

May, 2020

Suburban Scribe

Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers Club

sactowriters.org

In the midst of all this furor,
one important thing to *remember* is to

KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR!

Of course, to "keep" a sense of humor, we must either
already have one ... or find one.



A Message from our President

(No, silly, NOT Trump! This is from Ron!)

Hello Everyone,

We must do what is best for all the members. So, unfortunately, we will cancel the May banquet.

Everyone stay safe!

Thank you, SSWC for keeping the club going during these strange times, which I know a story is brewing for many members.

Take care,

Ronald Smith
President of SSWC

Mort Rumberg shared these bits of humor:

Turns out my top 3 hobbies are:

- Eating at restaurants
- Going to nonessential businesses
- Touching my face

This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat as if she thought the cat understood her.

I told my dog about it, and we had a good laugh.

I saw a flying saucer today. It appeared right after the flying cup my wife threw at me.



Future meeting dates—

Laura Kellen is working on getting some great speakers. She reports that the ones she has talked to have agreed to postpone their presentations, so we won't miss anything. Thank you and great job, Laura.

Meetings 7—9 p.m. 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks — **but not this month.**

sactowriters.org

Flash Fiction Contest Winner Brittany Lord

Congratulations go to Bernard Wozny — the winner of the Flash Fiction Contest.

Brittany sends thanks to everyone who entered since writing a piece of fiction that is just a couple hundred words long is no easy feat. It takes some real skill and patience to boil an idea down this much. All of those who entered should be proud of their accomplishment.

I hope you all consider participating again when the next contest is announced. Brittany added that it was a hard decision, and here is the winning entry:

I Knew It Was a Lie Bernard Wozny

St. Thomas Aquinas once said, “Playful deeds and jokes are a requisite for life.” I love a good joke, but one time I couldn’t work out if I was told a joke or a lie. I was a young college student. My mother was sending me to Poland to take Christmas presents to our extended family. My sister told me to take some toilet paper.

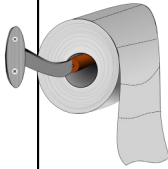
“You better bring your own,” she said, “because they don’t have any in Poland.”

I did not get any clarification, nor did I see any humor. While planning the trip, I had other priorities, that’s why I knew it was a lie.

On arrival in Poland, I enjoyed much feasting and festivities. Such indulgence eventually finds relief in the household toilet. Before seating myself, I checked if toilet paper was available. It was, so I scoffed at how my sister bullied me with lies.

When I finished, closer inspection revealed a horrific surprise. There was paper, but not the kind I would want to use. This was that old-fashioned medicated paper – you know, more like kitchen greaseproof cooking paper.

I now understood the smirk my sister displayed, but I did not laugh at the joke.



From Jeannie Turner:

Another second Monday now is here,
And COVID’s got us cowering in fear.
But when this COVID’s gone,
We’ll just party on and on,
And never shed another single tear.

And a response from Mark Heckey:

Amen amen. You can say that again.
We must persist until the virus desists.
Keep loving our friends until this thing ends.
Or ... Correction: Keep loving our friends more deeply
beyond when this thing ends.

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.

Six Feet of Separation

Mark Heckey

The traveler asked for water, but I could not provide.

Six feet of separation.

A homeless person stretched out his hands from the shadows but I would not touch them.

Six feet of separation.

My love asked for consolation but I could not embrace.

Six feet of separation.

I complied and roamed in silent desperation. The price of survival painful to endure.

Six feet of separation.

Then I heard the voices of people seeking a new connection. Reaching out we began to find ways of sharing.

Six feet of separation.

I walked the park and saw people smiling and waving, the simple joy of air and sunshine. Not alone, raising each other up.

Six feet of separation.

I looked at the sky and noticed it clearing and changing. The earth in recovery from the misdeeds of man.

Six feet of separation.

Together we bridge the distance, united in hope,
Ending the six feet of separation.

Jeannie Turner submitted this so we could all find some relief from our melancholy.

"And finally, in a word, it cannot be too much praised... *[It] keepeth the body fat and plump*; and also preserveth the countenance fresh and fair..."



