, and fuzzy parts

concussed out of her. I never had a close, mother/daughter relationship with her.

While I drove back home from that trip, I realized that my mother had always held a job until three months after I married and left home. She stopped working then and never had another full-time job.

While I was growing up, she did whatever was available; shipyards during the war, where she learned to weld, drive forklifts, and do whatever her supervisor needed done. After the war, she married the man who adopted me, and kept on working. We lived in a three and a half story union hall. My mom was janitor, that paid for our little apartment and a tiny wage. When we moved again, she got a factory job where she sewed little pieces of fabric together repeatedly, all day long, every day of the week. While at that job, she had to visit the chiropractor every week to adjust her neck because of the missing vertebrae.

My dad had a good paying job and there was no need for her to work, except I was still at home with my needs.

I think about her working all those years to pay for me and I'm sorry I never knew about it before she died. I took her for granted. I wished I'd been able to thank her, although if I had she would have been embarrassed and would have shrugged it off.

When my dad died, I moved to Grants Pass, Oregon to help her if she needed it. We established a relationship much closer than what we had when I was a child. Old grievances were forgotten or forgiven, and we enjoyed each other's company. I hope, somewhere in that time, she knew I appreciated her, even though I didn't know then to what extent I should.

My mother—she was a strong woman, and she did the right thing. She's my unsung and unthanked heroine. Happy Mother's Day, Mom!

Penny Clark

“There is no competition. Other books are out there, but they aren't written by you.”

Mitch Joel

Uncle Fred's Adventures in Cooking

Uncle Fred is an eccentric. Mother often warned us. "Don't ever give Fred responsibility." My sister forgot.

When we gathered for Christmas dinner, the aroma of turkey and pumpkin pie had our mouths watering. The meal was fantastic, and as we sat with our belts loosened, sis asked who wanted pie? Everyone said yes. I said, "Maybe later." Cautious? Yes, I was.

The pie was picture perfect, and everyone dug in. The delighted moans turned to horror as everyone ran for the toilets.

What had happened? Fred had used salt instead of sugar. We don't allow him to cook anymore.



Can you write a better story? Send it to turlockpenny@yahoo.com and you might win a prize. See the back page for details.

Things Native English Speakers know, but don't know we know.

Adjectives in English absolutely must be in this order: opinion – size – age – shape – color – origin – material – purpose Noun.

So, you can have a lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife, but if you mess with the word order in the slightest, you'll sound like a maniac. It's an odd thing that every English speaker uses the list, but almost none of us could write it out. And as size comes before color, green great dragons can't exist. From the BBC

Something New

Kindle Vella is a new KDP platform created as Amazon's approach to serialized storytelling. It will give authors the chance to engage readers in one short episode at a time.

The simplified main-core features are:

1. Episodes between 600-5000 words long.
2. Available, for now, in the US.
3. Not yet available to readers but will be soon.
4. It will be available on Kindle iOS on Amazon.
5. Authors will receive 50% royalties. Don't get excited, it's not much per reader.
6. Readers buy tokens to read each episode.
7. You can publish, update, or delete an episode at any time.
8. The first three episodes of each story will be free.
9. Readers will be able to follow what they want to read.
10. Readers can indicate they'll follow a story. A story with the most faves will be featured on a leaderboard.

This isn't a new thing as Radish, WebNovel, and Wattpad have been available for some time.

The popularity of this bite-sized type of platform is gaining more attention and is hugely popular in international markets, which is where Vella will expand to as it gains experience.

As with any new product there is a ton of information on their website. So, if you have questions or are interested, go to Kindle Vella's home page at,

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GR2L4AHPMQ44HNQ7

Writing Craft Events and Opportunities

A New Summer Class "The Practicing Poet."

Begins every Tuesday from June 8th through July 13th. The Practicing Poet begins with "Discovering New Material," "Finding the Best Words," "Making Music," "Working with Sentences, and Line Breaks," "Crafting Surprise," "and Achieving Tone."

The concepts become progressively more sophisticated, moving on to "Dealing with Feelings," "Transforming Your Poems," and "Rethinking and Revising."

You will write many poems, share your feedback, and discuss ways to publish and share your writing with others.

Susan Weidner, MFA in Poetry, is the guest speaker.

It's \$25 per class. To sign up, email ginis.writers1@gmail.com.



