



# The Redwood Writer



February 2012 - [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org) - Writers Helping Writers

Vice President's Message:

**Redwood Writers Conference Highlights**

By Elaine Webster



**Al Young**, California Poet Laureate Emeritus, is Keynote Speaker for *Poetic Journeys*, the pre-conference poetry night on April 27, 2012 at the Flamingo Hotel. In his poem "How the Rainbow Works" Mr. Young observes:

*Mostly we occupy ocular zones, clinging  
only to what we think we can see.  
We can't see wind or waves of thought,  
electrical fields or atoms dancing;  
only what they do or make us believe.*

These words leapt at me one morning from an e-mail message. *How appropriate*, I thought. The artistic mind has found a home in modern technology.

The first time this year's conference team assembled we asked ourselves, *What do writers want today? How will they proceed? What is their next step?* We concluded that some may seek the comfort of tradition, penning their thoughts into chapbooks and journals. Others will venture with abandon into the world of high-tech electronics. Many will look for a balance between the two. Yet, no one wants to be left behind. Writers want to take that "Next Step"—a literary journey into the future.

The **Next Step 2012 Writers Conference** is a supermarket of offerings, where the attendee can wheel his or her shopping cart down familiar and unfamiliar aisles. Sixteen breakout sessions have been categorized into four main tracks: craft, genre, publishing and marketing. The fun part is that attendees can mix and match to their heart's content. The hard part will be choosing just four.

We are especially excited about Saturday's keynote speaker, **David Corbett**, on *Beyond the Book: Writing Opportunities in a Multi-Platform Era*. Mr. Corbett is a *New York Times* Notable Author of four critically acclaimed novels and his forthcoming book *Character: The Art and Craft of Human Portrayal in Fiction, Film and TV* will be published by Penguin Books in early 2013.

We are fortunate to live in the San Francisco Bay Area—home to so many talented writers. Click on the Conference Link on the website to find the best of our local presenters, many of whom are Redwood Writers' members. To support community education, we've chosen the beautiful Bertolini Center on the Santa Rosa Junior College campus. The location has all the amenities for success and has enabled us to keep registration costs down and half price for students. The 2012 Next Step Writers Conference will deliver inspiration, education, and promotional how-to ideas all in our own backyard. See you there!

**Editor's Note:** Elaine Webster has written one of three articles by our three new Redwood Writers Vice Presidents. Arlene Miller will write the article for the March issue of *The Redwood Writer*. Frances Caballo wrote the VP's message for January. The three month series of articles take the place of Linda Reid's articles as President of the Redwood Writers.—**Robin Moore**



## Redwood Writers Meeting Feb. 12th

At its Sunday, February 12 general meeting, Redwood Writers presents **Tanya Egan Gibson**, Pushcart Prize-nominated writer and author of the novel "How to Buy a Love of Reading." She will speak on the topic "Building a Vibrant Fictional World." The general meeting is held from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., but come early – sign-in starts at 2:30 p.m., and other writers will be on hand to network, showcase their books, and share information about the club. Fees of \$5 for members and \$8 for nonmembers are asked to help cover the room rental and refreshments. The meeting is held in the Empire Room at the Flamingo Hotel, 2777 Fourth St., Santa Rosa, 95405, (707) 523-4745. For more details, go to [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org).

—Michelle Wing, RW Board Member

Program:

### "Building A Vibrant Fictional World"

Who wants to hang out someplace boring? Not you. And not your readers, either. Yet often while we worry about making our characters exciting and our plots clever, we relegate setting to backdrop—something to be decorated after the major story work is done. The result can be a story in which everything feels a bit disconnected, unreal.

Envisioning the "world" of your fiction early and thoroughly, on the other hand, allows setting to shape your characters and propel them into action. So how *do* you build a world that is unique yet believable, exciting yet grounded? Learn the various ways you can get the details of places right (even without a travel budget), how to make your world exciting, and how to use your world to strengthen both plot and characterization.

Bio:

Tanya Egan Gibson is the author of the novel *How To Buy a Love of Reading*, which was published by Dutton in May 2009, has been translated into Italian and Spanish, and had its paperback release by Plume in July 2010. Her short fiction has been published in *Carve* magazine, where it was nominated for a Pushcart Prize; her short fiction for young adults has been published in *Cicada*. She has written several articles about world building and the craft of fiction for *The Writer*. Her work has appeared in the anthology *Milk & Ink: A Mosaic of Motherhood*, and is forthcoming in *Parents* magazine.

Her current novel-in-progress, *Land*, takes place in an underwater-themed amusement park called Mertopia, where people of all ages come to relive (or live out) the heady, breathless angst of adolescence, dressing as the teenage Mermaids and Mermen from a popular movie series and riding through attractions where they become stars of these stories.

Tanya is Vice President/Program Chair of the Marin Branch of California Writers Club, a member of Women's National Book Association, and an alumna of Squaw Valley Community of Writers. She belongs to The Tuesday Night Writers, a collective of Bay Area writers who produce the reading series "Pints & Prose." She holds a BA from Cornell University and an MA from University of Washington.

She would love if you visited her interactive website, <http://www.howtobuyaloveofreading.com>, and shared a story about how reading changed your life.



## REDWOOD SALON FEBRUARY 29

Redwood Writers Presents: "The Year of Leaping," February Salon!

- \* Leap into presenting your work!
- \* Leap into our writing community!
- \* Leap into a friendly and supportive setting!

To be held on **Wednesday, Feb. 29** from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. in Santa Rosa. All members and their guests are welcome. Readings are for up to five minutes.

