

# Gold Country Writers Dispatch

Our Mission is to Support Local Writers



May  
2017  
Issue

Inside the May 2017 Issue:  
1-SCBWI Convention Report  
2- GCW Meeting Schedule Prose  
from the Pres, Writer's Quote,  
3 -Writing Contests, Jennifer  
Chen Tran  
4 -Two Truths & a Lie  
5 - Special Events, Specialty Spin-  
Off Critique Groups, Club  
Officers  
6 - Guest Speakers-Ken &  
Dahlynn McKowen: Travel  
Writing

May 3 & 10 meeting site  
**changed.** We will meet at  
the Auburn City Hall, Rose  
Room, same time.

## Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Convention

By Joan Stafford

On Saturday April 1, 2017 Gold Country Writers Chery Anderson and I attended the SCBWI - Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators – Spring Convention at the Roseville Community Center. The day was filled with many exciting guest speakers, from publishing houses to authors and illustrators of children's books.

The keynote speaker, who got the event going, was **Grace Lin**, an author and illustrator who told of her autobiographical path from a lover of picture books to her success as an author and illustrator. Born into a culture that was not her own, she shared how she learned to adapt to her own heritage through her exploration, travels and books.

Another speaker, **Pamela Notarantonio**, told how her publishing house published books with illustrators, often beginning with a black and white draft that takes many forms before becoming the actual color reproduction for the book. **Denise Vega**, author of *Chop Wood/Carry Water*, shared several ideas for staying on track with one's craft by having an anthem, (music to get you going into your writing each day); keeping one's craft as first, second, third and in between; and silencing the inner critic.

While some 15 workshops were presented, one could only attend a total of 4. Some of these were panel discussions using questions about specific concerns, while others were often two or three authors or publishers providing information about their roles and those of their authors. Question-and-answer sessions were held at the end.

There was a freebie table set up where one could grab postcards, business cards, books and mock-up books; from a section for illustrators to display their portfolios, which I did, receiving several comments via sticky notes put out for people to write comments; a raffle prize table, in which everyone had received a ticket and incredible prizes of multiple books in baskets; logo items; art and craft tools; and one-to-one critiques with authors and publishing houses.

There was little time to network and build connections in this all-day convention, but the atmosphere was professional and informative. For me, it is an intermediate step toward publishing my own illustrated works of children's literature.

## PROSE



### FROM THE PRES

Our April guest speaker, Jennifer Chen Tran, gave several of our member's insight into the publishing world. She also opened the question of self-publishing or traditional publishing? Which is best? I found it interesting that she was pushing traditional publishing as an agent, but she worked for a company (Fuse Literary) that bridges self-publishing with traditional publishing.

My question was, how is this accomplished? She gave some clues about the process. What I took away from the talk, is that if you self-publish, do your own marketing becoming somewhat successful then they will take you on as a client and into the traditional publishing world.

One thing she did say that is important to all members. Be careful what rights you sign away. Don't give exclusive rights away, especially future work you might do. This includes Amazon and other self-publishing venues.

It's hard enough to write our stories, it seems it's even harder to market them and get a fair compensation for your work.

Take care and be vigilant.

Skip Michael

# GCW Meeting Schedule

Join the **Gold Country Writers** each Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1279 High St., Auburn 95603. Our regular monthly schedule is:

**First Wednesday:** Business Meeting to discuss club business. All members are welcome to come and contribute. This is followed by a closed meeting of the club's Board of Directors.

**Second & Fourth Wednesday:** Drop-In Critique. This is the time when members present samples (a maximum of five pages, double-spaced) of their writing to the group, and everyone gets to offer his or her critique.

**Third Wednesday:** Special program of general interest to the club members. Topics change each month. See Page 5 for the Speaker of the Month.

**Fifth Wednesday:** On the rare occasion that there is one, we have a special program at the church or meet at a local restaurant for brunch. Join us for fun and socializing with other club members. **See Special E-Blast for details on May 31 Event.**

## Writer's Quote

*"It's none of their business that you have to learn to write. Let them think you were born that way."*

- Ernest Hemingway





# Writing Contests

## Voices of Lincoln Poetry Contest

Voices of Lincoln is holding a poetry contest. Entries can be in traditional rhyme, free verse, Haiku or other accepted poetry form.

Select up to 3 of the following categories and submit one of each: *Love is all around us*, *Dreams do come true*, *On the street where I live*, *Gone but not forgotten*, or *A second chance*.

Youth 18 and under have a separate category. Submittal deadline is July 22, 2017. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards in each category will be presented. Go to [www.libraryatlincoln.org](http://www.libraryatlincoln.org) for entry form and complete rules.

## Arizona Mystery Writers Jim Martin Memorial Story Contest

The annual story contest for 2017 runs from January 1 to June 1, 2017! Anyone can enter – and anyone can win! Send in your short story in mystery, suspense, or thriller style. Entries may be up to 2500 words. **Prizes:** \$200 for First, \$100 for Second, and \$75 for Third. Winners will be officially announced on Sept. 9, 2017.

