

## OUR APRIL 8TH MEETING

# WRITE A COMPELLING MEMOIR

TUESDAY, APRIL 8TH

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIAL HALL  
2201 LAWTON ST. IN SLO

6:30 PM

Michelle Theall will present us with the ins and outs of writing memoirs that will make readers sit up and take notice.

Michelle is currently the editor-in-chief of Alaska Magazine. Her adventure travel, environment, health, editorial columns, and sports articles and essays have appeared in national magazines including, *Health*, *UtneReader*, *Natural Solutions*, *Alternative Medicine*, *5280*, and *Women's Adventure*. She has also worked for *Backpacker*, *Climbing*, *VeloNews*, *InsideTriathlon*, *Recording*, *Dandelion*, and *Women's Sports+Fitness* magazines.

Michelle's latest release, *Teaching the Cat to Sit*, her personal memoir about growing up gay and Catholic in the Texas Bible Belt inspires timely discussion about the modern issues of family, motherhood, bullying, and faith.

Join us Tuesday, April 8 at our **new time, 6:30pm**. Unitarian Universalist Social Hall 2201 Lawton St. in SLO, and see how memoir is done. For more information [www.slonightwriters.org](http://www.slonightwriters.org).



Michelle Theall

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*Dennis Eamon Young*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: NOT THE FUTURE I READ ABOUT

Hello Mr. Clarke, Mr. Asimov, Mr. Blish. What's going on here Mr. Heinlein, Mr. Herbert? I guess I just didn't read correctly. I always loved science fiction, but now that I'm residing in the future we were all heading towards in your books, I am disappointed. I want to roll it all back and re-write it. Every time we take a step forward, someone pulls us back about ten steps.

The technology today is wonderful. It would be even better if it worked. We are told how much better and easier our lives will be as soon as we ask our doctor about a little purple pill. Just don't listen to the list of side effects. We are on the verge of cars that drive themselves and may soon fly. Don't bother opening the hood, or trying to replace something. It takes a team of experts and a bank of computers to replace just a turn signal. I could do my own work on my '57 Corvette. When I look under the hood of my Prius, I hardly recognize a thing.

If we re-read the above-mentioned authors, we can discern the dire warnings they actually planted in those pages. A lot of us closed one eye and saw what we wanted to and disregarded the rest. The promise of Asimov's Sally, the positronic car of the future, shone forth, beckoning us to hurry down the road. Sally knew what she was doing. Ask anyone with a GPS in their present car if they trust it to get them around the block without a detour of its own devising.

Star Trek taught us that the integrated systems in a spaceship could self-diagnose a problem while maintaining its course at warp speed, so you could take an extra five minutes in the ionic shower and tell the replicator to fix a beef stroganoff for your eight o'clock date with the ship's counselor. My updated photo data management program cannot get me through a day without my threat to toss it out the window.

So, writers, beware of prognostications you cannot find a way to back up. I ain't gonna believe you any more. I've learned my lesson. As soon as I find my smart phone and get those new apps installed, I'll be able to retrieve the address book that's stuck in a cloud. Then I can call around to see if I can locate a downloadable copy of "Cities In Flight" for Carol's Kindle.

The biggest problem with the future seems to be that you can't get to it while you are still young enough to enjoy it. The changes come faster and closer together now than they did in my erstwhile youth. We as a society are heading towards that cliff, just like the heedless lemmings, and there seem to be fewer of us watching the controls. We need another Arthur C. Clarke to tell us to keep a closer eye on HAL, before we get locked out of that ship.

Maybe one of our own NightWriters is sitting in front of a computer, ready to write a short story for the Contest that will bring a solution to light. If you are out there reading this, please snap to it, whip that story out and point us to the right path out of all this nonsense. We'll even invite you to read your award-winning story at the upcoming Central Coast Writers' Conference.

*Excelsior,  
Dennis*



## **Fellow Writers!**

**Is a writing partner sick? Need encouragement?**

**Getting married or having a baby?**

**Suffering from the loss of a loved one?**

**Email me at [jandkvolkov@att.net](mailto:jandkvolkov@att.net) and I'll send them a card from their SLO NightWriters family.**



*Kalila*



## **ARE YOU FOLLOWING THE NW BLOG?**

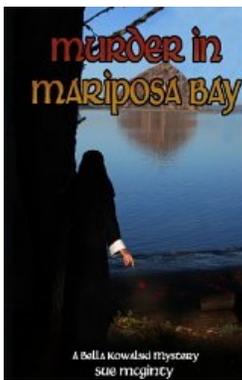
Be sure to check out our Blog for information, insights, encouragement, connections, etc. You'll find writing prompts, ideas, encouragements and lots more. Feel free to leave a comment on any of our posts. And join us on Twitter and LinkedIn, too!

Join us on our Blog: [www.slonightwriters.com](http://www.slonightwriters.com)

You can also access the blog from our website: [www.slonightwriters.org](http://www.slonightwriters.org)

## BOOK SIGNING EVENT AT COALESCE BOOKSTORE SUNDAY APRIL 6 FROM 1:00-3:00 PM

NightWriter members **Sue McGinty**, **Barbara Hodges**, **Tony Piazza**, **Paul Alan Fahey**, **Anne R. Allen** and **Susan Tuttle** will be part of the panel of authors at the Central Coast Chapter of Sisters in Crime (SinC) book signing event at **Coalesce Bookstore** on Main Street in Morro Bay on Sunday, April 6, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Come meet the authors, talk books, have refreshments and wine, listen to the authors read from and talk about their books starting at 1:30, and ask questions of the panel at 2:45 pm. If you love great mysteries and good writing, this is the place to find them! Come get your autographed copies this Sunday.



Sue McGinty



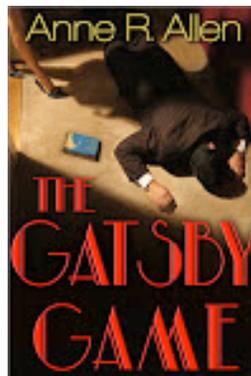
Barbara Hodges



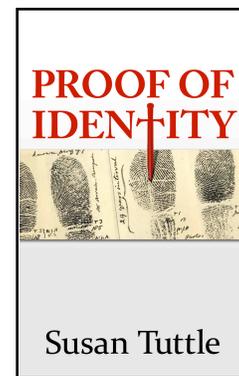
Tony Piazza



Paul Alan Fahey



Anne R. Allen



Susan Tuttle

# CRITIQUE GROUP ROUNDUP



*Writer Anita Hunt*

So, you're looking for a Critique Group?

Some people have a bucket list for 2014. Some want to travel the world or attend all the baseball parks in America. Mine is to see the Arora Borealis and to attend as many critique groups as I possibly can. At least until I find one that likes my work.

In my quest to learn more about writing groups, I stumbled on a real gem and got much more than I bargained for.

I found a weekly Writer's Workshop called The "What If?" Writers Group that focuses on specific skills that we can master to be able to succeed as a writer. The exercises are

designed to pull out our talent, strengthen our confidence and teach us strategies to solve character and plot problems, regardless of the genre.

Susan, the group leader, says, "When we learn to put our conscious mind on hold and just let the words flow, amazing things can happen."

