

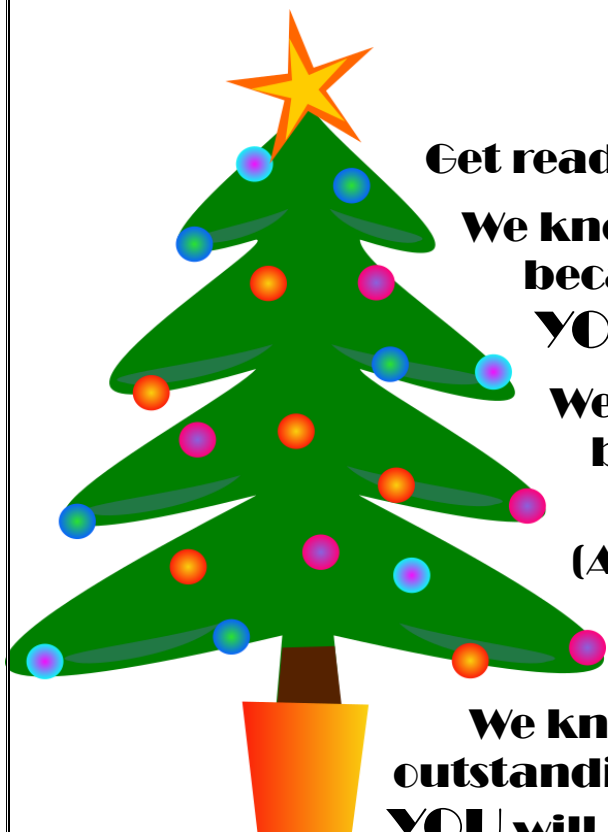


December 2017

Suburban Scribe

Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club

Our Annual Christmas Potluck



Get ready for a good time!

**We know that the food will be delicious
because**

YOU are bringing it.

**We know that the entertainment will
be great because**

YOU are providing it.

**(A few members of the club have
volunteered to read some of their
recent 5-minute writings.)**

**We know that the fellowship will be
outstanding because
YOU will be there.**

Happy Holidays to All

We Don't Need No Stinkin' Commas

Grammar Guardian, Mary Lou

There is a mnemonic for where commas are used: FANBOYS.

For.
And.
Nor.
But.
Or.
Yet.
So.

If one of those coordinating conjunctions separates two independent clauses (basically complete sentences), then a comma is necessary.

Or is it always necessary?

“So” is one of those words that can cause problems because it can be a coordinating conjunction, and it can be a subordinating conjunction.

Huh? Confused yet? Not surprised. Many English users are. Constantly. Let's not worry about the terminology. Coordinating ... subordinating! Phewy!

One website gave a relatively simple way to determine if a comma is necessary. If you can substitute “therefore” for the “so,” then include the comma.

If “that” can be inserted after the “so,” then no comma is necessary.

Examples:

I need to go to work, so I cannot go to the movies with you. (“Therefore” works here, so a comma is necessary.)

I need to go to work so my paycheck will not be short. (“So that” works here, so a comma is not needed.)

A Helpful Hint

by Mort Rumberg



Pricing your eBook.

Your book is finally out.
Now how do you price it?

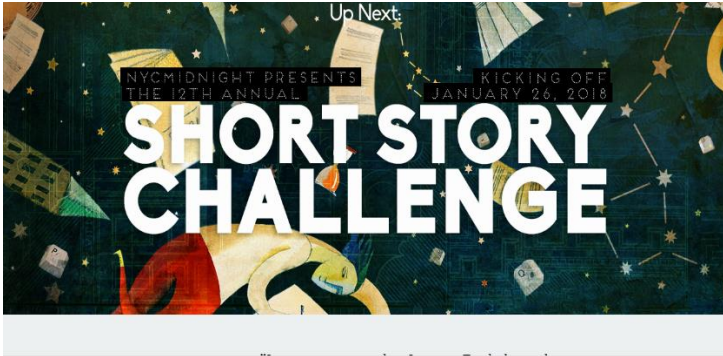
Here's what Amazon generally pays. (Most eBook retailers have similar pricing.)

If your eBook is priced between \$.99 and \$2.98, Amazon pays authors 35% of the gross selling price (35¢ – \$1.04).

If your eBook is priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99, Amazon pays out a royalty of 70% on all Kindle titles (\$2.09 – \$6.99).

If your eBook is priced over \$10.00, Amazon usually pays out only 35%.

Now's Your Opportunity



The 12th annual NYC Midnight Competition Short Story Challenge kicks off on January 26th, 2018 and registration is now open!

The competition contains 3 rounds of writing. In the 1st Round (January 26 to February 3, 2018), writers are randomly placed in heats and are assigned a genre, subject, and character assignment. Writers have 8 days to write an original story no longer than 2,500 words.



