

SACRAMENTO WRITER



Third Saturday CWC Meeting

Memoir Saturday

Coming to Sacramento: Saturday, March 16, 2019
Cattlemens Rancho Cordova, 12409 Folsom Blvd.

11 am - 1 pm

Pre-session: 10:15 Talk & Share - Great First
Paragraphs (any genre)

Post-session: 1:15-2:15 Writing Your Page-Turning
Memoir with Dorothy Rice

Featured Luncheon Speaker Sands Hall

Memoirist, Novelist, Essayist, Playwright, Writing Craft
Teacher

Squaw Valley Community of Writers and Franklin & Marshall College
Fictional Strategies Essential to the Memoirist

Sands Hall is known for her fiction, but several years ago she found herself compelled to write about a decade of her life that she'd pretended never happened. The result was her memoir, *FLUNK. START.: Reclaiming My Decade Lost in Scientology* (Counterpoint), which *Library Journal* describes as being "as gripping as any thriller as well as searching and insightful"; and which author Karen Bender describes as "transcendent," calling it "a triumph, a work of great honesty and insight... a necessary book for our time."

As Sands worked on her memoir, she realized that she was relying on tools she'd honed while working on fiction, and in her talk for the California Writers Club Sacramento, she'll discuss a few of these, including ideas about plot and structure, POV (yes! even a memoirist must make decisions about point of view), and that essential aspect of any story, imagined or real: Scene. In her talk, Sands will specifically address how to effectively build scenes that are rooted in memory. Whether you're working on fiction or a memoir, you will learn a lot from this energetic and knowledgeable writer and teacher.

Takeaways:

- Fictional Tools to Hone for Memoir
- Ideas on plot, structure, point of view
- Scene-building rooted in memory

In addition to her recent memoir, *FLUNK. START.*, she is also the author of the novel *Catching Heaven* (Ballantine), a WILLA Award Finalist for Best Contemporary Fiction and a Random House Reader's Circle selection, and a book of essays and writing exercises, *Tools of the Writers Craft*. Her short fiction has appeared in such journals as *Iowa Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, and *New England Review*. She teaches for the Iowa Summer Writing Festival and for the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley, and is an associate teaching professor at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Sands is also a theater artist: actor, director, and playwright. Her play *Fair Use* explores the controversy surrounding Wallace Stegner's use of the journals and letters of 19th century writer and illustrator Mary Hallock Foote in creating his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Angle of Repose*. Also a singer/songwriter, Sands's CD is called *Rustler's Moon*. She lives in Nevada City, California.

Pay online at www.sacramentowriters.org Questions:
sacramentowriters@gmail.com

First Friday Network Meeting
Sigrid Bathen
Magazine Writing:
Then & Now, Print to Digital
Friday, March 1
9-11 AM Coco's, 7887 Madison
Avenue,
Citrus Heights

