

The Writer's Life

Don't believe you're the only one who has ever suffered;
just write as if you were - William Logan



www.sdwritersguild.org

May 2013

Karla Peterson to Speak at May 20th Meeting



Karla Peterson, the U-T's critic at large, is a longtime San Diegan whose U-T San Diego beats have included TV criticism, pop-culture, Comic-Con and San Diego people and lifestyles. She has won awards for entertainment criticism from the American Association of Sunday and Features Editors and the San Diego Press Club.

Karla graduated from San Diego State University in 1982 with a degree in English. She was hired by the San Diego Union in 1985 as a clerk. Her typing is still quite speedy, she says. She has interviewed Oprah Winfrey, joined the band blink-182 on the road, followed Bob Filner and Carl DeMaio on the campaign trail and braved the crowds at Street Scene, Comic-Con and the "American Idol" auditions. She is ready to talk about the joys of writing, the horrors of deadlines and her many adventures in journalism. Join us for an entertaining evening.

The Future of Bookstores

Can you imagine a world without bookstores? Could you imagine kids growing up asking "What's a bookstore?" How can bookstores be supported, enhanced and prevented from faltering and closing?

Authors can do their part to support bookstores: list stores that carry your book on your website site and send readers there.

In France bookstores are supported by the government. Perhaps we could have a "Save the bookstore fund" financed by having a check box on our income tax form that will let us donate \$1 to saving bookstores instead of allocating it as a political contribution.

Bookstores could engage customers once inside the bookstore with electronic displays that let readers experience the books they are considering, right there in the bookstore. Imagine the fun you could have with a "take this quiz" in the self-help section that promoted your book. What if bookstores offered a way to buy the eBook after you browse, when you find the book you want but decide you'd rather have it in digital form? What if you could get it right then and there, instead of going home and ordering it online? Some indie bookstores are already doing this. Why couldn't a bookstore have an interactive display like some Fry's stores, where kids actually insist their parents take them to the bookstore? Imagine having such a display featuring Harry Potter books?

(excerpts from Saving Bookstores, blog by Penny C.Sansevieri 3/29/13)

The Prez Says . . . Website News !

Our website www.sdwritersguild.org will soon be getting a digital facelift. The new assistant to the webmaster will be behind the scenes making our site more flexible and allow us to obtain statistics on traffic to the site.

Members will soon have the option of signing up for a new perk: a personal listing on a designated page of the website. Watch for an email with the details and a form to complete if you wish to participate.

In a few months we will be offering members the choice of receiving the newsletter in either paper form, digital form, or both. The newsletter is now posted on the website soon after the paper copies are mailed.

I've heard several members say they are nearly ready to submit their work for the 2013 anthology! The Author's Agreement is on the website when you are ready to print it off and mail a signed copy to Linda Loegel, editor of *The Guilded Pen*.

Ruth Leyse-Wallace

Coming Soon to SDW/EG

June 24, 2013 - Jill Williams from Tucson will discuss the evolution of a memoir. Learn more about Jill at www.jillwilliams.com.

July 22, 2013 - Caitlin Rather, a San Diego author of true crime novels.

Books, as part of an information-based economy, will, for the first time, be included in the U. S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculation. UT SD 4-28-13

What You Missed . . .

by Ellen Shaw Tufts

Sci-fi Boundaries and Beyond

SDW/EG members and guests at our April 22 meeting experienced a buoyant evening when celebrated author/scientist/futurist David Brin shared his apparent passion for life in our tech-driven world.

"Look at each new thing as a source of joy," said Dr. Brin, a North County resident whose post-apocalyptic novel, "The Postman," was produced in 1988 as a celebrated film.

His talk, originally billed as "Pondering the Future," opened with a tribute to the late-sci-fi giant Ray Bradbury along with his L.A. childhood salute to "the sacred Los Angeles Public Library."

Often reiterating his premise that science and art (creativity) are inter-connected, Brin (www.davidbrin.com) urged writers to seek and accept criticism as the only antidote to delusions and mediocrity in their craft. And he graciously fielded Guild member/fablist Margaret Harmon's mid-meeting comment re the science/art connection as "a lovely thought."

With a dazzling frame of reference, Brin touched on related subjects and sci-fi "greats" including the classic "Star Trek" as a genuine utopia, also his offbeat take on Yoda, along with the legacy of famed La Jolla scientist Dr. Jonas Salk and a SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) update.

Thirty Million Dollars for a Book?

Said to be the first book ever printed in the United States, there are only eleven copies of the Bay Psalm Book surviving. Printed in 1640, the 6X5" book is expected to sell for \$30 million at auction next November. (SD-UT 4/14/13)

Copyright Myth

The mail-yourself-the-manuscript-and-then-you'll-be-protected belief is a myth. Rest assured, the only thing you will prove when you mail your work to yourself is that the post office is still in the business of delivering mail. See the FAQs at www.copyright.gov.

Source: Book Marketing Matters, e-newsletter from Brian Judd

A Tip of the Hat To . . .

Gary Winters, whose short fiction *Boy* has been accepted for *Big Art Book Anthology* published by Scarborough Arts, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Anne Hoiberg, who spoke at the Gary and Mary West Senior Center in San Diego on April 16. Her topic was "History of Women in Politics: The Firsts in the U.S."