The best part of the day, a cup of tea and a good book.

2021 Conference Update

More news on the EGWG conference. We're wrapping up the venue agreement with the city of Elk Grove. COVID managed to insert itself into the process, creating complexity, but we hope to have a signed contract by early May.

Admission, barring any unforeseen circumstances, will be \$60.00, and will include breakfast with assorted muffins, coffee, tea, and water. You may bring your own lunch, go to any nearby restaurants, or order lunch at the District 56 Cafe a few days prior to the conference.

Stay Tuned, Loy Holder, EGWG President

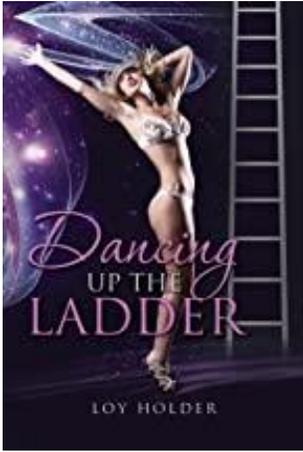
More on the Book Fair Contest

On October 9th, 2021, the Elk Grove Arts Commission will be doing a Short Story Contest during the combined Book Fair & Elk Grove Writers Guild Conference. Here are some details of the Short-Story Contest:

- First place prize - \$200. Second place prize - \$100.
- Fiction or nonfiction, 2000 words or less.
- The story must take place in Elk Grove.
- Open to all - age 18 and over.
- Manuscript must be in a PDF Format, with a cover page including title, author's name, and contact information. Pages should include the title, but not the author's name.
- There's an entry fee of \$10, due with submission of the manuscript.
- Fees must be paid by credit card only.
- Deadline for submission is August 1, 2021 at 5:00 PM. No submissions accepted after Sunday, August 1, 2021 at 5:00 PM.
- Winners will be announced on Saturday, October 9, 2021 during the Book Fair.

More information, submit your manuscript, and other information on the Book Fair is available on the Elk Grove Arts Commission Website at [Great Read Book Faire - City of Elk Grove \(elkgrovecity.org\)](https://www.elkgrovearts.com) and the Elk Grove Writers Guild Website at www.egweg.org.

Five Star Review *****



Dancing up the Ladder *Loy Holder*

[Amazon.com: Dancing Up the Ladder eBook: Holder, Loy: Kindle Store](#)

Liz Harmon loves her children more than anything else in the world. Once she realizes her violent drunk of a husband, Ron, may go after them too, she finds the courage to leave.

In the months leading up to her escape, Liz gets a job dancing at a local nightclub. As she and her children start their new lives, Liz receives unexpected support from her friends and coworkers. Her new journey forward shows the resilience and courage of women in similar situations.

As Liz tries to put her past behind her, can she open her heart again? She meets a new man who makes her feel something she hasn't felt in a long time. Bill Williams is kind and gentle, but he has a strange family situation of his own.

The Review

Loy Holder is masterful in her ability to paint a vivid picture of what it means to be a mom working hard to keep her children safe. I am always drawn to stories that take place in places familiar to me. Will there be a sequel? What's happening with Liz?

Writer's Corner

READING AND WRITING

The English language is a wonderful conglomeration of words, many of which are pronounced or written the same as words meaning something entirely different. Let me share some of the mistakes I've read lately. They provided funny pictures for my literal mind to enjoy.

1. "She crept behind the vampire and tapped him on the shoulder. When the vampire turned, she stabbed him in the heart with a **steak**." Shouldn't it be a wooden **stake**? Perhaps a thick T-bone would work.

2. "Even as a boy, Josie felt like an outsider, like a **piranha** to his family." Well, could you blame the family? No one wants a bite taken out of them by a **pariah**.

3. "The mayor looked the upset man in the eye and asked, 'What's got you all **roweled** up?'" the mayor said to a city boy. Maybe the mayor mistaking him for a cowboy **riled** him up.

