

# SACRAMENTO WRITERS

## THE SHORT STORY AS A TORRID LOVE AFFAIR



Saturday  
15  
March

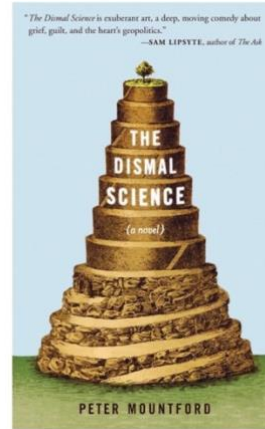
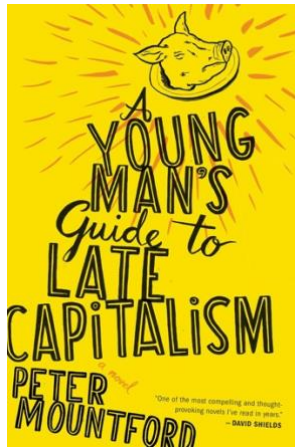
Peter Mountford

Imprudent, impulsive, poorly planned, wildly exciting—writing a short story is, as Lorrie Moore once pointed out, like having a brief intense love affair. Whereas a novel is a marriage. Marriages are fine and well, but if you’re writing and reading for fun, you might want to play the field a bit—fall in and out of love a few times, maybe get your heart broken without destroying your life. In this talk, we’ll focus on the craft (and process) considerations specific to this most exhilarating of literary forms.

- Short stories require play and improvisation. They resist planning.
- The ingredients and basic approach that ensures the play goes well.
- Short means move fast – the crucial role of information management.
- The key craft difference between shorter short stories, and longer short stories.
- How to get end a short story? The role of theme and a surprisingly early narrative climax.

Popular writing coach and instructor Peter Mountford is the author of the award-winning novels [A Young Man’s Guide to Late Capitalism](#), and [The Dismal Science](#). His work has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *The Atlantic*, *New York Times* (*Modern Love*), *The Sun*, *Granta*, *Guernica*, and elsewhere. He

teaches at UNR's low-residency MFA at Lake Tahoe. His collection of stories *Detonator*, will be out in fall, 2025. Learn more: [mountfordwriting.com](http://mountfordwriting.com).



New location for Saturday Luncheon Meetings:

The Old Spaghetti Factory 1625 Watt Ave, Sacramento  
(Watt Avenue at Arden Way)

Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 12:00–2:00 Zoom details on [website](#).

Members and guests will be asked to sign up no later than three days in advance and to indicate their choice of Spaghetti:

- Marinara Sauce (Meatless Red Sauce)
- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce (Red Sauce with Meat)
- Spaghetti with Mizithra Cheese and Browned Butter

The buffet will include salad, ice cream, and coffee. Drinks, including soda, can be purchased at the bar.

The price per sign-up will be \$30. Walk-ins will be accepted for \$35.

[Purchase tickets](#) no later than three days in advance

## Spring Open Reading by John Patterson

### Sign Up To Read Your—Or—Listen To Your Colleagues' Work Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm

Sign-up for the Open Reading with [John Patterson](#)

This reading commences our Branch's fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) year of our writers as sharing their work. The readings are insightful, akin to a quick workshop on how scenes and characters have been quickly devised, taking listeners to new places. In these journeys we learn about people and places, real and imagined, outside of our experiences. Please attend to share and/or listen for an enjoyable evening.

Check-in for readers opens at 6:30, and audience before 7:00 pm.

John Patterson is inviting you to use this Zoom [link](#).

Meeting ID: 860 6016 9459 Passcode: 686480

## MADAM PANTALOONS: A LOCAL HISTORICAL FIGURE



Friday  
7  
March

[Jenifer E. Rowe](#)

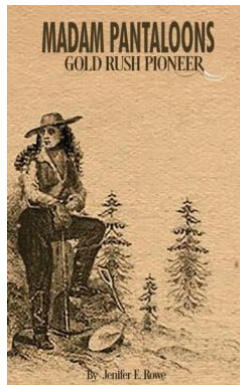
How far have women's rights come since the days of the California Gold Rush?

