

February, 2020

Suburban Scribe

Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers Club

sactowriters.org

February 10, 2020 speaker:

William Burg, author of *Wicked Sacramento*

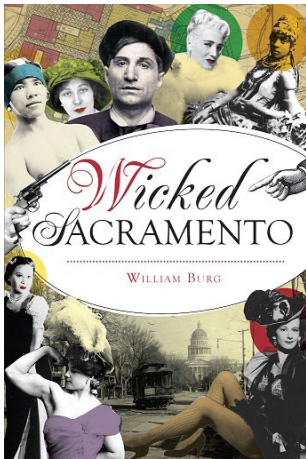
Something Wicked This Way Comes — Discover the wicked side of Sacramento's past.

Who murdered famous brothel owner Cherry de Saint Maurice? Was Kitty Nisetich's death a suicide — or a murder? Who was the Bootlegging Boxer that circumvented Sacramento law in order to bring "the raggiest of modern music" to a floating palace? And what was the great Cheese Sandwich Controversy of 1916?

Learn all about Sacramento's steamy past — the bootlegging, the gambling, the boxing, the stripteases, and the sex work — from historian and author William Burg.

William will also talk about the work behind writing *Wicked Sacramento* — how to write a book when your publisher is the one who suggests the title, how racism and discrimination tends to get glossed over when recalling history, and how to research when the official records are inaccurate or incomplete.

William Burg is the author of seven books and approximately one hundred articles on Sacramento history. He got his start as a social worker, then began volunteering as a docent with the California State Railroad Museum. He became a California historian and he is now the president of Preservation Sacramento and Sacramento Heritage, Inc. and the vice-president of the Sacramento Historical Society.



Leap Frog Leap Toad Lovers' Leap Leap of Faith **LEAP YEAR**

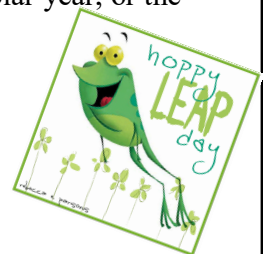
How to determine if it is a Leap Year — Basically, if the year is evenly divisible by 4, it's a leap year. However, there are always exceptions. The following is blatantly copied off the Internet:

A common year has 365 days and a leap year 366 days, with the extra—or intercalary—day designated as February 29. A leap year occurs every four years to help synchronize the calendar year with the solar year, or the length of time it takes the earth to complete its orbit around the sun, which is about 365 ¼ days.

Basically, it works out to this:

1. The year can be evenly divided by 4
2. If the year can be evenly divided by 100, it is NOT a leap year, unless;
3. The year is also evenly divisible by 400. Then it is a leap year.

Quiz at the meeting. (not really ... well, maybe)



Every month we offer:
15-Minute Workshop
Writing Support
Speakers

Workshop: Idioms. Jeannie Turner will share info that won't drive you up the wall, and you won't bite off more than you can chew. (This was preempted last month.)

Future meeting dates—All Mondays:

March 9 — David Kulczyk, author

April 13 — Phil D'Asaro, graphic novelist

Meetings 7—9 p.m. 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks

sactowriters.org

Networking in the Genres

John J. Vester

2020 presents a bounty of genre-related conventions and events, an embarrassment of riches for the aspiring writer.

I'll list here the ones I know about, have attended in the past, or am planning to attend this year.

SF in SF - <http://www.sfinsf.org/> - This is a monthly event. It takes place in the American Bookbinders Museum (<https://bookbindersmuseum.org/>) in downtown San Francisco. I attended the year's opener on January 12. They bring in two writers who read from their recent or forthcoming novel. They engage in a question and answer period with the audience, and then sign books. It's a wonderful opportunity to get to know successful writers of science fiction in an intimate setting.

If you can't make it to the city, past sessions are available as SOMA podcasts at <http://soma.fm.com/sfinsf/episodes.html>, but of course nothing beats being there.

Fog con - <https://fogcon.org/> - March 6-8, Walnut Creek. This is a new one to me, but looks very good. In its tenth year, Friends of the Genre (FOG) proclaims the praises of genre on their web site; <https://fogcon.org/about-fogcon/origin-story/>. A good read. It has events you'd expect at a con, plus a special writing workshop. Unfortunately, the deadline for signing up will have passed by the time this article appears, but I am enrolled and will report back afterwards.

