



Gold Country Writers

Forging Better Writers

April 2026 Dispatch Newsletter

About Us

Gold Country Writers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization of writers that meets every Wednesday at the Auburn City Hall Rose Room from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

Email gcmembership@gmail.com to join or find out more.

Website: goldcountrywriters.com

Facebook: Gold Country Writers

Mailing address: P.O. Box 5991, Auburn, CA 95604.



President's Message

April is National Poetry Month—a celebration of words, rhythm, and expression, and a fitting backdrop for our Poetry Contest. It's also a reminder for all of us—poets and prose writers alike—how much can be said through careful, creative word choice.

That same spirit carries into our 100-Word Story Contest, where every word counts (literally) and storytelling takes center stage.

Join us on Wednesday, April 29, for our Contests Celebration event. Our community grows stronger when we show up for one another—not only as writers, but as an audience. You'll hear poems and stories read aloud and share in the excitement as the judges' decisions are revealed. Let's support one another and celebrate the creativity that makes this club such a vibrant place to belong.

As we celebrate, we're also looking ahead. If you've been thinking about getting more involved, consider nominating yourself (or another member) for a position on our June ballot—Vice President-External, Treasurer, Director of Communications, Mentor Program Manager, and others. It's a great way to give back, and a fun way to write the next chapter of our club together.

Keep Writing,
Nicolle Goldman



Calendar of Meetings April 2026

**All meetings take place at the Rose Room, Auburn City Hall, 1226 Lincoln Way, Auburn, unless otherwise indicated.*

Wednesday, April 1	
General Business Meeting	10:00 a.m. - noon
Evening Mixed Genre Critique Max's Cafe, Auburn	5:30 pm, Round Table Restaurant, Auburn
Tuesday, April 7	
Memoir Critique	Atwood Business Park 11768 Atwood Road, Auburn Currently full
Wednesday, April 8	
Drop-in Critique	10:00 a.m. - noon
Poetry Group	noon - 2:00 p.m.
Children's Lit/Young Adult	noon - 2:00 p.m.
Friday, April 10	
Mystery and Thriller	4:00 pm In person and on Zoom Contact Rebecca Partridge: rebeccapartridge@att.net
Tuesday, April 21	
Memoir Critique	Atwood Business Park 11768 Atwood Road, Auburn Currently full
Wednesday, April 15	
Speaker Presentation: Karen A. Phillips: Using Tropes to Strengthen Your Story	10:00 a.m. - noon
Tuesday, April 21	
Memoir Critique	Atwood Business Park 11768 Atwood Road, Auburn Currently full
Wednesday, April 22	

Drop-in Critique	10:00 a.m. - noon
Poetry Group	noon - 2:00 p.m.
Memoir Share Group	noon - 2:00 p.m.
Sci Fi and Fantasy Group	2:30 p.m. Flames Restaurant 3434 Lincoln Way, #3215, Auburn (Raley's Shopping Center)
Wednesday, April 29	
Celebration of 100-Word Story Contest and Poetry Contest	10:00 a.m. - noon

Specialty Spin-Off Groups

Children's Lit & Young Adult: Contact Sara Pressler. Meets at noon at the Rose Room, Auburn City Hall, on the 2nd Wednesday. New members welcome.

Evening Mixed Genre Critique: Contact Rebecca Partridge. Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30 at Round Table Restaurant. Open to new members.

Memoir Critique (Words without Borders): Contact Philip Jacques, philipjacques@gmail.com. The group meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday each month in Atwood Business Park, 11768 Atwood Rd. Auburn. Currently full.

Memoir Share: Contact Terry Wicks, terryshenhouse@gmail.com. Meets 4th Wednesday each month at 12 noon at the Rose Room, Auburn City Hall.. Emphasizes sharing & caring, not in-depth critiquing. Open to new members.

Mystery & Thriller: contact Rebecca Partridge: rebeccapartridge@att.net. Now meets the 4th Thursday of the month at 4:00 PM. Meetings are hybrid: both in person and zoom.

Poetry: Contact David Anderson: dcajla80@gmail.com. Meets 2nd . M& 4th Wednesday from noon to 2:00 p.m. Sharing poems after the Drop-In Critique. Open to new members.

Science Fiction & Fantasy: Contact Bill Baynes, bbaynes303@aol.com or Frank Nissen, f.j.nissen@icloud.com. Meets the 4th Wednesdays of each month at 2:30 p.m. Meet at Flames Restaurant and Tap Room.