RSVP: attendance, directions, and arrangements for our potluck dinner, contact Sher Gamard: [gward@redshift.com](mailto:gward@redshift.com)

# REDWOOD WRITERS SOCO COFFEE READINGS

Saturday, February 25th, 6-8 PM

Soco Coffee, 1015 4th Street (at Brookwood Dr.\*), Santa Rosa  
Arrive at 5:30 to sign up for Open Mic readings. 1st come, 1st served - Reading time approximately 3 min.

## Featured Readers: Poets Toni Wilkes and Gregory Randall

Join us for camaraderie, coffee, & literary delights. Each month features special featured readers, after which there will be intermission & open-mic.

Come & read your work to a supportive audience.

Enjoy Redwood Writers' new sound system.

The first SOCO event drew over 50 people.

Please support the venue with the purchase of a beverage or snack.

Don't miss this wonderful event!

For details visit our website: <http://redwoodwriters.org/>

FMI: Abby Bogomolny: [house@bbbooks.com](mailto:house@bbbooks.com)

(\*Easy driving directions from 101 freeway to SoCo Coffee: Take College Ave., going east. Go straight through intersection with Brookwood Dr. Go one (short) block and turn right on Chinn St. Go 2 blocks, SoCo will be on your right. Off street parking is available. There's plenty of parking on Chinn St.)



Susanna Solomon read at a previous RW SoCo Coffee Open Mic.



Audience enjoying a SoCo Coffee Open Mic reading.

## Don't Be Late!

### 2012 Vintage Voices: Call of the Wild

Submission Dates: January 1, 2012 to March 1, 2012

We are anxiously awaiting your submissions of prose and poetry! **Deadline is March 1** absolutely, so don't be late! Also, we are in need of editors to work with our writers! We may also need a proofreader or two later on in the process. Please submit your pieces and offer up your editing expertise at [anthology@redwoodwriters.org](mailto:anthology@redwoodwriters.org).

Thank you!—Arlene Miller, 2012 Anthology Editor, RW Vice President



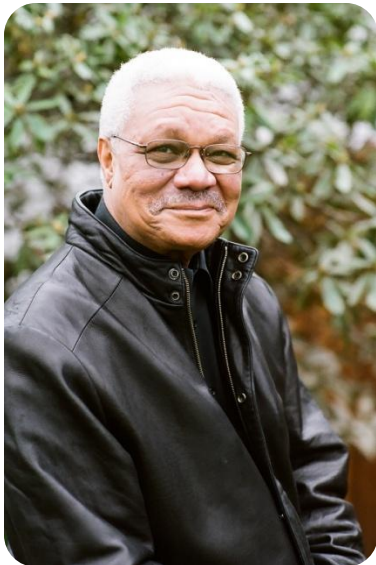
## Next Step Writers Conference



Exciting news! Our local Redwood Writers branch of the CWC is offering a one day writer's conference on **Saturday, April 28** at the beautiful new Santa Rosa Junior College Bertolini student center. The four tracks will be Craft, Genre, Publishing and Marketing. A poetry night, including dinner, is planned for the evening of **Friday, April 27**. Details and sign up information can be found on the club website <http://redwoodwriters.org/conference/registration/>

Whether you're a beginner or published author, seldom will you find so much local information about your craft. This is not an event to miss. Get the early bird price and save \$30 when you register before March 15. Read about a few of the conference speakers over the next few pages of this newsletter.

—Charles Markee, *Otherworld Tales: Irish the Demon Slayer* available as a paperback from Amazon or an ebook. For links to all platforms go to [www.charlesmarkee.com](http://www.charlesmarkee.com)



## Al Young: Reflections of Poetry

—Juanita J. Martin

When asked why he writes poetry, **Al Young**, keynote speaker of Redwood Writers Poetry Night 2012 responded this way. “I noticed that the surest poetry—to my ear and imagination anyway—blooms and blossoms in private space. While we can trace this impulse to make poetry all the way back to babyhood, all the way back to the ancient grasp and uses of poetry, we want to somehow own and control it. Poetry belongs to no one and to everyone. “

Young said, “A poem conjures up or sings a world into existence, then lets us groan or sigh or shout about it. For me, a great poem arrests me, body and soul at once. Such poems are cast in a physically-charged language that paints and sculpts.”

Al feels that poems don’t take on a life of their own until they are read and heard. Although Young has written many poems, his most vivid and lasting poetic journeys remains spiritual.

Young, a multi-talented poet and former California State poet laureate, has studied some of the most noted poets in the world, including Melvin B. Tolson, Bob Kaufman, T.S. Eliot, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Dylan Thomas and numerous others.

Young is working on a zigzag narrative that in part looks at what triggered particular poems; a slowed-down version of the kinds of stand-up prefaces to which many poets “treat” their audiences before they deliver the actual poem..

Young’s latest work is *Jazz Idiom: The Jazz Photograph of Charles L. Robinson* (Heyday Books, 2008) and *Something about the Blues: An Unlikely Collection of Poetry* (Sourcebooks, 2007). In *Something about the Blues*, Young gathers his music-triggered poems along with an audio CD.