Wild and Scenic Film Festival - <https://www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/> - Over with for this year, but this 18-year tradition in the gold country is a must for anyone with a love of the natural world and a conservancy streak in their lives and their writing. This event is held at many venues in Grass Valley and Nevada City. I mention it, not only to recommend it for next year, but to mention two great book stores in Grass Valley. For new books, you'll want to check out The Bookseller; <https://www.thebookseller.biz/> The word "curated" applies to this store. They have a marvelous selection, for example, of books on writing. For used books, there's Book Town Books <http://booktownbooks.com/> a co-op of 9 book sellers under one roof. Our speaker last meeting told us that small book stores are on the rise. The reasons will become apparent if you visit either of these stores.

Further out on the calendar are the following. Visit their web sites and see what interests you:

Tucson Festival of Books – March 14-15, <http://tucsonfestivalofbooks.org/> Appears to be formatted like the old Sacramento Reads event here many years ago. But on a massive scale.

Baycon – May 22-25, <https://baycon.org/>

Spacefest – July 9-12, <https://www.spacefest.info/>

Try to get to some of these events. You'll make great contacts and friends and be networking before you know it.

COPY AND DEADLINES

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. Also, share info about other meetings, contests, books, book signings, classes, etc.

Please keep the submission relatively short, otherwise it will have to be serialized. Also, please submit electronically. There is no pay but byline credit is given — and that looks good to agents and publishers. This is a benefit of being a member of SSWC.

Remember to put SSWC Newsletter Submission in the subject line ... PLEASE!

Contact: Mary Lou Anderson (916) 459-0888 mledsonanderson@yahoo.com
Deadline is about two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date.



Happy New Year Jeannie Turner



We all *see* much more clearly now
Twenty-twenty's here
For this is what we've waited for—
This special, special year.

You'd been trying hard to see
What was in store for you,
Now twenty-twenty has arrived
You see what you should do.

The twinkle in your loved one's eyes
Now glows with love so bright.
All colors now are brighter, too
And every thing looks right.

No matter what decisions that
You need to make this year,
Now twenty-twenty's here at hand
All answers are so *clear*

You weren't sure who to marry now?
Tom? Harry? maybe Dick?
The twenty-twenty calendar
Has *shown* the answer, quick.

This twenty-twenty does us *show*
What's in a person's heart,
And we have *seen* that what we thought
Was really only part

Of what that person actu'ly is.
Thus we've become so smart
That now we are the best of friends
From just this little start.

Yes, twenty-twenty is the one
We've lived for—all our years,
And when we hadn't *seen* so clear
And life was full of fears

We know the answers have come now
That twenty-twenty's here,
We gladly greet our *improved sight*
With such a happy cheer.

So, keep your *eyes* wide open
Throughout this bright new year,
And you will *see* the end of it,
Like start, filled full of cheer.



Advanced Writers Techniques (AWT) Mike Brandt



AWT group meets at 6:00 PM, an hour before our regular monthly meeting, at the Crossroads Christian Church. Learn how to be innovative while cultivating your skill set to create a book the readers will love.

In **February's session** we'll discuss whether or not to use **Beta Readers**. If you write to publish, the answer is YES! This session will cover selecting good beta readers and how to work with them in making this opportunity a success. (See related articles on page 6 of this newsletter.)

Each participant will have an opportunity to express his or her thoughts. Please respect fellow writer's time and arrive at 6:00 PM.

Grab a chair and bring it into the kitchen area. All are welcome and your writing skills will be improved.

Winter Months ... A Long Time Ago

Gisela Butler

Friends and I recently met again after a few months apart. It was a rainy winter day when the seven of us met for lunch in Sacramento. Margret took center stage and started talking about her childhood when she lived in the mountains around Lake Tahoe. She loved her surroundings at the lake and remembered an incident that occurred during the winter months. She was the youngest of us and her memories were vivid. We sat and listened during our lunch.



“When I was seven years old,” Margret said, “I had panic attacks.”

Curiously, we all chimed in with, “How come?”

“I hated school. I never told my mother, though. She was divorced and had to work, and I didn’t want to burden her with my problems. When I started school, everything changed, especially during the winter months. Being in the mountains, we got lots of snow. With our skis, my older brother and I went off to school. School was downhill and the speed was always fun. Coming home, though, was difficult since we had to walk sideways with our skis back up the hill. It took a long time for us to arrive home. My mittens were often wet from falling in the snow, and my hands were always cold.”

“Why didn’t you take the school bus?”

“Ah ... school busses did not exist in those days. My mother was often home, and since she only worked part time, she managed to always keep the fireplace going so the house was nice and warm. Even though my dad lived in another state, he helped out financially and paid the rent.”

It seemed as if Margret really needed for us to listen. She was serious, and we listened intently.

“I told my brother, Tom, there was a new girl in my class. and she always harassed me. My brother got mad at me for not standing up to this bully. I told him she called me names and stuck her tongue out at me. Other girls chimed in and did the same. Because of her, I became afraid of going to school.

