



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

December 2023

MEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY FOR DECEMBER 7 MEETING

We'll gather in the meeting room at Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, starting a little earlier than usual so that we can set up, 6 p.m. Location: 633 West Las Flores. We invite members and their significant others but not the general public.

We'll aim for a "modified potluck" which means that we'll provide plastic cutlery, paper napkins, plates, cups, and so on. For food, we'll have wrapped sandwiches and treats on hand. If you'd like to bring goodies, thanks very much, but do try to stick to individual serving-size items rather than roasted turkey on a platter.

We'll hear members' readings 5-7 minutes long. Come prepared to share you golden words with us. Serious. Humorous. Educational. Uplifting. Pick your favorite category (in good taste) and know you'll have an appreciative audience.

Along this, we'll do a fun word game or exercise, and socialize with our Ridge Writers colleagues and friends. Happy holidays! See you there!



NOVEMBER SPEAKER BUD ABBOTT SHARED HIS APPETITE FOR RISK **Report on the November Meeting written by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal**



Our November speaker Robert "Bud" Abbott, author of *Appetite for Risk: What It Is, Who Has It & How I Survived* left us spellbound with tales from a life spent in danger from time to time and occasionally a few minutes from death.

Mark Your Calendar...

December 7 – Ridge Writers Member Holiday Party – member readings and light refreshments

January 4 – Joshua Fox – "The Meticulous Art of Subtlety and Foreshadowing"

February 1 – Eva Poole-Gilson, award-winning poet and author of *Love Letter from a Poet in the High Sierra*

He opened his program by running us through a brief Tai Chi exercise, but using positive Western images in place of Asian metaphors that depict tigers and dragons (pictured above.).

Having loosened us up, he proceeded with his story:

As a young man, he marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. Later, he joined the Peace Corps and with it went to Nigeria where soldiers murdered his staff. Back home on presumably safe territory, he had a fender-bender...

Continued on page 3

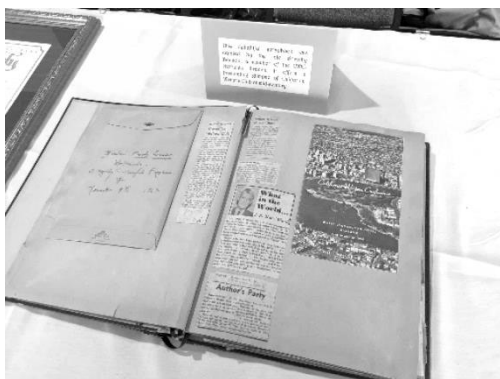
A Meeting of Minds: The 50th Annual CWC Awards



I entered the luncheon meeting room in Oakland, California for the Jack London and Ina Coolbrith award ceremony, not quite sure what to expect but excited (and honored!) to be there. It was brightly decorated and ready to honor the diverse group of California writers who were collecting slowly around the tables. There were writers from all corners of The Golden State and all walks of life. I started chatting with members from other branches while we waited for the food to be served. We traded anecdotes from our lives and various cities. I gushed about the fun things I'd seen the day before, this being my first time in NorCal.

All the tables in the room were abuzz with animated conversation.

Writers amiably conversing, spoken words crisscrossing over the white tablecloths, ideas and experiences flowing from one mind to another. A member from another branch asked my role in Ridge Writers and I told her I was VP and youth coordinator. She was fascinated that our branch had a position of youth coordinator and I told her about our scholarship program and recent Junior Writers bootcamp. She loved the ideas so much, and like the kind of writer who is always ready to collect novel ideas to put to good use, she pulled out her notebook and jotted them down, to "steal them" to take back to her board. I was more than happy to have sparked some excitement and a possible help to a fellow branch. A member from the Sacramento branch told me how they have 'network meetings' between general meetings, an informal gathering often over breakfast where members can share connections and garner feedback. I told him that was a cool idea, perhaps something our branch would like to try...