Al Young has taken us into the depths of poetry from various angles of exploration. What’s the next step for the prolific writer, speaker, entertainer and teacher? Al wants to pen a novella or memoir in verse. Read more about Al Young at [www.alyoung.org](http://www.alyoung.org)

Although this is Al Young’s second time as Poetry Night’s keynote speaker, his words continue to inspire, influence and resonate. Many have said they look forward to hearing his keynote address. **Poetry Night, Friday, April 27**, will be held at the Flamingo Hotel, 2277 Fourth St, Santa Rosa, from 6:15 pm -9:30 pm. Poetry Night 2012 will be filled with words of wisdom and poetry from another poet laureate, **Juanita J. Martin, 1<sup>st</sup>** Poet Laureate of Fairfield. Juanita will serve as emcee for the evening. She is an exciting speaker in her own right and will not disappoint. Martin will present Young with the latest anthology of Redwood Writers. She will also surprise him with an original spoken word piece called *Jazz Seduction*. You do not want to miss out on Poetry Night. Register today online at [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org) or pick up registration forms at the next general meeting. —**Juanita J. Martin**

### Conference Poetry Contest

Send us your “Poetic Journey” submissions soon! The deadline for the 2012 Poetry Contest in conjunction with the “Next Steps” Writers Conference is March 5<sup>th</sup>. Attend “Poetry Night” April 27<sup>th</sup> and hear our keynote speaker, Al Young. See who wins prizes: \$100.00 for 1<sup>st</sup> prize, \$50.00 for 2<sup>nd</sup> and \$25.00 for 3rd. Submit up to 3 poems for \$8.00 for members and \$10.00 for non-members. Send us your best. Go to [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org) for complete guidelines and to enter. —**Barbara Toboni**, RW Poetry Contest Chair

## Next Step Writers Conference Session Speakers

**Jody Gehrman**, YA novelist & teacher extraordinaire

—by **Jeanne Jusaitis**

Prior to writing this article, I only knew of Jody Gehrman as a respected author of YA books such as her *Triple Shot Betty* novels, set in Sonoma County, and her new *Babe in Boyland*. Of *Triple Shot Betty*, School Library Journal said: "this book comes infused with smart skater-chick-barista attitude, a plot nod to *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and, of course, a jolt of caffeine." Excellent, hilarious, strong characterization, and realistic dialogue are but a few of the superlatives that reviewers have used to describe Jody's YA writing. But, in doing a little research, I found more. She also has several adult chick-lit books, some with Sonoma County settings that you'll recognize.

Jody doesn't stop at being a successful YA author. She's been a travel writer, a singer-songwriter, an actress and an award-winning playwright with numerous plays that have been produced across the United States.

An MA in English and a Masters in Professional Writing from the University of Southern California are but a few of Jody's credentials. She currently teaches writing at Mendocino College. We are so lucky to snag Jody as a presenter at our April "Next Steps" conference. You can read more about Jody and her writing at [www.jodygehrman.com](http://www.jodygehrman.com).



## **Geri Spieler – Facts for Fiction**

—By **Linda Loveland Reid**

"The most exciting thing about teaching," Geri Spieler says, "is in giving students that *Ah Ha!* helping them to that *Wow* place where they can see how much value and fun there is in research." Spieler, a journalist and investigative reporter now working at Stanford, wants to help writers do research to make their details sing. "Readers will go anywhere with you if they trust your facts."

A researcher long before the entrance of the Internet, Spieler points out that in today's world, 60% of what you need is on-line; however, much of it is hidden. She wants to share with writers how to locate information that is not only more accurate than what's available on the surface, but more interesting.

Spierer explains that the Net is her gateway to the "deep web." How do you know if you can trust what you find? She teaches "string research," how to get beyond the junk, into the real sources. "People are taking control of their writing," Spieler says, "which is terrific but this also means they need to be even more careful. A well-researched book with correct facts shows respect for your readers."

As to complaints that research can be a dry activity, Spieler answers a resounding, "No! It's fun! Everybody likes a good mystery. It's shocking what you can find out." And, she explains, the more you find out about a subject, the more you realize, wow, I never thought about that in this way before. Research expands your mind and, consequently, your story."

Spierer's most exciting writing experience was with creative non-fiction, when she wrote a factual story into a novel, Capote style. First, she attended creative writing classes. Her editor warned, "You can make up nothing!" Her book included FBI and police records and is currently in universities as an example of good research—on how to do solid work.

Geri Spieler will be presenting a session at the Redwood Writers April 28 Conference in Santa Rosa, California: *Facts for Fiction Writers—Research Secrets Everyone Should Know*.

### **Conference Prose Contest**

"Odyssey." That's the theme of the Conference Prose Contest, and you are invited to submit up to three written pieces by the March 5<sup>th</sup> deadline. Each entry is \$8 for CWC members and \$10 for non-members. You must be registered for the conference to enter the Prose Contest. Three prizes of \$100, \$50, and \$25 will be awarded during the final wrap-up session beginning at 4:30 p.m. when all breakout classes are finished. What is prose? For this contest, anything that's not poetry: flash fiction, memoir, essay, short story, or non-fiction. For the form and guidelines, please see the Conferences pages of our website [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org). Contact chair Kathy Rueve, [krueve@sonic.net](mailto:krueve@sonic.net) if you have questions.

## Craft Support meetings Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 —Thonie Hevron

What an incredible group of people. Redwood Writers members have done it again! Months ago, President Linda Loveland Reid had an idea to start genre groups before the Redwood Writers General Meeting. Over the holidays, we exchanged a few emails, came up with some thoughts and decided to meet with any interested parties on January 8<sup>th</sup> before the General Meeting.

The meeting time rolled around and two people showed up. *Holy moly*, I thought. *This is going nowhere fast*. Within the next 5-10 minutes we had a dozen people. Okay, so writers aren't known for punctuality.

We started with a round-table on what each member wanted from the group. With some variations, the resounding answer was—**craft support**—as in "**conversations**". We discussed meetings for techniques to enhance our writing as well as platform building and generally everyone agreed they could use help with this, too. However, the idea of *small groups to meet, talk over ideas that pertain to the writing life, offer support and resources* was the winner.

