

Gold Country Writers Dispatch

Our Mission is to Support Local Writers

December 2017 Issue

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T. E. Watson—“Character Percolation”

GCW Guest Speaker for November

Have Your Pitch in Your Pocket

What if you had an editor or agent trapped in an elevator for 45 seconds or a minute? You have a minute, tops, to make your pitch and sell your book. Would you be prepared?

Here are seven tips to help you prepare, taken from a *Toastmaster Magazine* article entitled *7 Tips to Elevate Your Elevator Speech*. By Beth Kotz

Tip # 1 – Go with Your Gut A positive and energetic disposition goes far in creating a good first impression. So, eat a good breakfast to prepare for a great day.

Tip # 2 – Present Your Book as an Opportunity Your pitch for your book should not be an advertisement or a call for help. Pitch it as an opportunity that can create a mutually beneficial partnership.

Tip # 3 – Keep it Simple Avoid extraneous details and technical jargon. Carefully plan every word so it communicates your basic premise and creates a desire to learn more..

Tip # 4 – Remember Your Enthusiasm Your words are essential but they are only part of your pitch. Share your passion for your book. Deliver your pitch with excitement and conviction.

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13 Things to Give Your Characters:

1. **Goals** – the stronger the goal, the easier your plot will develop
2. **Motivation** – it can be fear, greed, determination, or simply love
3. **Purpose** – make them create conflict or undergo emotional development
4. **Fear** – hooks the reader and drives the plot; just don't let fear win the day
5. **A Flaw** – imperfection is human. it could be poor personality, bad social standing, or bad circumstance to live in
6. **History** – the past will shape the present and even drive the future
7. **Present Story** – don't drown or overshadow your present with the past
8. **Personality** – create complex characters by giving them contradictory traits
9. **Interests** – someone who has no interests isn't very interesting
10. **A Quirk** – strange is just as interesting as passionate. make them stand out
11. **A Name** – with a purpose, foreshadow actions. showcase a time period or interest
12. **A Desire** – can be a powerful motivator
13. **A Love** – readers want their characters to love someone

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PROSE



FROM THE PRES

This winter is an excellent time to reflect on the year past and think about our writing goals for the New Year ahead. Even if we don't regularly journal, we can ask ourselves what writing-related dreams or plans we had for 2017, and what we have done this year. It's not just a matter of what we have written, but also how we have researched our passion, developed connections, affirmed ourselves and others, and/or strengthened a framework for living that encourages writing. Pondering this may lead to some congratulations and new goals for the year ahead.

Gold Country Writers gatherings this month will be a bit different to allow for the holidays. We'll celebrate our accomplishments on Dec. 6 at our Business Meeting. Then we'll continue the celebration on Dec. 13 with our "Frosty Holiday Party" and Membership Kick-off for 2018. Bring a potluck dish and plenty of friends! We'll have no meeting on Dec. 27 and Jan. 3, to allow for Christmas and New Year's.

It is an honor to be part of such a creative group of people! May these holidays bring you quality time and deep meaning.

Betsy

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 are welcome to come. This is followed by a closed meeting of the Lead Team.

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

Third Wednesday: Special educational programs of general interest to the club members. Topics change each month. These are open to the public.

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 members and guests.

Have Your Pitch in Your Pocket Cont.

Tip # 5 – *Cut the Keywords* Scrap the canned clichés. Set yourself apart by crafting a wholly original way that pitches what makes your book unique.

Tip # 6 – *Build the Hype* After you've hooked your listener, the next step is to build legitimacy. Have you recently won a prestigious award? Mention it, and briefly summarize your publishing accomplishments.

Tip # 7 – *Find Common Ground* After you've done your best and made your pitch, it's time to close with some conversation. Remember your overall goal is to create a connection. The best way to do that is to find common ground. Ask for questions and show your interest by really listening. Remember you can never go wrong with a few kind words.

Guest Speaker – T. E. Watson Cont.