The judges choose a top 5 in each heat to advance to the 2nd Round (March 29 to April 1, 2018) where writers receive new assignments, only this time they have just 3 days to write a 2,000-word short story.

Judges choose finalists from the 2nd Round to advance to the 3rd and final round of the competition where writers are challenged to write a 1,500-word story in just 24 hours (May 11 to 12, 2018).

Feedback is included on every submission and there are thousands in cash and prizes.

Sound like fun? Join the competition and get ready for January 26th!

<http://www.nycmidnight.com/Competitions/SSC/Challenge.htm>

A Magical Wind

Jeannie S. Turner

I drove up at home and to my surprise,
I saw that my neighbor was not being wise.

With her leaf-blowing tool she was
blowing real hard.

She was blowing her leaves,
every one, to my yard.

My jaw dropped two inches,
my eyes, they popped wide

"You! You can have them!
They're *your* leaves," she cried.

Next morn I went out to clean up that mess.

And what happened next?

Well, you'll never guess.

A magical wind had come blowing through,
And oh, what a magical wind can do!

It had grabbed all those leaves,
each taken away,

Away! Far away! And away they did stay.

But when I considered and
thought more about it,
I realized the truth, and now I can shout it.

It isn't the wind I am thanking today,

It's good neighbor, Jim,
who lives just down the way,

The neighbor I lean on as if he were Dad,
And tell him my problems
when I'm feeling mad.

(I guess it's because he's
our neighborhood leader,
Our crime-fighting, food-sharing,
friendliest greeter.)

I'll first say "I'm sorry for tattling to you."
(It *wasn't* the first thing I *wanted* to do—

I wanted to blow
all those d a r n e d leaves right back.
But I reconsidered and changed my attack.)

Next thing I'll tell Jim,
"I'm glad you live near me—
Your bright Christmas lights;
they really do cheer me.

What a wonderful friend to have
down the way,
And true Christmas blessings
I'm sending this day."

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The Island

Catastrophe

Al Gilding

Far to the north of the Egyptian delta, an island was entering its terminal agony. What had gone before had been only prelude to this, the final act of geologically visceral violence. It had started as an ordinary volcanic eruption, if anything of this nature can be described as ordinary. Then something changed.

The first puffs of steam and ash had alerted the island's inhabitants to the displeasure of their gods. Gifts and sacrifices were offered to no avail. Ever larger exhalations of steam and ash followed, accompanied by increasingly frenzied offerings of larger and more precious possessions.

In a final desperate effort at mollification, the most prized possession of all was offered. The future of the island community, heaped upon the altar of survival, was given up as a ransom.

The answer was plainly felt as well as heard. Earthquakes shook the island in rapid succession. With the ground buckling under their feet and new fire-belching fissures opening up on all sides of their beloved sacred mountain, spewing ash over everything and everyone, everyone, including those who had offered up such a precious ransom, knew that their island was dying. Their awful sacrifice had been in vain.

Civil order collapsed as all means of escape from this great sea-faring island nation were sought and fought over.

A backward glance from the desperately struggling survivors, fleeing in all directions, brought the grisly vision of their homeland rapidly being converted to a gigantic pillar of fire.

Several times the angry seas rose up behind them as if to swallow them in mid-flight, then cascading through their midst, those crashing crests brutally shoved those who had survived each swelling rush onward ever more swiftly.

The now almost-vacant island began to swell visibly as magma welled up from the bowels of the earth, pouring up the roots of the mountain to refill the partially emptied vent chamber. Ground fractures radiating from the shore allowed large volumes of the sea to pour in. It immediately exploded into steam as it descended into the

heat above the up-welling magma. As the pulses of explosions were repeated, the surface of the liquid rock cooled and became solid, forming a plug that stopped the upward advance. Pressure built up until the plug could no longer resist.

With the force of the huge explosion the plug blew out, and the island crumbled. A mass of volcanic rock flung into the heavens with a large piece of the island. The seas pushed back from the newly gaping hole in the island caused a huge wave to radiate in all directions.

Finally, the seas cascaded into the enlarged chamber in such immense quantities that a plug formed so huge that the cap appeared to have become permanent.

A shaky calm descended over the shattered island as the belly of the beast rumbled ever more loudly in its distress. But the upwelling magma continued to strain against this new barrier.

The island shook anew, and pieces of it fell into the gaping caldera as this new restraint was tested again and again.

An irresistible force contended with an immovable object! The immovable object finally proved insufficient. Then, all hell broke loose from below, rocketing the vast earthen lid into the sky. With it, all of the island's central mountain disappeared.