Richard Lederer, whose new book, *The Big Book of Word Play Crosswords*, celebrates the 100th anniversary of crossword puzzles.

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 to be included in our next newsletter. Let your light shine!

Discovering My Memoir Theme . . .

by Harry Huntsman

When I enrolled in Donna Eckstein's City College Continuing Education writing class, "Our Stories Our Lives," she asked, "What is the theme of your memoir?" I was surprised and argumentative. I thought in a memoir your life is your theme. She put the question several ways.

I browsed through the 340 documents on my computer hard drive, trying to decide which belonged in my memoir, *The Minister and the Mafia*. I realized that many of them were about the abuse of power and dominance – in the home, business, in church congregations, government organizations and in organized crime. My story was showing how I and individuals in my life dealt with this abuse. I had the theme of my memoir: "Success depends on knowing the special tactics of abusers of power."

To find out more about this helpful class go to Donna Eckstein, PhD – 619-985-6140 or deckstei@sdccd.edu.

I find the following books most helpful in writing personal narrative, including memoir.

The Memoir and the Memoirist, by Thomas Larson (Not easy to read but profound)

The Memoir Project, by Marion Roach Smith. (A must for she who hesitates in writing.)

To Show and Tell, by Phillip Lopote (author of many books on memoir and personal narrative).

The next meeting is May 20th, 2013

Networking 6:30–Business meeting 6:45–Program 7-8:30 PM

American Trivia

by Richard Lederer and Caroline McCullagh

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

The Home of the Brave (Part II)

***Nathan Hale** (1755-1776), a Yale-educated teacher, became a captain in the Continental Army and a member of a select group of fighters called the Rangers. He volunteered to go through the British lines to gather intelligence on troop positions in New York City. At the age of 21, he was captured and hanged as a spy. Before he was hanged, he is credited with saying, "I regret that I have but one life to give to my country."

***Davy Crockett** (1786-1836), famous as a hunter, Indian fighter, army scout, and teller of tall tales, described himself as "fresh from the backwoods, half horse, half alligator, a little touched with the snapping turtle." Crockett used his mythic reputation to build a political career, including elected service in the Tennessee legislature and the U. S. House of Representatives. His motto was "Be always sure you're right — then go ahead!" Crockett died at the Alamo fighting for Texas's independence from Mexico. After his passing, he continued to be the subject of songs, books, television programs, and movies.

***The Lewis and Clark expedition**, led by U.S. Army officers Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) and William Clark (1770-1838), began near St. Louis on May 14, 1804. The group traveled approximately eight thousand miles, from Missouri to the Pacific Coast and back, exploring the Louisiana Purchase and the Oregon region. A Shoshone Indian, Sacagawea (1787?-1812), and her French-Canadian husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, accompanied them as interpreters from Fort Mandan in what is now North Dakota. Sacagawea walked thousands of miles with her infant son, Jean, on her back. The explorers returned to St. Louis in 1806 with maps; specimens; descriptions of plants, animals, and minerals; and information about the peoples of the West, which allowed the United States to establish a better claim to the Oregon region.

***Robert E. Lee** (1807-1870) was considered a genius as he rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army. When the Civil War began, President Lincoln offered Lee field command of the army, but he felt duty-bound to stand by his state of Virginia. Although he did not support slavery or secession, he believed that the South, like the original thirteen colonies, was fighting for liberty. He first led the Army of Northern Virginia and then became commander of all >>

Revising Tips. . . by Laurie Richards Wimpy Writing; Timid Tomes.

Many factors weaken writing: vague verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and—ta da: the passive voice in which responsibility for the action in the sentence is avoided.

Mistakes were made.

Well, who made them? If an author, a narrator, a protagonist or an antagonist avoids responsibility, wimpiness prevails, and the reader strays.

There are exceptions. For example, Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* wore timidity to disguise his greed, but Dickens drew the character so that the reader suspected Uriah's duplicity and looked forward to his undoing. Usually, however, the passive voice begets weak writing and buries tepid verbs.

Example: *The trial was lost through lack of preparation.*

Defense counsel lost because he didn't know enough about the facts of his case.

Example: *Enron was not well managed.*

Lay and Skilling mismanaged Enron.

Shirley was frightened by escalators.

Escalators terrified Shirley.

In the first two examples, the cause of the effect is not identified, as though the writer fears to state his opinion. In the third example, the cause is obscured in a prepositional phrase, but it should be the subject of the sentence.

Tip: Boldly assign the cause of an effect; i.e., responsibility for the effect, through the active voice.

"Everyone thinks writers know more about the inside of the human head, but that is wrong. They know less, that's why they write. Trying to find out what everyone else takes for granted."

Margaret Atwood from *The Quotable Book Lover*

Writers' Expo - June 8th, 9:00 AM - 1:00PM

The University of Phoenix will hold a Writers' Expo on their main campus as a fundraiser for scholarships. It will feature author's book signing (\$20 fee), four workshops on the craft and business of writing, and a sale of used books. For a table at the book signing send a check to Tony Vianna, 7152 Tanager Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92011-5033 – see viannabooks4u.com.

>> **Home of The Brave II**, continued

Confederate forces. He was beloved by his men and respected by his enemies. On April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia and urged Southerners to accept the peace. After the War, Lee became president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee).

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