After the plates of food were consumed, the presentation began and we were treated to a nice slideshow history of the CWC and each of the 22 branches' current doings. Then came the awards proper. As the rain poured from the gray bay area sky outside, the applause poured forth inside. Awards Chair and Bulletin Editor, Joyce Krieg, with assistance from Geri Spieler, CWC Vice President, read each honoree's bio and CWC President Roger Lubek presented the plaques. The celebration ended with a large group photo of all the honorees who were able to be in attendance. And it was a large group! Only a handful of the 25 awards recipients couldn't attend. The usual squeezing in and kneeling ensued as we tried to all fit into the camera frame. It was a panorama of wonderful volunteer talent and hard work! A meeting of minds from across the state gathered to celebrate a shared love of contributing to and improving our lovely CWC.



Ridge Writers Leaders

President – Daniel Stallings
Vice President – Janis Kunz
Secretary – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Treasurer – Andrew Sound
Member at Large – Monica Dwyer
Historian – Maryann Butterfield
Newsletter Editor – Daniel Stallings
Programs & Publicity – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
State Rep – Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
Youth Coordinator – Janis Kunz
Webmaster – Julianne Black

To reach any of these leaders, use ridgewriters@yahoo.com.

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters and our website CWC-ridgewriters.org.

SoCal Writers Showcase



The southern region of the California Writers Club maintains the "zine"-format socalwritersshowcase.com, containing monthly content from members, ranging from fiction, nonfiction/essays, and memoir, to poetry, interviews, discussion on writers' life, the craft, and news.

The Writers of the Purple Sage is the monthly newsletter of the Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch of the over 100-year-old California Writer Club. Except where otherwise stated, all articles in this publication may be printed without special permission in newsletters of branches of the California Writers Club and in the State Bulletin, subject to the following conditions:

- The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
- The text must be printed in its entirety, without additions or changes.
- You must send a copy of the newsletter bearing the reprint to the author.

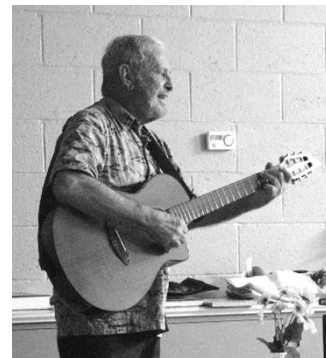
Contact the editor by mail at P.O. Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556 or by email, ridgewriters@yahoo.com. **SPECIAL NOTICE:** Photographs for publicity and newsletter uses are taken at all Ridge Writers events. By entering the venue, members and guests are granting permission that their likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.



...with a man clearly at fault who urged, “Please don’t call the cops. I’ll pay for the damages.” When days passed and the promise didn’t pan out, Bud went to the gent’s home only to find himself confronted with a knife and then a gun. Bud managed a safe retreat by joking and keeping calm. He subsequently saw the guy’s picture on the post office wall – as a felon on the FBI most wanted list.

Another encounter pitted Bud against river pirates ready to board his fishing boat and slit his throat. After that he went to Dubai where he stayed at the world’s tallest building that he had to flee when a fire broke out. He made his way down 48 flights of stairs with a badly bruised leg. Once on the

ground, he looked up to the skies and commented, “You can stop now.”



He said to us that he’s wondered why he finds himself in these situations so often, and he’s concluded that it must have to do with DNA: His parents handled threat with aplomb (for instance when his mother outran a polar bear and leapt into a helicopter to escape in the nick of time) and it must have rubbed off on him.

Our Jack London Award Winners

We’re proud of the Ridge Writers who have won the Jack London Award, the highest recognition each branch of CWC can give outstanding members.

The award was presented annually until 2005, and subsequently only once every two years.

Maryann Butterfield 1997
Casey Wilson 1998
Rlee Peters 1999
Judy Dutcher 2000
Curt Danhauser 2001
Judy Martin 2002
Donna McCrohan Rosenthal 2003
Holly Dworken Cooley 2004
Liz Babcock 2005
Allison Aubin 2007
Steve Wersan 2009*
Margaret Luebs 2013
Daniel Stallings 2015
Julianne DiBlasi Black 2017
John Anderson 2019
Andrew Sound 2021
Janis Kunz 2023

*With a special Charmian London Award to Fran Wersan

He offered advice for facing daunting challenges: Don’t panic and learn to think about them differently, see them in a new light, and take them in your stride.