“Tom said, ‘I’ll deal with her, but you’ll have to point her out to me after school.’”

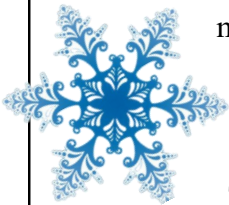
“I did, and Tom walked up to the girl. She spit at my brother so he slapped her. She lost her balance, fell off her skis, and started to cry. It felt so good to see her like this. Tom yelled at her, ‘You leave my sister alone, you hear?’

“Since the snow was falling down heavily,” Margret said, “I reached out and helped her up. I was surprised that she thanked me.”

The women were silent for several seconds.

Then Alice, one of the women at lunch, looked down in her lap and admitted softly, “I was that girl who trashed Margret.”

We looked at each other and smiled, because these two, Margret and Alice, were now the closest of friends you will ever meet.



The Flower

Marleen Hoffman

The flower smiled up at her.
 “Thank you for the drink,” it said.
 “Remember it’s all in the attitude.”
 “A little feed. A little water. Some sunshine.
 “Don’t worry.
 “It’s all good.
 “Live simply.
 “Don’t look back, you’re not going that way!
 “You have already walked through the Valley of the
 Shadow of Death.
 “That path is history. Gone. Gone forever.
 “Today is here.
 “In your hands.”
 So, she smiled back at the little flower with a heart
 full of thanks.
 And her day was set.
 Today. New day. Filled with possibilities.
 In her hands. Capable hands. To shape and mold into
 a beautiful day.
 Stacked one upon the other.
 Marching on to a beautiful new future.
 Building lovely memories.
 Then looking back and seeing only joy.
 And many more beautiful flowers smiling up at her.

Coffee

Marleen Hoffman

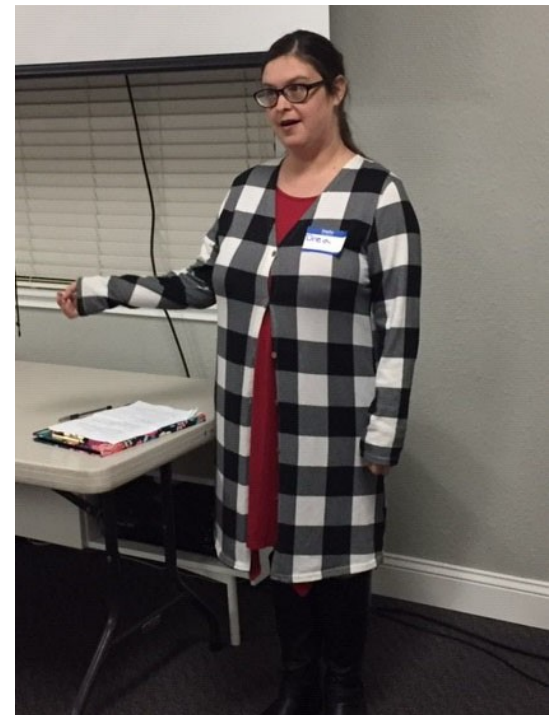
Coffee. Morning coffee.
 Slightly sweet and dark brown.
 Coming from the earth.
 Oh, so good.
 The sun warms the crystal spider
 Hanging in the window.
 There to bring joy to each New Day.
 Giving Thanks for the New Day, she drank the
 coffee.
 Slightly sweet. Dark brown.
 Early morning.
 Not even seven yet.
 The airplanes taking off from Sac International.
 One after the other.
 Powering up. Travelers off flying to parts
 unknown.
 Somewhere else. Away from here.
 Are they flying from or to?
 Such short few minutes between takeoffs.
 One after the other.
 Delicious coffee. Crystal spider. Sunshine.
 Aah! Another beautiful morning.

IF YOU MISSED LAST MONTH'S MEETING, YOU MISSED A LOT ———

What is an author event? What is a book signing? Do you know the difference between the two?

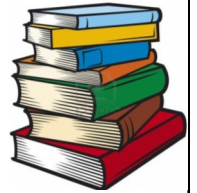
Drea Moore covered misconceptions and myths about marketing so you will feel more comfortable with self-promotion.

Plan, market, and hold a book event at a local bookstore or other venue!



Beta Readers

Jeannie Turner



1. Think of your betas as a focus group – your betas should reflect your target audience
2. Make sure your betas know what's expected of them — tell them what helps and what to avoid
3. Make sure you know what's expected of YOU — have a strategy and check your ego at the door
4. Know what hills you're willing to die on — their suggestions are yours to take or leave, know what you feel strongly about
5. Know what format you want material in and why — it should be what works best for you (e.g., hard copy? Electronic?)
6. Give them a deadline — be realistic and give them enough time, but set a date
Don't waste the opportunity! - keep an open mind and listen for a new perspective. Who knows...your Beta may have an out-of-the-box idea.

