

June, 2020

Suburban Scribe

Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers Club

sactowriters.org




Is anyone else keeping a journal? I wasn't until last night.

I was inspired by a great-grandfather's journal that he dictated to my grandmother in the late 1800s. My parents ended up with it, and my mother typed it so it would be legible. The original is lost in someone's piles, closet, or attic, but our mom made copies and mailed them to all four of her kids.

Reading the journal, though not chronological, is interesting. The flavor of the times is there — including events during the civil war, some battles and locations of fights, and his respect (or lack thereof) for the military leaders. He included dates of fights and loss of friends and family, bringing his times to life.

Reviewing his story and imagining I was hearing my great-grandfather's voice prompted me to write ... not necessarily trying to document society's responses, but how our family is dealing with it.



**MEMORIAL DAY
JUST A SHORT TIME AGO**

On Memorial Day I heard a news report that HALF OF ALL AMERICANS do not know what Memorial Day stands for.

Sad. Sad. Sad.
(And, NO, it's not for *sales* at stores and online!)

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history>

Use the link above to see a site dedicated to members of our armed services.

Then write a tribute to your father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandfather, great-grandfather, or anyone all the way back for anyone who served (and not necessarily died during service).

Which era? Which military branch? Where served? What made him/her special?

Make it a poem, a short article about how and when the service was done.

Then save it and share it with your kids, grandkids, family members to have forever.

Did You Catch Last Month's Error?

No, I'm not going to remind anyone what that error was.

Too everyone reading last month's early edition of the newsletter and told us of the reeeelllly bad punctuashun error, thank you. (It was quickly corrected!) Let us know if you find any others ... tactfully, please. The fine print — Warning: You may be volunteering to help edit/proofread.)

Everyone who writes knows that mistakes happen. Errors occur and are sum thymes mist when prooffreading and editing.

Now just if y'all can foregiive us (me).

This is appolloggy is from:

The compiler / the layout dept./ the graphics dept. / the editor / the writer / all the proofreaders / the publisher / and the disturbed distributor.

(Hey, maybe the club will fire the entire department and hire a new people. ???)

Future meeting dates—

Thanks to everyone for their patience. No one is sure when we will feel comfortable enough to meet as a group or when the church will even allow our members to meet. Laura Kellen is keeping in touch with the future presenters so we will have some great meetings ... as soon as we are allowed to.

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

Published!!!! Hooray!!!

John Vester

I'm writing to share some good news. I'll have another short story in Analog magazine soon. The story is titled "Where There's Life," and it will appear in the Sept./Oct. issue.

This is a special story for me. It's a personal favorite and, in a much altered form, began as one of my first writing efforts. Its theme has been treated by countless other authors, better and smarter than I am, so it's a significant confidence boost that my slant has gotten this nod from Analog.

As I've mentioned before, I'm grateful to all of you for your love, friendship, support, and the great example you have set in my life. Any success my writing enjoys is, in a real sense, a tribute to you and your influence on me.

Again I'll say that I hope you find it worth your time and effort to find the magazine, or to subscribe. I think you'll find much enjoyable reading there. FYI, here are some links:

<https://www.analogsf.com/>

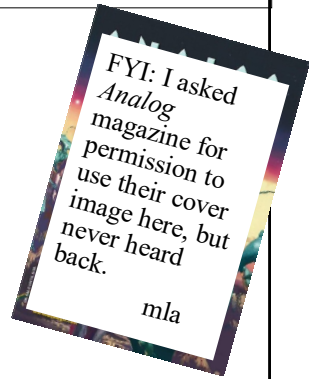
<https://analog-science-fiction-and-fact.subscriptioncore.com/?>

Finally, I have decided to use my Facebook and Twitter accounts for spreading the word about any new developments in my writing. jvsf2@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/john.j.vester.12>

<https://twitter.com/JohnJVester2>

Or email John at <jv4sf2@gmail.com>



John's message and his success should be an inspiration to all of us, encouraging us to write ... and submit to agents, editors, magazines, publishers, or to self-publish.

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.