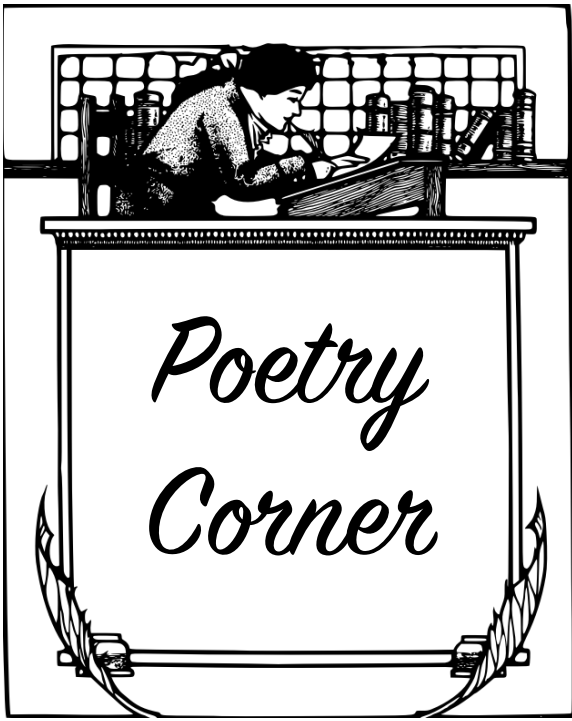


Join us at Coco's on March 1 for an interactive presentation with a writer, editor, and teacher who has decades of experience in writing for a variety of publications and agencies. Sigrid will discuss the changing face of journalistic writing, as lines become blurred among the various forms of journalistic writing (e.g., newspapers, magazines, newsletters) and other types of public-policy and PR writing. She will also introduce us to the many options open to freelancers in the publishing and media world today, and will bring examples of different forms of magazine-writing. Her past experience includes daily news and long-form writing, investigative reporting, commentaries, analysis, columns, short and long profiles, and Q&A. Please take a few moments prior to the meeting to peruse her website and look through her extensive bibliography: www.sigridbathen.com.

Sigrid Bathen is a Sacramento journalist who was a staff writer for the *Sacramento Bee* for 13 years and has written for numerous publications, including the *California Journal*, an award-winning magazine about politics and government, where she was senior editor. Her work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Capitol Weekly*, *California Lawyer*, the *American Lawyer Newspapers*, *California Medicine*, *California Republic*, the *Sacramento Business Journal*, *Comstock's Magazine*, the *Sacramento (and Chico) News & Review* and *Sacramento Magazine*, where she was co-managing editor and senior writer. She is a contributing writer for online healthcare media published by the *California Health Care Foundation*. She has been an adjunct professor of journalism and communications at California State University, Sacramento, since 1988.

She has served as the communications director for three state agencies. She has also taught journalism at California State University, Chico, and in the Los Rios Community College District. In 2013, she was honored by the Sacramento Press Club with a scholarship in her name. Her writing has won many awards, including several for outstanding contributions to public understanding of mental health. She was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for her *Bee* coverage of conditions in Stockton State Hospital. She was the first chair and co-founder of the Women's Caucus of the Sacramento Newspaper Guild and was the first president of Sacramento Women in the Media. Her Master's thesis, "The Girls on the Bus," about women political reporters, has been excerpted in several magazines and is available in the CSUS Library and on her website.

www.sigridbathen.com twitter: @sigridbathen



This month, we are featuring a poem written by one of our CWC Sacramento members, Dr. Ray Blain. Ray and the editors would like to remind everyone that April is National Poetry Month. We will be celebrating Poem in Your Pocket Day (April 17 or thereabouts) during the Early Bird Talk & Share at the April 20 luncheon meeting. Please bring original poems to share, and consider these words from Tracy K. Smith, Poet Laureate of the United States:

This is why I love poems: they invite me to sit down and listen to a voice speaking thoughtfully and passionately about what it feels like to be alive. Usually the someone doing the talking—the poem's speaker—is a person I'd never get the chance to meet were it not for the poem. Because the distance between us is too great. Or because we are too unlike one another to ever feel this at ease face-to-face. Or maybe because the person talking to me never actually existed as anything other than a figment of a poet's imagination, a character invented for reasons I may not ever know. Even when that someone is the real-life poet speaking of things that have actually happened, there is something different—some new strength, vulnerability, or authority—that the poem fosters. This is why I love poems: they require me to sit still, listen deeply, and imagine putting myself in someone else's unfamiliar shoes. The world I return to when the poem is over seems fuller and more comprehensible as a result.

From "Introduction", American Journal: Fifty Poems for Our Time

A Goal We All Should Seek

By Raymond Leo Blain, M.D.

To be or not to be
The best that we can be,
A goal we all should seek.
There is always such a choice
Encouraged by a voice inside
To help us choose which way to go,
To gain the pyrite of today
Or the true gold of the morrow,
To know the brief joy of today
At the cost of later sorrow.

Choose light,
Choose hope,
Choose carrying another's load today.
Bring peace.
Bring love,
Bring help.
See beauty,
Joy,
And possibility in all things.
Look not the sadder way.