Beta Readers

Paul Turner

I'm glad you asked — how do we get new members and more of them?

1. First, let's ask whom we **wish to target** for new memberships.
That is, do we want just anybody? Broad-based advertising usually is too dilute to bring in everybody. So, our target audience is probably waifs who want to write. These we can help. These waifs include people in college; second careerists; retired hopefuls; members of other writing groups.

We can also include beta readers mentioned last night in our board meeting.

2. How should we **reach out** to each of these groups?
Person to person contact using our SSWC business cards seems best, but slow.
Be active on the web in social media, because people who are searching for a group to critique their writing, or help them get started or help them get finished, do search online as a means to discover writer groups;
3. **Discounts** are not something I personally favor. We have free attendance, and "Free" is an attention-getter. We recognize that some people simply come and look, and never come back. We are casting a net, through social media, and other means, that catches many kinds of fish. Some who stay and swim in the writing waters, and some who do not. Therefore, in order to bring in long-lasting members, we need to cast many nets toward our target audiences. A business card handed over in time, saves nine false starts. As Publicity Chair, I need to cast more marketing nets online for SSWC. Perhaps we do need a Twitter account.
4. With a **Twitter account**, the SSWC can place articles, include links in Tweets, and photos. Know that anything good that happens in real life, or on our Twitter account, can be reTweeted by us, and by anyone who receives it.

Getting Followers on Twitter is easy. L Paul Turner, yours truly, Tweets several times a week, and without much trouble he has about 90 followers. A friend of mine has about 30,000 Followers. He does this mostly with photos. So, I would ask that we include photos, perhaps images of our book covers, including our very fine anthology cover with a link connecting people to the purchasing page on Amazon.

Because many younger people, Gen Xers and some Millennials, frequent Instagram, and that social medium is mostly for photos and drawings (think Tealya's drawings), we should be photo heavy, and verbiage light. However, a person may write articles to post on these social websites, and that increases our credentials, especially if we are writing articles that teach writing, and include pointers and encouragements.

Respectfully submitted,

L Paul Turner aka Cle Curbo
Publicity Chair, SSWC



Join the Club!

We are a vibrant club with active writers, have several critique groups (with room for more), and stay wonderfully supportive of each other.

SSWC supports local writers and encourages everyone to write and publish. Attending meetings is free, but membership brings benefits, such as publication in the newsletter and anthology, use of our club's library, qualification for grants to attend conferences (limits apply), and ability to join our first-class critique groups.

MEMBERSHIP is paid on a yearly basis. If joining after April, dues are prorated by quarter (unless you are just really late in maintaining your membership!).

_____ Individual \$40 / year

_____ Couple \$55 / year

_____ Full-Time Student \$30 / year

_____ Platinum Senior (70+) \$30 / year

More information is on our website: sactowriters.org

Name: _____ Genres: _____

Published? Y / N (yes, includes self-published) Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Website/other info/address (optional): _____

OFFICERS

Elected Officers:

President	Ron Smith
Vice President	Brittany Lord
Secretary	Cathy McGreevy
Treasurer	Julie Beyers

Chairs:

Achievements	Y O U ????
Coffee/Treats	Al Gilding
Conferences	John Powell
Critique Grps	Brittany Lord
Historian	Pat Biasotti
Librarian	Ron Smith
Membership	Jeannie Turner
Newsletter	Mary Lou Anderson
Nominations	Y O U ????
Prgm/Speakers	Laura Kellen
Publicity	Paul Turner
Raffle	Y O U ????
Sunshine	Nan Roark
Website	Wes Turner
Workshops	Paul Turner

**There's a spot in the list
above for YOU!**



Motivational Prompt

The dogs in the neighborhood are all barking, and yours is starting to pace the floor. What do you do?

Turn on every light in the house?

Turn off all the lights?

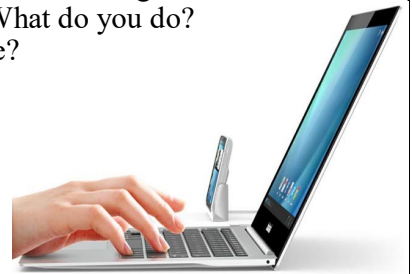
Open the door and check?

Look out the windows?

Immediately call 9-1-1?

Roll over and go back to sleep?

Write down your ideas.



MEETING INFORMATION

2nd Monday of every month

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Next meeting:

Monday, February 10
Crossroads Christian
Fellowship Hall

5501 Dewey Drive

Just north of the Dewey and Madison intersection

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