The classes are held on Wednesday in Grover Beach (10:30 am -12:30 pm) or in the afternoon in Los Osos (3:00-5:00 pm). Due to popular demand, in April there will be a Monday night class added in Los Osos. The workshops are formatted so that you can start at any time; the topics are not dependent on one other.

There is a minimal fee. Four sessions a month and all I have to do is stop drinking my Latte's twice a week to break even.

In the class I attended we discussed "Cliffhanger Endings" and "Closed Door Endings" and if this is any indication of what is to come, I will more than break even. This experience gave me ideas that I never



The "What If? Writing Group" afternoon class. L-R: Hanje Richards, Susan Tuttle, Mark Arnold, Sharyl Heber, Jan Alarcon. Missing: Mary Bhuta, Lila Bhuta, Sandy White

knew I had. It inspired me to think quickly and helped to bring out the inner writer in me and I loved it!

Contact Susan Tuttle for more information: [aim2write@yahoo.com](mailto:aim2write@yahoo.com)

I wonder what type of treasure I'll find next month?

Until next time,

*AE Hunt*

Blog: <http://theoccasionaljew.com/>

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## MEET NEW MEMBER: BAXTER CLARE TRAUTMAN

Baxter Clare Trautman earned a Masters degree in Biology at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and promptly turned her hand to writing. Her thesis, *Spirit of the Valley*, published by Sierra Club in 2000, was followed by *Bleeding Out*, the first in the L.A. Franco mystery series. She also authored *The River Within*, reprinted by Bedazzled Ink, and continues work on the Franco series.

A practicing wildlife biologist, Trautman lives in central California with one wife, three dogs, four cats, and varying numbers of chickens, depending on how hungry the local foxes are.

In addition to her nonfiction works, Baxter has published 6 novels, among them *Street Rules* and *Last Call*. She made the Lambda Best Lesbian Mystery short list for *Cry Havoc*, in 2004, and the long list for *End of Watch* in 2006.

You can contact Baxter at [batertruatman@thegrid.net](mailto:batertruatman@thegrid.net), and check out her website at [www.baxterclare.com](http://www.baxterclare.com)



*Baxter Clare Trautman*

## "Critique Group Connections"

NW Members—Please, email critique requests to: Anita Hunt, Critique Group Coordinator, [hunt6465@charter.net](mailto:hunt6465@charter.net). We'll print your specific request in this **Critique Group Connections** section of the newsletter for all NW members to view, increasing opportunities for NW critiquing. Use this information to find a match for your needs, make contacts, or to start a new group or critique partnership. Contact Anita for assistance if needed. And, if you form a group, please let Anita know so she can list it on the website. She can also showcase the group's talent in the newsletter. Critique Group Guidelines are available on the website at [www.slomightwriters.org](http://www.slomightwriters.org).

\*\*\*SLO NW cannot guarantee critique group formation or availability but do we strive to facilitate connections between writers so they can initiate and develop their own writing affiliations. While we cannot be, and are not, responsible for any outcomes from these associations, we hope they lead to great creative magic and magnificent literary works!



Anita E. Hunt  
Critique Group Chair

**Poetry Critique Group Emerging! Any poet can join and benefit from peer review and exchange.**

**Any interested poet can call Irene @ 481-3824 or email [irenekooi@gmail.com](mailto:irenekooi@gmail.com). Preferred meeting area is SLO City/Avila Beach.**

## CRITIQUE GROUP REQUESTS:

**Katie** is seeking a critique group for YA and FICTION. She is interested in either a critique group, or 1:1 electronic peer exchange. She has some writing experience and prefers SLO City location. Contact Katie at: [dreamsofcitylights@gmail.com](mailto:dreamsofcitylights@gmail.com).

**Bill Gloege** is looking for a partner to give feedback on his novel, man vs nature genre. It describes a family's escape to the Arctic as they flee severe climate change. He hopes to educate on climate facts, but there's plenty of Hollywood style action and violence. Bill's previous writing has been technical; this is his first fiction. He needs honest, helpful feedback and will reciprocate with any writer of fiction, essays, short stories or nonfiction pieces. Contact Bill at 805-937-4547 or email [oflibertysons@yahoo.com](mailto:oflibertysons@yahoo.com)

**Sheri Humphreys** is seeking a critique Group for FICTION - ROMANCE genre specifically, SciFi and suspense are fine too. No specific skill level required. Preferred location is Cambria, Morro Bay, SLO. Contact Sheri at 805-927-2453 or email at [sheri@sherihumphreys.com](mailto:sheri@sherihumphreys.com)

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## Critique Group Connections, Continued

**Kristen Herrera** is seeking a critique group for FICTION and YA. Preferred skill level is intermediate to advanced/experienced. Preferred location is SLO City area or South County.

Contact Kristen by email: [kristenmbriggs@yahoo.com](mailto:kristenmbriggs@yahoo.com)

**Tony Taylor** is seeking a critique group for FICTION, YA, CHILDREN'S MIDDLE GRADE or VARIED GENRES, preferred skill level is advanced/experienced writers. Preferred location is SLO City area.

Contact Tony at 805-704-3528 or by email: [tony@anthonyjtaylor.com](mailto:tony@anthonyjtaylor.com)

**Rolynn Anderson** wishes to organize a **NEW PLOTTING GROUP** for LITERARY FICTION with elements of suspense and mystery. Preferred skill level is advanced. Preferred location is Arroyo Grande/Los Osos/SLO area.

Contact Rolynn at 805-473-5847 or by email [rolynna@earthlink.net](mailto:rolynna@earthlink.net)

**Julie Cucchiara** is looking for a critique group or 1:1 writing mentor for Fiction, preferred genre Comedy. All skill levels. South County location preferred.

Contact Julie at: [julie.cucchiara@gmail.com](mailto:julie.cucchiara@gmail.com)

**David Flamm** is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange or 1:1 writing mentor/partner or editing fee for service, for COMMERCIAL FICTION. Preferred Skill Level is Intermediate to Advanced. Preferred locations for meetings are SLO City, South County/Santa Maria, Orcutt.

Contact David at 805-868-3779 or by email: [david.flamm@yahoo.com](mailto:david.flamm@yahoo.com)

**Christina Grimm** is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for VARIED NO GENRE RESTRICTIONS. No skill restrictions. Preferred location for meetings is SLO City, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria, but can travel to other locations.

Contact Christina at 805-459-4923 or by email: [grimmpsyche@gmail.com](mailto:grimmpsyche@gmail.com)

**Jill Stegman** is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for LITERARY FICTION or LITERARY HYBRIDS WITH THRILLER, SUSPENSE, MYSTERY. Preferred skill level is advanced. Preferred location for meetings is SLO City, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria or North County.

