

SACRAMENTO
OCTOBER 2024



BRANCH
NEWSLETTER

SACRAMENTO WRITERS

Writing Success Guaranteed: Using 10 Superpowers to Build a Career



Saturday
19
October

Michael Larsen

Writing Success Guaranteed: Using 10 Superpowers to Build a Career will show you how to clarify and reach your goals as quickly as you can. Now is the best time ever to be a writer. You can develop the gifts, passions, and abilities that guarantee your success. The talk will describe the skills you need to succeed. You may email Mike after the talk with questions and for feedback on adult fiction and nonfiction.

What attendees will learn from this presentation:

- Make writing and sharing the value of your work labors of love.
- Build your visibility, credibility, and brand.
- Write books that your readers love and that sell each other.
- Be as devoted to your readers as you are to your writing.
- Create a business to support your writing.

Mike Larsen is an author coach who loves helping writers achieve goals by adding value to readers' lives. He cofounded Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents, which sold books to more than a hundred publishers and imprints. His books: [How to Write a Book Proposal](#), with coauthor Jody Rein; [How to Get a Literary Agent](#); and [Guerrilla Marketing for Writers](#) (coauthored). Mike is cofounder of the San Francisco Writers Conference.

Saturday, October 19th, 1:00–3:30 pm

Arcade Library, 2443 Marconi Ave, Sacramento

Suggested \$10 contribution to speaker's fund

[Join on Zoom](#): Meeting ID: 831 1220 0475 Passcode: 568644

Crocker Art
Museum
Sacramento

The Perils of Screenwriting



Friday
4
October

Lois Buchter

Uncover the hidden challenges of screenwriting—from Hollywood’s business decisions to crafting irresistible hooks, characters, and a compelling script structure.

What attendees will learn from this presentation:

- Hollywood’s 16 Business Decisions
- Marketability for high concepts.
- Script structure
- Character profiles
- High concepts—it all starts here

Lois Buchter’s career spans twenty years as a screenwriter, has optioned screenwriter/paid writing assignments, and is a short film producer. She has a masters certification in screenwriting. Author of [Gerti’s War](#), [Legend of Cinnamon Valley](#), [Ropen Island](#), and new [Lost City of Quatria](#).

October 4, 9-11 a.m. at Denny’s 8841 Greenback Ln, Orangevale, CA 95662

Lois Buchter is happy to announce a new initiative within the CWC Sacramento Branch called the “Book Launch Group.” She will be discussing details with the membership during the October 4th meeting.

“Basically, I’m looking for like-minded authors who would be interested in joining this group to download new pre-releases for members and give a review onto the different platforms, i.e., Amazon. Then, when you actually release your book, it goes right to the best seller listing with plenty of reviews. Authors need reviews!

“Please note that these releases would be offered about a month before you actually dropped your books at the author’s cost. These sales actually do count in the grand scheme of things.”

Send Lois an email at LoisBuchter@gmail.com with name and genre, and get on this interested listing.

“I’ll spearhead the group and keep an excel spreadsheet of the names and emails. Authors will contact me when they are about six weeks from launch.”

...



Saturday 19 October

The Queer Sacramento Authors Collective and Sacramento’s Avid Reader Bookstore are hosting a spooky Halloween reading and costume contest, with prizes, on October 19th at 2 pm.

Readers include:

Liz Faraim reads from *Bad Man*: In past lives Liz has been a soldier, a bartender, a shoe salesperson, an assistant museum curator, and even a driving instructor. She focuses her writing on strong, queer, female leads.

BJ Sikes reads from *The Cultist’s Wife*: A 5’6” ape descendant who is inordinately fond of a good strong cup of tea, Doc Marten boots, and fancy dress. She specializes in steampunk, gothic horror, and strong female characters.

G.B. Lindsey reads from *Ganger*: Born and raised in California. She loves to write sci-fi, romance, historical fiction, and short stories.

Amy Lane reads from *A Salt Bitter Sea*: She lives in a crumbling crapmansion with a couple of growing children, a passel of furbabies, and a bemused spouse. She writes fantasy, urban fantasy, and gay romance.

M.D. Neu reads from *Golden Hills Haunting*: An award-winning LGBTQA fiction writer with a love for writing and travel who is specifically drawn to science fiction and paranormal television and novels.

Sarena Silva reads from *Possessed*: A former project manager turned stay at home mom. She is currently working on her debut novella, an untitled possession horror story.

Come by the Avid Reader, 1945 Broadway, Sacramento, (NOT Davis)
Bring your best costume, and get a little scary culture!

COMING IN NOVEMBER

Demystifying Book Marketing



Saturday
16
November

Shawn Langwell

Author & Book Marketing Expert

Shawn Langwell can teach you how to increase sales, boost morale, and feel better about the work you do and who you are as a person. The best part, he's done everything he teaches in his books.

Membership Meeting; Saturday November 16 Arcade Library 1–3 p.m.

