



*Writers
of the*

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

January 2024

JOSH FOX SHARES FORESHADOWING TIPS JANUARY 4

Author Joshua Fox will give our Thursday, January 4 program, 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W. Las Flores Avenue. Public welcome, No admission fee.

Young and at the tender age of 22, he has spent most of his life understanding the intricacies of literature: character arcs, narrative theme, all the way down to color theory. He possesses a passionate appreciation for it all. Having already published his first book, finished the second, and started on his third, he is putting all of that knowledge to use.

The highlights of his craft are his miniscule details, how seemingly innocuous phrases turn into tells of what is to come, or what are thought to be simple mistakes become carefully sown seeds with the turn of a page. He will go over how to turn a story into a meticulously carved puzzle, inlaying important details to subconsciously input them into readers' minds. He will talk about how to tastefully reveal information to maximize intrigue and anticipation, as well as how focusing on subtlety and foreshadowing quickened his writing. There will also be some discussion about writing online, and gradually building an online audience over one million strong. His view count on fanfiction.net stands at over one million.

Come join Ridge Writers on January 4, as Joshua Fox explores how to master the art of weaving together details. A Q&A and book signing will follow.

HAVE YOURSELF A LITERARY CHRISTMAS

Report on the December Events written by Daniel Stallings



Guests at this year's Dickens Tea enjoying the tea and treats provided by Monica Dwyer.

December is always a special month for Ridge Writers. We host a couple special events to gather us all together to tell the stories. Side note: This is one of my favorite times of year to be a Ridge Writers member. I love getting the chance to hear people share their works and the atmosphere of giving that fills every corner of our holiday time together.

The festivities started quite early this year with our 9th annual Dickens Tea held on Saturday, December 2nd. Subtitled "Mr. Fezziwig's Ball," our annual teatime

treasure was made extra special by the efforts of members Monica Dwyer (who provided the tea, gluten free treats, and table decorations), Donna McCrohan Rosenthal (who created the book and gift exchange), and Daniel Stallings (who commissioned the craft project and created the dramatic reading). After enjoying mini Victoria sandwich cakes and cranberry and orange scones, the guests got to open gifts, watch Daniel perform the Fezziwig ball scene from *A Christmas Carol* that included a surprise dance with actress Devanne Fredette playing Mrs. Fezziwig, vote for the costume contest (in which Devanne Fredette got first place and Janis Kunz got second), and create the snowman bell jar ornaments designed by Margit Stallings. The tea was a perfect cozy start to the holiday season. Thank you so much to Monica, Daniel, Donna, Amber Stull, Steven Dwyer, Gerry Wisdom, and Devanne Fredette for your help making the Dickens Tea happen this year!

Mark Your Calendar...

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*



Member Gerry Wisdom shows off her completed ornament.

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Back to Your Roots



And I'm not talking about letting your hair grow out and go natural. As writers, we all start in different media. Did you start as a poet? A playwright? A novelist? A short story writer? Memoir? Non-fiction articles? Blogs? Whatever your gateway media into writing, sometimes we drift into new media and new territories. Bloggers become novelists. Playwrights become screenwriters. Poets become memoirists. And so on.

In my writing, I first started as a poet, gradually honing my skills until I could graduate to larger projects and longer work such as plays and novels. My work had taken me in very specific directions now over the years. I haven't written a poem since 2011 when I self-published my last poetry collection. My life and work has grown and taken me elsewhere, as all our lives do. That doesn't mean I don't respect the art or where I come from as a writer.

With the ekphrastic poetry collection from the statewide California Writers Club coming up (See "Vision and Verse" on page 4 of this issue of *The Purple Sage*.) and the self-imposed break from theatre I will have, I felt it was time to reintroduce myself to the world of poetry and try my hand at writing something new. Or to be more specific, something new out of my own past. My dear friend (and our Vice President and Youth Coordinator) Janis Kunz was very taken with the ekphrastic challenge and shared some of her artwork with us. One photo in particular stood out to my eyes. I was in love with the *I Spy* books when I was a little kid, and this photo—a glittery motley of costume pieces—spoke to my theatrical heart (I recognized many of those pieces from past shows) and the little boy who remembers searching for clues in those old picture books. She took the photo during the lockdown. And now I had the itch to write a poem for the first time in years. So taking on the ekphrastic challenge, I will go back to my roots as an author I find myself excited to embrace the fresh challenge. The thrill of working on a new project. The chance to refresh dormant skills. The change of pace from what my writing had become of late. It's like a renewed burst of energy, a shot in the arm to get me back into writing they way I want to write. I have the chance to take what I learned over the years and improve on a craft I did a long time ago, making it stronger. I support writers making resolutions for the new year, and I think going back to our roots as writers, writing new pieces in old forms we used to do just for the fun of it, is a fantastic way to add spark to your creative mojo again. Let's get writing!

Planet Mojave

We will have an exciting update about Planet Mojave—our branch's seminal anthology first published in 2011—at the January general meeting. We encourage our current membership to attend this meeting.

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 socialwritersshowcase.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.



Janis Kunz explains the ekphrastic poetry challenge.

On December 7, we held our annual Member Holiday Party where we had a potluck of light refreshments and desserts brought by our membership. After tasty nibbles and tastier conversation, several members provided entertainment in the form of readings, poetry challenges, and games.