Contact Jill at 805-466-1956 or by email: [jastegman@gmail.com](mailto:jastegman@gmail.com)

**Colin McKay** is seeking a critique group or peer edit exchange for COMMERCIAL FICTION – CRIME, YA, or SCREENWRITING. Preferred skill level is advanced. No location restrictions for meetings but would prefer Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cambria. Contact Colin by email: [mckay01@gmail.com](mailto:mckay01@gmail.com)

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## Critique Group Connections, Continued

**Deborah Brasket** is seeking a critique group, online peer edit exchange, or 1:1 writing partner for ADULT LITERARY FICTION, NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES, AND FOR CHILDREN'S MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL. Preferred experience level is intermediate to advanced. North County is preferred. Contact Deborah at 221-5405 or by email: [dbrasket51@gmail.com](mailto:dbrasket51@gmail.com)

**Bill Bloom** is seeking co-author / editor arrangements for two projects—one, an autobiography; the other, a book about Albert Einstein's wife. Any fee for service to be arranged between author and editor. Contact Bill at 543-1910 or by email: [clb4u2c@charter.net](mailto:clb4u2c@charter.net)

**Griselda Rivera** is seeking multiple critique groups: MEMOIRS, TEEN & CHILDREN'S, ACADEMIC / EDUCATION / LINGUISTICS.

Contact Griselda at [grissilvarivera58@yahoo.com](mailto:grissilvarivera58@yahoo.com)

**Alycia Kiley** is seeking a critique group for VARIED GENRES but primarily POETRY, NON FICTION and ARTICLES; skill level is intermediate. SLO City location is preferred.

Contact Alycia at 602-7075 or by email, [alyciakiley@gmail.com](mailto:alyciakiley@gmail.com)

**George Klein** is seeking a critique group or 1:1 writing mentor / partner for COMMERCIAL FICTION; No particular skill level or meeting location restrictions.

Contact George at 712-3378 or by email, [fangio@charter.net](mailto:fangio@charter.net)

### Quote of the Month

"Every writer is a frustrated actor who recites his lines in the hidden auditorium of his skull."

~Rod Serling  
(contributed by Sharyl Heber)

### Word of the Month "Edacity"

Definition: (N. Latin: *edere*, to eat) Excessive desire to eat; extreme gluttony

Synonyms: esurience, ravenousness, voracity, hunger, rapacity, gluttony

Usage: He went through the buffet not with restraint but with edacity, devouring even those foodstuffs he had eschewed for years.

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## SLO NIGHTWRITERS Meeting Time Has Moved Up by 1/2 Hour!

Join us for our informative and fun 2014 Meetings!

Our new location is the

Unitarian Universalist Social Hall

2201 Lawton Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Near the Corner of South and Broad, Next to Meadow Park

Meetings now begin at 6:30 pm, and end at 8:30 pm

Come a little early to meet other members and extend your network!

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## NW MEMBERS ON CONGALTON SHOW

You can still hear NightWriters **Barbara M. Hodges** and **Susan Tuttle**'s interview on Dave Congalton's Talk Radio show that aired on Wednesday, April 2nd at 3:00 pm on KVEC 920 radio. The program is up on the KVEC website as a podcast. Barbara and Susan were interviewed concerning writing mysteries and about the SinC book event to take place on Sunday, April 6, from 1:00-3:00 pm at Coalesce Bookstore on Main Street in Morro Bay. Follow the link below to listen to the podcast. Barbara and Susan were on first, so you can get the full benefit of the hilarity right from the start. Enjoy!

[www.ebroadcasters.com/podcasts/congalton/04-02-14.mp3](http://www.ebroadcasters.com/podcasts/congalton/04-02-14.mp3)

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## SLO NW e↔Line Edit Exchange

Can't find a critique group? Don't have time for meetings? Have specific needs for feedback on your work? Our Electronic Peer Review Line Edit Exchange is perfect for out-of-town members, or those with restricted time schedules.

All E-Exchange Partners are SLO NW members.

- Exchange views with other writers
- No fees charged, no credit expected or required.
- Participants contact each other, set their own rules and time frames.
- Use your own style of editing/commenting.
- If you don't find value in the feedback, try someone else on the list.

To be added, **contact Anita Hunt** ([hunt6465@charter.net](mailto:hunt6465@charter.net)) with: Your Name, Email, Genre (if you desire a specific one), Skill Level (if you require a specific level). She will add you to the list. Then you can reach out on a one-to-one basis and find the right writing partner for you.

## MEMBER-AT-LARGE CONNECTION

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, 9:14pm

Dear NightWriters,

I am sitting on the floor in my son's bedroom waiting for him to fall asleep. I don't normally do this, but tonight is not normal. A couple of hours ago we were hiding in the closet. "There is a bad man on our street," I was explaining to Kai, age 3, while trying to keep my 8-month-old daughter from pulling everything off the shelves. "If he comes into the house, you need to hide between Daddy's shirts and stay very, very quiet, OK?"

This morning, all I had planned for the evening was my husband's birthday party. I bought a huge Doc Bernstein ice-cream cake, appetizers, booze, and decided that this time I was not going to cook. I love cooking for our friends, but I am traveling to Slovakia in three days, alone with two little kids, and there is so much to do. I needed to make it simple for myself. We would just order pizza.

At 5:54pm my phone rang. It was one of our guests saying that they can't get in, because our street is blocked off by the police. He didn't know much, but explained there were some shots fired and there is a gunman in one of the houses. Then my husband called and said the house in question was the one we can see from our living room, not the one across from our kitchen that was involved in a major drug bust over Christmas. A few more episodes like this and Pismo Heights real estate might become affordable.

As the story unraveled, I learned that a young man I know by sight was in trouble, despondent and barricaded inside of his parents' house. I explained to Kai that the man I told him about was not a bad man, just a very sad man, and while we still needed to be careful, we could go into his room.

Hours later, here I am, my baby girl asleep in her crib, my son snoring away in his bunk bed, cats curled up by my feet, appetizers all around, that ice-cream cake still untouched in the freezer, my husband making yet another attempt to get home to us, and strange sadness floating around the room. Sadness for the young man, sadness for the missed birthday party, sadness for the lesson my innocent child had to learn, sadness for the fact that this is the way life works sometimes.

I should be writing a real Member-at-Large column. I should be working on a blast e-mail about Tolosa Press connection. I should be preparing blog posts about the book club. I should be doing laundry, packing and panicking about surviving the flight with a teething baby and a boy that roars like a dinosaur. But instead I am sitting on the floor, listening to my



*Andrea Chmelik  
Member-at-Large*

son's breathing, listening to the cats purring, listening for the sound of the key in the lock, listening for hope for that sad young man. And all I can do is to ask you to listen and hope with me. We'll get to the rest later.

Yours, *Andrea Chmelik*  
[chmelik.andrea@gmail.com](mailto:chmelik.andrea@gmail.com)

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## THE APRIL NW ONLINE BOOK CLUB SELECTION

For April, we have selected a novel by Jordan Rosenfeld, *Forged in Grace*. Jordan will be presenting at the Central Coast Writers Conference in San Luis Obispo in September.

Fire almost killed her as a teen. Will rekindling a dangerous friendship finish the job? At age 15, a horrific fire left Grace Jensen scarred and highly sensitive to the pain of anyone she touches. Thirteen years later, living with her hoarder mother and half-in-love with her former doctor, her long-absent best friend, Marly Kennet, returns to town and convinces Grace to make a leap-of-faith trip to Las Vegas. There, Grace discovers she not only feels others' pain, she can heal it. This healing gift soon turns darker when the truth of Marly's past and the fire that scarred Grace is revealed, pushing the boundaries of loyalty and exposing both women to danger. With the intensity of a thriller, and a touch of magic realism, *Forged in Grace* leads to a dramatic climax in which she must choose between healing and revenge.