So here's what I'm thinking: twelve people is too many for a discussion group so we'll split into two. We'll meet in the Empire Room at the Flamingo on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. I want to designate a moderator for each group—someone who will keep the discussion moving forward and an eye on the time. This will be voluntary but I'd like to rotate the position.

The rules will be simple:

- Disagree kindly
- Wait your turn to speak
- Observe time constraints

Some seriously GOOD suggestions were offered and I want to memorialize them so we can come back to them as time allows (or dictates) later.

- Meeting more often than once a month—off site, probably during the day, but flexible
- Topic/education focused groups-technology/platform building is a big issue that many would like more training in
- Critique groups: both genre specific and general. I would only act as a facilitator to get people together. Group members need to decide their own terms. Please email me at [thonieh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thonieh@sbcglobal.net) if you are interested in finding a group
- Resources—I will be taking this on. Our group is so talented that we should be able to find help for whatever ails the writer in need. Bear in mind, many of our members make their living at technology, social media, editing, etc. Discuss fees before making commitments with them so both of you know what to expect
- Mentoring wasn't mentioned but I thought we could look at this for writers who have specific issues, for example: a member who doesn't finish anything she starts. It wouldn't take too much effort to call, email, or Facebook her to keep her on a pre-determined track

I'll be emailing a copy of this to Redwood Writers members on the list serve. I want everyone to see the fruits of our labors. Someone might see something here that intrigues them. We can always take more members! Our muses are busy but sometimes they need a little nudge in the right direction. So stand by for truly dynamic members who want to share and motivate each other.

Inspiration is in the air!—**Thonie Hevron**, RW Secretary and Author of *Probable Cause* [www.thoniehevron.com](http://www.thoniehevron.com)  
<http://wordpress.thoniehevron.com/>



### THE PLAY'S THE THING!

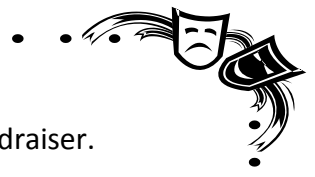
Submit your 10-minute play by Feb 29.

Winners awarded at April Membership Meeting.

Your winning play "produced" on June 29/30 at RW's Play Festival Fundraiser.

Last year 150 people saw the winning plays.

Don't miss out on this opportunity! **See details at end of this newsletter.**





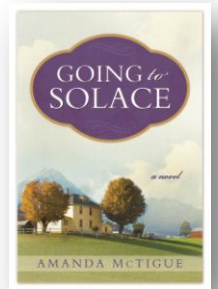
## Member in the Spotlight: Amanda McTigue

—By Waights Taylor Jr.

"I don't see language, I hear it." That's how Amanda McTigue describes the way writing comes to her. This multi-talented North Carolina native, who comes to us via Yale University, is an author, poet, playwright, actress, theatrical producer, lyricist and librettist. The published author of a number of children's books, she has written several operas in collaboration with Jeff Langley, Director of the School of Performing Arts at Sonoma State University. The two are now composing an original consecration ceremony for the opening of Sonoma County's elegant new concert hall at the Green Music Center in September 2012.

Somehow, within the demands of all these various artistic pursuits, she has found time to write her first novel to be released in May 2012 by Harper Davis Publishers. *Going to Solace* is set in her native North Carolina in 1989 and tells a multi-faceted, multi-character story.

"God spare you the need, but should one of your loved ones take sick—mortal sick—and need a place from which to die, you could do worse than Solace." With that poetic and descriptive sentence in the language of the North Carolina hill people, McTigue takes the reader on a six-day period up to and including Thanksgiving Day, as three families struggle with loved ones facing life-ending illnesses. August Early, a retired trucker who has never set foot in a hospital, has to see to his wife's placement in a hospice facility called Solace, while he worries about the care of his twin granddaughters orphaned when his only daughter died of a drug overdose. Maggie Dulé, now living in California, breaks a vow never to return to her North Carolina home when her mother, a woman she has hated for years, becomes deathly ill. Cadence Greevey, a sweet fourteen-year-old girl who unfortunately operates with the mind of a much younger child, passes unnoticed by all around her as she tries to understand and cope with her mother's placement at Solace leaving her at home alone. Cadence's estranged father, Bobby O. Greevey, is trying to get home to help his daughter when.... Enough, you just gotta read the book to watch, feel, laugh, cry, and empathize with all these fabulous characters as you get to know them and the others trying to help them cope with life's great ending moment.



McTigue describes her book as a set of crossroads: the crossing from life to death; the intersections of people's lives; and the crossing of cultures and races as the world has become more global. If you think this book is about race (read black and white) and stereotypical Southerners, you are in for a big surprise. You will also love the sparse, but precise use of the North Carolina hill country dialect—it's delightful and literate.

While some may see this book as a "woman's novel," McTigue will turn your head when she says, "No, I think it could just as easily be called a 'war novel' or 'science-fiction novel.'" Think about that for a while.

**New Members** Please welcome the following new members: **Cheryl Berry, Dianna L. Grayer, Christina Haas, Lana Marlow, Heidi Sue Roth, David Sandri, Dave Seter, George Sidel** and **Bernhold Rankenburg**.  
—Julie A. Winrich, RW Membership Chair

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We Support Redwood Writers

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### The Redwood Writer

Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month

P.O. Box 4687

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Email submissions to: [editor@redwoodwriters.org](mailto:editor@redwoodwriters.org)

Editor: **Robin Moore**

Acquisitions Editor: **Juanita J. Martin**

Copy Editor: **Arlene Miller**

Copy Editor: **Farrell Winter**

# Poetry Place

## Reclaiming the Rose

—Michelle Wing

I will send you no valentine, no easy apology,  
no tame cliché of pre-packaged romance,  
and never those dozen long-stemmed corpses  
morgue-cold and wrapped in plastic.