New Memoir Critique Group will meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 1:00 P.M. starting on April 14th. The meeting will be at a private home. Contact Gina Calderone gmcalderone@gmail.com for more information.

Specialty Spin-off Group information can also be accessed on the GCW website:
<https://goldcountrywriters.com/genre-specific-critique-groups/>

Specialty Spin-off Groups Coordinator: Rebecca Inch-Partridge

Snap Your Critique Group

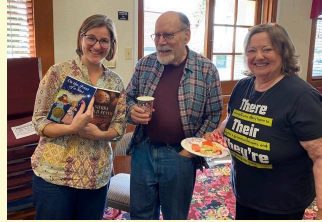
Critique group leaders and participants: Please send photos of your critique groups in action to our newsletter editor Marla Mion at: marlamion2100@gmail.com. Also, you can visit the GCW Facebook page, like the posts, and generate more traffic and interest in Gold Country Writers.

March Mixer

Our first March Mixer was a resounding success! We enjoyed the opportunity to meet new members and chat with established members.



Sheila Lopez, Pat Snelling,
Kathryn Shields
(photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Jen Hartman, Frank Nissen,
Sarah Michie Pressler
(photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Annie Hendrix, Mac Daly,
Nicolle Goldman
(photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Susan M. Osborn,
Jim Hernandez
(photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Michael O'Haver,
Barbara Young
(photo by Margie Yee Webb)

Much thanks to Lisa Schliff for the idea, and to Mac Daly for organizing the event and picking up the food.

Upcoming Events: Save The Dates!

by Margie Yee Webb

The Speaker Programs, scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except in August and December), are free and open to the public. Writers, readers, and guests are invited! Join in these engaging events!

Friday, April 10, 2026

Read and Review — Coincidences and Other Spooky Connections by **Susan M. Osborn**, and Meanwhile...From the Wisconsin Prairie to the African Savanna and back by Malvina aka **Sarah Michie Pressler**
<https://goldcountrywriters.com/event/read-review-5/>

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Author **Karen A. Phillips**

“Using Tropes to Strengthen Your Story”

<https://goldcountrywriters.com/upcoming-events/>

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Contest Celebration for 100-Word Story Contest and Poetry Contest (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

<https://goldcountrywriters.com/event/contests-celebration-2026/>

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Former Investigative Journalist **Geri Spieler**

“Bringing Journalistic Rigor to Fictional Storytelling”

<https://goldcountrywriters.com/upcoming-events/>

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Author **James L'Etoile**

“The Author’s Toolkit: Building a Successful Book”

<https://goldcountrywriters.com/upcoming-events/>

GCW Speaker for April

Learn About Using Tropes to Strengthen Your Story by Margie Yee Webb

We are pleased to welcome Karen A. Phillips for a presentation to Gold Country Writers. On Wednesday, April 15, 2026, she will present “Using Tropes to Strengthen Your Story.”

“Tropes are a promise to the reader. They are storytelling hooks that we use to thrill and entertain audiences,” said Karen. She will discuss how to use tropes to strengthen your story and use examples from her own work, from bestselling books, and popular movies. Her talk is based on the principles from The Trope Thesaurus series by Jennifer Hilt.

Karen writes humorous, fun, action-packed mysteries. She has many short stories published in various anthologies. Her characters are engaging and fearless. The Rocky Nelson Boxing mystery series features an amateur sleuth who boxes: A Deadly Combo (Book 1), A Deadly Match (Book 2), and A Deadly Hook (Book 3) — the newest novel in the series. And yes, Karen does take boxing lessons.

She is a past president of Capitol Crimes, the Sacramento chapter of Sisters In Crime, and is a member of many other writing organizations. For more information and to subscribe to her newsletter, visit KarenAPhillips.com.