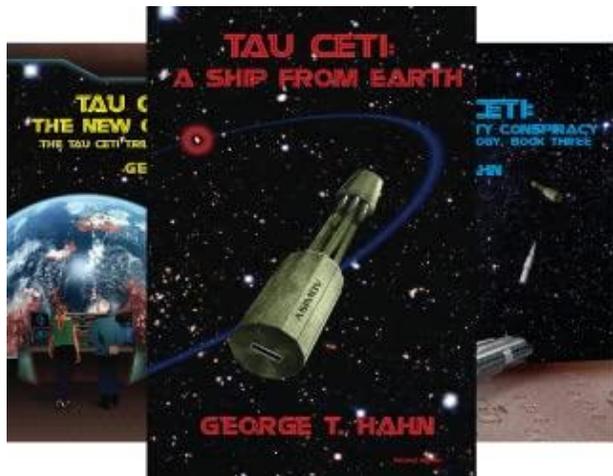
4. "The old man gave the winner of the match the trophy and said, 'That was quite a **fete** for you.'" I suppose whatever **feat** the winner accomplished must have been entertaining. Luckily, the author didn't use **feet**.

In that Same Vein

How to Avoid Writing Mistakes

1. Read it out loud.
2. Revise and proofread it – twice.
3. Use a *dictionary* or *thesaurus* when in doubt.
4. Have someone read it with a critical eye.
5. Walk away for a bit and come back with a fresh mind.
6. Run it through a grammar program, such as Grammarly, or ProWritingAid.

From the Ivory Street Kitchen, Pitcairn, Tau Ceti



Pitcairn Chili (Smoking hot)

Developed by Paulina Edelstein for the Ivory Street Kitchen

Serves 4

Ingredients

1-pound hot sausages, casing removed.

1-pound Pitcairn spinach (see Diego for proper identification), stems removed

3 red onions, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

4 Jalapeno peppers, chopped, with seeds and ribs

4 tomatoes, diced

4 cups drained and rinsed beans (Paulina uses Cannellini)

1 ¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon fresh-ground pepper

2 tablespoons cooking oil

Substitutions

If Pitcairner spinach is not available, kale can be used, but skip boiling it beforehand.

For non-Pitcairners, it might be advisable to leave out the jalapeno seeds and use fewer jalapenos. In Grissom, this is called the child's version.

Procedure

1. In a large pot, boil spinach for 30 minutes. Pour off the water, and boil for 30 more minutes with fresh water. Set spinach aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in the pot over moderate heat. Add the sausage and cook, using a fork to crumble it, until the sausage is browned. Drain excess fat. Add remaining oil and add onions and jalapenos. Continue cooking for about three minutes or until onions soften, stirring occasionally.
3. Add garlic and spinach to the pan and cook, stirring frequently, for about two minutes. Stir in tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for about five minutes.
4. Stir beans into the pot and cook until warmed through, about five minutes. Paulina likes to mash some of the beans to thicken the sauce.

By George Hahn

* * * *

Coming Next Month

An article on editors, what types are there, and what does each type do.

It's common advice, "Get an editor." But no one tells you there are all kinds of editors and that they all do certain things to a manuscript. The coming article will, I hope, clear that up for you.

Food for Thought

“If my doctor told me, I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn’t brood. I’d type a little faster.” *Isaac Asimov*



"Read, read, read. Read everything--trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it. Then write. If it's good, you'll find out. If it's not, throw it out of the window."

- WILLIAM FAULKNER

SUBMISSIONS

Do you have a poem, a special memory, a favorite author’s quote, flash fiction, a **response to a writing prompt**, or a book coming out in 2021? If chosen (probably will be) it will be printed in the next issue and will be available on the EGWG website.

Does your group have an event coming up? Send it to me, at least a month in advance, and I’ll publish it.

Address for submissions

turlockpenny@yahoo.com

Please, use Garamond – 12 for submissions. Send in **word not PDF**. Thanks.

See you next month!

HAPPY MAY!

May 9th is Mother Day. If you still have one – honor her.

May 31st is Memorial Day, commemorating those who have fallen in battle.

A Few More Writing Prompts

The candles flickered and died.

A character confronts three alternative realities in their life, and get to choose one to live in.

When the law fails them, a group of townsfolk start a vigilante group to stop crime in their town.

The elevator stops on the way up. One of the passengers is claustrophobic. What happens?

In 100 words describe why Uncle Fred isn’t allowed to cook dinner anymore.

NOTE: Uncle Fred will appear for the next 4 months. Submit your 100+ words (any genre) about Uncle Fred. (See example on page 7.) Three will be posted, and the best one each month will win a \$25.00 Visa card. Let’s have some fun with this.

Submit to turlockpenny@yahoo.com



A writer spends a lot of time developing an idea.