

# The Writer's Life

The Newsletter of the San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

"Upstart Crow" was once a slanderous name given to Shakespeare by a jealous contemporary.

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

September 2012



## Calling All Writers: How Editors Can Help

Literary agents and book publishers receive tens of thousands of submissions a year. Only a fraction of them are picked up. How do those few rise to the top? Good story telling, for sure. But as one literary agent famously said, if I see one typo in a manuscript, I stop reading and go on to the next one. Manuscripts are also rejected for improper formatting, bad grammar, awkward syntax, "plot holes," and a through-line that wanders off course, leaving the reader baffled. And in this era of the self-publishing juggernaut, authors who have no fear of rejection by an agent or publisher often get scathing reviews from readers who point out these same shortfalls.

What can you expect from an editor? What, exactly, does an editor do? Get the answer to these questions and many more on September 24 from Shirley Clukey, president of San Diego Professional Editors Network (SD/PEN), and Larry Edwards, a professional book editor, judge for the San Diego Book Awards, and winner of the 2012 San Diego Book Awards. Come prepared to be educated and entertained.

## The Prez Sez

Get acquainted with new members through "Introducing . . .", a series facilitated by Marcia Buompensiero. Such accomplished and interesting individuals have joined us!

We bid a fond farewell to Gene Elmore and Anne Casey who have resigned from the Board of Directors for personal reasons. Gene served SDW/EG as Treasurer for ten years, while Anne served as a Member-at-large for two years.

Fall is the time of year for election of the Board of Directors for SDW/EG. Half the Board members are elected on alternate years: 5 per year. Nominations are open in September, the election is during the October General meeting. Officers are elected at the November Board of Directors meeting for the year beginning in January. There are two vacant positions which need to be filled in addition to three people up for re-election for a two-year term. If you want to nominate someone or yourself (volunteer ☺) be ready at the September meeting or contact one of the current Directors.

A big "Thank You" to everyone who returned their Member Survey.

**Ruth Leyso-Wallace, President**

"The writer who breeds  
more words than he needs,  
is making a chore  
for the reader who reads."

Dr. Seuss

## Anthology Deadline Drawing Near

Be a part of the Guild's very first anthology – your opportunity to publish work of up to 1500 words and support the Guild. For a copy of the Submission Guidelines and Author Agreement, contact Linda Loegel. The deadline is drawing near: October 1, 2012.

Also, we are seeking suggestions for a title for the anthology. If you have an idea for a title, please contact the editor Linda Loegel at [noirons@cox.net](mailto:noirons@cox.net).

Our condolences go to Caroline McCullagh for the death of her husband Bill McCullagh in June. Bill was a long time member of SDW/EG . He passed away painlessly, surrounded by family, after a short hospitalization.

**The next meeting will be September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012; 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

*(Networking 6:30. . . Business meeting 6:45. . . Program 7-8:30 PM)*

## A Tip of the Hat to . . .

Linda Loegel for the publication of her new book *Twelve Steps to Becoming a Writer*.

*If you, or someone you know, has published a book, scheduled a book signing, or some other accomplishment to share, please contact Linda Loegel at [noirons@cox.net](mailto:noirons@cox.net) to be included in our next newsletter. Let your light shine!*

## WHAT YOU MISSED by Ellen Shaw Tufts

### Putting Women Back Into the Story

During our August meeting, local author Laurel Corona revealed a few skills---if not secrets---as a distinguished author of historical fiction. This literary niche recently propelled her into the 2012 Santa Barbara Writers' Conference where she conducted a four-day workshop on historical fiction, a first-time inclusion for both the conference and presenter.

"Putting Women back into History" was her formal speech at the Guild and she immediately distinguished between accuracy and truth in crafting historical literature about both fictional and actual women---"my novels are populated with real and invented characters," she noted.

One facet of this literary skill continues to be presenting facts when all the ACTUAL facts of history or historical eras aren't known. According to the speaker, "As authors of historical fiction, we often use exhaustive research in order to present as truthful a view as possible, not saying anything inconsistent with the facts we have, but building plausibly---through imagination---in the story, when the facts are not enough."