What attendees will learn from this presentation:

- Women's rights in 1849
- What travel to the mines involved
- Life in a typical mining camp
- Jeanne Marie Suize: businesswoman extraordinaire
- Brief review of women's rights today

Jenifer Rowe has published numerous short stories. [Unexpected Findings](#), her first novel, earned Finalist in the 2021 Next Generation Indie Book Awards.

[Madam Pantaloons: Gold Rush Pioneer](#) (2023) will be followed by more juvenile non-fiction. Her second novel, [Blood and Boundary](#), will be the first book in a trilogy.



Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 9–11 a.m.

Denny's Restaurant, 8841 Greenback Lane, Orangevale

Join Zoom Meeting: ID: 817 3734 0307      Passcode: 227171

# Coming in April



Friday

4

April

[Lisa Montanaro](#)

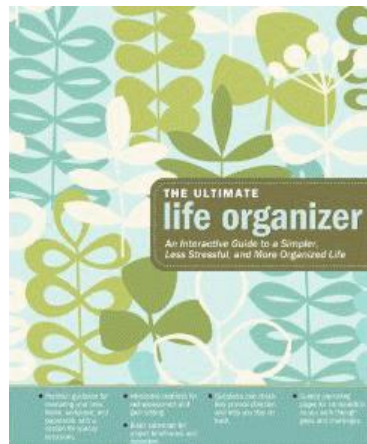
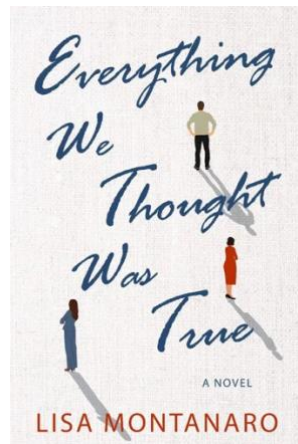
Coach & Webinar Host

[Lisa Montanaro](#) is part no-nonsense Italian-American New Yorker and part sunny Californian. She has a unique background as a performer, teacher of deaf students, recovered lawyer, coach, speaker, and author.

Her debut novel, *Truth and Other Inconveniences*, a multi-generational Italian-American family drama, will be published by [Red Adept Publishing](#).

She is also the author of the book, [The Ultimate Life Organizer: An Interactive Guide to a Simpler, Less Stressful & More Organized Life](#), published by Peter Pauper Press in 2011.

As a Branding, Business, Mindset, and Productivity Coach for writers, Lisa provides support for all stages of a writing career.



Lisa is thrilled to be performing at Stories on Stage Davis on March 9th from 4-6 PM at Sudwerks Brewery in Davis, CA. She'll be narrating an edgy piece written by local author Rachel Howard. Come on down for a brew and to hear some great literature performed live!



Saturday

19

April

### Andrea Fleck-Nisbet

Chief Executive Officer, Independent Book Publishers Association

Hi! I am the CEO here at [IBPA](http://IBPA.org). I have worked in the publishing industry for over 20 years in various capacities from sales to digital content development, to acquisition and business operations. My role is to serve and help grow our community of publishers. Please reach out if I can be of help to you.

## CWC SACRAMENTO LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors

#### Officers

President: Bernard Wozny

First Vice-President/Programs: Kimberly Edwards

Second Vice-President/Membership: Bonnie Blue

Treasurer: Tim Schooley

Secretary: OPEN

#### Directors

Kimberly Edwards (Board Member Emeritus)

Chris Hennessy

Cheryl Stapp

### Club Positions

Contest Coordinator: OPEN

Historian: Julie Bauer

Marketing Consultant: Alysse Adularia

Newsletter: OPEN

Open Readings Host & Coordinator: John Patterson

Publicity Chair (Print/TV/Radio/Social Media): Chris Hennessy

Webmaster: Bernard Wozny

Writers Network Coordinator: Cheryl Stapp



# Branch President's Message

## by Bernard Wozny

Spring is here, the time for renewal.