The entry fee is **\$15** per story, and you can submit more than one story if you like. Entries are judged “blind:” without the judges knowing who wrote the stories.

For entry form, judging criteria and past winners, go to the AMW website -

[http://www.arizonamysterywriters.com/?page\\_id=1449](http://www.arizonamysterywriters.com/?page_id=1449)

## Kudos

Betsy Schwarzentraub received a go-ahead from an editor of a publishing house in response to her preliminary book proposal at the Mount Hermon Christian Writers Conference. Now she is working on filling out a full book proposal in their format. We wish her well.



*Jennifer Chen Tran, Agent - April Guest*

*Speaker, “Two Truths & a Lie”*

*This is a test - Spot the Lies (Answers on Pg 4)*

### New York Times Facts?

1. A YouTube star is in the top 10 best sellers.
2. *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying* has sold 6 million .
3. A book written in poetic verse is in the top 10.

### Publisher Facts?

4. Authors always have input over their covers.
5. Publishing is 78% women.
6. For Big 5 publishers, you don't need an agent to represent your work.

### Querying Facts?

7. It's important to spell the literary agent's name correctly when querying.
8. It's important to personalize the query as much as possible.
9. It's okay to send queries out to multiple agents at the same time in the same e-mail.

### Pitching Facts?

10. Reading a verbatim summation of the plot is a sure-fire way to get the agent's interest in your project.
11. The best pitches are short and memorable.
12. Telling an agent about yourself in not only okay, but encouraged, for the most part.

## “Two Truths and a Lie,” continued

### **Facts on How to Woo an Agent**

13. It's okay to e-mail or persistently call agents about your query.

14. It's okay and even encouraged for you to be familiar with the other works an agent has sold.

15. It's okay and even encouraged to follow an agent on social media.

### **Facts about writing Non-fiction**

16. A platform is very, if not the most important aspect about selling non-fiction.

17. My relationships with other authors are irrelevant when selling non-fiction.

18. Memoirs are probably the hardest non-fiction to sell because there are so many and the writing has to stand out in order to sell.

### **Facts about writing Fiction**

19. Publication of short stories or even excerpts of your story in literary journals, magazines, etc. are very beneficial for the writer.

20. Having a Masters of Fine Arts in creative writing is persuasive but not conclusive in selling fiction.

21. Not having any writing credits to your name is okay if your writing is good enough.

### **Facts about Social Media**

22. It's okay to not have any presence on social media these days.

23. If you are not good at tweeting, it's okay to not be on Twitter.

24. Editors and agents will Google you.

25. You should have an Author's page on Facebook.

26. Stalking your favorite authors and agents on Twitter and Facebook and posting multiple times on their wall is a good idea.

27. To stay interesting on social media you must engage with other authors and members of the literary community.

### **Did you Know?**

28. Kathryn Stockett's bestselling book *The Help* was rejected over 60 times before securing representation.

29. *Harry Potter* was rejected 12 times before getting published

30.. *Gone With the Wind* was accepted immediately.

### **Notes about Book Contracts**

31. The advance is always non-refundable

32. Publisher will be happy not to have an option on the next book.

33. Royalty rates are negotiable.

34. You should register your copyright BEFORE approaching publishers.

35. You can control what your book cover looks like.

36. The warranties and indemnification clause are difficult to change.

### **Some Parting Thoughts**

Publishing is a marathon, not a sprint. Your book will eventually be published.

It's important to smell the roses and enjoy the process.

### **Additional Notes:**

Keys to a good pitch:

◇Tell what the central conflict is and what motivates the central characters.

◇It's okay to use a Hollywood Pitch.

◇When selling short stories keep reprint rights.

◇If you start self publishing, it's hard to go traditional later.

◇-Know your goals as an author.

◇If you write non-fiction, get insurance.

### **When to start Looking for an Agent:**

◇-When you've done critique groups, beta readers, multiple revisions, set the book aside for a time, and you think you're done.

Her agency *Fuse Literary* works with successful self publishers as well as traditional ones.

Jennifer is open to taking pitches via e-mail at: [queryjennifer@fuseliterary.com](mailto:queryjennifer@fuseliterary.com)

## “Two Truths and a Lie”

### These are the lies:

4. Authors always have input over their book covers.

6. For Big 5 publishers, you don't need an agent to represent you.

9. It's okay to send queries out to multiple agents at the same time in the same e-mail.

10. Reading a verbatim summation of the plot is a sure-fire way to get the agent's interest in your project.

13. It's okay to e-mail or persistently call an agent about your query.

17. My relationships with other authors are irrelevant when selling non-fiction

21. Not having any writing credits to your name is okay if your writing is good enough.

22. It's okay to not have any presence on social media these days.

30. *Gone With the Wind* was accepted immediately.

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32. Publisher will be happy not to have an option on the next book.

