

Gold Country Writers Digest

Our Mission is to Support Local Authors



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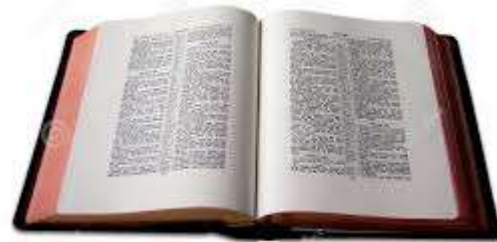
James L'Etoile – January GCW Guest Speaker, From Prison to the Page: Adding Realism to Fiction – How Much is Too Much?

After retiring from a career in the California State Prison System, turning to writing was therapeutic. Associating with such criminals as *The Hillside Strangler* gave James L'Etoile ample material to write about. Details of prison life added realism to his writing. But too many details can be counterproductive. Violence can be just hinted at, and left to the reader's imagination. Swear words should be used sparingly, but they are needed to accurately portray prison characters. Prison guards and administrators have different relationships with inmates. **Interesting Facts About Prisons:**

- California prisons used to just warehouse mentally ill prisoners.
- Prison gangs police their own members to enforce internal gang policies.
- CSI Effect – All crime labs are not all as modern and scientific as CSI portrays them.
- Inmates can't write for profit.

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GCW Reading Group



The new Gold Country Writers reading group had its first meeting on January 10, 2018. Peter Stafford was elected Chairman. Skip Michael won 1st Assistant, Chery Anderson won 2nd Assistant. The first book that they will be reading is Sheri McGuinn's *Alice*. In February they will read Betsy Schwarzentraub's *Afire with God*. In March it will be Susan Monday's *To See Clearly*. In April it will be *The Best Land Under Heaven* by Michael Wallis.

The group's next meeting will be the 4th Wednesday of February, the 28th, during the Drop-in-Critique session. But, it may be moving to the 3rd Wednesday after the quest speaker. The group's official name is the **Gold Country Writers Read and Review**.

PROSE



FROM THE PRES

Instead of resolutions, I'm starting out the New Year with two affirmations: 1) being a writer is normal! and 2) there's no reason to fear getting my writing out in the world! You may fight different demons, but unblocking our hidden negative messages can keep us motivated and getting our stories out.

A special thank you goes out to:

- Margie Yee Webb for her ongoing storyboard about our excellent speakers;
- Susan Korn for her two storyboards showing highlights of our past year together, at our fun Frosty Holiday Celebration – and to Chery Anderson and Joan Stafford for planning the event;
- Kathy Ward for her display of the Historian's Scrapbooks at our Jan. 10 meeting. What a great way to celebrate and encourage us all!

An exciting, new program gets going this month: the Gold Country Writers Read & Review. Their purpose is to encourage GCW members to read one another's books. At an organizing meeting on Jan. 10, Peter Stafford was named the Coordinator, assisted by Skip Michael and Chery Anderson as chairs. This month they will meet on the Fourth Wednesday as a second option during our Drop-In Critique. The book to read for February will be my book *Afire with God*.

Feb. 21 will be the last Writer's Platform Group meeting. I will share more notes from the "Online Presence Makeover" and a piece about writing an Author's Bio page.

Keep on writing!

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 organizational 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. See Page 6 for the Speaker of the 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.

KUDOS

- ❖ Rebecca Inch-Partridge sold a Science Fiction Short Story
- ❖ Ann Reh published her book, "Meditating Murder"
- ❖ Kathryn Shields & June Gilliam Retired

100-Word Contest Coming Soon

Sharpen those pencils, or is that tune up those computers? The dates for this year's 100-Word Contest have been set: **March 7** – Kick-Off, **May 15 @ 9 PM** – Story Due Date, **May 30** – "Hat's Off" Social & Awards Presentation. Darlene Cooke is coordinating it this year. Look for more details in upcoming newsletters.

Special Events



San Francisco Writers Conference

A Celebration of Craft, Commerce & Community, February 15-18, 2018,
Workshops Include: 1) **How to Win an Agent Over**, 2) **Proposals:**
3) **Ten Steps to Building a Bestselling Author Platform**
website - <https://sfwriters.org/> **Not a GCW Event**

GCW Special Guest Program

February 21, 2018, at the church. 10 AM – 12, **Allen Pierleoni**,
(CapRadio Reads: Authors On Stage Coordinator/Interviewer)

Open Mic for the Spoken Word

February 24, 2018, Auburn Library, 1 PM, Rebecca is taking over from
Chery in March – This will be a GCW Event

Monthly Meeting for GCW Read & Review

February 28, 2018, 11:30 AM, at the Church

Placer's Gold Toastmasters

meets each Tuesday 12 Noon – 1 PM at DeWitt Justice Center,
Contact Michael O'Haver **Not a GCW 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 Kathy Ward, 209/704-0719. They are back to
meeting on the 4th Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 11 a.m. **The New
location is Chevys, located on Highway 49 & Old Airport Road.**

Children's Lit: Contact Norma Lehr 530/878-8421. They meet at the
restaurant at the Ridge Golf Course on Bell Rd. on the 4th Thurs., 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 1st & 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.