There is a lot happening in these coming months, I'm sure you feel it too. You're likely to have plans and ambitions set for these coming months. You may also be curious about our plans, and we do have a few.

I've mentioned the Centennial before, we will be celebrating this October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the North Ridge Country Club, Madison Avenue, Fair Oaks. This will be a ticketed event, and it promises to be quite an event. We're still finalizing the itinerary, and I've been told to keep this a secret for now.

Then of course the Sacramento Book Festival on May 31, at Shepard Garden and Arts Center. This is now fully booked for authors, and the speaker schedule is pretty much complete. Remember, headliners such as James Rollins, Catriona McPherson, Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson, Bryan Patrick Avery, and many others will be there. This is free to the public so come one, come all, and support your local authors.

Tim Schooley will be asking for volunteers to help, see his article for those details. This won't be work; in fact, it will be fun.

Remember, I created this book festival for you, so let's support Tim as best we can. You will get an insight into the inner workings of book festivals.

New developments are happening further afield as well. The central board is revamping the CWC Bulletin, there is a new editor with a new vision. If you are interested in helping, or submitting articles, let me know and I'll put you in contact.

Remember, writing or working on the club newsletter is a valuable addition to your résumé.

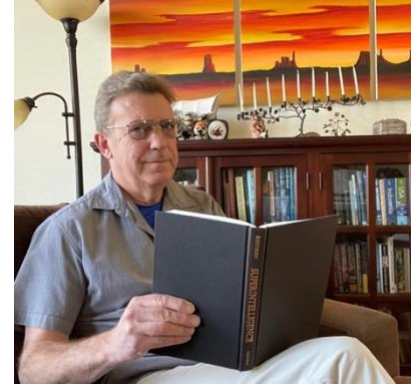
We are looking for volunteers to help in our club. The important thing is we are looking for people like you who want to take part with new ideas. You can be involved in a big way or simply help with small things. An example of something big would be our newsletter, there will be a vacancy coming up soon for a new editor.

For instance, I think this club needs someone to keep track of writing competitions. We all keep up with the writing news, but it would be great if someone could gather information like this into one place.

Good luck with your springtime projects and give some serious thought to working closer with us. It will stand you in good stead when promoting your writing.

Remember, your words must be read.

Bernard Wozny ([bpwozny@gmail.com](mailto:bpwozny@gmail.com))



# SACRAMENTO BOOK FESTIVAL



## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

Planning for the Sacramento Book Festival—hosted by your club—is off to a great start. The festival will take place on Saturday, May 31, from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., in East Sacramento.

**And we need your help!** We have many opportunities for volunteers to help us make this festival a success, from setting up in the morning to checking in attendees to helping with a fun scavenger hunt, and more. Of course, the planning committee hopes that all CWC members will attend, but if you'd like to do more, please sign up as a volunteer on the book festival [website](#).

As a preview: More than 125 local authors will attend the festival to talk about and sell their books, plus numerous sponsors, including 5 bookstores, 8 local writers organizations, the Sacramento Public Library and [Friends of the Library](#), [916 Ink](#), and the [Sacramento Literacy Foundation](#). We will be running a fundraiser for the [Mustard Seed School](#), a school for homeless children/families in the Sacramento area—we're asking attendees to bring a new or gently used children's book (or to buy one during the festival) to donate to the school. And we'll have several well-known authors speaking during the festival, including headliner James Rollins, award-winning mystery author Catriona McPherson, and crime fiction writers Claire Booth and James L'Etoile.

In preparation for the April 2025 Bulletin of the CWC, we would like to receive members' recent news. Please send us a fifty-word (50) blurb describing recent publications, recent acceptances for publication, awards received, or any other news related to your writing. Send directly to The Bulletin at [editor@calwriters.org](mailto:editor@calwriters.org).

