

October, 2024

Suburban Scribe

Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club Newsletter

sactowriters.org

Shannon Dittmore will be our speaker on Monday, October 14th, at 7 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall at 5501 Dewey Drive, corner of Dewey and Madison.

October Topic: Character Purpose is Everything - Seven High Level Questions You Must Answer

In fiction, we know this to be true: compelling characters always serve the plot, and compelling plots always serve the characters. But it's harder than it sounds, isn't it? In this session we'll explore question-based character development while acknowledging the truth that not all questions provide helpful answers. Asking the right questions at the right time will ensure your characters serve their purpose within the story you're telling. When your characters are doing what they were meant to do, your plot can't help but soar. Purpose really is everything, and by looking at the central characters in *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, I'll show you exactly how this works.

**If you haven't read The Hunger Games and won't have time before our session, consider watching the movie. Some knowledge of the story will add a richness to our discussion.*

Bio: Shannon Dittmore is an award-winning author and speaker. Her young adult books include a high-stakes fantasy adventure in the *Winter, White and Wicked* duology, as well as an eye-opening plunge into the supernatural with the *Angel Eyes* novels. The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books called *Winter, White and Wicked* a "propulsive, adrenaline-fueled ride through a dangerously thrilling and chilling landscape," and the Whippoorwill committee awarded it The Whippoorwill Award in 2021.

Shannon enjoys teaching and encouraging writers of all ages. She's taught in a variety of formats including year-long classes, mentoring tracks, and workshops at several conferences and schools including Realm Makers Writers Conference, Mount Hermon Christian Writers Conference, SoCal Christian Writers, John Adams Academy, and Grace Classical Academy.

When she's not at her desk, Shannon can be found in the wilds of Northern California, adventuring with her husband and two children.



A Reason to Attend Meetings In Person

Big Brother is always watching and keeping track of whether you attend or not — much like the Eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. Big Brother is everywhere... And you wouldn't want to disappoint it, would you?

Editor's Note:

Lots of great stories in this month's newsletter! Particularly on page 6...

Hello, fellow writers and artists of all walks of life, members, and guests — EVERYONE IS WELCOME, NO MATTER YOUR ... WELL, NO MATTER YOUR *ANYTHING!*

Please join us in person at 7 p.m. at 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks in the Fellowship Hall of the Crossroads Christian Fellowship Church behind the white fence at the edge of the parking lot. We meet there on the second Monday of every month except May when we meet at a local restaurant.

We **HIGHLY** encourage meeting in person. The room has a super-large television for viewing the speaker if they are not in-person, plus there are usually goodies you can snack on. Feel free to show up early for the chance to talk to some of the hippest dudes and dudettes in the Golden Bear state.

If you **MUST** join on Zoom 7-9 p.m. from home, please contact President Ron Smith in advance for special accommodations.

Ronald Smith, President SSWC

Review of M.L. Edson's Sierra Heist

By Karen Sepahmansour

A page turner, M. Edson's book, *Sierra Heist*, keeps you on the edge of your seat with a well-crafted plot, each chapter ending with a cliffhanger of curiosity and anticipation. What will it take for cons to find where they left off? M. Edson weaves the characters, scenes and plot with colorful, memorable characters and transitions immersing the reader in a flowing arc. You will be captivated until the very end wondering how a family finds hurdles unimaginable in dealing in a very different environment from which they came. Can the diverse characters be bonded together? Why or why not?

Editor's note: Feel free to write a review of each other's work (or any book you are currently reading) and submit it to the newsletter. Convince us to read the book or run away from it in sheer terror. You can even make a challenge out of it!





Writers' Mingle

NEW LOCATION

Now meeting at Denny's Roseville on Sunrise (at Douglas)

122 Sunrise Ave, Roseville, CA 95661

Saturday October 19th, 2024 --- 9 am to 11 am
All are welcome --- No toll fee for the Bridge Troll



This Month's Topic:

The Story of YOUR story



In The Moment

By Karen Sepahmansour

As I take this flight alone,
I will not forget where is my home.
The heart is there the blood flows in one place,
In my body no need for haste.

The plane stops, I listen as the road angles,
I leave and decipher how to become
unentangled.

The needs and directions are piled high
Like the Eiffel Tower in the sky.

One by one I am puzzled,
I close my mouth that needs a muzzle.
Occasionally confused like a fog in the night,
Remember logic is right here in sight.

I park the car near home so clear.
And venture out with lists, no fear.
What to do first, the tasks like bait,
Each asking for a sooner date.

I put on music to distract for a while,
And dance around and begin to smile.
Aha! One by one, my mind speaks,
Each task with care I then complete.