Jordan E. Rosenfeld is an author, writing coach, editor and freelance journalist. She earned her MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars and is the author of the writing guides, *Make A Scene: Crafting a Powerful Story One Scene at a Time* (Writer's Digest Books) and *Write Free: Attracting the Creative Life with Rebecca Lawton* (BeijaFlor Books). Jordan's essays and articles have appeared in such publications as *AlterNet.org*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The St. Petersburg Times*, *The Writer* and *Writer's Digest* magazine. Her book commentaries have appeared on *The California Report*, a news-magazine produced by NPR-affiliate KQED radio. She lives in Northern California with her superhero-obsessed son and psychologist husband. She is co-founder of <http://www.indie-visible.com>.



## *SLO NightWriters* 25th Annual Writing Contest The 2014 Golden Quill Awards

In association with

Cuesta College Central Coast Writer's Conference

***This year's theme: Déjà vu***

Visit [www.slonightwriters.org](http://www.slonightwriters.org) for information and entry forms

**1st Place Prize \$750** for each category

2nd Place Prize \$400 for each category

Honorable Mention Certificates

### **2 Categories**

Short Story/Memoir 1,000 word limit

Poetry 40 line limit



All Writers Welcome

Entries accepted April 1 - June 30, 2014

Entry Fee \$15

SLO NightWriters has teamed up with the Central Coast Writers Conference. Our contest is still ours, still run by us, but for the first time we will reveal the winners at the Conference itself. First place winners will read their winning entries to the faculty and conference attendees. And First place winners in this year's contest will be awarded **free entry to the Central Coast Writer's Conference** this September, a \$140.00 value!



**San Luis Obispo NightWriters**  
Presents their 25th Annual Writing Contest

in association with the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**Cuesta College Central Coast  
Writers Conference**

**The 2014 Golden Quill Awards**

Writers everywhere are welcome!

**Choose from 2 Categories:**

- Short Story/Memoir (1,000 word limit)
- Poetry (40 line limit)



**Entries accepted from April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Prize-\$750 for each category      2<sup>nd</sup> Place Price-\$400 for each category  
Honorable Mention Certificates

**Entries must include the words “Déjà vu” AND depict the theme** (Interpret as broadly as you like)

## Entry Fee - \$15 per entry

You may enter in more than one category and with as many entries as you like.

Go to [www.slomightwriters.org](http://www.slomightwriters.org) for payment and contest information.

**SHORT STORY/MEMOIR** 1,000 max word limit - **must be double spaced** and, where applicable, will be judged on: 1) Beginning / Ending, 2) Character, 3) Dialogue, 4) Narrative Voice & Point of View,

5) Description of Setting, 6) Emotional Impact, 7) Plot / Story Arc, 8) Use of Language

**POETRY** 40 line max limit - **may be creatively spaced and formatted** and, where applicable, will be judged on: 1) Power/Emotional Impact, 2) Message, 3) Form and Flow, 4) Use of Language

All rights belong to the author. SLO NightWriters may request permission to announce and publish the winning entries on its website and other media.

For a complete set of Rules and Format Guidelines see below or visit our website at:

[www.slomightwriters.org](http://www.slomightwriters.org)

Contest Entrants qualify for the special Early Bird rate at the 30th Annual Cuesta College Central Coast Writers Conference, September 19-20, 2014 in San Luis Obispo, CA, featuring keynote speaker, Anne Perry. Attendance at the CCWC is optional. First place winners will be given free entries into the conference (\$140 value each). For details, visit: [www.communityprograms.net](http://www.communityprograms.net)

## REVIEW: MARCH QUERY LETTER MEETING

Anita Hunt was the M.C. Someone mentioned that one feels enveloped by a warm bear hug standing in Anita's presence; I couldn't agree more.

Tom Snow was the speaker; the topic was query letters. Query letters are formal letters that writers send to literary agents to propose their manuscript ideas. Based on the contents of the query letter, the literary agent decides whether to contact the author and request to see their manuscript. Every literary agent has their own precise guidelines. You should pick a one that is interested in your genre and



By Jan Alarcon



then hand-tailor your query letter with that agent's guidelines. To find an agent and get these guidelines, Tom recommended [Jeff Herman's Guide to Book Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents: Who They Are, What They Want, How to Win Them Over](#). The 2014 edition is currently available on Amazon for \$19.93. He also recommended [The 2014 Guide to Literary Agents](#) edited by Chuck Sambuchino (Amazon: \$21.62) and the website <http://www.agentquery.com/>. Tom suggested

that we send at least 10 query letters but he confided that he had sent 327 while pitching his own first novel.

A standard requested format one page of approximately 150 - 200 words with the following components:

- Professional, courteous greeting
- Tagline: one sentence introduction with essential information
- Mini-Synopsis: main plot through the eyes of the main character
- Short biography of the author
- Professional closing



Tom emphasized the importance of a strong tagline. This one sentence should contain the hook that keeps the agent reading. Imagine yourself lucky enough to be alone riding an elevator with a CEO in a twelve-story building- you would take advantage of this time to pitch your ideas in a way that was both strong and memorable. The tagline should be written in the present tense, in the third person, describe the main character, explain what the main character has to lose, and explain what the main character will be risking both internally and externally.



Tom Snow accepting his “prize” for a great presentation: a box of Lucky Charms



Tom recommended that in our synopses show and not tell; choose specificities over generalities; set the mood; describe the setting using all five senses; and focus on the high stakes by explaining what is the worst thing that could happen if the main character does not succeed. Our query letters should be like a four-legged stool whose legs are named unique, useful, urgent, and ultra-specific. I loved his example of showing and not telling: don't say your main character is sad because his dog died, say “after the dog died he bought ice cream and ate it in a dog park.”



There's always time for networking...

This was Tom's night. He was chosen by random drawing to read from his latest work:



The Pope Went Speed Dating. Tom has a talent for unique phrases: “a modest flat burning with character”; “ferret through a stack of mail”; “sucking the life out of a cheap cigar”; “gossip about high fashion and low-fat recipes”. Tom was awarded a \$5.00 Starbucks card and a box of Lucky Charms cereal- I told you it was his night.

After the break we all participated in a writing exercise called “The Thread”. Our writing was to begin with the phrase “at

rainbow’s end” followed after a few minutes by “the leprechaun’s dined”; then by “a little Irish jig”; and then by “they are always after my lucky charms”. Yes, there was a St. Paddy’s Day theme. Several volunteers read their work- all were wonderful. Interestingly, many chose to make Rainbow’s End the name of a bar- myself included. What does that say about us?



Not all of us knew the definition of a leprechaun. “A leprechaun is a type of fairy in Irish folklore, usually taking the form of an old man, clad in a red or green coat, who enjoys partaking in mischief.” I grew up with an Irish grandmother and still haven’t figured out half of what she was saying to me. She would warn me that, “Is olc an chearc nach scríobann di féin”: A bad hen that does not scratch itself. Please email me if you know what that means [janmariealarcon@hotmail.com](mailto:janmariealarcon@hotmail.com)- I want make sure I am doing this right.

See you on April 8, 2014 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. “An áit a bhuil do chroí is ann a thabharfas do chosa thú”: May your feet bring you to where your heart is.

*Jan Alarcan*

←—————→  
“There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.”