Silver Linings to the Cloud of COVID

Jeannie Turner

Are there ways we could do better after the pandemic is over?

Maybe we'll get sick less often. We have been washing our hands more frequently and striving not to be touching our faces all the time. Will many Americans now have better hygiene? Since it takes about 66 days to create a habit, it's possible that our new healthful habits will protect us from the common cold, strep throat, and other infections. According to Dr. Emily S. Spivak, associate professor of medicine and director of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program at University of Utah Health, "Our flu rates basically took a nosedive as soon as we started social distancing... obviously we can't do [social distancing] forever, but people may be more conscientious about distancing and common-sense hygiene."

This is what happened after the 1918 flu pandemic, when we stopped using common cups in public places and began to frown upon spitting.

Maybe we will lead less frenzied lives. The viral prose poem by Kitty O'Meara begins "And the people stayed home," and envisions a brighter, better world emerging from our COVID crisis. Will some of the stillness, creativity, and contemplation remain in our post-pandemic world? (Find the poem here:

<https://www.chausa.org/prayers/cha-prayer-library/prayer/poem-by-kitty-o'meara--relveant-to-today's-times>)

Maybe we will be better prepared for any emergency. Will we take emergency preparedness more seriously? Give it our attention that it

deserves? Nancy K. Bristow, who teaches a class at the University of Puget Sound on culture and catastrophes says, "Emergency preparedness has to be taken more seriously at the individual level, at the state level, and at the federal level." Perhaps this depends on how long our attention span is and how we recognize that this is not a political issue but rather a human issue.

Maybe we'll be more engaged with our elders. Maybe we will we continue to buy groceries and run errands for our elderly neighbors? Will we continue to call our grandparents more frequently after the pandemic ends? A survey commissioned by Medicare Advantages, a health insurance company, found that 40% of grandparents report that they had been communicating more frequently with children and grandchildren. Many have learned of and used FaceTime, also texting with children and grandchildren has increased.

Pandemic restrictions have made many people more appreciative of simple gestures—hugging a grandparent, dropping off a meal to friends without worry of passing along a deadly virus. Possibly some of the stores that instituted special shopping hours for the vulnerable will continue that practice.

Maybe we will enjoy richer, stronger relationships. Now while we are so isolated, we are making contact with family and friends in different, more creative ways. When this pandemic is a thing of the past, perhaps we could ask ourselves what we liked about this time—perhaps we could learn from it, make it a part of our lives.



Advanced Writers Techniques (AWT) Suggestions



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, on another planet, in another lifetime (current, past, or future), or involving lovers (cover any genre!). Try writing scenes that are in far-away places, whether you actually visited them or only dreamed about going there. Whatever ... just write.

COVID Catastrophe

Jeannie Turner

My friend, she called me late last night. “I’ve got some awful news,
I only tell you this so you can join me in my blues.

“Oh, I am craving chocolate—dark, I’m going out to buy some.
And if dark chocolate all is gone, milk chocolate? I *might* try some.

I put on mask, I put on gloves, I’m ready now for shopping.
I knew I’d make just one quick stop, not store to store be hopping.

I went right to my favorite store—they’d always had a plenty.
I headed for the chocolate shelves. I found them all quite empty.

Oh well, I thought, I’ll find some at my second choice, I know.
So in my mask and wearing gloves, to second store I’ll go.

Again, I parked my trusty car. Again, I stood in line.
I know they’ll have some chocolate here. For chocolate, dark, I pine.

I kept my distance in the store, six feet we stayed apart.
When I got to the chocolate shelf it almost broke my heart to see that bare
space facing me.

No chocolate was in sight.

What is this world a coming to! I then exclaimed in fright.

And thus, I went from store to store, to store, to store in vain.
No chocolate was there *anywhere*. My heart filled up with pain.

I’d weathered all this plague had brought; I’d thought that I was strong.
I’d thought that I could be so tough. I found that I was wrong.

If I don’t get dark chocolate now my heart is going to break.
How drastic will my actions be?

What measures will I take to satisfy my drastic need?

I’d rob a bank... or kill.