The rose I give is an explosion,  
scarlet fever rises up from the stem,  
evokes visions  
and shivering.

This blood-spattered bush cries out  
in the throes of transformation.  
Here is wild passion, unbound  
leaf by leaf.

## New Windows

—Lynn Millar

Less traffic noise,  
less heat loss out,  
less cold in,  
yet no flying geese sounds

## Hugging You

—Barbara Toboni

is like diving  
into an envelope

stationery  
folded neatly in thirds  
words tucked in

wrapped in ribbon  
for safe-keeping



**Editor's Note:** Poetry Place is now a regular feature in the newsletter. Each month a poem or two will be selected to be printed in the newsletter. Poems will be chosen based on the space available. Send

one poem per person. Use 12 point Times New Roman font.

Shorter poems work best.

**Send poems as a Word document** and email to:

**Juanita J. Martin**, Acquisitions

Editor [freelance@jmartinpoetwriter.com](mailto:freelance@jmartinpoetwriter.com) \*\*Note:

Poems need to be sent by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to be included in the following month's issue.

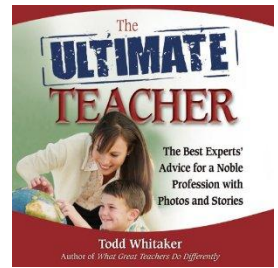
## Member News



John J. Lesjack, is pleased to announce he has two stories in *The Ultimate Teacher*. One story comes from his experiences at Camp Ozanam in 1951. The other came out of his experiences as a classroom teacher.

He doesn't get paid any more money for them, but will have the honor of having them read, and available on audio. He is delighted to announce that *The Ultimate Teacher: The Best Experts' Advice for a Noble Profession* is now available as an audiobook from Audible.com [here](#)

—John J. Lesjack



I have news to share. Sally Baker, the local watercolor artist, who is currently exhibiting her work in Graton Gallery in Graton, CA, has chosen my short story, "Cherries for Bidu," to accompany a piece of her artwork entitled "Cherries Jubilee." A reading was held in Graton Gallery on Dec. 11 for Sally's exhibit entitled "A Picture Is Worth 500 Words—or Less." (I had found out about the contest through RW, so thank you!)

Also, I submitted a short story to the Newbie Writers competition last December (also posted by RW!) and received news from Damien of Newbie Writers that my story won. The title is "My Education on Other Beings." Thank you so much to Redwood Writers for the opportunities!—Renelaine Bontol



**Karen Batchelor** has a short story in the latest issue of the online journal, *Diverse Voices Quarterly*. "Friday Night Happy Meals," is in volume 11-12.

[www.diversevoicesquarterly.com](http://www.diversevoicesquarterly.com)

There is a place for comments on the home page, if you are willing and so inclined. Many thanks to all readers.



My 25-minute radio interview is now posted on <http://www.outbeatradio.org>. Click on *December 18, 2011* in "Archives." (To skip the preliminaries, click in the player bar until you reach seven minutes into the program.) The first part of the interview is about my involvement with the gay community. When Gary Carnivele and I move on to my new book, *Living With the Stranger in Me*, I will put in a plug for my favorite club, Redwood Writers.—(Kathryn) Kay Mehl Miller

Website: <http://www.kaymehlmil.com/>

Author: *Living With the Stranger in Me: An Exploration of Aging*  
*Talking It Over: Understanding Sexual Diversity*



The British journal *Iota* recently accepted two of my poems for publication, and I have poems coming out soon in the *Tule Review*, based in Sacramento, and a beautifully formatted art and poetry magazine called *Labletter*. The e-zine *Otis Nebula* is including my poem "Martini Effect" in its latest embodiment.

I'll be reading from my new book, *Swimming the Eel*, at the Sacramento Poetry Center on Monday, January 23rd at 7:30 with the East Bay poet Judy Wells. In February, I have three readings: Notre Dame Namur University, Rebound Books, and Book Passage in Corte Madera. My website, [www.zararaab.com](http://www.zararaab.com), has details.—Zara Raab



A new Redwood Writers member, **Dave Seter**, recently published three poems, "If Only," "The Professionals," and "Cornflowers" in the online journal *Blast Furnace* (Volume 1, Issue 4), which can be found at

<http://www.blastfurnacepress.com/2011/12/blast-furnace-volume-1-issue-4-autumn.html>

His poem "Survivor" just appeared in print in the Winter/Spring 2012 issue of *Appalachia*, the nation's longest running journal of mountaineering and conservation. [www.daveseter.com](http://www.daveseter.com)



Members of our critique group, **WE Writers of Napa Valley**, are organizing another open mic reading at Copperfield's in Napa, **Feb. 5th** from 2-4:00 p.m. First signed in, first to read. Our featured reader is poet Leonore Wilson, author of "Western Solstice." We hope to see you there.—**Patsy Ann Taylor**  
(L.-R:) **Amber Lea Starfire, Patsy Taylor & Barbara Toboni**



I was recently published in *Tiny Lights* holiday edition of the online quarterly literary journal. Interested readers can find my short story "Unfinished Dream," at *Lights Online*, in the 26th Flash section of *Tiny Lights*.—**Patrice Garrett** communications ink/wordwranglingwoman



On Friday, **December 16th**, 2011, four of my critique group members were featured at a Copperfield's Meet and Greet event in Napa. All of us had books or chapbooks for sale and enjoyed the face-to-face with people as they shopped.  
—**Patsy Ann Taylor**  
(L. – R:) **Amber Lea Starfire, Patsy Taylor, Barbara Moehring, & Barbara Toboni**