Deadline: April 3, 2025.

## Romance is Always About Relationships



If you weren't in attendance at the first Friday meeting this month, you missed a jewel. [Anna J. Stewart](#) gave a riveting talk on her journey to working as a writer. While she is known for her 60 (yes, I said 60) novels that she has published since 2016, she gave us insight into the billion-dollar industry of romance writing, its huge appeal, and the bit overwhelming listing of sub-genre's that make up romance.

For in romance, there is always a Happily Ever After... "Romance," she said, "is always about relationships—emotion and respect." She was quite adamant over the new

[Dark Romance](#) category that has recently surfaced. She doesn't consider it romance if consent isn't given.

The genres that are included in romance include over seventeen different categories, including many that most of us are familiar with including Fantasy, YA, Paranormal, Regency, and Contemporary Romance. But her discussion of over eighty tropes in this subcategory surprised us even more, including "small-town romance, billionaire romance, time-travel romance, vampire romance, and even the exploding LGBTQ+ listing." Someone asked her if the LGBTQ+ was a trope or genre, and she asked me to forward to everyone that she considers it a crossover of both categories. If you would like to get a listing of these tropes, please contact [Cheryl Stapp](#) as she doesn't put this listing out for general consumption.

Her romance novel formula includes writing to trend for world-wide readers giving them a comforting "happily ever after." She has had good success in writing for [Harlequin](#), who pays her an advance for every one of her 60-70,000 word novels. She makes a proposal for each and keeps them in rotation allowing her to make a living with her writing. She does not have an agent and said specifically, "I'm not waiting anymore." Plus, with Harlequin, she doesn't really need one. "I still write other novels with a boutique press and I'm venturing into self-publishing myself."

One of her steps for success is to incorporate at least seven tropes in her writing. She was putting in four, but the publishing world is happier with seven tropes.

She then dove into a lesson on publishing, including traditional, independent and vanity.

Your options in publishing include *traditional*, which is extremely hard to get into. You can query, knowing your odds are extremely thin, but they do all the



work for you in releasing your book including writing the back cover copy. Many require an agent to get eyes on the pages. Once published with a traditional house, you become part of their brand.

*Independent* publishing requires that you do everything including editing, publicity, reviews, blurbs, cover design, formatting, and uploading. If you are going this route, please use a professional editor and cover designer.

*Vanity* publishing isn't recommended because the only one who makes money on that path is the one you hire for an exorbitant fee of upwards of \$3000. Once they have put everything together for you, their work is done and little if no marketing is done for you. You have little say in cover design or promotional materials.

She encourages everyone to educate yourself with what route you are going to move forward with. Then, take the time to learn the indie publishing curve. It all comes down to how much control you want with your literary career.

Anna even does some editing services depending on the needs for the novel.

Anna lives in the greater Sacramento area and more information on her writing journey can be found at [www.AuthorAnnaStewart.com](http://www.AuthorAnnaStewart.com).



[Lois Buchter](#)'s career spans twenty years as a screenwriter, has optioned screenwriter/paid writing assignments, and is a short film producer. She has a masters certification in screenwriting. Author of [Gerti's War](#), [Legend of Cinnamon Valley](#), [Ropen Island](#), and new [Lost City of Quatria](#).

“At a recent CWC meeting, I sat next to [Dena Kouremetis](#), and she happened to tell me about a writers resource called [NETGALLEY.COM](http://NETGALLEY.COM). This service provides writers who are going to release their novels a way to upload their books for writer reviews prior to release. I checked it out and I'm going to review a few books on the site.

“If you want to release your book to the site though, it's a bit expensive at \$600, but the upside is that you will get reviews that are visible, and it will be a way to gain followers. I might even have Dena do a short “tickler” narration of my book to help spur some action to the release.

“Just something to think about in this new world.”