But *no* store has my chocolate now, and don’t know when they will.

So I went home. I sat and cried. This plague has reached its peak.
I stomped around, I tore my hair, I started to feel weak.

I thought and thought *what can I do? I need dark chocolate, yes.*
So how’d I solve that lack, you ask? I think you’d never guess.

My kitchen held an answer, poor. It helped not much, but some.
I got the can of cocoa out. To what sad end I’d come.

I dumped that cocoa on a plate, it was a pretty sight—
So dark and rich, all piled high there. Would I try this? I might.

I stuck my finger in my mouth. I got my finger wet.
I touched my finger to that pile—I’ll solve my problem yet!

That finger, caked with chocolate, dark. I started in to lick . . .
’twas chocolate, dark, but not the same. It nearly made me sick.

We’ve *got* to stamp this COVID out! We *need* our chocolate now!
We’ve *got* to fill those empty shelves with chocolate, dark, somehow.

If you have chocolate hid away, and want to make some money,
Just let me know. I’ll buy it all! And I’m not being funny.

I’ll give my car, I’ll give my house, I’ll give my diamond ring.
I’ll give you *every* thing I have if you will chocolate bring.”



TID-BITS

Mort Rumberg shared this with us:
He's not sure who created it. (From the Internet.)

Wisdom For The Ages

If a married man is walking alone in a park and expresses an opinion without anybody hearing him, is he still wrong?

A wife will forgive and forget, but she will never forget what she forgave.

It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a distillery to homeschool one.

I think the surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that none of it has tried to contact us.

My wife sat down next to me as I was flipping channels. "What's on TV?" she asked.

"Dust."

And then the fight started.

New Word

Jeannie Turner

New, at least to me, Word I heard a word I'd not heard before—*imaginated*. Kind of a fine-tuning, I guess, of *imagined*.

To *imagine* is what just *happens* in your head without your volition.

To *Imagine* is to help it along, more akin to *create*, it would seem.

Refreshing our Writing Skills

Mort Rumberg

Who vs. Whom

Who functions as a subject while *whom* functions as an object. An easy way to remember the difference is to substitute he/him into your sentences. If *he* works, it should be *who*. If *him* works, it should be *whom*. *Who (he) told me to make dinner. You delivered a pizza to whom (him)?*

Who did you give that to? **Incorrect**

To whom did you give that? **Correct**

Attain vs. Obtain

Attain and *obtain* are both verbs. *Attain* means "to accomplish, reach, or achieve something through effect." *Obtain* means "to get, acquire, or to gain possession of something." *Attain* implies effort put forth to produce the outcome.

Joe worked hard and obtained a great deal of success. **Incorrect**

Joe worked hard and attained a great deal of success. **Correct**

Break vs. Brake

Break can be used as a noun and a verb. To *break something* is to cause it to separate into pieces. A *break* is the act or action of breaking. *We took a break at work.* *Brake* can also be used as a noun and a verb. To *brake* is to stop the car.

There's been a brake in the water pipe. **Incorrect**

There's been a break in the water pipe. **Correct**

Building Your Vocabulary

M. L.

I found this on Wikipedia:

Pleonasm ... is the use of more words or parts of words than are necessary or sufficient for clear expression: for example *black darkness* or *burning fire*. Such redundancy is, by traditional rhetorical criteria, a manifestation of tautology, and might be considered a fault of style.

W W W — Wow! Whatta Website!

Wes Turner sent a couple of interesting websites. Check these out when you have some *spare* time.

Wes says this site will search the top 1 million sites and list what fonts they use!

<https://www.fontreach.com/>

The next site is called a Paraphrase Tool. Wes thinks it just finds synonyms for a few common words and swaps them out. He suggests that you put in something that actually makes sense, then have them Re-Write it. Read it aloud and try not to laugh! Play around with this one:

<https://codebeautify.org/paraphrasing-tool#>

Mort had this response to Wes's font-usage site:

Obviously, someone had a lot of time on his hands. So, now that I know... what do I do with this "knowledge?" Hmm, maybe bring it up in my next cocktail hour and see what people say.