**Natasha Yim** has just finalized a contract with Charlesbridge Publishing via her agent Karen Grecnik of Red Fox Literary Agency for her next picture book, *Goldy Luck and the Three Chans*, a multi-cultural twist on the Goldilocks story. Publication is slated for January 2014. [www.natashayim.com](http://www.natashayim.com)  
[www.natashayim.blogspot.com](http://www.natashayim.blogspot.com)



**Persia Woolley** was one of three members who read from their works in progress (WIP) at the regional meeting of the Historical Novel Society in Berkeley on Saturday, January 14. There were 35 members present for the luncheon at the Berkeley City Club, a building designed by Julia Morgan and built in 1929. Also reading were Liz Allenby, a beginner who is working on a book composed of Gold Rush stories, and Cecelia Holland, a well-established and very powerful writer, who lives like a hermit in Humboldt County. Her submission was a short-story so well crafted, you knew immediately it was Eleanor of Aquitaine speaking, though no names were mentioned until the end of the first page. Persia read the first seven pages of her novel *Ophelia's Story*, which is going through final tweaking.



RW Member and sci-fi author **Ann Wilkes** will be interviewed on the Feb 6, 2012 Genre Traveler podcast. You can hear it by clicking on a link at the Genre Traveler <http://www.thegenretraveler.com> site. Carma Spence talks with Ann about writing science fiction. [www.annwilkes.com](http://www.annwilkes.com)

My space opera, *Awesome Lavratt*, is now also available for iPhone/iPad, Android, and Kindle. Get sci-fi news, interviews, and reviews at [Science Fiction and Other ODDysseys](http://www.sciencefictionandotheroddisseys.com).



My story "Night Visions" was published in the Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Point Reyes Light*.  
—**Susanna Solomon**

# ARE WE THERE YET?

—©2011 by Mike Foley

Back when I was in high school, one of my English teachers read my term paper and told me that it wasn't consistent.

"It was fine until you got close to the end," she told me. "Then it was obvious that you just wanted to be finished."

On some level I understood what she meant, but I didn't REALLY get it until many years later when I began working as an editor. And then I started seeing exactly what she was talking about.

As human beings, we often grow weary of a project and become anxious to finish. And that's when the project can suffer. This problem is more common for writers who are working on novels or nonfiction books. It's far easier to grow tired of a book after working on it for several months (or even years). And then we get that old "Are we there yet?" feeling that we used to have as kids on long road trips.

Of course you're not there yet. But you so badly want to be. And so you rush things, creating an ending as quickly as you can. I've edited many books that were simply excellent until the last 50-75 pages. Then things begin falling apart. The narrative isn't as focused or crisp, the dialogue no longer sounds real or fits the characters, the viewpoint is lost in certain sections, or even worse, the story no longer makes sense. At times, it doesn't even feel as if the same author wrote that section.

So how can you avoid this drop in quality at the end of your novel or nonfiction book? By following these suggestions:

- 1. Stop**—When you estimate that you have about 75 pages left, it's time to stop. Take a couple of days off. Instead of working in your usual manner, don't do any writing on the story. Read back over certain sections that you think are strong, sections that you're proud of. Consider everything that you've done so far, and also consider what's left to do. Get those general ideas solidly in your mind.
- 2. Outline**—Even if you don't use a detailed outline to write (I certainly don't), it's critical to use at least a simple outline of the last few pages or chapters. In fiction, you'll need to wrap up the plots and subplots and show growth in the characters. In nonfiction, you'll need to drive home your main points and remind readers what they have gained/learned by reading your book. Jot down some quick outline notes and create a map of how you will do these things.
- 3. Don't Rush**—When you get back to the writing, begin by cutting your goals in half. If you normally write six pages in a typical writing session, set your new goal at three pages. If you go over that, fine. But allow yourself the extra time to walk away after you've reached the shorter goal. Don't allow yourself to rush through the ending, creating something that feels forced. Take it slowly and keep the writing focused.
- 4. Reread**—When you've finished the book, don't begin editing until you've reread that closing section. You don't have to make changes at this time, just read it and make a note of any weakness you see. Then when you begin your rewrite, you'll have a deeper feel for this very important section of the book.

How can you be sure you've done it well? That's where your writer friends come in. Allow them to read your book or even just the ending portion. Ask for their response and their suggestions. Incorporate those that make sense to you, then drop the rest. At that point, you can be fairly confident that you've kept the writing strong throughout that ending section.

The main thing to remember here is that you shouldn't rush things, no matter how badly you want to be finished. It's far more important to get it right, than to be finished with the project. You'll be glad that you took your time and I think you'll be much happier with the result.

Best of luck with all your writing.

**Mike Foley** is former editor of *Dream Merchant Magazine* and author of more than 750 published stories and articles. He also teaches fiction and nonfiction writing in the extension program at UC-Riverside. Since 1986, he has operated the Writer's Review critique service, helping hundreds of aspiring writers improve their fiction and nonfiction projects.

You may contact Mike by writing: [mike@writers-review.com](mailto:mike@writers-review.com)

Mike's website <http://www.writers-review.com/>

**Note:** This article was first published in *Fresh Ink*, the newsletter for the **Inland Empire branch of the CWC**. Thank you, Mike, for permission to include your article in *The Redwood Writer*. —**Robin Moore**, Editor

# SIGNS THAT 2012 IS NOT GOING TO BE YOUR YEAR

—by Sharon Hamilton

Here's a tongue-in-cheek look at a writer's life.—**Robin Moore**, Editor



## OH GOD! NOT ANOTHER YEAR OF RESOLUTIONS!

Calgon, take me away. You'd think that after all the adult years I've had making resolutions, only to break them by lunchtime of the first day of the year, I'd learn. I used to have a friend who would call me on the 1st, petrified she couldn't duplicate the success she'd had the previous year. She and I would both somehow muddle through and do more, even though we shared a January full of white knuckles, mostly punching our own bodies (figuratively).