*Lois Buchter*

## The Great Chair Adventure

I never thought I'd be writing about my relationship with a chair, but here we are. After three novels written while perched on what I lovingly called "The Medieval Torture Device" (a hand-me-down dining room chair from my grandmother), my posterior finally staged a revolt.

"We need to talk," my backside seemed to say one morning as I shifted uncomfortably for the hundredth time. "This isn't working out anymore. It's not me, it's the chair."

So began my quest for the perfect writer's chair. I'd love to say I approached this mission with the sophistication of a furniture connoisseur. Still, I was just a desperate writer with a numb behind and dreams of finishing my fourth novel without requiring physical therapy.

First, I tried channeling my inner Stephen King. "He wrote in a laundry room on a kitchen chair," I told myself, planting myself firmly on a wooden IKEA special. Two hours and one screaming piriformis muscle later, I realized something profound: I am not, in fact, Stephen King. Who knew?

Next came the Japanese inspiration phase. I bought a cushion and tried sitting on the floor at a low table, imagining myself becoming one with my Zen-writer self. After twenty minutes, my legs fell asleep, and my Zen writer-self made decidedly un-Zen-like sounds while trying to stand up.

The British approach seemed more promising. I found a lovely Windsor armchair at an antique store with a circular writing pad attached to the right arm. It looked perfectly authorial. Unfortunately, it also cost more than my advance for the last book, and the store owner seemed unreceptive to my offer to pay in signed copies of my yet-to-be-written novel.

Finally, I did what the article suggested—I went chair shopping properly. I became that person who sits in office chairs at the furniture store for uncomfortable lengths of time, taking notes about lumbar support and seat depth. At the same time, other customers gave me concerned looks. I tested armrests with the intensity of a NASA engineer. I checked if I could sit cross-legged without looking like a human pretzel. I contemplated neck support with the seriousness of a philosopher pondering existence.

And then I found it. The One. It was like love at first sight. The height was adjustable, the lumbar support hit just right, and my shoulders didn't roll forward like I was impersonating Quasimodo. When the salesperson came over to ask if I needed help, I was so comfortable I had already outlined two chapters of my next book on my phone.

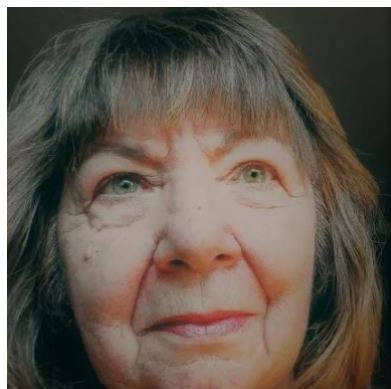
“I’ll take it,” I said, trying not to sound too eager. “But first, I need another fifteen minutes to ensure my posterior agrees.”

The salesperson nodded sagely, probably used to writers and their peculiar chair-buying rituals. Or maybe she just wanted to avoid eye contact with the person who had been test-driving office chairs for the past three hours.

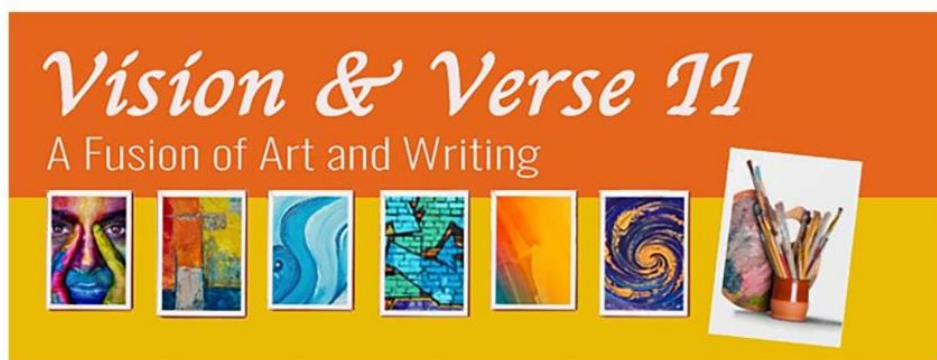
Now, as I sit here writing this in my new chair, I can’t help but think about all the great literary works that might have been influenced by their authors’ seating arrangements. Did Jane Austen have good lumbar support? Would Hemingway’s sentences have been longer if his chair had been more comfortable?