~Joseph Brodsky

## KUDOS... KUDOS... KUDOS...

**Beryl Reichenberg**, fiber artist and children's book author, will be participating in a group show at the Gallery at the Network during the months of **April and May**. Called *Unique Expressions*, the show will feature unique works of art that are both decorative and functional, including Beryl's paper and fiber baskets and her paper sculptural forms. The gallery is located at 778 Higuera Street in San Luis. In addition, Beryl's children's books will be on display and for sale.

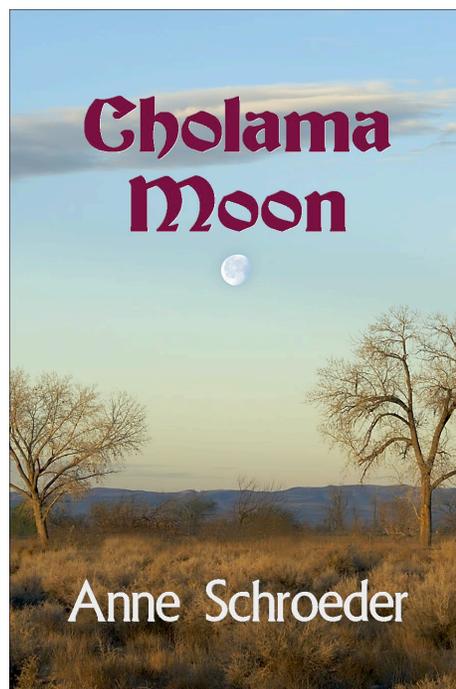
Beryl will also be teaching a class at Whiz Kids Toy Store on **April 9 at 3 pm**, on making a hanging butterfly book. Interested children should contact the store at 547-1733.

**Anne Schroeder** will hold a book launch for *Cholama Moon*, the first in a series of historical western novels that trace the development of the Central Coast through the Spanish, Mexican and American eras.

*Cholama Moon* (Oak Tree Press) depicts pioneers struggling to build ranches despite earthquakes, banditos, cultural differences and their own internal strife.

The launch will be held Sunday, April 6th, 1-3 PM at the Paso Robles Pioneer Museum, 2010 Riverside, adjacent to the Pioneer Park.

Anne has been a NW member since 1988 and currently resides in Grants Pass, OR with her husband Steve and two dogs. She has two memoirs under her belt including *Ordinary Aphrodite* (Amazon and Kindle) and a number of published short stories. She is currently President-Elect of Women Writing the West and Director of the LAURA Awards, a national short fiction competition. She blogs at [anneschroederauthor.blogspot.com](http://anneschroederauthor.blogspot.com). Follow her on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/anneschroederauthor](http://www.facebook.com/anneschroederauthor)



## 4 WAYS TO REVISE AS YOU WRITE

From Revision and Self Editing by James Scott Bell

Excerpted from Rachel Scheller's post, Writer's Digest Blog

Revising. Some writers hate it, some love it. But we all have to do it. Here are 4 strategies to make the revision process less painful.

1. **Revise your previous pages:** Re-read the pages you wrote the last time and do a quick edit as you read. This puts you back into the flow of the story and gets you ready to continue writing. Small problems can be fixed quickly. Make a note of the larger ones to do at a later time so you don't get bogged down before finishing the story.
2. **Use the 20,000 word step back:** Whether you're an outliner or a seat-of-the-pantser, when you hit 20,000 words step back for a day or two, or even a week, then re-read it all. You've done enough to know the characters and the direction of the story. Make sure it's all still working. If not, you can fix it now. A few days or a week break at this point can help you clarify how you feel about the book and the direction it's heading in.
3. **Keep a free-form journal:** Get in the habit of making notes daily on whatever pops into your mind about your story, when you're not working on it. Maybe first thing in the morning, or just before turning off your conscious mind at night. This can lead to some interesting additions to your story in the form of new characters, settings, subplots, directions, etc. And when writing that draft, remember it's an act of discovery. It doesn't have to be perfect the first go-around. Give it room to breathe and just see what happens.
4. **Take advantage of all your tools:** In this digital age, there are so many tools available to writers to make the process more streamlined than ever before. Here are some you can use as you work"
  - a. **Word Comments:** Turn on Word Comments to leave yourself notes as you write, about research that needs to be done, ideas that pop up, plot points to address, etc.
  - b. **Running Outline:** Keep a running summary or ongoing outline of your story. Copy and past the first and last couple of paragraphs of each chapter. Put a summary statement of the action of each chapter at the top, in all caps.
  - c. **Spreadsheets or Tables:** Great for outline people. Put outline in a spreadsheet or table and color code it. You can see the outline, the characters and action summary at a glance.
  - d. **Paper:** Use sheets, rolls of butcher paper, sticky notes of differing colors to make a map of the action and pin it up on your wall.
  - e. **Critique Groups:** Find one you can establish a rapport with and that understands your genre. Check your ego at the door. Give as much as you get. Stick to established deadlines. Look for a group that is small enough so you are not overburdened. Work to build trust.

## NEW TIME FOR NW MEETINGS ON TUESDAYS!

Starting with our April meeting, NightWriters will meet from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, just one half hour earlier. But that will get us all home even earlier, and with daylight savings time being in effect by then, it won't be so dark when the meeting lets out.

We have other exciting events planned for our members that will take place before our regular Tuesday meetings at the UUC Social Hall. Stay tuned for announcements of our in-the-planning-stages Round Table discussions, mini workshops, critique get-togethers, etc., that will take place an hour before the Tuesday meetings, from 5:15 to 6:15 pm.

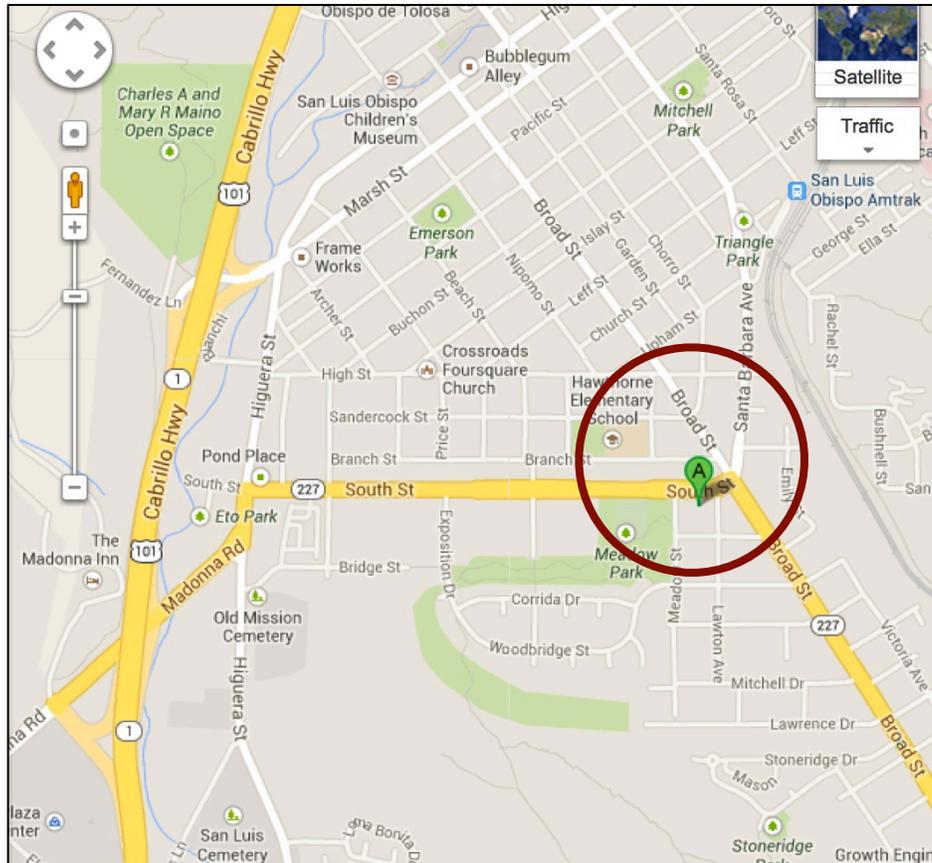
**It all starts this month, in April**, so mark your calendars! Meetings will begin 1/2 hour earlier, at 6:30 pm, and watch for announcements of our Round Table extras, for members only.