This lady was hard to compete with in book sales (thankfully she lived clear across the United States), or in attitude. I was beating her on the chest front until she wound up with cancer, and voila, she now outclasses me! She told the surgeon she wanted boobs so big she would never sink again. He did her proud. She laughingly told me it was sure a heck of a way to beat me once and for all. I'm at a distinct disadvantage, in that I'm now a 44 long, while she will permanently look like Barbie, even lying down. I can be so cruel, I know.

But one of the things I've decided to do was not take things so seriously this year. Listen more and talk less. Find other people's parades and get in line with the horns, the hat and the confetti. Don't toot my own horn too much.

So, in keeping with this theme, here's my top 10 reasons why 2012 *won't* be your year to shine:

10. Who decided the race had to start on New Year's Day anyway? You overslept, had pancakes for breakfast at 1:00 p.m. and the dog peed in the living room because he couldn't wait. And you stepped in it.
9. You went to the Apple Store to upgrade your Mac so you could download some new software, and the young salesperson said she'd not seen one of *those* kinds of computers—ever!
8. A woman in your husband's office said you inspired her to write. She thought she could do a way better job of it than you did.
7. Your father asked you when you were going to get a real job.
6. Your best friend said she liked your book, couldn't put it down, but when you asked her what parts she liked the best she said she couldn't remember.
5. Your \$26.00 royalty from Amazon bounced.
4. You bought a fellow author's novella for .99 and *your* ATM transaction bounced, costing you a \$25.00 fee from Amazon and a \$35.00 fee from your bank.
3. Your book about angles should have been proofed better by your editor angel.
2. Your Letter to the Editor at your local paper was rejected because it wasn't written well enough.
1. Your erotica short was listed under the children's section at Amazon, since you were writing about sex toys.

Happy New Year one and all. May we laugh at all the silly little things that will happen to all of us this year, and next, and next and next and so forth. (I know the rule of 3 but decided to break it—another one of my resolutions). When our muse is happy, the whole world is our oyster. Oysters are good for our sex lives, they say.

—**Sharon Hamilton**, Redwood Writers member

*Life is one fool thing after another.*

*Love is two fool things after each other.*

[Sharon's Blog](#) \*\* [Sharon's Website](#) \*\*

[Heavenly Lover](#) \*\* [Underworld Lover](#) \*\* [Honeymoon Bite](#)

available now at Amazon/B&N

## *Write by the Sea in Samos, Greece*

Session I: June 1-8, 2012

Session II: June 9-15, 2012

This June, **Patricia V. Davis** will be hosting two one-week long writing workshops on the glorious island of **Samos** in Greece.

Check Patricia's website for additional

information. [www.patriciavdavis.com](http://www.patriciavdavis.com)

## Announcements

Are you behind time,  
mired in time,  
or just thinking about time?

Let's think about it together.

—**Paul Greenberg**, Poet & RW Member

[www.TourofTimeThroughTime.com](http://www.TourofTimeThroughTime.com)



### Jumpstart with Marlene Cullen:

A workshop where creative sparks are used for jumping-off points to inspire writing. \$15 per workshop.

**Tuesday mornings:** 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Petaluma Community Center. **February 7, 14, 21 and 28.**

**Tuesday evenings:** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Copperfield's, Petaluma. **February 7, 14, 21 and 28.**

**Jumpstart Online:** Weekly writing prompts emailed to you. \$10 for one month of writing prompts and commentary.

Details at: [www.thewritespot.us](http://www.thewritespot.us) Contact Marlene: [mcullen@comcast.net](mailto:mcullen@comcast.net)

## Writers Forum of Petaluma proudly presents Dave Pokorny

**February 16, 2012** 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Petaluma Community Center, 320 No. McDowell Blvd. Petaluma

\$15 at the door

### Writing Comedy, What's So Funny?

**Dave Pokorny** just finished a successful three week run at **The Glaser Center**, where he presented his first one-man show, *Based On A True Story*, "the very funny show nicely demonstrates Pokorny's skill as a writer... Mashing up hilarious tales of life on the road with outrageously arcane automotive laws—Pokorny is engaging and comfortable on stage, slipping in and out of character as he bounces his narrative back and forth like a rubber ball. Based on a True Story is sweet, cleverly done, and even in its most serious moments, is always honestly and humanly funny," says David Templeton, Second Row Center, KRCB radio.

**Dave Pokorny** the creator and host of the award winning monthly story telling show *West Side Stories* was able to quit his "day job," and make his living as a stand-up comic touring the western half of the U.S. for a decade, opening up for such talents as Jim Carrey and Ellen DeGeneres. After becoming the house emcee at San Francisco's #1 comedy club and a regular on the Vegas strip he gave it all up to pursue a lucrative career as a stay-at-home dad. Seven macaroni & cheese filled years later he returns to the stage.

—Submitted by **Marlene Cullen** [www.thewritespot.us](http://www.thewritespot.us)

## Come to Dine With Local Authors:

Gaia's Garden, 1899 Mendocino Ave. Santa Rosa. **Monday, Feb. 13** 6 p.m.

Six authors will read from their books:

*Beautiful Evil* by Robbi Sommer Bryant

*Matrix Meditations* by Victor and Kooch N. Daniels

*The Art and Magic of Palmistry* by Kooch Daniels

*The High Country* by Richard Perce, DMV

*Don't Write Like You Talk* by Catherine Bramkamp

*Urban Homesteading* by Rachel Kaplan and K. Ruby Blume



Please email [info@jeaneslone.com](mailto:info@jeaneslone.com) or call Gaia's at 544-2491 if you wish to make reservations with a specific author.