GOLD COUNTRY WRITERS

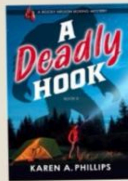
Karen A. Phillips

USING TROPES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR STORY

Tropes are a promise to the reader. They are storytelling hooks that we use to thrill and entertain audiences. Author Karen A. Phillips will discuss how to use tropes to strengthen your story. She'll use examples from her own work, from bestselling books, and popular movies. Her talk is based on the principles from *The Trope Thesaurus* series by Jennifer Hilt. Karen is a past president of Capitol Crimes, the Sacramento chapter of Sisters in Crime. Her books in the Rocky Nelson Boxing Mystery series are *A Deadly Combo* (Book 1), *A Deadly Match* (Book 2), and *A Deadly Hook* (Book 3). For more information and to subscribe to her newsletter, visit KarenAPhillips.com

April 15, 2026

10 A.M. to NOON
Auburn City Hall
Rose Room
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603
FREE



PUBLIC INVITED goldcountrywriters.com

Nuggets

by Randy Landenberger

For Short Story Writers

Most of what follows comes from *The Indy Author Podcast*, Episode 323: "Navigating the Short Fiction Market with Authority" interview with Angelique Fawns. It's worth your time. Put it on while you're walking, driving, or conquering the laundry pile. Be prepared to take notes. Listen here:

- Podcast page: <https://theindyauthor.libsyn.com/from-expertise-to-authority-in-short-fiction-with-angelique-fawns-323>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8gSkbuf7bg>
- Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/navigating-the-short-fiction-market-with/id1135670942?i=1000750114991>

Who is Angelique Fawns?

Angelique Fawns is the author of three guides to the speculative fiction market, creator of the horror podcast *Read Me A Nightmare*, and has sold over 100 short stories. Her fiction has appeared in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, *Amazing Stories*, *DreamForge*, and many anthologies. She knows this market from the inside.

Contests: Worth the Fee?

Ever click "Submit" only to discover a sizable entry fee hiding at the bottom of the page? Winning or placing in a contest may strengthen your bio. Bragging rights matter. But here's the hard truth: most readers have never heard of most contests.

(If you send me \$30, I'll happily award you First Place in the Randy L. Scott Sensational Writing Invitational. The certificate will look impressive. Don't worry, your readers probably won't fact-check it.)

Starting submitting with local organizations like GCW for the experience, feedback and local recognition. Even publishing in a lower-paying market can build recognition and momentum. The goal isn't one trophy. It's credibility and audience growth.

Authority Sells

Her key point: niche down and leverage your authority. Are you a parent? Grandparent? Carpenter? Teacher? Bus driver? Former inmate? Future inmate? Life experience is currency. Write from what you know. Editors recognize authenticity. Readers do too.

IP Matters

Angelique also discusses intellectual property and the growing demand for short fiction as source material for film and television - from Hallmark-style movies to dark anthology series. Original ideas are valuable. Protect them. Develop them.

A Practical Resource

I recommend her book "The Guide of All Guides" if you're earnest about writing and submitting, another tool worth the investment.

If you're looking to place speculative short fiction, this *is* a working tool—not theory. It lists paying magazines, e-zines, and podcasts, organized by pay rate. It covers response times, editorial preferences, and what kind of rejection to expect. The ebook is \$2.99—or (possibly) free if you join her mailing list at:

<https://www.fawns.ca>

Scroll to "Are you a writer?" and enter your email when the pop-up appears. Also, click the Blog tab. You'll find writing tips and regularly updated Open Submission Calls. Many pay. Some cap the number of submissions—so check early.

But wait—there's More!

Flash Fiction Online accepts 500–1,000 words (firm).

They pay \$100 per story. Short. Focused. Paid.

Submissions: <https://ffo.submittable.com/submit>

2026 schedule: <https://www.patreon.com/posts/2026-submission-145549050>

I look forward to seeing or hearing about a GCW member's name in one of these publications soon. Let's get to work.

-Randy L Scott



Read and Review 2026 Book Lineup

Upcoming Books for Read and Review

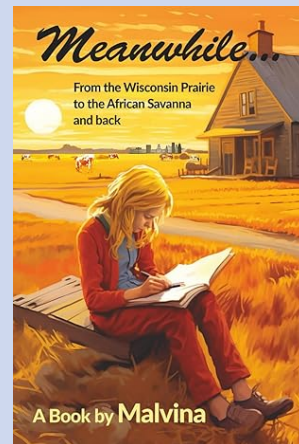
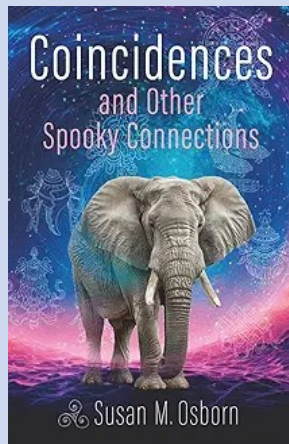
Did you know Read and Review is our very own Book Club? It's an open forum for all members where books written by our very own authors are discussed. Please consider

joining us in 2026 at Depoe Bay in Auburn, 10 a.m. to noon, on the Friday dates listed below. Most books are available on Amazon, and all can be checked-out from our own GCW library.