## ENLARGED MAP OF NEW MEETING PLACE!

Just to make it as easy as possible to find us, here's an enlarged street map of our new meeting venue, the UU Social Hall, 2201 Lawton Avenue in SLO.

See you there on February 11th!



## 5 LESSONS FROM FAMOUS WRITERS

Excerpted from Brian Klems' Writer's Digest Blog

We can learn a lot from what other writers have experienced in their careers. Visiting the sites of where the greats lived and wrote can provide some wonderful and heartening lessons for those of us struggling to hit the big time. Here are 5 lessons inspired by visiting some famous literary landmarks, like the cabin where Mark Twain wrote "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," Thoreau's Walden Pond, Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, Jack London's ranch and a hotel in Monterey:

1. **Rejection shouldn't stop you.** Jack London amassed over 600 rejection letters throughout his writing career. Still, Jack London persevered and became the highest paid writer of his day. Nathaniel Hawthorne's first story collection was rejected and he burned the manuscript. It helps to know even the greats suffered their share of rejection.
2. **Creativity should be creative.** William Faulkner kept his convoluted plots straight by writing them on his walls. And when his diagram for *A Fable* was painted over by his wife, he rewrote it and shellacked it. Use your space creatively, don't just live in tidy world of the laptop. Creativity needs room to move.
3. **Silence is golden.** Many of the great writers needed silence to work. Emily Dickinson's bedroom radiates quiet serenity. Eugene O'Neill used 3 empty rooms to cushion his study. How much more could we get done if we turned off the phone and the dings of email and surrounded ourselves with silence? Distractions are the best inhibitors to our creativity. Work to put some silent solitude into your writing time.
4. **Mind-body balance is the key.** Good health equates to energy for writing. Louise May Alcott liked to run, a rare pastime for a woman in the late 1800s. She also climbed trees and jumped fences. Poet Robinson Jeffers wrote in the morning and collected boulders from the beach in the afternoon, and used them to build his family a house. It's important to keep a balance in your life when you're engaged in a sedentary occupation. Just a walk through your neighborhood can rejuvenate your writing in unexpected ways.
5. **Inspiration is all around us.** Use your environment in your work. Robert Louis Stevenson traveled from his home in Scotland to a hotel in Monterey, CA, in 1879. The scenery, Spanish influence and a local legend about buried coins later went into *Treasure Island*. Henry David Thoreau wrote about building a cabin and put Walden Pond on the map. Mark Twain did such a good job of describing Hannibal, MO, in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* that locals talk about "Becky Thatcher's House" as though she'd been a real person. Inspiration is everywhere, even your own back yard. To these writers, they weren't famous places. They were just their home, or a place they stopped to visit for a few days.

## SHOULD YOU WRITE A NOVEL IN PRESENT TENSE?

From Brian Klems' Writers Digest Blog

Excerpted from On Writing Fiction by David Jauss

Present tense narration, wrote David Jauss, "once rare, is now common enough to be commonplace. ...It's becoming the default choice for many younger writers." But many writers don't know when to use present tense. It's important to understand the pros and cons of the technique so we can best understand when to employ it.

### Advantages of Present Tense:

1. **It has more "immediacy" than past tense:** We can show a character's change as it happens, not after the fact. We are there as it happens, and hence the climax can be both more immediate and intense.
2. **It contributes to the characterization of the protagonist:** The title character lives in the present. It carries the reader unreflecting on the stream of events.
3. **It reflects a work's theme:** The past is eternally present in memory. The use of present tense reinforces the concept that events are still happening and go on forever.
4. **It simplifies handling of tenses:** Past tense often contains a majority of our language's 12 tenses, but present tense stories employ only four—simple present, present progressive, and a smattering of simple past and simple future. Many consist solely of simple present tense. It makes shifting into the past easier, because one can use just the simple past tense.

### Disadvantages of Present Tense:

1. **It restricts our ability to manipulate time:** Altering chronological order and varying duration work against present tense's primary purpose, to make things feel like they're happening now. It's easier to alter chronology when looking back from an indeterminate present to many past times.
2. **It's more difficult to create complex characters:** It's easier to add complexity when you have access to manipulation of order and duration. We can convey the character's subjective experience of time and achieve more psychological depth and realism. Without the context of flashbacks, characters tend to become relatively simple, even generic.
3. **It can diminish suspense:** Present tense characters cannot know what is going to happen, so we can't create the kind of suspense that arises from knowledge of upcoming events. What we gain in immediacy, we lose in tension.
4. **It encourages inclusion of trivial events that serve no plot function simply because such events would actually happen in the naturalistic sequence of time:** A present tense story can seem less the work of an author than an unedited film. The principle of selection can be applied more readily, and ruthlessly, in past tense.

Understanding what you gain and lose with each type of tense will help you choose the correct one for each of your stories.

## PROGRAMS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEES

NW is in need of **Programs and Publicity Committee Members for 2014**. Committee members work together to make sure our monthly meetings, contest and other NW events are distributed properly through the social media / print / air venues. Interested in exploring (not committing to, just further getting information) this opportunity further? Drop us a line at [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com) or contact your Member-at-Large, Andrea Chmelik at [chmelik.andrea@gmail.com](mailto:chmelik.andrea@gmail.com).

## NEWSLETTER POSITIONS OPEN

WordSmiths is looking for writers to help with the editing process (checking for typos, etc.) of the NightWriters Newsletter. Health considerations are making it difficult for the present editor to fulfill deadlines. If you have editing expertise—or would like to develop that skill—please consider helping out. Also, WordSmiths is looking for columnists, either occasional or monthly. We have a distribution of over 200, which is great for your writing resume. Send enquiries to: Newsletter Editor at [aim2write@yahoo.com](mailto:aim2write@yahoo.com) or [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com). Be sure to put “Newsletter Editing/Column” in the **subject line**.