Two immense tidal waves were generated from this cataclysm—one from the violence of the monstrous explosion itself, and the other, when, with an overpowering roar, the seas rushed back in to fill the now gargantuan void. Finally filling, the sea rose up into a swirling, towering mountain of water before rushing out to follow its mate.

The thin ring, all that was left of the island, hung precariously over the edge of a now gigantic void with little visible means of support. Bit by bit a part of the remaining ring gave in to the force of gravity. Finally, undermined by the fracturing caused by the huge unsupported weight overhanging the abyss, the remainder of the shattered island plunged into the sea. One final wave, towering above all the others, rushed out to tell of the island's passing.

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Letter to Santa

Remember what Mort wrote to him last year?



Dear Santa Claus,

Last year I wrote you a nice letter objecting to being placed on your Official Naughty List. In that letter I clearly mentioned several illegal things you have done on your flights of fancy around the world delivering "gifts" that Mrs. Claus might not appreciate--if she knew about them.

I thought we had reached an understanding--my silence, for the privilege of staying on the Official Nice List and your delivery of one special gift for me. Apparently, you have chosen to ignore my little admonishment, done so at your peril. Remember, I am a great writer and must listen to the voices. They tell me what to write and right now they're hinting that it should be about you and the "little pleasures" you receive during these flights of fancy.

Let me be clear. Your behavior is akin to that of someone in the recent news named Harvey—and I'm not talking about an invisible rabbit. I'm sure more names will appear along with Harvey's. Do you want one of them to be yours?

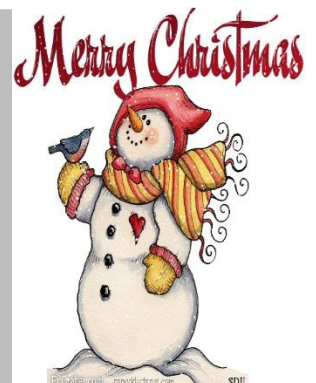
Listen, buddy, you are an elderly, overweight man of questionable behavior, who runs around wearing a funny red set of pajamas—to say nothing about that ridiculous tasseled hat.

So here's the deal. Think long and hard about keeping me on your Official Naughty List. I'm still looking for my Maserati, and you're looking for an easy retirement with the missus. Let's make this a win-win.

Your friend (with patience running out), *M.M. Rumberg*
Unassumingly modest, award winning, world famous author

All of the meetings of the Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club are held
on the 2nd Monday of each month. 7 - 9 p.m.
at the Crossroads Community Fellowship Church's meeting hall,
5501 Dewey Drive, Carmichael
(just north of the Madison/Dewey intersection)

All writers are encouraged to attend.
Membership is not mandatory but brings privileges.



OFFICERS

Elected Officers:

President	Wes Turner
Vice President	Cathy McGreevy
Secretary	Mary Lou Anderson
Treasurer	Chris & David Stein

Chairs:

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Chairs Chair	Wes Turner
Coffee/Treats	[open]
Conference Coord.	John Powell
Critique Groups	Brittany Lord
Directory	Jeannie Turner
Historian	Pat Biasotti
Librarian	Ron Smith
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Newsletter	[open]
Nominations	[open]
Programs	Therese Crutcher-Marin
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Raffle	Mort Rumberg
Scholarship	David Stein
Speakers	Tammy Andrews
Sunshine	Eras Cochran
Website	Westley Turner
Workshops	Eva Wise
Youth Mentors	Tammy, Wes, & Cathy

Advertise your writing related services in the
Suburban Scribe!

\$3 a month (3-month minimum) for members
\$5 a month (3-month minimum) for non-members

Send your request to newsletter@sactowriters.org

COPY AND DEADLINES

Please submit original written material such as: poems, letters, book excerpts, articles, book reviews, humor, web sites to visit, general information, fun stuff to share—almost anything ***by the 20th of each month***. Also, share info about other meetings, contests, books, book signings, classes, etc.

Please keep the submission relatively short and submit electronically. There is no pay but byline credit is given—and that looks good to agents and publishers.

This is one of the many benefits of being a member of SSWC.

Send your submissions to
newsletter@sactowriters.org

MEMBERSHIP is paid on a yearly basis. If joining after March, dues are prorated by quarter.

Individual \$40.00/year

Couple \$55.00/year

Full-Time Student \$30.00/year

Platinum Senior (70+) \$30.00/year

Membership is not required for attending meetings but it does provide benefits including

- 1) Publication in newsletter
- 2) Participation in club author events
- 3) Participation in critique groups
- 4) Grants for conferences ... & more

More information is on our website: sactowriters.org.

Name: _____ Genres: _____ Published? Y/N

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Website/other info/address (optional): _____

Your name and email are needed to receive the digital newsletter.