One thing’s for sure—my grandmother’s dining room chair has been officially retired from literary service. It’s back to its original purpose of making dinner guests subtly uncomfortable so they don’t stay too long after dessert. As for my new chair and me, we’re settling in for a long and comfortable partnership. My next novel’s dedication page is already written:

“To The Chair—for supporting me through thick and thin and not making my piriformis want to sue for damages.”



Dorajane is a retired registered nurse and expert witness (on Catastrophic Injuries) who writes historical western romances, romantic suspense, and mysteries. You can find her under her pen name: Jo Donahue at [www.jodonahue.com](http://www.jodonahue.com)



*REMINDER*

***CONTEST ENDS MARCH 15***

*Vision & Verse II: A Fusion of Art and Writing*  
A CWC-members-only art and photography contest  
Open to all CWC Members—[Details](#)

# Power is in the Roots Where You Come From

## by Susan Dlugach



It was once again my pleasure to attend the San Francisco Writers Conference, an annual February event held across the street from the Ferry Building by the bay. What better location to spend a long weekend among other imaginative and enthusiastic writers?

Workshops and panels I attended included fiction craft, legal issues in publishing contracts and negotiating tips for dealing with agents, the business of children's books, fiction in the marketplace, and some poetry sessions. But my favorite of all was Immigrant Voices and Bilingual Poems.

In this Immigrant Voices session, we heard from Latino voices who learned English as grade school children, which was the second language for two of the panelists and an additional language for Juan Lizarraga, an Ecuadoran immigrant who also speaks an indigenous tongue. All three spoke to the issue of trying to fit in, trying not to be seen when they were not yet conversant in the schoolyard language of their peers.

Lisha Adela Garcia migrated to Texas when she was seven and remembers that her little brother was expelled from school when he drew a picture of a Mexican flag flying from the Alamo. In a poem she shared, the poem's speaker tells us "I came here to save our lives."

Though Alejandro Murguia was born in San Francisco, he moved as a toddler with his family to Mexico City when his mother died. When he returned to the land of his birth as a second grader, English was a foreign tongue. In his poem, "Rose Colored Dreams," he shows us a small boy selling roses at night in the Mission, then returning to the "two-room battleground of survival" where his family lived, recalling the "rose petals as sacrificial hearts."

Yet why do they write? Juan, who said he lives with "a foot in both places," is convinced that "power is in the roots where you come from." He believes that "writing is a road map for others."

And perhaps many of us can relate to the power of writing as our own road map.

Susan Dlugach, a retired English teacher, writes poetry, fiction and short articles and participates in local poetry groups.



## NEW MEMBERS

- **Lisa Turlo** who writes Fiction and Memoir
- **D. L. Finn** who writes adult and children's fiction, poetry, mystery and paranormal, and historical fiction
- **John Drikas** who writes mystery and thrillers
- **PJ Blohm-Craig** who writes fantasy romance, fantasy coming of age, fantasy crime

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New members are invited to share a brief (200 words max) bio and a jpeg headshot for our website's [Members](#) page. And you can include a link to your own website in your bio! Please send to [sacramentowriters@gmail.com](mailto:sacramentowriters@gmail.com). You can have your published books listed in our [Members' Books](#) section by sending a description and a picture of its cover to [Bernard](#).

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## CRITIQUE GROUPS

Interested in finding a Critique Group? So many of us write alone and have gotten very little feedback on our work. Exposing our creative efforts to a group of like-minded and considerate writers is the first step towards sending our masterpieces out into the world.