Write Something

By M.L. Edison

TV calls to all to see:
Hey, you! Yes. You! Watch me. Me!
New books are not meant to be.

Games entice the young and old
Leaving books alone and cold
Things online need to be sold!

Don't fall into their clear trap.
Don't become just one more sap
Don't be caught taking a nap.

To think and write and create
Or maybe just vegetate?
Wake up, before it's too late

Story lines happen each day,
Yelling the news all the way,
And neighbors have much to say

Kids always do something fun.
Know someone who's really dumb?
Do you make any income?

Sit down in your special chair
Run your fingers through your hair
Write your story if you dare.
Any genre, we don't care.

Real-life, true reality,
Science-fiction, comedy
Just give us a chance to see
What's your visionality.

Author Milestone:

Carol Johnson has published her book. You can find it by scanning the QR code on the left or emailing her. Make sure you congratulate her IN PERSON at a SSWC meeting.

A Must Read!
The beautiful and
inspiring true story of a
couple's rare journey
spanning decades.

"Life can only be understood backwards
but it must be lived forwards"
—Soren Kierkegaard

Available on
Amazon



author contact:
writer.ccjohnson@gmail.com



Carol and Dan were campground
managers at Tahoe Donner



From Hallowed Halls to Halloween: The Amazing Lives of a College Gown

By Pat Biasotti

Back in the ancient days when I attended a Catholic women's college, it was *de rigueur* to wear our black caps and gowns to all official functions, as well as to daily morning Mass (attendance greatly encouraged). These gowns were extremely practical, and they covered a multitude of sins. One could catch an extra ten minutes of sleep by throwing on the gown and rolling up pajama pant legs. The cap would cover hair put up in pin curls, but didn't work well over rollers (curlers, to you youngsters). Several times I was caught red-handed, or should say red-faced, walking up the chapel aisle and an errant p.j. leg unfurled below my gown. However, the strangest sight must have been a group of us, racing against time, down three flights of the old-fashioned, spiral iron fire escapes outside our residence hall—gowns billowing out behind like witches whirling down a vortex.

And that brings me to the somewhat shady, secret life of the venerable college gown. I married and as my family grew, they made use of that voluminous black gown. For the boys it doubled as Zorro's cape as he dashingly dispatched a younger-brother foe. I doubt the Lone Ranger ever had a cape, but more than one kid pranced around in it yelling, "Hi, Ho, Silver!" It was a great Halloween costume for Count Dracula or the girls be-witching the neighborhood.

It even attained a certain fame onstage. It appeared in numerous school plays, and was borrowed by neighbors to clothe everything from a Russian Count to the villain in the village melodrama. However, its most ignominious—and annual—role took place at Halloween on my darkened front porch draped with spider webs. Spooky music played and a sinister black-robed figure with green hair appeared, and handed out candy with white skeleton hands. "Eeeek!" Half of my little visitors would scream and run, sans candy. Their parents or older siblings would have to bring them back, "Look, it's only Mrs. Biasotti." (That witch's mask got hot, so one year I used green makeup. I looked even more witchy the following day. I couldn't get all the makeup off.)

They certainly wove good cloth back then. From hallowed halls of learning to Halloween costuming, it lived on. And to think, it was already on its second life. I bought it used!

.....

(This anecdote is from Pat's autobiography which she is writing for her children.)



Writing Tip from the Grammar Guardian:

Time

*From the Grammar Guardian
(aka, M. L. Edson / Mary Lou Anderson)*



Time. No one has enough. This year's summer seems endless, but that doesn't mean that the passage of time has changed speed. It just seems slower, hotter, draining — all motivation and production suckers.

Time is something we can't control. We can't make more of it. We can't buy more. We can't save it up in a special place to use later. (Think Jim Croce's song "Time in a Bottle" here. <https://genius.com/Jim-croce-time-in-a-bottle-lyrics>)

We can only decide how we're going to use the time available to each of us. When we're young, time seems to crawl. As we get older, time seems to speed up and pass at a frightening pace.

Is it helpful to sit and mope that you just don't have enough time to do everything you want or need to do? Does it help to sit and vegetate in front of the television? Does it help accomplish anything to play games on your tablet?

So, how do you use your time? Is that game on your phone or tablet helping you relax? Or perhaps keeping Alzheimer's away like they keep promising? Sure, they are usually free, but ARE they? They cost you time. Time you cannot save. Time you cannot repeat. Time that is limited.

Does it help to read others' books? Or is that also a waste of time.? Perhaps you might think reading is only an excuse to not work on our own book?

Well, it just might be helpful. You just might be inspired by the creative tome, or the electronic device, you hold in your hands.

