

The Writer's Life

“Writing is the best way to talk without being interrupted” . . . Jules Renard

www.sdwritersguild.org

April 2012



U-T PETER ROWE SPEAKS AT APRIL 23 BEAT

Cheers for one of San Diego's most popular news writers, *San Diego Union-Tribune* staff writer/columnist Peter Rowe, who will headline our (Monday) April 23 general meeting at the San Diego Mental Health Center at 3851 Rosecrans Drive in the Sports Arena area.

Rowe, who was hired as a U-T writer in 1984, will discuss his own life and times at the newspaper with an emphasis on his apparent recent editorial "beat" concerning "artisanal" foods---from craft beer to corner bakery owners---a new brand of local entrepreneurs. Recent assignments have led him to write about food/beverage conferences, local brewing history, plus covering his former beat of profiles and features.

A California native, Rowe attended high school in Encinitas (San Dieguito) and college in La Jolla (UC-San Diego) and graduated from University of California-Berkeley and Northwestern University. He is a past president of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists and a former Fulbright scholar (Japan 2003).

Rowe says he is married "to a terrific woman who often rescues me from errors, in writing and in life." He has three sons--"none of whom read my stories." He adds that he does not look like his photograph.

The Guild welcomes this distinguished journalist who will field questions during his spring talk.

SDWEG Anthology

Are you at the "thinking about it" stage?" Or the "first draft" stage? Or the "final polishing" stage? Or "composing a 100-word biography" stage? Submission contracts are now available from Linda Loegel, noirons@cox.net, or can be obtained at the regular meetings. Your submission will be review anonymously by a committee of SDWEG members. The deadline is October 1, 2012, so you have plenty of time for polishing and perfecting.

Read and Critique Groups

If you are interested in forming a Read and Critique Group of five or six participants to meet once a week, please call Gene Elmore at (619) 460-5740 or email GeneElmore@cox.net. If you know of a group meeting in Escondido or nearby, please email Chloe Edge at auntiewild@aol.com

If you wake up and find yourself a success, you haven't been asleep Gladiola Montana

Words That Changed the World . .

by Anne Casey

William Randolph Hearst and the Unintended Consequences of the Spanish American War

"You furnish the pictures, I'll furnish the war," crowed William Randolph Hearst to newspaper illustrator Frederic Remington.

Hearst thought illustrations of Spanish abuses against native Cuban insurrectionists would enhance newspaper sales and his empire. With continuing civil war in Cuba, President McKinley ordered the U.S.S. Maine warship to Havana to protect Americans and their interests in Cuba.

The night of February 15, 1898, explosions were heard in Havana Harbor, the Maine was suddenly engulfed in flames and sunk.

Unsubstantiated reports were that Spain had torpedoed the Maine. Hearst exploited this with bold faced headlines in his New York Morning Journal, **Maine Sinks, Crisis at Hand, Destruction of the War Ship Maine was the Work of an Enemy.** On April 24, 1898, as

diplomacy failed, Spain declared war against the United States, an "aggressor" in the affairs of Spain's Cuban colony. April 25, 1898 saw a reluctant President McKinley declare war on Spain.

Hearst had his war and empire, American's world power was strengthened following Admiral Dewey's success in the Philippine Islands.

Linda Loegel's Tip of the Hat to . . .

Gary Winters, who read his poetry on March 21, 2012 at the Upstart Crow Bookstore & Coffeehouse in Seaport Village, with Megan Webster, as part of the Alchemy Poetry Series, hosted by Seretta Martin.

Larry Edwards, a finalist in the 2012 San Diego Book Awards competition for his unpublished memoir, "Dare I Call It Murder? -- A Memoir of Violent Loss, Grief and Clarity. See Larry's website

<http://www.larryedwards.com/spellbound/index.html>.

Ralph L. Cates for his new book, *The Phoenix Agenda*, which will be available shortly.

If you, or another Guild member, have published a book, scheduled a book signing, or have some other accomplishment to share, please contact Linda Loegel at noirons@cox.net to be included in our next newsletter. Let your light shine!

Untangling Legal Issues . . by Larry Edwards

Call him Myth Buster. At the Guild's March meeting, speaker Mark Reichenthal debunked a number of myths dealing with matters of copyright, fair use and permissions.

"A common myth held by writers is that if they mail their manuscript to themselves, they don't need to register their work with the U.S. Copyright Office," said Reichenthal, an attorney with the Branfman Law Group in Oceanside.

The problem, he explained, is that if the work is not registered, the author cannot sue for infringement in federal court. "It only costs \$35 and you can register online," he said.

A copyright remains in force for the life of the author, plus 70 years.

Another misconception regards the "fair use" of copyrighted material. Often, writers believe that if they credit the author, it's OK. But that's not the case. Nor is there a bright-line rule on what constitutes "fair." Each use must be considered individually.

Which leads to permissions. Reichenthal recommends that authors always seek permission when using copyrighted material, whether it's text, photographs or other original works of authorship.

San Diego Poetry Annual -Garden Oaks Press

Submissions are open until October 15, 2012; see guidelines at <http://sandiegopoetryannual.com/submission-guidelines/>

Coming Soon to SDWEG



May 28th – John Wolf will demonstrate how to create a video trailer to market your work on your web site.

June 25th – In Praise of Poetry: Refresh your knowledge about poetry and enjoy local poets reading their work; meet a local publisher of poetry.

Work in Progress Kent Hinckley

I have finished the 2nd draft of my novel, *The Thorium Stratagem*, and am in the process of rewriting, polishing, editing, and structuring the chapters. I have a reader to make sure it is coherent.