As others struggled on their way
I ever seek
With efforts and my purse
A way to lighten some the load they carry
Even in a meager way

For it is not as heavy for us as for
These brothers and sisters I behold
As they fight to gain a better life
Away from danger's bitter strife,
Hope their only tool.

When I am laid to rest
And my life is said in stone
By a dash between my dates of birth and death
I hope that mark will say
That I did my best to make its hidden sum
To mean a life well spent
Bringing love, peace, and hope
To others different as the night and day
In tattered rags with hunger pains inside.
Who travel at my side

Lay a daisy on my grave
Pick up my torch
And make it now your own
For we will always have the poor,
And lonely souls abounding in our midst
Who need our love.
Hunger of all kinds stalks these unknown friends.
To feed or not to feed their souls,
To rescue those in need
A goal we all should seek.

NEW MEMBERS

Members who joined in February:

New members to CWC Sacramento: Elisabeth Gruskin, Dan Schmitt, Andrew Laufer, and Lisa Randolph

Coco's Speakers (who receive a complimentary one-year membership):

Dänna Wilberg: television producer and writer, whose February presentation showed us how we could use screenplays to improve our writing.

Sigrid Bathen: journalist, Bee reporter, and CSUS (California State University Sacramento) teacher, will discuss many aspects of magazine writing on March 1.



MEMBER NEWS

These delightful tidbits were submitted by our secretary, Sandra S. Navarro:

Kiyo Sato has won the Sharif Jewelers Hometown Hero award. It was presented in conjunction with the Sacramento Kings, at a recent Kings game. She was called to the floor of the Golden One Arena, where she received the award (a lovely necklace) from Omar Sharif of Sharif Jewelers, and was honored in front of an audience of 18,000. A slide show of her educational work with her VFW post was played. (The subject was the Japanese-American incarceration during World War II). Kiyo, who is a former Air Force captain and registered nurse, is a prize-winning author, and a long-term member of CWC Sacramento.

Another long-time CWC Sacramento member, **Elaine Adams**, was featured in The Sacramento Bee on February 17, 2019, in the Life & Style section. The article, entitled, "Longtime Friends with British Royalty," describes Elaine's 20-year connection with Sarah "Fergie" Ferguson, former wife of Prince Andrew of Great Britain.

Member **Marsha Porter** wrote the Sacramento Bee article about Elaine, as a special to the Bee. Here is the link to the article: <https://www.sacbee.com/entertainment/living/article226021970.html>

IN BRIEF

Poetry Slam

March 10, Saturday, 2 - 5 p.m., Dreaming Dog Brewery, 2501 W. Taron Ct., Elk Grove
Sponsored by Elk Grove Writers; free, brews available for purchase
Sign up: Loy Holder loyholder77@gmail.com or Nan Mahon nannosecond@comcast.net

National Poetry Month is April; Poem in Your Pocket Day is April 17

Bring an original poem to the Early Bird "Talk & Share" at Cattlemens on April 20

Our Life Stories, Cosumnes River College (with City of Sacramento Hart Senior Center) **April 13, Saturday**

NCPA (Northern California Publishers & Authors) Book Awards Banquet

April 14, Sunday, 5 - 9 p.m., \$30 per person, Cherry Island Golf Course, Elverta
www.norcalpa.org

Folsom Library Local Author Expo (book tables, speaker panels)

April 27, Saturday 11 - 3, Georgia Murray Bldg., 411 Stafford St., Folsom 95603
CWC table; or reserve your own for "free" with donation of a copy of your book to the library
https://www.folsom.ca.us/city_hall/depts/library/events/adult/local_author_expo_2019.asp

CWC Sacramento Memoir Writing Contest Deadline April 30

www.cwcsacramentowriters.org

Gold Rush Writers Conference

May 3 - 5, Historic Leger Hotel, Mokelumne Hill
Contact Sally Kaplan (310) 927-6929 or salkap123@att.net