A thought. An idea. A character. A thought might pop into your head. "Hey, I can do this!" Or even, "Hey, I can do BETTER than this." And off you go, your fingers flying over the keyboard with ideas, characters, conversations, scenarios. Making new worlds. Memorializing your life. Writing a biography. Creating something. Writing something. Using time creatively. Writing, then even finishing your story, book, poem, or article.

Okay, enough of that, I'm off to finish the final tweaks on my time machine so I can go back and do what really needed to get done.

HELP !!! VOLUNTEERS

Gondor Calls for Aid! Will You Answer?

Calling all members — SSWC is in need of volunteers. (Yes, that means you.)

Snacks/Refreshments

Publicity

Historian

Membership Committee

Nominations

There was a Newsletter position, but that spot has been taken by a Sinister Rapsallion.

No individual job takes a lot of time, and you learn a lot about the club, our members, and about writing by helping out. Plus you get Theoretical Monopoly Money which we may or may not keep track of.

Contact Ron Smith ... or any other Board member listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Appaloosa Radio

Jim Miller

I have introduced a new feature to my Appaloosa Radio webcast site called **91-Second Stories**. These are complete fiction stories that run about 91 seconds to listen to. Typically, this runs 250 to 350 words. It is an exciting genre to write in. Concise and pithy stories that carry an impact.

I am inviting the Club's members to submit their own 91-Second Stories which I'll convert into audio.



I have been webcasting the stories on both my podcast (Appaloosa Radio Podcast) and on my main site (Appaloosa Radio Productions). Of course, the podcast is always available on services such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music, Overcast, etc.

Appaloosa Radio—James Joel Miller Jim.mount.miller@gmail.com
online audio theater where original stories come alive!

You can also check out the newly formed Appaloosa Radio YouTube Channel featuring some of our very own members! <https://www.youtube.com/@Appaloosastories>

Appaloosa Radio is a production of the Appaloosa Springs Audio Theater, a volunteer collaborative whose purpose is to create, produce, and share original story content through webcast radio experiences.

We offer a **permanent archive** of our original audio stories at Appaloosa Radio Productions --- <https://appaloosaradio.productions>

We also offer a **podcast** service that adds new episodes each week. The podcast host is at --- <https://appaloosa-radio.buzzsprout.com>

Principal contact: jim-j@appaloosaradio.productions

Behind every door is an untold story . . .

~ Jim Mounts-Miller ~

This space is reserved for your short story or poem next month.

It can't be as horrifying as the wailing of 10,000 teenagers that have to get up in the morning, of that I'm sure. Please email your submission to

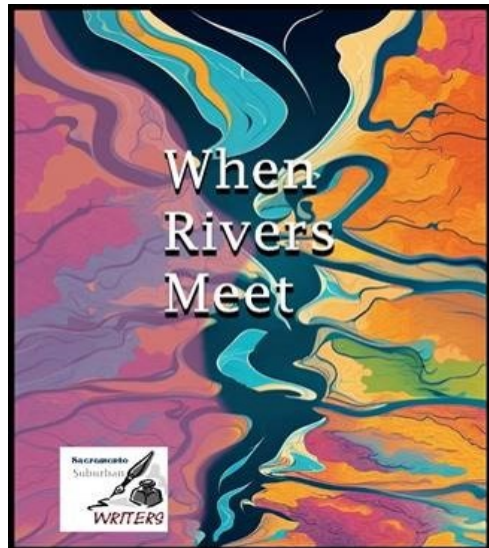
kevycastle32@gmail.com

P.S. If you're kind to him, he won't force you to endure the La Sierra High School fitness test.

(Submissions are for members only. Annual membership is super cheap. Feel free to email

Kevin the Newsletter Goblin with questions.)

When Rivers Meet



The Sacramento Suburban Writers Club is going beyond print to sharing our stories by audio and video. We will host a story-sharing platform that will webcast our audio stories to services such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, iHeartRadio, TuneIn, Alexa, Overcast, PocketCasts, Castro, Castbox, Podchaser, etc. That means that anyone can listen to them on their smartphone or in their car wherever they may be in the world!

We are also posting the same stories to a YouTube channel that will also feature other stories written by the Club's members. That option opens even more opportunities for sharing our tales. The Board has decided to begin by webcasting stories previously published in one of our anthologies.

Thus...

If you have written a story that has been included in any of our published anthologies, please contact Jim Mounts-Miller at jim-j@appaloosaradio productions or Brittany Lord (a.k.a. tealya) at tealya@hotmail.com to confirm that you wish to have your story (or stories) webcast on these new platforms.

We are calling this an audio-anthology and we have tentatively named it, "***When Rivers Meet***" and the subtitle is "Fiction from the Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club."