Come even if you haven't read the book and join in on our lively discussions. In April we'll be discussing books written by Susan Osborn and Sarah Pressler.

PLEASE NOTE THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF TITLE FOR SARAH PRESSLER'S SUBMISSION.

April 10: "Coincidences and Other Spooky Connections" by Susan Osborn;
"Meanwhile...From the Wisconsin Prairie to the African Savanna and Back"
by Sarah Pressler writing as Malvina.



July 10: "Fever Road" by Ernest Brawley; "Exploring the Sacred Mystery, A Quest for the Divine" by Mary Mohs

October 9: "The Rain in Spain" by Lisa Schliff; "Discovery: Book One of the Tav-Yah Chronicles" by Kathleen Ward writing as Kaydee Landry

Kelly Lardner, Coordinator
lrdrn@yahoo.com

March Speaker: Jojo Cook

GCW's very own Jojo Cook presented an entertaining and informative workshop centered on Social Action Writing. Jojo encouraged us to reject the idea that social action writing is in conflict with political writing by reminding us that all art is political. Art reflects cultural norms, both implicitly and explicitly. Jojo challenged us to consider that critical inquiry plus social responsibility equals social action writing.



To help writers better understand the idea, Jojo provided the first writing prompt:
What is something you cannot stay silent about?

JoJo continued by outlining the three ways in which social action writing takes shape:

1. Bearing Witness: Write about something you have seen, heard, or experienced yourself. For example, J.R.R. Tolkien was not simply writing about a fantasy world when he created The Two Towers. The work was informed by Tolkien's harrowing experience of fighting in World War I.
2. Breaking Silence: Speak truth to power. For writers, no subject is too fearful or shameful to address.
3. Celebrating Resistance: Writers can express joy in the face of despair and "explore the beautiful tomorrow". Think of the phrase "Keep the Faith to Keep the Fight."

Building on these themes, the second writing prompt was: You can only save what you write down. Everything else vanishes. To be saved, it must be named.

Prompt three had us write down that time when we saw something but didn't say anything. The final prompt required us to make a list of what we love, and then create a portrait of a person from the details. JoJo closed the workshop by encouraging us to think about weaving these ideas into our own work. She reminded us that we have the privilege to write, and with that privilege comes the unique duty to include social action in our work.



March Workshop Speaker JoJo Cook starts with a writing prompt (photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Fans cheer on Speaker JoJo Cook after workshop presentation
From left: Joy Hemp, Marla Mion, Rebecca Inch-Partridge, JoJo Cook, Betsy Schwarzentraub, Mona Anderson (photo by Margie Yee Webb)



Fun lunch at Old Town Grill

From left: Frank Nissen, Diane Miller, Trudi York Gardner, JoJo Cook, Rebecca Inch-Partridge, Nicolle Goldman, Mac Daly, Margie Yee Webb, Joy Hemp, Susan M. Osborn, Sarah Michie Pressler, Chery Anderson (photo by Nissreen, Old Town Grill)

Kudos to Our Members!

To Mac Daly, Marla Mion, Frank Nissen, Kathryn Shields, Susan Korn, Annie Hendrix, Dan Araujo, Nicolle Goldman, Heike Kutchukov, and Lisa Schliff, for their work on the March Mixer party that took place on March 4th in the Rose Room.

To Our New Members:

Sue McMahon

Sue found us through Margie Webb and joined by mail. She has published one book, "Blue Sky Writings."

Paul Crovo

Paul found us through Lisa Schliff and joined at the drop-in-critique this month. He is unpublished.

H Michael Ross

He found us through William O'Daly and joined via email. He is unpublished.

Kudos to 2026 Book Launches!

Hours of hard work. Gallons of caffeine. Sleepless nights. Too many rounds of edits to count. Finally publishing a book is no small feat. Our members deserve a special corner of our Kudos section for the awesome accomplishment of publishing a new book!