SAVE THE DATE: CWC Sacramento Mini-Conference, Heather Lazare "Selling a Best Seller"

Former Simon & Schuster editor; writing and publishing, getting your book in tip-top form (after luncheon meeting on **May 18, 1:30 - 5 p.m.**, 40% discount for members)

Sacramento County Fair, CWC Booth (under consideration)

May 23 - 27, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Public Safety Writers Conference

(announced by CWC member Mike Brandt) **July 18 - 21**, Orleans Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV
www.policewriter.com

President's Message:

Take-Back of a Meeting: How Past Informs Future

There may be a benefit to having been in CWC for so long - I've observed changes and seen trends come and go. Under this description falls the First Friday Network Meeting, a.k.a. the Non-fiction Marketing Network.

Three decades ago, before the days of self-publishing and Internet, when writers lived and died on selling and placing work, members looked for markets: newspapers, magazines, publishers, agents. A group of members took the initiative to meet for breakfast once a month to share markets and marketing tips. And so was born the Nonfiction Marketing Network, a "watering hole" of sorts held between official club meetings. Over bacon and eggs, attendees went around the table describing what they were working on or new markets about which they had learned. Who was buying? How much did they pay? Who needed copy? Everyone chimed in and problem solved jointly. Often a speaker presented for 30-40 minutes. Members passed around an envelope in which to contribute \$1-2 to cover the costs of breakfast for the speaker and volunteer recorder. This was a vibrant gathering of self-directed members. As this meeting grew in popularity, fiction writers joined because of the stimulating exchange in an intimate setting. Members chose speakers and informed community newspapers of meetings. The Nonfiction Marketing Network emerged as a coveted membership benefit as well as a recruitment tool.

About 10 years ago, the people involved at the time changed the name of the Nonfiction Marketing Network to "Network" to better reflect their needs. The envelope stopped going around the table and the club began to underwrite breakfast costs for speaker and reporter. CWC officers lined up speakers, attended Network meetings, and made announcements. Members became participants. Signs of a self-directed group faded.

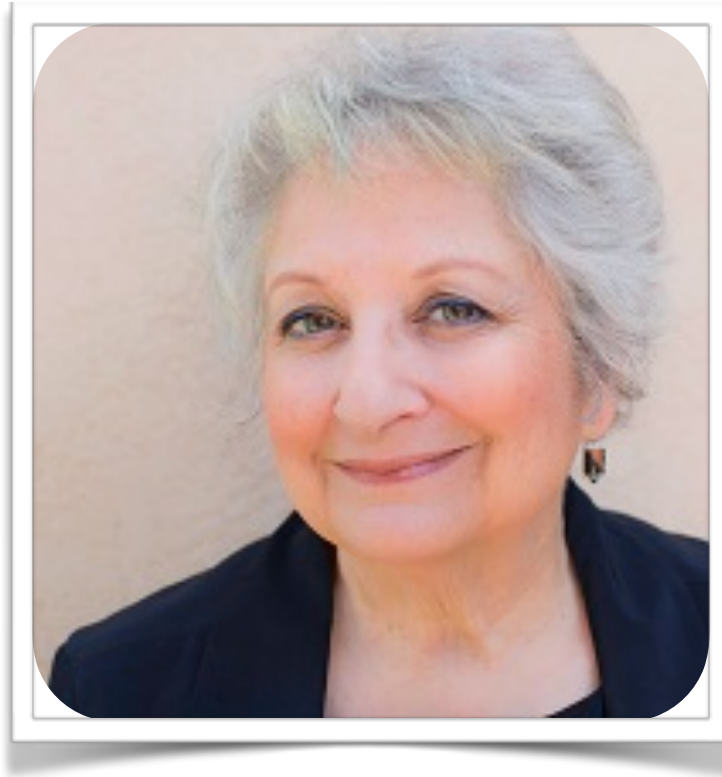
The board and I have been slowly trying to return the reins of the Network meeting back to members. Why? So members are in control of their own experience. My personal hope is that members will take a look at the origins of this meeting, enabling them to better take it forward and craft it to meet present needs. While the term "marketing" has changed due to the digital age and a shift in "markets," the term has broadened in some respects and become relevant to all writers.