There is no charge for webcasting your stories on any of these platforms.

Future SSWC Speakers / Events

October - Shannon Dittmore, YA
Fantasy Author

November - Chris Hennessy, Filmmaker

December - Annual Winter PARTY!

Future SSWC Speakers / Events

January - Susan Osborn, Flash Fiction

February - (**You Could Be Here!**)

March - Tim Schooley, Historical (Medieval)
Fiction

2025—??? It's a twisty mystery...

This page is intentionally repeated each month.

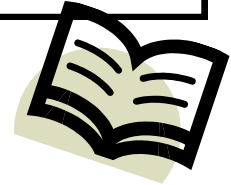
Follow the SSWC podcasts at:

<https://anchor.fm/sactowriters>

Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/0UHX19RTviPkRXMzkysg6V>)

RadioPublic (<https://radiopublic.com/sactowriters-694Q1Z>)

Pocket Casts (<https://pca.st/z1e83qlq>)



Which Club Members Have Published?

Check out the SSWC website. You will find a list of members and their book on our club's website: <https://www.sactowriters.org/books-by-our-members/>

If you are a member and have published material, send the information to Wes Turner, including any links to your own website and/or to a site that sells your books (eg Amazon). His email is listed in our club roster. Wes will add your book(s) to the list.

R U Done Yet?

Have you finished another book? Had any kind of material published recently? Finished a BIG Milestone on your current project?

Are you holding a Book Launch or Public Reading to let the world know what you have accomplished? Let the other members and readers know so we can support you!

Send a brief announcement (including links and your contact information) to kevincastle32@gmail.com and have it included in the next newsletter. Please include a copy of the cover.

Members — Wanna be Published?

Submit your own short story, article, poem, or excerpt of your own book to the newsletter for publication. (Please keep it to under 450 or so words ... or it will have to be serialized.)

It would give you bragging rights as being published if you are going to be in contact with an agent and/or publisher.

Send all Submissions to Kevin The Newsletter Goblin: kevincastle32@gmail.com

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Note that the article to the left is directed to "members."

So, if you do *want to be published* in any future newsletters, make sure your dues are up to date.

Join the Club!

We are a vibrant club with active writers, have several critique groups (with room for more), and stay wonderfully supportive of each other.

SSWC supports local writers and encourages everyone to write and publish. Attending meetings is free, but membership brings benefits, such as publication in the newsletter and anthology, use of our club's library, qualification for grants to attend conferences (limits apply), and ability to join our first-class critique groups.

MEMBERSHIP is paid on a yearly basis. If joining after April, dues are prorated by quarter (unless you are just really late in maintaining your membership!).

_____ Individual \$40 / year

_____ Couple \$55 / year

_____ Full-Time Student \$30 / year

_____ Platinum Senior (70+) \$30 / year

More information is on our website: sactowriters.org

Name: _____ Genres: _____

Published? Y / N (yes, includes self-published) Email: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Website/other info/address (optional): _____

MAIL YOUR DUES TO: Jeannie Turner. Her address is in the Directory. If you don't have a copy, email Jeannie at turnerjeannie48@gmail.com and she will let you know where to send it.

OFFICERS

Elected Officers:

President Ron Smith (El Capitan)
 Vice President Brittany Lord (And Lady)
 Secretary _____
 Treasurer Mary Lou Anderson
 (Ms. Money Penny)

Chairs:

Coffee/Treats _____
 Conferences _____
 Critique Groups Brittany Lord (And Lady)
 Historian _____
 Librarian Ron Smith (El Capitan)
 Membership Jeannie Turner (Voice of the People)
 Newsletter Kevin Castle (Goblin)
 Nominations _____
 Prgm/Speakers Laura Kellen (Speaker Herder Extraordinaire)
 Publicity _____
 Raffle _____
 Scholarship Karen, Wes, and Linda (Cerberus)
 Sunshine Nan Roark (The Good Witch)
 Website Wes Turner (Technowizard)
 Workshops _____

There's a spot in the list above for YOU!

WRITING PROMPT

(450 Words or Less)

BOO! It's the seasonal flu and it's coming to get you! (I know because I'm sick as I type this.)

Write something about a real or imagined disease. You can even give your character giant purplish spots if you want!

P.S. Don't forget to send it to your favorite Newsletter Goblin!

MEETING INFORMATION

7:00 - 9:00 PM

We meet the second Monday each month, year round. Be there or be square. 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks, CA Just north of the Madison/Dewey intersection, across from the Safeway. In the Friendship Hall through the white fence.

All writers are encouraged to attend.
(Yes, that means you!)

Membership not mandatory but brings privileges
such as publication in the newsletter!