Seven Things to Make Your Character:

1. **Make them Complex** – surprise the readers, a little at a time
2. **Make them Unique** – give them unique goals, motivations or personality traits
3. **Make them Intelligent** – dumb is uninteresting
4. **Make them RELATABLE** – give them at least one personality trait, circumstance or motivation the reader can relate to easily
5. **Make them Fail** – some failure is necessary to make the final victory all the sweeter
6. **Make them Suffer** – readers must see them at their worst to appreciate them at their best
7. **Make them Sweat** – easy is boring, they must shed blood, sweat & tears in order to win

Thirteen Things to “Find” About Your Character:

1. **Find their Sex** – can male or female live the story best
2. **Find their Perspective** – how they see the world
3. **Find their Type** – introverted or extroverted, shy or outgoing, adventurous or content
4. **Find their Language** – dialect, accent, slang, jargon, or proper grammar
5. **Find their Attitude** – optimistic, pessimistic or realistic
6. **Find their Happy Place** – where they are truly comfortable and relaxed. take them there, so readers can see them in purest form
7. **Find their Support** – who will guide and help them in the tough times. bring them on
8. **Find their Gut** – feelings & reactions
9. **Find their Bane** – their breaking point
10. **Find their Refuge** – their safe haven
11. **Find their Redemption** – how will they fix their mistakes and become likable characters
12. **Find their Glory** – show how much they have grown from their beginning
13. **Find their Story** – only by finding their story can your story shine



Writer's Retreat - Wonderfully Organize & Orchestrated

Rebecca Inch-Partridge through a party and 15 members showed up. Each participant had to specify a goal for the session, were assigned a work station and received a wonderful lunch and a goody bag. They could write themselves a post card, to be mailed in one year by Rebecca. I don't believe anyone had to resort to Rebecca's Writer's Bloc Breaking Station, but it was an excellent idea anyway. Strict time limits were enforced and everyone reported they appreciated either 2-1/2 or 5 hours of uninterrupted writing time.

The weather cooperated and was pleasant for an outside lunch, as can be seen by the picture above. Thank you Rebecca! We all hope you do this as an annual event.

KUDOS

Joan Stafford had a review of the play
“Nonsense” published in the *Auburn Journal*

High praise for Sheri McGuinn's novel *Alice*
from 25th Annual Writer's Digest Self-Published
Book Awards:

Comment from the judge: “Overall, one of the
most interesting and useful novels I've seen.”

Special Events



GCW Special Guest Program

Canceled for December.

Open Mic for the Spoken Word

Canceled for December, due to the holidays.

Not a GCW Event

GCW Frosty Holiday Party

Dec. 13, 2107, 10 AM – Noon, at the church. It's a pot luck so bring your favorite holiday dish.

Definitely 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

Auburn Winter Storytelling Festival

January 27, 2018, all day Event, at the General Gomez Arts & Events Center, 808 Lincoln Way, Auburn, there will be a Children's hour, Workshops, Open Telling, Liar's Contest, and the professional Teller's showcase, contact Chery Anderson

A GCW Sponsored Event

Specialty Spin-off Critique Groups

Coordinator - Pauline Nevins -530/637-9163

Books: Contact Betsy Schwarzentraub 530/333-0852. They meet the 2nd and 4th Wed., 12-3 p.m. at Depoe Bay.

Historical Fiction: Contact Michael O'Haver – 530/268-2490. We are back to meeting on the 4th Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. **The New location is Black Bear Diner, located at Hwy. 80 & Foresthill Rd.**

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

Science Fiction/Fantasy: Contact Rebecca Inch-Partridge 530/889-1520.

Memoirs: Contact Susan Thompson 530/941-3778. They meet at Northridge Restaurant, 21515 Higgins Rd, off of Combie Road between Auburn and Grass Valley, the 3rd Thursday of each month at 2 p.m.

Novel: Contact Ann Reh 530/823-1870. They meet every other Monday, 2:30 – 5:00 p.m. at a member's office. Call for directions.

GCW Officers, Board Members & Committee Chairs

President: Betsy Schwarzentraub 530/333-0852 Genre ~ Christian Nonfiction.

V P - Internal Affairs: Susan Korn 530/888-9971 Genre ~ Self-Help & Corporate Culture

V P – External Affairs: Joyce Rule 916/521-5177 Genre ~ Short Stories

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 Genre ~ Historical, Fiction & Memoirs
Submit newsletter material by the 15th of each month to
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