Evening Mixed Genre: Contact Rebecca Inch-Partridge, 530/889-1520, 6
PM, 1st Wed. of each month, Feb 7, at Tap and Vine at 907 Lincoln Way,
Auburn, CA 95603 -- **NEW – JUST STARTING**

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

Marketing GCW & Events: Joyce
Rule 916/521-5177

Author Opportunities: June
Gillam 530/820-3020

Genre ~ Suspense Thrillers &
Poetry

Membership & Guest Speakers:
Margie Yee Webb 916/213-0798
Genre ~ Gift Books

Public Relations: Chery
Anderson 530/613-1153
Genre ~ Short Stories

**Web Master, Graphics & Cyber
Security:** Skip Michael: 916/601-
1044 Genre ~ Science Fiction

Spin-off Critique Groups

Coordinator: Pauline Nevins:
530/637-9163 Genre ~ Memoirs

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

Submit newsletter material by the
15th of each month to
GodsScribeMike@aol.com

San Francisco Writers Conference Writer's Group Mixer

Gold Country Writers is invited to participate in a free writer's group mixer at the San Francisco Writers Conference, on Thursday evening (2/15/18) from 6:00-8:00 PM, in the California Room at the Mark Hopkins.

Laurie McLean, co-director of the San Francisco Writers Conference, emailed and said: "The San Francisco Writers Conference will have a mixer. Exhibitors will have their booths set up there, and the SFWC team will be there. There will be opportunities to mingle and chat with attendees. It's also open the public and FREE!"

If you're interested in going, let Margie know.



GCW Face in a Book Event

Gold Country Writers will be featured at Face in a Book on March 25, 2018. Margie Yee Webb is coordinating this event to spotlight GCW authors.

Authors interested in being featured have submitted books and applications to Margie. She will transmit the books to Face in a Book for the final selection. They want a variety of genres and types of books.

Face in a Book is located in the heart of Town Center in El Dorado Hills, California. The hours for the event will be 1-4 PM, and will feature book signing, book sales, and more.

GCW members chosen to participate: Suzanne Blaney, Jo Chandler, Sheri McGuinn, Michael O'Haver, Virginia Simpson & Margie Yee Webb.

James L'Etoile Continued

Writing Tips:

- Get that vomit draft out. Editing can fix it later.
- Sometimes realism, if too unbelievable, has to be changed to sell.
- Try to leave out the part readers tend to skip over when reading.
- When describing your characters for your own use while writing, put a picture with it. It helps you know them better.
- Have your elevator speech about your book ready at any time. You never know when you will need it.
- James met his agent over the book sales table. He was asked, "What are you working on?"

The Prison Trivia Quiz (18 multiple choice questions about California prisons) was won by Kathryn Shields. If you want the questions & answers, Joan Stafford has them all.

What I Learned about Writing Fiction by Michael O'Haver

When describing a scene, follow these steps in this order:

- 1) Describe the location, using as many of the 5 senses as possible-sight, touch, hearing, etc.
 - 2) Action – what is happening.
 - 3) Dialogue
- ❖ Describe the personality quirks of your main characters. That's what makes them real.
 - ❖ Describe emotions and feelings of characters.
 - ❖ Describe the character's reactions to what is happening.
 - ❖ When in doubt, "Show, don't tell"

Famous Writer's Quote

Most writers regard the truth as their most valuable possession, and therefore are most economical in its use.

– Mark Twain

Auburn Winter Storytelling Fest - 2018



The **2018 Auburn Storytelling Fest** on January 27 drew a crowd of several hundred fans. The Open Telling session featured around 30 storytellers, many of them Gold Country Writers. Our own Hester Jones wowed the crowd with her tale of almost winning the softball/drinking game with an eyes-shut inside-the-park home run with the bases loaded. GCW was one of the sponsors.

The winner of the Liar Contest was a guy from Citrus Heights named Eric. He told a story about a dog who got cut in half. Dad put it back together with one side backwards. That way the dog could bark on either end.

Other Gold Country Writers members who spoke at Auburn Winter Storytelling Fest, telling their stories on stage during Open Telling were: Rebecca Inch-Partridge, Kathryn Shields, Terry Wicks, Pauline Nevins, Margie Yee Webb, Susan Osborn, and Michael O'Haver. Chery Anderson was one of the featured Professional Storytellers.

5th Wednesday Celebration Social at Awful Annie's



The **5th Wednesday Social at Awful Annie's** was a success, with nearly 30 of our club members attending. Almost everyone had a book to talk about.

Some talked about one they wrote, or were in the process of writing. Others spoke about a favorite book that was influential in their past. And some talked about why they became writers, and who influenced that decision.

The food was good, the service was excellent, and the only drawback was that there wasn't really that much time for actual socializing with one another. We did get to see some old members whom we hadn't seen in a while. It must take a social to get them out and about.

So Awful Annie's wasn't awful after all.



Gold Country Writers

Third Wednesday Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

10 a.m. to 12 noon

~ Gold Country Writers proudly presents ~

Allen Pierleoni

*Publishing Potpourri:
Books, Bookclubs, Authors and a
Candid Confluence*



Who wants to listen to a lecture when you can ask questions and get honest answers? After a brief introduction, Allen Pierleoni will take questions from the audience and offer answers gleaned from 20 years of writing about the printed page and those who put the words on it.

For 16 years, Allen Pierleoni curated the Sacramento Bee Book Club, recruiting A-list New York Times best-selling authors who appeared in front of Sacramento audiences that ranged from 100 to 1,000 people. For 20 years, he wrote two weekly columns focused on new books, trending authors and local literary events.

After leaving the Bee in June 2017, he created Authors On Stage for Capital Public Radio and serves as interviewer. Appearing for Authors On Stage last October was award-winning Davis-based science-fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson (for "New York: 2140"). Appearing on January 29, New York Times best-selling author Alafair Burke for her psychological thriller "The Wife."

Allen's books column, "Between the Lines," publishes on the www.capradio.org website at www.capradio.org/events/capradio-reads.

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"**

~ A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization ~

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/>