How to use chocolate 1672

It revives the drooping spirits, and cheers those that are ready to faint; expelling sorrow, trouble, care, and all perturbations of the minde; it is an Ambrosia: And finally, in a word, it cannot be too much praised... *[It] keepeth the body fat and plump*; and also preserveth the countenance fresh and fair... and certain it is, that a man may live longer with it, then with any kinde of Wine whatsoever... It is a great Cordial... strengthening the natural heat in all parts, and thereby prolonging life; for it is by an easie transmutation converted into blood. It preserveth in vigour the principal faculties, enabling men to prosecute their Studies and tedious exercises, expelling winde, opening obstructions... and is most excellent against Hypochondriack melancholy.

William Hughes, The American Physitian

Note from author: But to have all that "cheer" and long life and to preserve "the countenance fresh and fair," a "fat and plump" body doesn't seem too big a price to pay.

If you can't go out, if you're furloughed from work, if you are living like a shut-in ...

How many of you are spending your days in your pajamas?



Advanced Writers Techniques (AWT)

Mike Brandt



AWT group usually 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 readers will love.

Since we are not currently meeting, our planned subject of **CRIME STORIES ACROSS CONTINENTS** will be discussed when we can hold meetings again.

Do some research on the Internet. Come up with a mystery or crime that happened in an exotic land. Try writing scenes that are in far-away places, whether you actually visited them or only dreamed about going there. Whatever ... just write.

Undercover

Jeannie Turner



I love a garage sale. A yard sale. Call it what you want

I don't even have to look for them. They seem to look for me.

Even when I drive down a street I've never been on before. There they are, those yard sales, calling to me.

I've found some of the most remarkable things at yard sales: a popcorn popper, a red silk blouse, a Raggedy Ann doll. You name it, it's sure to be at a yard sale somewhere, some time.

It's best not to go looking for something in particular but just be open to whatever calls to you, whatever you see.

Oh, I know many who go looking for a particular item, but that's just laying yourself open for disappointment if you don't find it.

When I go to a yard sale, I just keep my eyes and my mind open, and you'd be surprised at the treasures I've found or rather that have found me.

But all that was before my earth-shaking experience.

That was before it happened.

Well, let me tell you about it. You see, there's a house on a very busy intersection in my neighborhood where there is a yard sale EVERY week. I kid you not—EVERY week. (Well, that is, they HAD had one every week, until they got shut down by the police. It seems there is some kind of a law that restricts a person from having more than four yard sales a year. Untaxed. If they are a business, not only do they need a business license, but they also need to collect and pay taxes.)

This one day my friend Marge and I were out having the time of our lives. We'd been already to three yard sales before we got to that one.

Actually, by now we'd found some pretty nice stuff. I'd discovered a set of measuring cups that reminded me of the ones my Grandma McCabe used to have, so I just HAD to get them. And then there was that beautiful watch! Of course, it wasn't running, but then whoever really checks their watch anymore. Anywhere you turn there's a clock if you really need to know what time it is. There's one on the stove, one on the bedside table, and one on the bathroom wall, plus they keep telling you the time when you're listening to the radio. And it was such a pretty watch.

Marge had found a purse and a lovely pink and purple vase with kind of a running vine design on it. It had a crack, but you could put just artificial flowers in it that don't need any water so there wouldn't be any leakage.

So, there we were, at the ever-present yard sale. They continuously had a lot of really good stuff for sale. I don't know where they could get so much stuff to sell every week, but they did.

My husband had once asked, "How do you know that they aren't just fencing stolen goods?"

Well, we don't of course. That did kind of make me wonder how they spent their nights between their weekend sales.

Since I do love to read. I ALWAYS look over any book table that I see. That day, that memorable day, I saw a familiar-looking book.

This small book with a red cover had a black line drawing on the front of two little children, a girl and a boy, sailing a toy boat on a puddle.

I exclaimed to Marge, "Why that is just like the book I learned to read from when I was a little girl living in Kansas!"

Eagerly I picked it up to see if any of the stories in it would be familiar to me, if the pictures were the same as I remembered.

I opened up the book and gasped.

I nearly lost my balance.

Marge grabbed my arm. "What's the matter, are you all right?"