34. You should register your copyright BEFORE approaching publishers.

35. You can control what your book cover looks like.



# Special Events

## Nonfiction Writers Conference

May 3-5, 2017, conducted entirely online. Cost from \$125 - \$490. **Not a GCW Event** For details go to <http://nonfictionwritersconference.com>

## GCW Special Guest Program

May 17, 2017, 10-Noon at the church, **Ken & Dahlynn McKowen**, on Travel Writing

## Open Mic for the Spoken Word

4th Sat. of each month, 1:00 PM, at Auburn Library, **May 27, 2017**.  
Contact: [Taleteller2@gmail.com](mailto:Taleteller2@gmail.com) **Not a GCW Event**

## Art Bistro, Rocklin Open Mic Night

for storytelling, singers, poets, comedians - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month-  
**May 16, 2017**, 6 PM, 6848 Five Star Blvd. Suite 6 Rocklin, CA 95677 **Not a GCW Event**

## Placer's Gold Toastmasters

Every Tuesday, Noon-1 PM at Placer Co. DeWitt Justice Center, Richardson Dr. & B Ave. Auburn, Contact: Michael O'Haver, **Not a GCW Event**

5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Social, May 31, Details to be announced

## Specialty Spin-off Critique Groups

Coordinator - *Pauline Nevins* -530/637-9163

**Books:** Contact Betsy Schwarzentraub 530/333-0852. They meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wed., 12-3 p.m.

**Historical Fiction:** Contact Michael O'Haver - 530/268-2490. They meet once a month on the 4th Thursday, at 11:30 a.m. at The Daily Egg, 844 Lincoln Way, Auburn

**Children's Lit:** Contact Norma Lehr 530/878-8421. They meet at Norma's home on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs., 2-4 p.m.

**Science Fiction/Fantasy:** Contact Skip Michael 916/601-1044

**Memoirs:** Contact Susan Thompson 530/941-3778. Call Susan for meeting times and places; they like to change it up.

**Novel:** Contact Ann Reh 530/823-1870. They meet every other Monday, 2:30 - 5:00 p.m. at La Bou



## GCW Officers, Board Members & Committee Chairs

**President :** Skip Michael  
916/601-1044 Genre ~ Sci. Fi.  
**Vice President - Internal Affairs:** Betsy Schwarzentraub  
530/333-0852

Genre ~ Christian Nonfiction  
**Vice President - External Affairs:** Chery Anderson  
530/613-1153 Genre ~ Storytelling

**Treasurer:** Joy Hemp  
650/799-5828 Genre ~ Self-Help & Inspirational

**Secretary:** Michael O'Haver  
530/268-2490 Genre ~ Christian Children's Books & Poetry

**Assistant Secretary:**  
Kathleen Ward 209/704-0719  
Genre ~ Short Stories

**Mentor Coordinator:**  
Susan Korn 530/888-9971  
Genre ~ Self-Help & Corporate Culture

### Marketing GCW & Events

Joyce Rule 916/521-5177  
Genre ~ Short Stories

**Author Opportunities:** June Gillam 530/820-3020  
Genre ~ Suspense Thrillers & Poetry

### Membership & Guest Speakers

Margie Yee Webb 916/213-0798 Genre ~ Gift Books

**Newsletter Editor:** Michael O'Haver 530/268-2490

Submit newsletter material by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to [GodsScribeMike@aol.com](mailto:GodsScribeMike@aol.com)



# Gold Country Writers

Third Wednesday Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

10 a.m. to 12 noon

~ Gold Country Writers proudly presents ~



## Ken McKowen Dahlynn McKowen

*Travel Writing for Fun,  
Profit and  
Other Insane Reasons*



Two-time national award-winning travel book authors will share the reality of what it takes to becoming a travel book author. Ken and Dahlynn will cover analyzing the marketability of your initial book idea through the planning, research, traveling, photography, interviews, expenses, and, oh, yes, the writing you will need to do to be successful.

**Ken McKowen** has been in the publishing industry for 40 years, with 25 books to his name. He has won national awards for his travel books *Best of the California Coast* (2015) and *Best of California's Missions, Mansions and Museums* (2006). Ken spent 30 years with California State Parks—as a ranger, marketing manager then media specialist—and is always on the lookout for his next great travel book! [www.PublishingSyndicate.com](http://www.PublishingSyndicate.com)



**Dahlynn McKowen**—a freelance travel writer, author and ghostwriter for more than 25 years—is the CEO and publisher of Publishing Syndicate. A consultant and co-author for *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books for 10 years, she has shared bylines with the founders of the series. Dahlynn's integrity and reputation is such that she has ghost-written for a U.S. president and Fortune 100 and 500 corporate founders and CEOs. [www.PublishingSyndicate.com](http://www.PublishingSyndicate.com)



Join us! Meetings are free and open to the public.

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1279 High Street, Auburn CA 95603**

(enter and park in back)

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**Gold Country Writers: "Writers Working Together To Promote and Improve Their Work"**

Meetings are held every Wednesday of the month. **Third Wednesdays:** guest speaker presentation. **First Wednesdays:** business meeting. **Second and Fourth Wednesdays:** "Drop-In Critique" for members to get feedback on their work. For months with **Fifth Wednesdays:** social event. See website for details.

<http://GoldCountryWriters.com/>