The novel concerns a Russian agent who tries to foil an American paramilitary incursion to steal a discovery by Russian scientists of a thorium energy reactor. Organized by corrupt U.S. cabinet officials, the American president must rely on assistance from the Russian president to preserve his administration and prevent hostilities erupting between the two powers. The U.S. leader proves his commitment by aiding the Russian agent to prevent the assassination of the Russian president by an ex-CIA killer.

Work in progress Linda Loegel

I'm working on two books that are finished. The first is historical fiction, *Willard Manor*, about a young couple who buy an old house and in the process of renovating it, create a spiritual bond with the family who owned it for 170 years. The chapters alternate from the young couple in 2010, to 1840 when John Willard built the house, and the lives of the generations of his family.

The second is non-fiction called, *Twelve Steps to Becoming an Author*, under contract with a publisher. This is a writer's guide that follows fictional Rhonda Gayetski, a wannabe writer, on her path to learning the ins and outs of the business of writing, from joining a read and critique group, to titling her book, publishing vs. self-publishing, marketing, etc., the basics that a new writer needs to know.

War Veterans Anthology . . . Seeking Submissions

Writer and editor Henry F. Tonn is calling for submissions for a veterans of war anthology. Fiction, nonfiction, and poetry are requested from war veterans, their family and friends. Experiences from any war are permitted, including work from veterans of foreign countries. All work must be in English. The book will be perfectly bound and hard copy. Guidelines can be found at henrytonn.com.

The Big Read: Shades of Poe

April 2012 is a month-long celebration of Edgar Allan Poe's remarkable stories and poems in a wave of exhibitions and events created by Write Out Loud to encourage our community to read the works of Edgar Allan Poe. For the full schedule see writeoutloudsd.com/shades-of-poe.

American Trivia

by Richard Lederer and Caroline McCullagh

SDWEG members Richard Lederer and Caroline McCullagh are the proud parents of a bouncing baby book, *American Trivia: What We All Should Know About U.S. History, Culture & Geography* (Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2012). Over a span of three years, the co-authors will share with you their journey through American history.

Introduction to This Series

The United States of America, a federal constitutional republic covering 3.79 million square miles, is home to a population of more than 315 million people. What are the ties that bind together a country as far-reaching and diverse as ours? Throughout our history, we've lived through the best of times, and we've also lived through the worst of times; yet the heart of our society continues to beat mightily.

We are not a people made from a single stock. Rather, we are a medley of colors, races, religions, and ethnicities. As Jesse Jackson explains, "Our flag is red, white, and blue, but our nation is a rainbow—red, yellow, brown, black, and white."

You might think our language unites us, but in fact we have no official language; we speak all the languages of the world. Walking down the street in any American city, you may hear Spanish or Chinese or Yiddish or any of the more than three hundred other tongues spoken in the United States. Many people are in the process of transition from the language of their birth to English, while others strive to preserve the language of their heritage.

Is there such a thing as an American palate? We all know what hamburgers, hot dogs, and french fries are, but do you know what a cat biscuit or johnnycake is? Have you eaten poi? Gyros? Moose hash? Mountain oysters? Gefilte fish? Some of us would say yes, most of us, no.

We all share a nation with many people who may look different from us, speak a native language different from ours, and pray in a way that may be foreign to us. In any category you mention, there are a myriad of possibilities. What, then, holds us together in this vast and varied land of ours?

The one thing all Americans have in common is our history. It doesn't matter if you're a first-generation or twelfth-generation American. You own our history. That's what makes you an American. That's the glue that holds us together as a people.

We hope that this *American Trivia* series will make the history of America live for you—that you'll think more about the people who have gone before us and worked so hard to bequeath us a united, spirited, and enchanting country. We hope that you'll find even more precious our national gifts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Revising Tips by Laurie Richards

Punctuation: Tools Not Torture.

"You're drafting a sentence that leaves the post slow and steady but picks up speed as it stretches across the page to nudge out the first period that tries to get close, and the crafty sentence overtakes three commas while escaping a semi-colon that would signal a pause and interrupt the gallop toward the paragraph's end, until, finally in sight of the finish line, the sentence skids to a full stop. The reader catches his breath."

Punctuated another way:

"You're drafting a sentence. It leaves the post slow and steady. It picks up speed. It stretches across the page. It nudges out the first period that tries to get close. The crafty sentence overtakes three commas and escapes a semi-colon. The semi-colon would signal a pause and interrupt the gallop toward the paragraph's end. In sight of the finish line, the sentence skids to a full stop, and the reader catches his breath."

The first version disobeys punctuation rules, but its punctuation obeys the message of the paragraph and helps to create the mood of increasing speed and a sudden end. The long sentence followed by the abrupt, short sentence adds to that result.

In the second version, the punctuation is absolutely correct, but the rhythm and the impersonal pronouns are monotonous. Worse, in this version, the punctuation contradicts the message of the paragraph.

Perhaps neither version displays mastery of the craft of writing, but together they prove a point: What punctuation to use, when to use it and why to use it requires decisions by the writer that may be as important as word choice. Some writers leave the job of punctuation to an editor. That's lazy. Period. Punctuation is an integral part of crafting the story. Written words are like musical notes, and periods, commas, semi-colons, dashes, and ellipses tell the reader when the notes should be played. With every sentence composed, the author should be the person who decides what rhythm to use.

Tip: To master the tools of punctuation, read: "A Dash of Style," by Noah Lukeman; "Eats, Shoots, and Leaves," by Lynne Truss, and Section I of "The Elements of Style," by Strunk and White.

The next meeting will be Monday April 23, 2012

San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

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3851 Rosecrans

San Diego County Health Services Complex

Visit our web site

www.SDWritersGuild.org

Membership: \$36.00 per year

Guests: \$5.00 per meeting

Mission Statement: The Guild shall promote, support, and encourage the writing art for adults and youth.

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