When my pounding heart settled a bit and let me speak, I gasped weakly, "Look! It *is my book!*"

And there, in my mother's beautiful handwriting, was my name! Right where she had written it so many years ago!

How did that book get here? I knew I hadn't brought it with me when I'd moved to California 48 years ago. Nor had my parents when they followed me here ten years later. HOW did that book get from Kansas to California?

We rushed over to the man running the sale.

"Wherever did you get this book?"

He shrugged nonchalantly. "Oh, I don't know. We get stuff from all over, different places."

Well, of course I couldn't leave it there. I wanted that book.

I just had to buy it. So, buy it, I did.

(But I kind of wondered if he shouldn't just have given it to me, after all it WAS my book. My name was right there in the front.)

Such a shocking, almost scary, kind of creepy experience!

It was months before I could bring myself to go to another yard sale.

Razmar – Home for the Wealthy Aged

Cle Curbo



Jimmy Ladder set his breakfast plate down at the round table and took a gander. Seven of his gals were in attendance. He was the oldest at hundred-four, but the spry females of eighty-five knew him well. Service with a smile. That's what they said. It was true.

Except today there was a new beauty. Only fifty-six as the story went. She looked it too.

#

That night, fifty-six was dressed to the nines, and Jimmy danced with her on the ballroom floor. He signed her dance card seven times. She was worth it.

They rested at the table, not a bead of perspiration on his forehead, but fifty-six was steaming. "I love you, Jimmy. Will you excuse me? I must freshen up."

Jimmy sat back in his chair and smiled. "I'll be right here waiting for you."

An hour later, Jimmy figured he'd been stood up and called it a night with an eighty-five in tow.

The next afternoon, like always, Jimmy checked his bank account. Seven checks had cleared. The account was empty.

"She said she loved me. I knew it was a lie."

And, so was Jimmy's thought.

Refreshing our Writing Skills

Mort Rumberg

Affect vs. Effect

While both words can be used as a noun or a verb, "effect" is usually used as a noun and "affect" is usually used as a verb.

The game will effect our standings against the other teams. **Incorrect**

The game will affect our standings against the other teams. **Correct**

Apart vs. A part

Apart is an adverb meaning, "separated by distance." *These two cars are three feet apart from each other.*

A part is two separate words, the article "a" and the noun "part."

Apart is usually paired with "from" and *a part* is usually paired with "of."

May I be apart of your group? **Incorrect**

May I be a part of your group? **Correct**

Pry them apart. **Correct**

Assure vs. Ensure vs. Insure

To *ensure* something happens is to guarantee it. *Assure* is to tell someone something positively or confidently to remove any doubt. *Insure* has to do with insurance - typically providing compensation for loss or damage. *Ensure* is also a product - not an English issue.

Greg assured me nothing was wrong. In order to ensure that nothing was wrong, Greg locked the door.

You must take the proper precautions to assure your privacy. **Incorrect**

You must take the proper precautions to ensure your privacy. **Correct**

The monthly premium for your car insurance is \$500.00. **Correct.**

I KNEW IT WAS A LIE

Pat Biasotti



My idea of a vacation is a resort hotel and sunny beach, my husband's?—adventure. We take separate vacations. I debated a unique gift for his fiftieth birthday when he said, "Not getting any younger. I've always dreamed of a safari and with you. It'll be thrilling. You'll love it."

My eyebrows arched. "WHAT? No way. I've seen zoos." Four Days later I gave in.

Months later we were flying over dense jungle in a tiny plane. Suddenly, the motor sputtered and we headed straight down—BANG into a tree. Alive, bruised, scratched, somehow we clambered down. "We'll head for a river we just passed," our pilot announced. "Native villages along those."

After we had been hacking through jungle growth for seemingly hours, two fierce-looking natives startled us. "Head-hunters!" I screamed.

"Unga yuku," pilot greeted them.

"Miggi ushi ocko....." they replied.

Pilot translated, "Their dugout can take us downriver to town, but they want your earrings," and pointed to me.

My prized emerald earrings? *Better jewelry than my life*, and handed them over. Once in town, I announced to hubby, "End of safari. Home or divorce."

Thrilling? You'll love it? I knew it was a lie."

Virus Quiz

If price gauging is illegal, then why is yeast so expensive online right now?