Email Bonnie at [sacramentowriters@gmail.com](mailto:sacramentowriters@gmail.com). Your names and genre will be collected and linked with other interested members. Your newly formed group can get help with getting started on our website under Members Resources then select Critique Group.

## Announcements

On Friday, April 11, 2025, Chuck Sambuchino will return to Sacramento to host The 2025 Sacramento Writing Workshop—a full-day in-person “How to Get Published” writing event. This event is a unique opportunity to get intense instruction over the course of one day. On the conference website, you will find the agents and editors expected to be in attendance. Seating is limited to 125 total, resulting in a event truly personalized with so many experts in the house. We, the California Writers Club Sacramento, are proud to be the local partner of this event. See you there!

**Poets Robin Gabbert  
&  
Gini Grossenbacher**  
Invite You to

*The Art & Sense of Poetry*  
**VIRTUAL WRITERS WORKSHOP SERIES**


Transform your words into sparkling, resonant poetry using  
artwork and the five senses to create vivid,  
sensory-rich experiences.

Wednesday evenings, 6-8 p.m. PST  
March 5, 12, 19, 26. April 2, 9  
\$25 per class, take one or all!  
Take 6, get one class free!

*Perfect for poets who want to deepen  
their craft and bring their words to life!*

**Tickets at Eventbrite**

*New Poets Welcome!*

  
SAN RAFAEL WRITERS & ARTISTS  
CLASSES, COACHING, COMMUNITY

*Special Guest Poet:  
Terry Tierney, PhD*

[Robin Gabbert](#) and [Gini Grossenbacher](#)

*are assembling a dynamic set of workshops to send your pens flying across the page.*

Our intimate Zoom nights will be filled with community building, laughter, and expressions of love for ourselves and our poetry.

[Dr. Terry Tierney](#) adds his special insights on March 19, and will read from his new collection, [Why Trees Stay Outside](#).

Please do not hesitate to spread the word to friends and neighbors who love to write. This memorable workshop will change how you see, smell, hear, taste, and intuit poetry—\$ 25/class. Scholarships are available. Just ask Gini. You may take one or all the evenings in the series.

Our enrollment is open now, so please sign up for one and all classes. A 10% discount is available by Feb. 26 You may pay through [Eventbrite](#) or send a check to: Gini Grossenbacher, 18 Narragansett Cove, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Please send any questions you may have and spread the word. Thank you!

If you are unable to make it, please let other poets know. This will be a special and productive course for aspiring and accomplished poets.



### Northern California Romance Writers

Saturday, March 22-[Susan Palmquist](#): Writing a Continuing Series. Have you ever wondered what it's like to write a continuing series, such as Harry Potter or the Hunger Games? Maybe you've created a character whose story will take more than one book to tell. Whether you're in the exploration stages of planning a series or already working on story one, Susan will take us step by step and show what it takes to create a continuing series that will have readers longing for the release of your next story.

Susan has written over 100 books and is a popular speaker at writers' events.

Zoom meeting: NorCalRW members pay \$15 to attend each meeting. The price for non-members is \$25. To register for meetings, search PayPal for Northern California Romance Writers.

Saturday, April 26: [Anna Stewart](#): All-Day Workshop on Goal, Motivation and Conflict. A highly interactive in-person session where you'll learn more about GMC and receive expert feedback on how to use this tool to give your fiction the depth that keeps readers coming back for more!

Anna is the award-winning (Maggie, Holt, Reader's Choice) and USA Today bestselling author of more than sixty sweet to spicy romances. Currently writing for Harlequin's Heartwarming and Romantic Suspense lines, she also publishes the award-winning Circle of the Red Series for Arc Manor's Caezik Romance imprint. Her Heartwarming novel [Recipe for Redemption](#) was optioned for television and aired as [A Christmas Recipe for Romance](#).

This workshop will be held at Rancho Cordova City Hall. [Details to come!](#)