Janis Kunz explained the upcoming CWC anthology, *Vision and Verse* (see page 4), and its goal of featuring ekphrastic poetry—poetry that describes a work of art in detail. Think John Keats’ “Ode to a Grecian Urn.” She brought samples of her own artwork to

encourage members to take on the challenge of writing one, and then she read a poem she wrote, “Clous 9,” inspired by one of her own photographs. Readings continued with Gerry Wisdom reading her poem, “Allusions,” which you can read in its original typewritten form later in this issue. Don Goodson read a story about memories of a different December 7 etched forever in history.

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal provided us with some tricky word puzzles and games. She also collected a challenge where we rewrote familiar sayings with a twist ending. The holiday party was a warm and welcome way for Ridge Writers to celebrate.



Our holiday party readers sharing their work. From L to R (clockwise): Janis Kunz, Gerry Widsom, and Don Goodson.

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

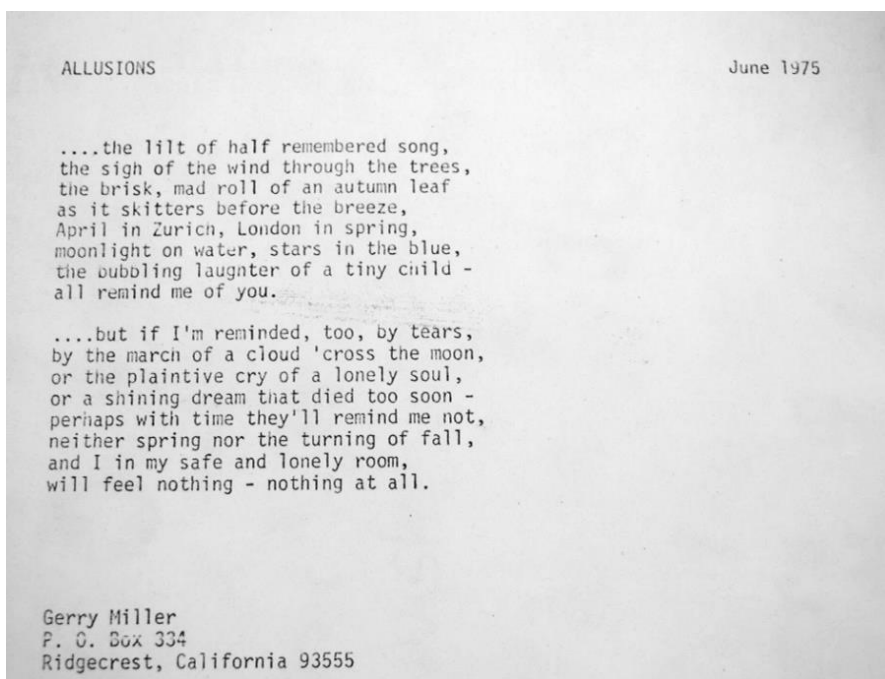


Photo of Gerry Wisdom's poem "Allusions" she read at the holiday party, typewritten in 1975.

2024 CWC Literary Review

The California Writers Club *Literary Review* has been published for many years, but with the blessing of the CWC, the High Desert Branch has created a new model. In order to expedite the process, and to make the costs more manageable, there will be some significant changes. We’ll be bringing up these changes at the January meeting to assess our membership’s interest in submitting to the statewide *Literary Review*. So if you are interested in taking part in this publication, please plan on attending the general meeting and letting us know.

Ridge Writers Christmas Tree

Several years ago, Ridge Writers President Daniel Stallings came up with an idea to create a Ridge Writers Christmas tree built out of words and stories. It's been subsequently shared online and printed in the *Sage*. However, some of our members didn't get a chance to contribute to it. All you need to do is send us what was your favorite Christmas ornament. You can write a short story about it if you wish—no longer than 55 words please. Send it to Daniel at beinmyhaus@hotmail.com, and he will create a new Christmas tree, adding the new entries with the earlier ones, for 2024.

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.



Vision and Verse

California Writers Club announces plans for a new CWC book in 2024 titled *Vision and Verse: A Fusion of Art and Photography*. *Vision and Verse* will be an ekphrastic book pairing artwork with poetry and short prose. There are two phases to this project. Phase one is an art and photography contest. Phase two will post the winning art and call for poetry and short prose submissions inspired by the selected works. Submitted poetry and prose will be judged and selected poems and prose will be published in 2024 along with the winning art in CWC's *Vision and Verse*.

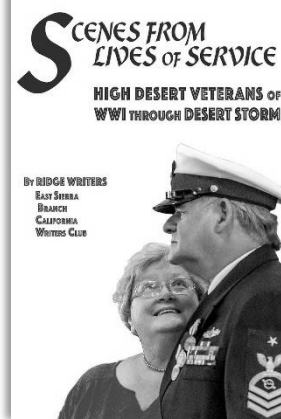
PHASE ONE

A CWC member-only Art and Photography contest beginning on **December 1, 2023 through January 15, 2024**. Member artists and photographers are invited to submit a digital image of their artwork and thought-provoking photography to the contest. The first-place winner will be featured on the cover and receive a \$100 prize. The second and third place winners will receive \$50 prize. All other artists whose work is selected will receive a copy of *Vision and Verse*.

Submission guidelines:

We welcome original paintings, drawings and illustrations. Original photographs only. All submissions must be submitted in jpeg format. Submissions must be received no later than January 15, 2024. Multiple submissions are allowed. There is a \$10 fee for each submission.

Contest and Submission Details are available on the CWC website — calwriters.org.



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.

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Jack London Awards

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