Recently, members Michel Inaba and MaryLou Anderson volunteered to work on future speakers, joining Facilitator Cheryl Stapp in making the First Friday Network go smoothly. Newsletter editor Marcia Ehinger volunteered to serve as temporary board liaison. Michel and MaryLou will be surveying members at upcoming meetings to get a better idea of what you would like to do and hear at Network meetings. Additional help and suggestions are always welcome.

So, in considering the future, I invite you to think about the past.



Message from the CWC Sacramento Secretary



Members of the CWC Sacramento Branch are eligible for exceptional opportunities to gain or enhance:

- Leadership experience
- Skills relevant to the professional organization environment
- Camaraderie with other Sacramento Branch members.

Please specify your interest in one or more of these CWC Sacramento Branch positions or resource areas:

- First Vice President, Programs, FY 2019-2020
- Member, CWC Holiday Party Committee
- Member, Monthly Meeting Support Team (Please indicate Friday or Saturday meetings.)

in an email to Sandra Navarro, Secretary, CWC Sacramento,
ssnavarro22@gmail.com.

FOLLOW UP

**Cattlemens Luncheon Speaker,
February 16, 2019:
Becky Parker Geist**

Bring Your Story to Life in Audio

Meeting notes by Marcia Ehinger



Becky Parker Geist is an audiobook narrator and producer with 37+ years of experience, and the founder and owner of Pro Audio Voices, an audiobook production and marketing company. She is President, Bay Area Independent Book Publishers Association. Her *Audiobook Toolkit for Authors: Your Comprehensive Guide to Recording Your Own Audiobook*, can be found at authortoolkits.com. She is also the author of two additional non-fiction titles and two children's books.

Becky started by saying that Audiobooks are hot – the fastest growing portion of the publishing industry. They are largely selected by word of mouth, and 38% are purchased on Audible or iTunes; 20% are borrowed from a library; and 20% are accessed for free on YouTube.

Narration is the most critical aspect of an audiobook. Authors should consider having a professional narrate their books, since voice actors have a unique skill set. The benefits of producing an audiobook include increased discoverability of your work, upselling and cross-selling a book, reaching new audiences (including non-readers, and 23 million vision-impaired individuals in the U.S.), and receiving increased royalties. To know when the investment is worth it, financial and career goals, leverage, marketing, and engagement with the audience all need to be considered. Audio and video pieces can be used to help readers find you. They can be placed on your website, used in blogs and podcasts, and on all social media sites, and added to Amazon Author Central and Good Reads author accounts. For business people or teachers, this aspect can also bring new clients or students to your website or classes. An audio production company can also prepare video clips, or you can DIY (Do It Yourself) with your phone camera video. Becky notes that reading aloud is always valuable to check your writing for phrasing and flow, or to prepare for presentations of your work at local bookstores, cafes, or seminars.

ProAudioVoices offers a full range of production and marketing services in their Audiobook Marketing Program™. (AMP up your sales!) Their productions range from one narrator reading your book to full production of CDs, with the box, blurbs, and cover, with music and sound effects, plus a full cast of character voices. Becky advises against ACX.com (owned by Amazon) for distribution; they only use Audible (also Amazon owned) and iTunes. She likes AuthorsRepublic.com, which has good customer service, higher royalties, and a variety of distribution outlets, including Audible and libraries. AMP creates a web of distribution for your audio and video pieces, which includes their own author community.

Many of the questions during the Q&A involved details of the production process and costs. With AMP, an author would submit a manuscript or writing selection for review, and Becky's team would respond with possibilities for audio and video materials, and costs for the project. She said that a single narrator production has a price of about \$450/finished hour (approximately 9000 words). Jerilyn Ring noted that her research found a range for finished hours starting at \$250/hour, and estimated that 70,000 words would cost about \$3,000. (Becky brought 2 finished CDs from a screenplay, in a box with cover and blurbs, which had music, sound effects, and a multi-character cast, and cost "less than \$10,000".) Becky also mentioned poems and short story collections which had been made into audiobooks, as well as audio and video promotional pieces. Today's demand is mostly for listeners less than 35 years old (at least 10% of them under 18), and those over 52.