## VICE PRESIDENT NEEDED

We are looking for someone to fill the position of Vice President on our Board of Directors. Our current Vice President, Sharyl Heber, has stepped down after filling the office with grace and competence. The Vice President’s duties are simple. The Vice President attends monthly Board meetings and votes on issues; he / she fills in if the President is not able to attend board or general meetings (might happen once or twice a year, if at all), and serves as backup for other board positions in emergency situations (hasn’t happened yet!). The Vice President also has the **option** of in stepping as President when the presiding President’s term is up. If you are interested in exploring this position, please contact NightWriters, with “VP” in the subject line: [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com)

## GREAT BEGINNINGS

### ...INFORMATION FOR BEGINNING WRITERS (AND EVERYONE ELSE TOO)

#### WHAT TO DO WHEN WAITING TO GET INTO A CRITIQUE GROUP

Excerpted from: James Duncan, Writer's Digest Blog

1. Look for a few readers who will give you honest feedback. Having someone tell you how wonderful your writing is might be gratifying, but it doesn't help you improve. Find someone who has editing skills, but also someone else who is simply a reader. A reader's feedback will be different, and after all, you're writing for mostly for readers, right?
2. For shorter projects, give your beta readers the whole thing. For novels, there is more than one approach. It's sometimes best to give the whole thing at once, but you can also do it chapter by chapter, or everything except the ending if you want feedback on what the reader would do with the end. Be clear on what you want from your beta readers: typos, grammar errors, places of confusion, characters they don't like, etc. Decide what kind of feedback you want/need, and let that dictate what you give your readers.
3. When to ask for feedback depends on what you are looking for. You can seek feedback before the story is finished, after the first draft, after the 2nd or 3rd draft, or when you feel it's ready for publication. Sometimes it's best to let your story sit a few months between drafts—and before getting feedback—to let your subconscious have a chance to work.
4. Give your beta readers time to read when and where they are comfortable. It doesn't help to stand before them, waiting for instant feedback. Give them room to read, absorb and decide what and how to give feedback. Don't rush the process. It's more honest that way.
5. Asking for feedback can be difficult, especially if you're new to the craft and shy about letting others read it. But feedback only helps make your work stronger. Getting feedback from readers as well as other writers helps to smooth out places where readers might become confused, or be pulled out of the story for one reason or another. Feedback helps you fix the problems well before seeking publication, and adds to your satisfaction once your work is in print.
6. There are many ways to get your work to readers for feedback. If your beta readers are local, you can hand them printed copy. Or you can email Word or PDF files they can read on their computer, or download to their e-readers. They can give you a list of typos and comments or use track changes. Whatever works best for you and them.

Always remember that feedback from anyone, writer or reader, is simply personal opinion. Unless it's a typo or grammatical error, you need to follow your instincts. Listen carefully to each piece of advice, and thank your beta readers even if you don't use what they say. But if more than one person tells you the same thing, it's time to take notice that you might have a problem on your hands. This is your audience speaking. It's up to you to give them the most satisfying reading experience you can.

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## We Need Your Help!

The success of non-profit organizations like NightWriters depends on its members. We all have talents other than writing that any organization could make use of.

NightWriters has many special opportunities for members to get involved, working "behind the scenes." If you'd like to assist in any capacity, email: [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com)

President: Dennis Eamon Young  
Vice-President: \* **Position Open**  
Secretary: Carol Schmidt  
Treasurer: Susan Tuttle  
Program Director: Jeannie Bruenning  
Contest Committee Chair: Tom Snow  
Publicity Director: Randy Ross  
Membership Director: Hanje Richards  
Critique Group Coordinator: Anita Hunt  
Member-At-Large: Andrea Chmelik  
Writers' Workshops Coordinator: Anita Hunt  
Tolosa Press Submission Manager: Judy Guarnera  
Welcome Committee: Hanje Richards  
Sunshine Chair: Kalila Volkov  
Website Master: Janice Konstantinidis  
Web Assistant: Lila Bhuta  
Newsletter: Susan Tuttle  
Art Director: Dennis Eamon Young  
Assistant Secretary: Janice Konstantinidis  
Board Assistants: Sharyl Heber, Rebecca Waddell  
NW Historian: Sharyl Heber

## About Our Monthly Meetings

NightWriters' Evening Meetings are on the second Tuesday of every month, year round. We encourage interested visitors to join us at 7:00 pm. Admission is free; refreshments are served.

**Next Meeting: April 8th**, 6:30 pm, at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Social Hall, 2201 Lawton Avenue, San Luis Obispo.

Writers' Critique Groups: For paid members only. These groups read and critique each other's work and discuss the business of writing. Visitors welcome; phone ahead to make arrangements. See details below, or visit our website: [www.slonightwriters.org](http://www.slonightwriters.org)

## Notify NW of any change in address or email:

[slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com). Join NW and send dues or renewal checks (payable to SLO NightWriters) to: SLO NightWriters, PO Box 6241, Los Osos, CA 93412-6241. Or join/renew online through our website:

Email all correspondence to: [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com) or snail mail to: SLO NightWriters PO Box 6241 Los Osos, CA 93412-6241. We must have your **current email address** in order to send the Newsletter and other important NW announcements.

**Newsletter Submissions:** Send **by the 15th of the current month** for next month's publication. Send in kudos, writing articles, quotes, facts and tidbits, etc. Mark email "for newsletter" and send to: [slonightwriters@yahoo.com](mailto:slonightwriters@yahoo.com)

## Have You Checked Out Our Website Lately? Control Your Own Information!

Post your bio, picture, book covers and ordering links! Contribute a writing blog post! Free publicity!

### MEMBER SITE LINKS!

List your website(s) and blog(s) with live links — makes it easier for the public to find you and helps build your platform!

### BOOK REVIEWS!

Get your book reviewed. Write a review—it's a valid publishing credit!

### WRITERS SERVICES!

Do you have a writing or professional skill? Get listed on our new Services Page.

### FACEBOOK!

Become a "Fan" of NightWriters! Visit NW's Facebook page and sign up today! Also, link your Facebook page and your websites and blogs to NW sites!

### LinkedIn!

New! Connect with NW on LinkedIn! Help build your author platform with writing professional connections.

# CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

NW Critique Groups are a wonderful benefit of NW Membership. Some groups are full, but many welcome visitors. Always contact the group leader listed for specific information regarding group availability and visiting options. SLO NW cannot guarantee critique group formation or availability but we do strive to facilitate connections between writers so they can initiate and develop their own writing affiliations. While we cannot be, and are not, responsible for any outcomes from these associations, we hope they lead to great creative magic and magnificent literary works! Contact **Anita Hunt, Critique Group Coordinator** to list your critique group and critique needs in the NW Newsletter and on the NW Web site. [hunt6465@charter.net](mailto:hunt6465@charter.net)

**Can't find an existing group? START ONE. It's easy!** If you're new at this, don't be intimidated. It's fun and there are no lofty requisites. All it takes is two or more folks committed to reading/hearing the work of others and providing honest, constructive feedback. Critique groups are not teaching sessions. They are writers learning from reading and critiquing each others' works. Effective formats may include exchanging the review/editing service by mail or electronically, or meeting face-to-face and reading aloud to each other, or any combination that works for the group. One of our groups takes a lesson/learning approach and does practice writing exercises every meeting. Some groups focus on a particular genre; others accept all kinds of writing. Each group is different depending on their needs and interests. **Group members set their own times, dates, meeting locations, and parameters.** We have **Critique Group Guidelines** on our website to help get you started and we can provide a mentor to attend a few sessions if needed. [www.slownightwriter.org](http://www.slownightwriter.org). Contact [slownightwriter@yahoo.com](mailto:slownightwriter@yahoo.com) or Anita Hunt Critique Group Coordinator ([hunt6465@charter.net](mailto:hunt6465@charter.net)) with your critique needs and genres and she'll do her best to assist

## CRITIQUE GROUPS WITH OPENINGS

### POETRY CRITIQUE GROUP FORMING

Poetry Critique Group Emerging! Any poet can join. Any poet can benefit from input of a group, regardless of experience. Call and together we can set time and place to meet.

#### CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Contact: Irene Chadwick, 481-3824  
[irenekooi@gmail.com](mailto:irenekooi@gmail.com)

### 'JUST US' CHILDREN'S BOOK CRITIQUE

Meets in the South County. Critiqued at a fast pace, in a process where members critique each other's writing electronically, followed by a face-to-face meeting twice a month. **Meetings are held 1st and 3rd Saturdays at 10 am.** Contact moderator for details and directions.

#### CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS

Moderator: Lili Sinclair, 904-9697  
[liliasinclair@gmail.com](mailto:liliasinclair@gmail.com)

### NORTH COUNTY GROUP

Meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 9:00 am-noon. Adult Fiction, Memoir, etc (See page 19). Non-fiction, too, until another group can start. Meets in Paso Robles. **CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderator: Lillian Brown, 215-6107  
[lilliofslo@aol.com](mailto:lilliofslo@aol.com)

### SLO CRITIQUES

This group has no genre restrictions and no skill level restrictions. Meeting location is San Luis Obispo. The day and meeting times will be open to discussion.

#### CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS.

Moderator: David Schwab, 543-3111  
[daveschwab@sbcglobal.net](mailto:daveschwab@sbcglobal.net)

### HI HOPES

This group was invented to fill a need for a Los Osos/San Luis Obispo group that incorporates writers who generate stories, essays, novels,

# CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

## CRITIQUE GROUPS WITH OPENINGS

poetry—you get the picture—writers of any description. Whether or not you wish to publish, we'll help you with ideas to improve your writing. Led by Sharon Sutliff, we meet on the **2nd and 4th Mondays at 9 AM and usually wrap up in time for lunch.** We meet in various locations. Call one of the moderators to arrange a visit, or get more information. **CURRENTLY OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderators: Sharon Sutliff, 544-4034  
Audrey Yanes, 748-8600

### **What If? Writing Group I (a.m. Group)**

Meets **every Wednesday morning in Grover Beach from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm.** Not a traditional NightWriter critique group. Work is produced in each session, then analyzed according to the objective of the day's goal. Based on writing exercises designed to jump-start the creative process (gleaned from a variety of published authors), these sessions take writers through the process of writing fiction from inception of idea to the final resolution. This group is for all fiction/non-fiction writers who want to learn the process of crafting a well-told story while developing their own voice and style. We explore such topics as ideas, character, story arc, tone, voice, POV, tension, dialogue, resolution, writing mechanics, etc. There is a small fee involved for this class to cover materials. If enough interest is expressed, a night class may be started.

**CURRENTLY OPEN FOR MORE MEMBERS**

Moderator: Susan Tuttle: 458-5234  
[aim2write@yahoo.com](mailto:aim2write@yahoo.com)

## **NEW GROUPS FORMING!**

### **ADULT NOVELS**

Lili Sinclaire is considering **FORMING A NEW GROUP** for **ADULT NOVELS** in a process where members critique each other's writing electronically, followed by a face- to-face meeting.

Contact: Lili Sinclaire, 904-9697  
[liliasinclaire@gmail.com](mailto:liliasinclaire@gmail.com)

# CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

## FULL CRITIQUE GROUPS: CALL TO VISIT

### LO PROSE

Meets in **Los Osos on the first and third Wednesdays at 7pm till usually 10pm.** Charlie Perryess and Lorie Brallier share hosting responsibilities, running a tight ship so that everyone can read. No cross talk permitted. At the beginning and at our break we socialize. We're all serious but fun-loving. Presently the writing covers several genres: YA novels; short stories; short stories woven into a novel; fantasy; humorous mystery novel; political satire novel; and personal essays. We write just about everything except poetry. **CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS** but guests are welcome. It may happen that space could be made for a compatible writer.

Moderators: Charlie Perryess, 528-4090  
Lorie Brallier, 528-8845

### LONG STORY SHORT

**Flash Fiction/Nonfiction only** meets the **2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays every month, from 10 am to 12 noon** in Arroyo Grande. Bring paper and pencil, or your laptop if you are so inclined—flash pieces, 1000 word strict maximum. **CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS** – call or email Diane to be placed on a waiting list.

Moderator: Diane Smith 858-414-0070  
[mdcomposes@yahoo.com](mailto:mdcomposes@yahoo.com)

### NOVEL IDEA

Meets twice monthly on the **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays in San Luis Obispo**, dealing with book-length works. The group is fully committed to helping one another craft material in the chosen genres with helpful critiques and

encouragement. Marketing techniques are part of the on-going exchange. We are currently full but welcome one-time guests to observe how our group functions in the hope of encouraging establishment of new groups. **CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderator: Barbara Wolcott, 543-5240

### FICTION/NONFICTION

**Meets on 1st and 3rd Mondays from 9:00 am to noon in San Luis.** Members bring original work to each session and read aloud to the group. The group provides constructive suggestions for improving the writing and the structure of the stories. Prose forms of literature—short stories, novels, memoirs, essays, newspaper and magazine articles, travel—are this group's forte. It welcomes writers who are serious about producing work for publication. Those interested in attending or who need more information should telephone. **CURRENTLY FULL — NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderators: Terry Sanville, 541-0492  
Gloria Pautz, 543-2049

### SOUTH COUNTY WRITERS

Meets on the **second and fourth Saturdays from 9:30 AM to noon in Grover Beach.** This group thrives on variety, writing short stories, articles, poetry and novels, all genres from fiction to biography and memoirs. Members exchange work by email at least one week before the meeting in order to receive in-depth critiques aimed at eliminating weaknesses and increasing strengths in everything from plot and character development to grammar and proper manuscript preparation. Intermediate to to advanced writers

# CRITIQUE GROUPS LISTING

## FULL CRITIQUE GROUPS: CALL TO VISIT

are welcome. We meet in a casual and fun atmosphere and are serious about fully developing each member's writing talent, whether for publication or self-satisfaction. Visitors are always welcome.

### **CURRENTLY FULL – NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS**

Moderator: Judy Guarnera, 474-9598  
[j.guarnera@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j.guarnera@sbcglobal.net)

### **WHAT IF? WRITING GROUP II**

For all writers of fiction and creative non-fiction. Meets **every Wednesday in Los Osos from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm**. Not a traditional NightWriter critique group. Work is produced in each session, then analyzed according to the objective of the day's goal. Based on writing exercises designed to jump-start the creative process (gleaned from a variety of published authors), these sessions take writers through the process of writing fiction from inception of idea to the final resolution. This group is for all writers who want to learn the process of crafting a well-told story while developing their own voice and style. We explore such topics as ideas, character, story arc, tone, voice, POV, tension, dialogue, resolution, writing mechanics, etc.

### **CURRENTLY FULL—NOT OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS: Visitors Welcome**

Contacts: Susan Tuttle, 458-5234  
[aim2write@yahoo.com](mailto:aim2write@yahoo.com)