Describing a spiritual dimension of historical fiction, she mentioned an occupational occurrence which may have resonated with other writers in the house: "Sometimes it feels as though someone is shaping the story with me---every novelist I know has often felt her story is being shaped by something not in our control."

Dr. Corona is currently a full professor of English and Humanities at San Diego City College. See <http://www.laurelcorona.com> for information on Corona's other works of historical fiction including *Until Our Last Breath* followed by *The Four Seasons*, then *Penelope's Daughter*, *Finding Emilie*, with *The Mapmaker's Daughter* scheduled for 2013 publication.

What a sparkling evening!

## News from Amazon . . . by Laura Riley

Thom Kephart, Amazon representative, gave an overview of Amazon's services to an overflow crowd on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Amazon's *CreateSpace* distributes print books; *Kindle Direct Publishing* distributes digital books; ACX (Audiobook Creation Exchange) creates and distributes audio-books; and *Author Central* lets you keep your book and author's pages up to date—a feature allowing an author to track book sales real-time on a map of the US.

Advantages to using Amazon's services include 1) it takes days instead of years to put your work before the public, 2) the author retains control and rights, 3) royalties are higher, 4) there is no requirement to order a minimum number of copies, 5) listing on Amazon is part of your marketing plan, and 6) you can get on with your life and write another book.

Kephart advised authors to be sure the copy that describes your book on Amazon contains key words that will bring it up on appropriate search engines.

For more information re: Thom Kephart and publishing with Amazon see Larry Edwards' blog at <http://polishingyourprose.wordpress.com/2012/08/25/amazon>

## Advice to writers

" . . .Memorize, read, arrange time for solitude. All writing is re-writing: think, reflect, without distraction" advised Christopher Hedges, author of *War is the Force That gives Us Meaning*, in an interview with Dean Nelson, Chair of Journalism Department at Point Loma Nazarene University. Broadcast on ITV, San Diego

## Planning, Promotion, and Pitching . . .

the Three Ps of a successful book signing.

Who is your reader? Go where they go. Think ahead of time about your signature. Do you have a special message?

Put together a kit of pens, tape, markers, book stands, and other items, and take it to each signing. Get out from behind the table and talk to shoppers and passersby.

Jessica Barrett  
from a Book Consultant at iUniverse, Inc.

## Welcome to The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

### Introducing . . . . . Laura Riley



Born and bred in Los Angeles, Laura attended high school in Santa Monica (Saint Monica's), received a B.A from UCLA, and an M. A. and PhD in clinical psychology from USC. Laura was engaged in a multi-ethnic psychology practice in L.A. for 27 years.

Before retiring, Laura wrote many non-fiction articles. The last three years have been spent learning to write fiction and completing an 110,000 word novel about strong women fighting abuse. Laura says, "When the manuscript returns from its last edit, it'll be ready to go out into the world—perfect or not!" Laura joined SDWEG to associate with knowledgeable, dedicated, and brilliant authors and says she has found them here! To contact Laura: [riley.martin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:riley.martin@sbcglobal.net); 858-456-2144

### Introducing . . . . . Susan Hunter

For the past ten years, until June 30, 2012, Susan was head of Public Relations at Allianz Global Investors Capital, a global asset management firm. She was responsible for all internal and external communications, including media relations, branding, advertising and events. Susan has extensive experience editing financial-related reports, commentaries, presentations, etc. She has supervised relationships with advertising and PR agencies, freelance writers, video producers, graphic artists and has managed internal teams of writers, copyeditors and graphic designers. Now on break from the corporate world, Susan is eager to concentrate on more creative endeavors, including fiction writing and building on social media skills. "Ellen Shaw Tufts and Linda Seeley, fellow alumnae from Smith College, introduced me to SDWEG. I find the monthly meetings an invaluable resource in learning more about writing and publishing." Susan has a Master's in Journalism, and an MBA in finance and marketing.