Editor's Note: The "Early Bird" Talk & Share on February 16 was an excellent discussion of the use of Beta Readers by Ray Gray. A summary of his talk is included in this newsletter.

The How, Why, and Free Benefits of Using Beta Readers

by Ray H. Gray

What is a Beta Reader? A person who volunteers to read an unpolished, unpublished version of a work with the specific intent to provide feedback so the writer can improve the plot, characters, and scenes (PCS).

Why use Beta Readers? They provide a reader perspective on a manuscript. The writer is too close to their work, filling in unwritten narrative gaps with their intimate knowledge of the PCS. Readers do not have that familiarity, and will let the writer know through feedback.

Beta Readers highlight reader engagement. Is the plot interesting and fresh? What do they feel about the characters? Do the ones they love and hate match the writer's intentions? Is anything offensive or communicated in an unintended manner?

When to use Beta Readers? Ideally, after the manuscript has been reviewed by a Developmental Editor (DE). A DE will take an early draft and identify issues concerning PCS development. Once the DE's issues have been addressed in one or more rewrites, it may be time for Beta Readers.

Beta Readers essentially provide the same feedback as a DE but without the professional knowledge or training. Beta Readers can save the writer money, but should not be used in place of one or more editors.

Ray's process: I used Beta Readers first, fixing the PCS issues through three rounds of Beta Readers. When I submitted the work to a DE, it was more pleasurable for her to critique. She highlighted two style inadequacies that dramatically improved the novel once addressed.

Where to find Beta Readers? Social media, webpages, blogs, book clubs, senior groups, forums, and whenever anyone asks, "What do you do?"

Who makes good Beta Readers? People who read the novel's genre, or multiple genres, depending on the target audience and manuscript content. Age group can be important, too.

Who makes questionable Beta Readers?

1. Family, friends, and co-workers who would hesitate to be critical or could be offended by content.
2. Writers, teachers, and professors are best suited to a launch team or use as editors/proof readers.
3. Critique group members are best suited for developmental work or a launch team.
4. Psychological arsonists, people who love to inflame any situation with negativity. They are easy to recognize because their feedback is so contrary to the rest of the Beta Readers.

How to use Beta Readers?

1. Prepare Beta Readers by informing them of the genre(s) and any content involving sex, politics, and religion.
2. Divide the manuscript into three to ten sections. The complexity of the plot and length of the work will help determine the number of sections required. Compile a questionnaire for each section.
3. Develop a tracking system to follow the progress of each Beta Reader.
4. Manage Beta Reader tracking.
 - a. Send out manuscript sections one at a time to each Beta Reader and keep a record of the date sent.
 - b. Log the date they finished reading the section.
 - c. Send them the questionnaire for that section and record the date sent.
 - d. Log and review their answers when they return the questionnaire.
 - e. Send the next section once their feedback is received.

How to put together a questionnaire? MS Word, MS Excel, and PDFs are great ways for putting together a questionnaire. Keep the questionnaires easy to complete. Give the Beta Reader a method to rate their engagement, emotions, and praise/concerns about the novel's PCS. Examples are shown below:

1. Use a 1 (bad) to 10 (perfect) rating system, or;

5. List each of the characters in the section and use the rating system to measure the Beta Reader's impression of the characters.
6. Beta readers are also a perfect forum to test 25-word pitches, jacket blurbs, and author bios.
7. Ideally, a Beta Reader should take no more than a week to read a section and complete a questionnaire. Reality? My fastest Beta Reader finished all the sections and questionnaires in one week. The slowest took four months, but provided great feedback. The average Beta Reader took four weeks to complete the process.