Oh, wait! I have several cocktail hours each day, and I'm the only one there.

Hmmm. Have to rethink this.



?!, !?, !?!, or !?! ...?

Mary Lou for Neka Anderson



The way to copyright something, I understand, is to write it down ... and publish it. So, here goes.

During this pandemic, I've been tutoring my seven-year-old granddaughter, a first grader, and she is, of course, a genius. (No prejudice here, of course.) Well, we were talking about the uses of end of sentence punctuation marks: periods for regular sentences, question marks for questions, and exclamation marks for excited statements. I explained there really was no mark for an excited question.

She smiled and said, "That would be called a 'questamation mark'."

When I stopped laughing, I had to agree that she had given it a perfect name.

While others have used interrobang, I think the absolute best name for it is the questamation mark. Don't you agree?

Wes Turner offers this word for your contemplation:

Contextomy

It's basically quoting something out of context, taking perhaps the worst insult ever and making it sound like a compliment. The info is a fun read:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quoting_out_of_context

You may never believe another movie review again.



Washing? Washing? What?

Jeannie Turner

Does anyone know? Can we take showers yet?
Or must we keep washing our hands???

I need a shampoo, And that's really true,
But I just keep washing my hands.

My feet are quite dirty and starting to stink,
But I just keep washing my hands.

It's good no one's near me, for I think they'd
fear me,
But I just keep washing my hands.

A Pickpocket's Lament

Jeannie Turner

Six-feet! Oh, no, that's much too far!

No pockets can I pick.

I used to be the best of all—

I really was so quick.

But now that COVID's come to town,

And all stay far apart.

No pockets can I reach to pick.

It nearly breaks my heart.

The Plight of the Daylight Burglar

Jeannie Turner

Most folks used to go to work

But they don't work no more

They just sit at home and wait

And that sure makes me sore.

Networking (Virtually) in the Genres

May 2020

John J. Vester

There's not much going on in the genres, as you would expect. BAYCON has been moved to November 7 & 8. CONTACT is now scheduled for November 31 to October 2. SPACEFEST has been cancelled and the NEBULAS are, this year, virtual.

But if you're writing actively, the pandemic should have very little effect on you. Submission procedures for the markets have not changed at all. Response times may be a bit long. I know the people at Analog and Asimov's have been working from home, so that adds some lag time. But the activity of writing is almost tailor-made for the locked down world we have been living in.

And there has been an interesting upside revealed. The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) has turned their annual Nebula awards event into an online one. Exchange of information continues, but without the personal touch. But, a curious benefit, that can apply to any organization, has emerged. The SFWA business meeting, supposedly open to all members, was on line. People who in the past would not be able to attend due to travel time and expense, now could be there, virtually. As a result I got a better sense of the organization and am able to report some interesting news.

Most interesting would be that they are considering opening membership to comic book writers and game designers. Also, much interesting news about the mentorship program. For anyone working in these genres, SFWA membership should be on your to do list.

On another topic, you can find great resources on the web. For example, *Strangest of All*, an anthology of astrobiological science fiction, edited by Julie Novakova, accomplished scientist and sf writer. Go to

<https://www.julienovakova.com/strangest-of-all/>

It is wonderful for the fiction, by top names in the field, and the factual essays explaining the science and speculations underpinning the fiction. It's a free download, so save yourself a trip to the library.

The pandemic will soon be behind us, but let's not be too eager to require people to physically attend everything when Zoom can be an eco-friendly alternative.

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!**



WRITING PROMPTS

With everything going on right now, there is plenty of *stuff* to write about:

Current events	Newsmakers	Family
Friends	Injustice	Prejudice
Frustrating	Love	Space Travel
Support	Fear	
Horror	Wonder	
Inspiration	Motivation	
Fear	Hope	



MEETING INFORMATION

USUALLY the 2nd Monday of every month

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Next meeting:

Sorry, but no meeting in June either

**Things should get back to
NORMAL again ... soon.**

5501 Dewey Drive

Just north of the Dewey and Madison intersection

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