### Introducing . . . . . Joe Bompensiero

Joe is a native San Diegan born into a Sicilian family in what is now known as "Little Italy." Growing up on the waterfront, he went to sea at age seven and spent ten seasons fishing for tuna in the Pacific. His fisherman father encouraged schooling so Joe graduated from San Diego State University and became a USAF career staff officer, obtaining his post graduate degree in San Francisco. Joe's avocation is writing. His first effort was a humorous Vietnam memoir entitled, "Dinner in Happy Valley," followed by "Chocolate Moon" (a seafaring tale) published in 2011. Joe is hard at work on his current effort: "NIPUTI – Mafia NEPHEW," a guilt-by-association memoir of San Diego Mafioso, Frank Bompensiero. To contact Joe: Cell: 760-644-4739; [Jbompensiero@roadrunner.com](mailto:Jbompensiero@roadrunner.com)



### Introducing . . . . . Rob Jordan Black (R.J.)

R.J. is an emerging writer originally from Mexico City. Having worked on both sides of the border in various capacities for thirty years, R.J. recently retired to divide his time between building his dream home with his girlfriend and writing. Attempting at least one good limerick a day to keep active through writing blocks while finishing an "epic" novel about the Mexican-American War, his work has appeared in several small presses, including the "2012 San Diego Poetry Anthology." R.J. looks forward to the lectures, conversations, friendships and conviviality that the guild offers likeminded people who mainly work alone. To contact R.J.: 619-540-5511; [rjb@hit.net](mailto:rjb@hit.net).

### Introducing . . . . . Lawrence Richard Carleton

Lawrence has published or otherwise presented scholarly work in philosophy, cognitive science, and software development, thereby putting to some use his advanced degrees in computer



science and philosophy, and a post doctorate in cognitive science. He has now embarked on a series of interrelated novelettes and short stories with a working title, "Down Hill From 9/11," combining his nostalgia for Michigan and Ontario with his keen interest in current political and social issues. Lawrence can't help infusing his naturally wry humor into the proceedings. "Down Hill" and "Big Oil and Beer Berries" are available on Amazon Kindle. "Marty Grey" is forthcoming in the first

issue of the San Diego Writers/Editors Guild annual anthology. To contact Lawrence: email: lrcarleton @ gmail.com; Amazon kindle author page:

[http://www.amazon.com/Lawrence-Carleton/e/B006OUZL11/ref=ntt\\_athr\\_dp\\_pel\\_1](http://www.amazon.com/Lawrence-Carleton/e/B006OUZL11/ref=ntt_athr_dp_pel_1)

### Introducing . . . . . Amy E. Zajac

With her two daughters grown and on their own, and after living in Georgia twelve years, Amy relocated to San Diego, where she spends her time writing and also volunteering at Feeding America. Her stories, published in *A Cup of Comfort for Divorced Women*, *Pets Across America Two*, *Hot Dogs & Cool Cats*, and the upcoming *1<sup>st</sup> Annual San Diego Writers/Editors Anthology*, follows her successful affiliation as a local county correspondent for the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*. An October 2012 release is on schedule for her mother's memoir, "It Started With Patton – Teresa Leska's Story." Currently, she is editing her first speculative fiction novel.



### Introducing . . . . . Birgit Dugan



Birgit has aspired to write since childhood. With several writing classes under her belt, she still hadn't found her topic of passion. "Then, during the past 10 years, my life took a direction that was unbelievable and has ultimately brought me to my calling." Birgit's inspirational memoir, "FROG Every Day," is currently being published and should be released in the fall of 2012. In case you're wondering, "FROG" stands for "Fully Rely on God." Birgit currently mentors women and teens to help them find solutions to life that brings them peace and joy. Along with scheduled book signings, Birgit will appear on Hay House Radio. To contact Birgit: 760-815-4122; [bsdugan@ymail.com](mailto:bsdugan@ymail.com) or [FROGeveryday.com](http://FROGeveryday.com)

**Thank you to Marcia Buompensiero  
for collecting and editing these introductions to new members of San Diego Writers/Editors Guild.**

### Books That Shaped America

Founded in 1800, The Library of Congress has a new "Books That Shaped America" list, all written by Americans. The 88 books are not the 'best' American books, although many of them fit that description. Some have been the source of great controversy in U.S. history, shaping Americans' views of their world and the world's views of America. Below are a few that you might not be familiar with: ***A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*** (1783) by Noah Webster. Webster believed a distinctive American language was essential to creating cultural independence for the new nation. ***A Survey of the Roads of the United States of America*** (1789) by Christopher Colles. Few people purchased subscriptions, but this first atlas covered 1,000 miles from Albany, NY, to Williamsburg, VA. ***How the Other Half Lives*** (1890) by Jacob Riis. This was an early example of photojournalism as vehicle for social change. ***The Snowy Day*** (1962) by Ezra Jack Keats. This first full-color picture book with an African-American as the main character changed the field of children's literature forever.