If you have already launched a book in 2026 or you have an upcoming launch to announce, please let us know. We want to celebrate you!

Barbara Young

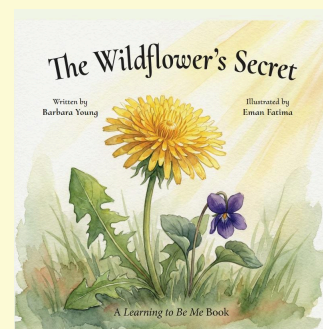
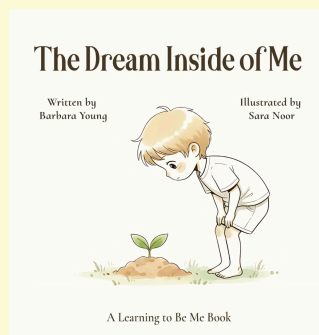
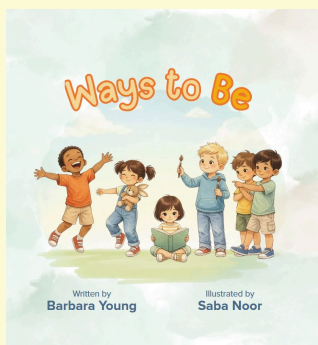
Our GCW Member and Historian wrote and published three children's picture books from January through March of 2026.

"Ways to Be"

"The Dream Inside of Me"

"The Wildflower's Secret"

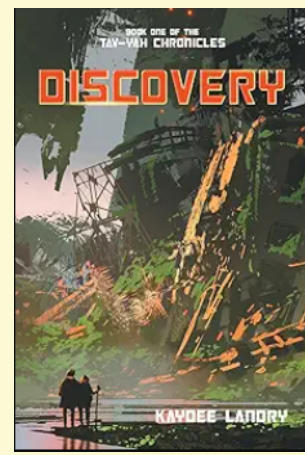
These three titles make up a collection of books that Barbara refers to as *Learning to Be Me Books*. More info at BYoungBooks.com or chat with her.



Kathleen Ward aka Kaydee Landry

“Discovery: Book One of the Tav-Yah Chronicles.”

This book began as a short story writing assignment in a college class on science fiction. After too many years to count, it was finally published as a full-length novel on February 5, 2026. It can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Trafford, Ingram Sparks, or through Kathleen herself.



We Need You! Volunteer Positions Available



Our wonderful group is comprised of many volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to keep our operations running smoothly. We need your help! We have the following positions open and ready:

Mentor Program Manager - Please contact Susan Korn for details.

Webmaster assistant - Please contact Sarah Pressler or Nicolle Goldman.

Audio Visual Recording of Monthly Speakers - Please contact Nicolle Goldman.

Coordinator/Judge for Poetry and Story Contests - Please contact Nicolle Goldman.

Substack Media position - Please contact Chery Anderson.

Newsletter Submission Deadlines

Please submit all kudos, articles, images, and news to Marla Mion at marlamion2100@gmail.com.

All submissions are due by midnight on the 26th of the month. Late submissions may not be included until the following month. Thank you!

Share Your Milestones!

Please send news of your writing milestones and accomplishments to Dispatch Editor Marla Mion at marlamion2100@gmail.com. Your news will be posted in the Kudos column. We want to read about you!

Newsletter Errors (Yikes!)

Mistakes - we all make them! Sometimes in the rush to meet deadlines, your humble newsletter editor goofs up and needs your help. If you find an error, please help me out and let me know how to remedy any scheduling snafus for members. Need an email sent out with the correction? I'm on it! Just communicate with me what you need me to say and when you need it.

Your patience, kindness, and assistance is greatly appreciated!



Speaker Programs on ACTV

Click on the blue link to view the Guest Speaker's presentation on youtube.com. Auburn Community Television (ACTV) Studio Manager **Phil Jacques**, a member of Gold Country Writers, has been filming the Speaker Programs since March 2022 when his schedule permits. Much appreciation to Phil!

To view past Guest Speaker videos, visit the GCW website:

<https://goldcountrywriters.com/gcw-videos/>

William O'Daly, "Imagination and Community: Translating Our Lives Into Poetry" February 18, 2026

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiWYzIsv7Vw>

Out of Town Literary Events

by Margie Yee Webb

Cameron Park Library — Tuesday, April 7, and Thursday, April 16, 2026 - 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Poets and Writers Workshop led by El Dorado County Poet Laureate Emeritus Lara Gularte and author Beverly Parayno — held on the first Tuesday and third Thursday of every month. “We offer an encouraging space for writers and poets to gather in community. Bring one or two poems or six pages of prose, double-spaced. Read, discuss, critique.”