He followed this by singing two songs accompanied by guitar. The second, written by him, reminded us, “Change is coming.”

* * *

Ridge Writers’ 9th annual Dickens Tea: Mr. Fezziwig’s Ball

Ridge Writers is bringing back the Dickens Tea for 2023. Over delicious holiday tea and treats, the event will feature festive and interactive activities with a literary or Dickensian twist. The festivities will include our annual white elephant book exchange, a Yuletide craft of snowman bell jar ornaments for all the guests to create, and a holiday finery costume contest for our guests. The whole event will conclude with a dramatic performance of Fezziwig’s Ball. Guests are welcome to dress in their holiday or Victorian best, join us for a hot cup of tea, and ring in the holiday season in true Dickensian style.

Ridge Writers’ Dickens Tea: Mr. Fezziwig’s Ball is on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Clubhouse (425 W. Ridgecrest Blvd.).

Tickets are \$25 each and are available now at Red Rock Books.



Pictured left: This year’s Dickens Tea craft — a bell jar ornament styled like a snow globe. Guests are provided with a kit and simple instructions to create their own personalized craft at the tea.

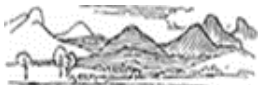
Fun Fact About the California Writers Club

What do you suppose this is? This picture, taken by Janis Kunz at the CWC Awards luncheon, is of our club's corporate seal. And yes, it's supposed to be backwards. It's a woodblock for ink printing. When inked and pressed, the printed seal is the right way around. This block was designed in 1913 by UC Berkeley art professor Perham Nahl, and the organization has preserved it for the last 110 years!



Ridge Writers does not endorse any contest, conference or publishing opportunity that appears in our newsletter. We merely collect and share news of opportunities for our membership. Member discretion advised.

The East Sierra Branch (Ridge Writers) is the California Writers Club branch serving the eastern part of Kern County. Over the mountains on the west side of the county is our Bakersfield-based sister branch, Writers of Kern.



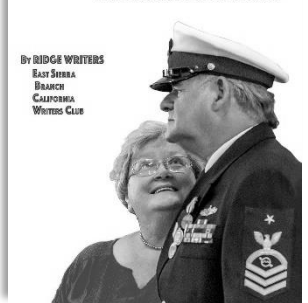
RIDGE WRITERS AT THE 2023 RIDGECREST PETROGLYPH FESTIVAL

Ridge Writers had a booth at the Petroglyph Festival on November 4 and 5 this year. We offered handouts and literature about the club, our brand new Meet Our Authors flyer, books for a \$1 donation to the branch, tickets and information for the annual Dickens Tea, and our branch anthologies — *Planet Mojave* and *Scenes from Lives of Service*. We had fun connecting with our community and sharing the club with them.

Pictured below: The Ridge Writers booth at the Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival this year. Thank you to Donna, Monica, Janis, Andrew, and Daniel for contributing to the booth and volunteering over the weekend.



SCENES FROM LIVES OF SERVICE



Cover Photo by Laura Austin

Our book featuring stories of High Desert veterans, *Scenes from Lives of Service*, is on sale at Red Rock Books and through mail order. To order through mail, send a letter and check to Ridge Writers, PO Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA, 93556; buyer should state name, mailing address, number of copies wanted, and enclose a check for \$32.50 each. Ridge Writers members can buy the book for \$25 each.

Inside ...

Page 1:

December Program:
“Member Holiday Party”

“November Speaker Bub Abbott
Shared His Appetite for Risk”
Report on November Meeting
by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

Upcoming Speakers

Page 2:

Guest Message by Janis Kunz:
“A Meeting of Minds: The 50th
Annual CWC Awards”

Ridge Writers Leaders

Page 3:

Jack London Awards
Dickens Tea: Mr. Fezziwig's Ball

**The Ridge Writers
East Sierra Branch
California Writers Club
P.O. Box 484
Ridgecrest, CA 93556**