## Speaker at Book Passage, Marin

Alice B. Acheson will be returning to **Book Passage** to teach three workshops. Writers can register via [bpclasses@bookpassage.com](mailto:bpclasses@bookpassage.com) or Leslie Berkler at 415/927-0960. The details are:

**Friday, March 2, 2012** — 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

"The Greatest Marketing Tool" (on the verbal pitch)—The pre-class assignment is to write a 30-second pitch. (Instructions will be received upon registration.) You'll leave the workshop with tools to create a well-honed, ever-useful, selling description.

**Friday, March 2, 2012** — 2:00-5:00

"Publishing Choices: Print-on-Demand, Self-Publishing, Traditional Publisher"—Learn the advantages/pitfalls of each type of publication from an instructor who draws on decades of working with all three publishing choices.

**Saturday, March 3, 2012** (10:00-5:00) and **Sunday, March 4, 2012** (10:00-1:00)

"What's Next?" -- Publishing has made a quantum shift. Whether self-publishing, using print-on-demand or the traditional publisher, how do you allot time, energy, and money to the marketing tasks and demands of the publishing world? The pre-class assignment: write a query letter (instructions provided upon registration).

**Bio:** Alice Acheson, a Marketing Specialist and Publishing Consultant with decades of experience, works with authors, illustrators and photographers plus large and small publishers. She has edited books, negotiated contracts, and sold subsidiary rights. Her publicity work has been recognized with many *New York Times* bestsellers (four simultaneously) and a *Literary Market Place* Outside Services Award for Advertising, Promotion, and Publicity.

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## From The **CWC** Publicist's Pen: **WRITE RETRO?**

I just got back from CES 2012 in Las Vegas, the annual Consumer Electronics Show dedicated to unveiling the newest in breakthrough technology.

Year after year, we see the results in the tools of our trade. When was the last time you used a typewriter? A mimeograph machine? Carbon paper? Probably rarely if ever after you got your computer. And now PCs seem destined to fall by the wayside. The same applies to writing in general. We blog. We tweet. We publish online. But when was the last time you wrote a Letter to the Editor of your local print newspaper?

Let's not dismiss that particular approach quite yet. It still represents an effective PR strategy. Suppose, for instance, your branch just lost its meeting room. Try penning a Letter to the Editor. Address your dilemma and the larger threat to nonprofits when they can no longer find or afford a place to convene. Include a plug for your branch and its value to the local creative community. In so doing, you promote the CWC while possibly attracting new members and hearing from a house of worship, school or lodge that has a venue for you. Or write about the latest state budget proposal and its impact on libraries. Or the closure of Jack London State Park.

By all means keep blogging, tweeting and publishing online. Invest in solar power for your Kindle or a private cloud. But then go retro with a Letter to the Editor. The response might surprise you.

If you do this and it works, please let me know. Thanks, —**Donna McCrohan Rosenthal**, PR chair for CWC, [pr@calwriters.org](mailto:pr@calwriters.org)

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## YA Workshop at Henry Miller Memorial Library—March 2-4<sup>th</sup> Big Sur Writing Workshops

Greetings from Big Sur! This is Mike, with the [Henry Miller Memorial Library](#). We're a non-profit art space and co-sponsors of the upcoming [Big Sur Writing Workshop](#) for young adult fiction authors.

For the past fourteen years, writers have come to the Big Sur Writing Workshops for an intensive weekend of working on manuscripts with publishing professionals who are dedicated to helping new writers. The workshops are designed for writers (Picture Books - Young Adult) who have a finished or partially finished manuscript that needs critiquing, revisions, editorial help and guidance.

The dates for this spring's writing workshops will be March 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you!

—**Mike Scutari**

**Henry Miller Memorial Library** Workshop home: <http://henrymiller.org/AFW3.html>

<http://www.facebook.com/BigSurWritingWorkshops>

"Success stories": <http://henrymiller.org/AFW3.html#success>



# 10-Minute Play Contest



Join in Redwood Writers 2nd Playwriting Contest!

**The Prize!** Winning plays will be performed at the  
**Redwood Writers Play Festival Fundraiser in June.**

- Open to members of CWC and general public in Sonoma, Marin, Solano, Napa, Mendocino, and Lake Counties
- Deadline February 29 (leap for it!)
- Awards will be presented at April General Meeting

## Submission rules

No special form to fill out. Just follow below:

- Play must be 10-minutes in length
- Play cannot have more than 4 characters
- \$6 per play for CWC members; \$8 non-members
- Maximum of 2 plays per person
- Play cannot have been performed before, anywhere
- Format: 12 point font, Times Roman, single spaced
- On play: name of play (do not print author name)
- On cover letter: name of play, author name, email, phone, and 60 word Bio
- Submit as email or snail mail.
- There is no formal submission form, only these instructions.



### Email Submits

Send to [lindareid100@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lindareid100@sbcglobal.net)

Email submissions must be received by midnight **Feb 29**

Send fees to mailing address below

### Snail Mail Submits

Linda Loveland Reid, 1734 E Cotati Ave, Penngrove, CA 94951

Snail mail submissions must be post marked Feb 29.

Pay submission fee: Use PayPal at [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org).

Or mail check made out to Redwood Writers to snail mail address above.

For more info [www.redwoodwriters.org](http://www.redwoodwriters.org) or [lindareid100@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lindareid100@sbcglobal.net)

**Judges** - To be announced.