Remember when only bad guys wore masks?

If the same number of people are still eating, why is so much food going to waste in the fields and being plowed under?

If we're really on quarantine, why are there so many cars in the Lowes and Home Depot parking lots?

Exactly *who* has all that toilet paper?

Why is there a shortage of canned baby corn?

What makes someone think you're essential and tells you to go to work every day to hang out with all those others who might be sick?

For the rest of you — What do you mean I'm not essential? Well, on second thought, maybe it's okay staying home and not facing all those contagious people out there.

Aren't you glad you have writing to keep you busy and sane ? Maybe we're not getting rich from our hard work, but at least we're not paying a psychologist big bucks to tell us to find something to do.

**LET ME KNOW OF OTHER INCONGRUITIES AND
NONSENSICAL ITEMS TO INCLUDE NEXT MONTH!**

Writing Together We'll Weather This Storm

Jeannie Turner



Shakespeare dealt with many plagues.
He was born during a plague that had taken 2 of his siblings.

He wrote King Lear while he was sequestered because of a plague.

Others of his works were written during plagues.

What are you writing during this one?

Here are some responses from our members:

Mark Heckey - Planner, Writer, Art Docent — A poem and a short story. Doing heavy edits from beta reader on a 60-page spy story.

Mort Rumberg — I am writing less, but trying not to gain ungodly amounts of weight while unpacking boxes from our move to Roseville. I'm making good progress. While many of my clothes have shrunk and probably destined to Goodwill, I am down to 21,000 boxes from 23,000. I'm having so much fun.

Mary Lou Anderson — Writing now? My Will. (not really, it was done years ago) I did finally put "Sierra Heist" (aka M.L. Edson) onto Kindle yesterday!!!

Karen Sepahmansour — I have been writing a little. I wrote something for the Flash Fiction Contest. I am still trying to complete my historical fiction novel. It has been taking me a long time because of other responsibilities. Nevertheless, I am hoping to light a fire under my butt and complete it by the summer.

Paul Turner — Thanks for asking. I'm writing a sci-fi adventure and a love story mystery. Both by Cle Curbo, my alter ego.

Deidre Daughtery —

I'm working with a critique group on my memoir, 'Adventure Doesn't Mean Fun' and enjoying reading the groups' works. Getting inspired to write more. What are you writing?

Thanks for the powerful reminder or incentive. I am going to work toward having something relating to my writing project to show to remind me of this time of uncertainty.

Emma Clasberry — I'm working and writing as usual.

Ron Smith — Write on.

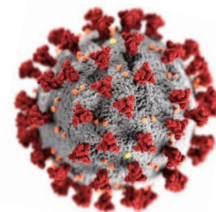
Antoine J. Bastien van der Meer — I was looking forward to the April meeting, to say goodbye to my SSWC friends. My wife and I leave for Oklahoma next week (home for us). Say goodbye to all, hope to see you again when we return for a visit.

Marleen Hoffman — Here's to making good come from this Stuck at Home time!

<https://downloads-fw.s3.amazonaws.com/writersdigest/YearOfWritingPrompts.pdf>

Jeannie Turner —

I've written four beginnings
And endings, quite a few.
But they don't go together—
I don't know what to do.
So if you've writ a middle
That you could spare for me,
Perhaps we could combine them
And really authors be!



This space is saved for YOU ... for your next poem,
short story, article, bit of information, or even an excerpt
from your new book.



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:

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	MaryEllen Dempsey
Sunshine	Nan Roark
Website	Wes Turner
Workshops	Paul Turner

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



Need Motivation to Write? Just Close Your Eyes and Sleep

"They" say that many of us are having more vivid dreams during this quarantine (*whoever* "they" are....).

So, how about putting a notepad beside your bed and jotting down your dream as soon as you wake up?

Don't wait because dreams fade and eventually disappear. Write quickly.

Then expand that into a short story, poem, or anything else that just might help you make sense of all this.



MEETING INFORMATION

USUALLY the 2nd Monday of every month

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Next meeting:

**Nope, not in May either
The BANQUET is postponed until
we can all get together again.**

5501 Dewey Drive

Just north of the Dewey and Madison intersection

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