Cameron Park Library, 2500 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park, CA 95682

Truckee Literary Crawl — Saturday, April 11, 2026 - 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Throughout the day, more than 40 regional authors will share short readings from their published works, followed by engaging Q&As. For details: tahoelitfest.com/truckee-literary-crawl

Various Venues, Downtown Truckee, CA 96161

Sierra Poetry Festival — Saturday, April 18, 2026 - 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 10th annual Sierra Poetry Festival presents a full day of poetry, performance, workshops, youth voices, slams, connection, inspiration. PLUS, more than a month of pop-up poetry events, free and open to the public, at various Nevada County locations starting March 21 — World Poetry Day. For

details: <https://www.sierrapoetryfestival.org/>

The Center for the Arts, 314 W Main Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Sacramento Book Festival — Sunday, April 19, 2026 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The festival will feature over 200 authors — Kim Stanley Robinson, Wendelin Van Draanen, Brenda Novak, Allison Brennan, and more. Plus food trucks and prizes. For details: sacramentobookfestival.com

Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6151 H Street, Sacramento CA 95819

Independent Bookstore Day — Saturday, April 25, 2026 - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

“We already have several books and swag items on order that are EXCLUSIVE to indie bookstores for Independent Bookstore Day. Come out and celebrate books, independent business, and local community with us.” <https://oldhauntsbookshop.com/>

Old Haunts Bookshop, 8789 Auburn Folsom Road, Suite C, Granite Bay, CA 95746

Writers Coffeehouse — Saturday, April 25, 2026 - 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

NEW location and NEW day for April’s Writers Coffeehouse — “a group open to writers of all levels and interests! Meet like-minded people and share writing tips, industry info, and a bit of what you’re working on. There are no fees, no registration, and no publishing requirements. All writers are welcome!” (Note: New location is less than a mile from previous location — Face In A Book Bookstore, which closed in March.)

Raley’s ONE Market - Community Meeting Room, 3935 Park Drive, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Also of Interest

The 2026 Sacramento Book Festival - April 19th, 2026, from 10am to 5pm at the Scottish Rite Center in Sacramento. Children and YA authors and activities; adult authors as well as two panel rooms for guest author presentations.

Become a Member of Gold Country Writers!



It's easy to join!

Email your name, address, and telephone number to:

GCWmembership@gmail.com.

Please put 'GCW Membership' in the subject line. We will mail you a more comprehensive membership questionnaire.

Gold Country Writers is here to support and encourage writers of all levels and all genres — whether Novels, Poetry, Science Fiction, Fiction, Memoirs, or your own creative genre. Whether you are a beginner or an established writer — WELCOME.

Membership gives you: Critique groups, monthly speakers, networking, mentor program, Read and Review quarterly book club, monthly newsletter, website with your bio, social events, and much more!

Printable PDF of This Newsletter!

[Printable PDF File](#)

Gold Country Writers Leadership Team

Executive Committee

President (2025-2027).....Nicolle Goldman
VP – Internal Affairs (2025-2027).....Lisa Schliff
VP – External Affairs (2024-2026).....Pat Snelling
Secretary (2025-2027).....Annie Hendrix
Treasurer (2024-2026).....Heike Kutchukov

Directors

Director of Membership.....Joan Griffin
Director of Communications.....Chery Anderson
Director of Speaker Programs.....Margie Yee Webb
Director of Spin-off Critique Groups.....Rebecca Inch-Partridge

Other Leaders & Coordinators

Mentor Program Manager.....Susan Korn
Newsletter Editor.....Marla Mion
Website Manager.....Sarah Pressler
Read & Review Coordinator.....Kelly Lardner
Librarian.....Kathryn Shields
Social Media Coordinator.....Michael O'Haver

Audio-Visual Tech.....Randy Landenberger/Phil Jacques
Drop-In Critique Coordinator.....Frank Nissen
Historian.....Barbara Young
Security Manager.....Terry Wicks
Greeters.....Kathryn Shields/Terry Wicks

www.goldcountrywriters.com

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