Benefits of a Beta Reader

1. New writers often believe their work is a masterpiece and ready for an audience due to the time, effort, and sacrifice required to express their imagination. Beta readers will spotlight how much more work is needed.
2. Every sentence and paragraph of the manuscript connects the writer to the plot, scenes, and characters of their imagination. Beta readers have no such connection. If the writer has inadequately constructed the details with words, the Beta Reader will sense nothing, and will let the writer know through feedback.
3. A writer often intends the reader to understand specifics about the plot, characters, or genre. Beta Readers will point out all the WTFs of the manuscript, often surprising the writer with their impressions and interpretations.
4. Beta Readers will help a writer develop a tough skin. It is impossible to please everyone, and Beta Readers provide proof. Beta readers will quit the process. The act of quitting is valuable feedback, whether the writer learns their reasons or not.
5. I added a new first and last chapter to my novel to better flesh out my protagonist and her story. I added specific reveals and breadcrumbs to my plot when Beta Readers were confused. I put sex in the white space (reader's imagination), but left the seduction and afterglow in the novel.
6. Beta Readers are a good way to test genre categories if not following a genre formula. I felt my novel was a techno-thriller. Beta Readers labeled it mystery/suspense, sci-fi, and techno-thriller. My editor called it an erotic thriller.
7. My personal philosophy: "If someone else has done it, so can I." Beta Readers will help you learn and perfect your writing craft, nourishing your soul. The following statement from a third round Beta Reader helped me realize I had achieved my soul-nourishing goal for my novel: *I love the book! I'm horribly sad it's done. I even think your story could be a beautifully wonderful movie. I think this is very well written and exciting to read. You have an incredible way of connecting readers to feel for ALL your characters even if you don't like them you still love their character for who they are. You did a really great job keeping me guessing and shocking me! I couldn't put the story down. My husband actually had to hide section two so we could get household stuff done. I hope I've helped!!*
8. My first novel, Entangled Secrets, is in editorial rewrite now. It is on track to be self-published in summer 2019.





First Friday Speaker
February 1, 2019:
Dänna Wilberg:
Author & Film Director
How Script Writing Can Help
Your Novel Writing

Meeting notes by Emily Boyd

A full house listened to Dänna Wilberg, author and film director, give a presentation on “How Script Writing Can Help Your Novel Writing,” at the Friday, February 1, breakfast meeting of CWC-Sacramento. Dänna Wilberg is a writer, short-film producer, and hosts the TV programs *Paranormal Connections* and *Story Connection*.

Dänna introduced the topic by saying that “everything has a story” whether it’s a movie, a novel, a memoir, or a poem. When you write a novel, you “want your reader to feel the same things they would see on the screen.” In other words, give the reader enough to visualize the setting and the characters because that adds depth.

A screenplay has a beginning, middle, and end, just like a novel. The story needs conflict and resolution. Movies have a “beat”, meaning viewers are brought up when the tension is high and let back down when the action slows, similar to pacing in a novel. Movies create mood with background music; a novelist can create mood by having the characters listen to, sing or think about music.

Regarding dialogue, Dänna said, “Sometimes it’s knowing when not to say something.” If it’s not moving the story forward, cut it. It also needs to be believable, natural.

Connecting how script and novel writing are similar, Dänna said to pay attention to location (setting) and casting (characters). She suggested that novelists write a 10-minute screenplay about their book. That will help writers summarize the story and will pull out plot highlights for the book jacket.

The rules for scriptwriting that apply to novel writing are: write what you know and watch movies or read novels that mirror what you want to write. What grabs your attention? What do you like about the characters?

Dänna read the first pages of three scripts to illustrate the points she was making. She also shared the trailer from her film “Afternoon Delight”. The full film can be viewed on her website, dannawilberg.com. She is on twitter @dannawilberg and on Facebook at Author Dänna Wilberg.

Handouts from the presentation will be archived on CWC’s website.



CWC Sacramento Branch Leadership (FY 2018-2019)

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