To see the entire list go to: [http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-123.html#skip\\_menu](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-123.html#skip_menu)

## American Trivia by Richard Lederer and Caroline McCullagh

SDW/EG 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.

### A Capital Idea

Ironically, the only president who didn't live in Washington was Washington. During George Washington's administration the nation's capital was situated in Philadelphia.

In 1788 Maryland, and Virginia in 1789, donated a hundred square miles of land to the American government to be used for a capital city. George Washington chose the territory contributed by Maryland, and title to Virginia's land was returned to that state.

It was John Adams who first occupied what was then known as the President's House, at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. The Adams family moved into their new home on November 1, 1800, while the paint was still drying. Adams occupied the President's House for only four months, having lived most of his term in Philadelphia.

### Capital Facts

Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to call his D.C. home the White House. Previously, the house had been called the President's House or the Executive Mansion. The White House is the most-visited building in the United States. Graceland, Elvis Presley's former home, is second.

When, in 1814—during the War of 1812—British troops burned the White House, Dolley Madison (1768-1849), wife of President James Madison, rescued Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of George Washington before she fled the city. That most-recognized of all presidential portraits is the only remaining possession from the original building.

The Washington Monument honors George Washington and, in many people's eyes, symbolizes the city of Washington, D.C. Surrounded by 50 American flags, the monument stands near the west end of the National Mall. Towering 555 feet high, this marble obelisk is the tallest stone structure in the world.

The building of the monument began in patriotic fashion on July 4, 1848. Because of a lack of funds and the onset of the Civil War, construction was halted in 1856 and wasn't resumed for 20 years. The American centennial in 1876 inspired a national passion to complete the obelisk, a goal reached on December 6, 1884, when the final capstone was set. Because marble from one quarry was used from 1848 until 1856 and marble from another from 1876 to 1884, a horizontal line about one-third up separates one color from the slightly different color of the top two thirds.

continued>>>

## Revising Tips . . . by Laurie Richards

### Right Word, Wrong Reaction.

Our modern vocabulary includes words that haven't been around forever. If you're writing a story set during the Crusades, you would startle a reader if you described a drink as having the effect of methamphetamines. That's an example of a wrong word for the era.

Sometimes, a writer chooses a word that has been around long enough, but sounds too modern and, thus, kicks the reader out of the story. For example, the word "guy" has been around for centuries, but if you were writing a story set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and described a character as a "guy who liked coonskin caps," the phrase probably rings too modern for the setting. The reader might conclude that the author lacks sufficient knowledge of the period to be writing about it.

**Tip:** Unless you plan on visiting every reader to explain that the word was, in fact, used during the period of your story, ensure that your word selection seems credible to the reader.

### Coming Soon to SDW/EG



October 22<sup>nd</sup> Antoinette Kuritz, publisher and organizer of The LaJolla Writers Conference, will give a presentation about designing a book and its cover. It is said "Don't judge a book by its cover," but how many times have you not opened a book because the cover wasn't appealing?

November 26<sup>th</sup> SDWEG members Richard Lederer and Caroline McCullagh will share their co-adventure writing, publishing, and marketing *American Trivia: What We All Should Know About Our Great Nation*.

### American Trivia, continued

The first cherry trees of Washington, D.C., were a gift from the people of Tokyo to the city of Washington. First Lady Helen Herron Taft, along with the Vicountess Chinda, the wife of the Japanese ambassador, supervised the planting of the first trees in 1912. Currently more than 3,750 cherry trees of 16 species adorn the capital.

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the largest museum complex in the world, includes museums and galleries, nine research centers, and 160 affiliate museums around the world. It's no wonder that the Smithsonian is sometimes called "the Nation's Attic."

**San Diego Writers/Editors Guild**  
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        7:00 - 8:30 P.M.- Speaker/Program  
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Mission Statement  
of  
The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

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