AUTUMN OPEN READING

by John Patterson

Sign-up to read your—or—listen to your colleagues' work
Tuesday, November 19th at 7:00 pm (link below)

If you don't sign up to share a part of, or a piece, you've worked on, maybe only to gauge audience reaction, you're *still* invited to attend and listen to fellow members' work. It's a wonderful opportunity to participate in the creative process. We share comments and questions, but this is not a critique group. Please note, if you arrive after the reading has started, you will be admitted as soon as that piece is concluded. Pieces are approximately eight minutes long.

Sign-up for the ZOOM Open Reading at: 2johnpatterson@gmail.com .

CHECK-IN for readers between 6:25 and 6:50, and audience before 7:00 pm.

John Patterson is inviting you to use this [Zoom link](#)

Topic: SAC-CWC'S OPEN READING Zoom Meeting

Time: Nov 19, 2024, 06:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 813 6741 5942 Passcode: 876999

SAC BRANCH PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by

Bernard Wozny



I'm not sure what to say, but I know I have to say it.

Don't we all get that feeling that there is something important brewing inside us? It's even worse when we don't even know what it is, never mind how to get it out.

These last weeks and months have been pretty hard on me. I was blaming it on turning 65, not so much a mid-life crisis, more like a getting old crisis. But what about all the other milestones in my life? Am I supposed to get my knickers in a twist every time I pass a threshold?

Other events had to be dealt with. Notably, my daughter, who has left home and moved into student accommodation at UC Davis. Packing, moving even the traffic between here and there have potential for trauma. Everything must take its share of focus.

That leaves wife and I home alone—OMG—what are we supposed to do? I guess we'll figure something out, there must be some dusty memories of togetherness lurking inside us.

You see, life must be dealt with every step of the way, the good, the bad and the indifferent. There's no escaping it, I guess that's why they call it life. David Bowie once sang it quite poetically:

Turn and face the strange
Ch-ch-changes
There's gonna have to be a different man
Time may change me
But I can't trace time.

The trouble is that it still leaves me with that 'something important' thing brewing inside. I still don't know what it is, let alone how to bring it out. Just like everybody else, I go on wondering what and why it is.

But wait, BINGO! I think I got it! I didn't realize it was so obvious until I saw it.

Creativity doesn't always come on demand, sometimes you have to wait for the right threads to weave together. That is exactly the problem we all collectively suffer—inspiration, or lack of, commonly known in our domain as writer's block. That awful desire to thump the keyboard, the impression left on your cheek as you rest your head on your hand.

I don't have a magical cure other than patience and understanding.

Some say that the brain is one big association engine, nothing is real until a concept can be associated (or connected) to something else. That's what I mean by waiting for the right threads to connect. At college they told me that if you have a tough problem to solve, and you can't find the solution, go do something else. Change your mood, forget the problem, work on something different. Stop banging on the stupid keyboard, because it's not stupid, and it's not its fault.

In order to increase the associations in your brain, I think it's always a good idea to connect with another brain. In other words, talk to someone about it.

You: "Hey, I think I have writer's block."

Someone: "Oh? What are you trying to write?"

You: "This and that."

Someone: "Try writing about that and this."

As I have said before, that's why I enjoy this club so much, we have the opportunity to help each other to create.

We have network meetings to learn from each other, we have monthly meetings to learn from professionals. Come to meetings and talk with fellow writers, we have all suffered the same issues and we will all continue to suffer. But these issues turn into fun when we share our troubles and exchange ideas.

Remember, your words must be read.

Bernard Wozny (bpwozny@gmail.com)

MEMBERS' CORNER

by Bonnie Gault-Blue

We welcomed 3 new members this last month. They are:

Rihanna Brown who writes poetry

Barbara Young who writes non-fiction children's picture books, creative memoir giftbook, and self-help/personal growth

Heather Martin who writes women's fiction, historical fiction, and speculative fiction

Please say hello if you see them.

<=>

New members are invited to share a brief (200 words max) bio and a jpeg headshot for our website's [Members](#) page. And you can include a link to your own website in your bio! Please send to sacramentowriters@gmail.com. You can have your published books listed in our [Members' Books](#) section by sending a description and a picture of its cover to Bernard at bpwozny@gmail.com.

<=>

Interested in finding a **Critique Group**? So many of us write alone and have gotten very little feedback on our work. Exposing our creative efforts to a group of like-minded and considerate writers is the first step towards sending our masterpieces out into the world.

Email [Bonnie](#). Your names and genre will be collected and linked with other interested members. Your newly formed group can get help with getting started on our website under Members Resources then select [Critique Group](#).

<=>

Calling for Beta Readers

If you are interested in reading a members's manuscript in full to give feedback on, there are people in the club interested in obtaining your services. Let us know at sacramentowriters@gmail.com

<=>

Editors from our Membership

Gini Grossenbach - find her at www.ginigrossenbach.com

Janey Ranlett - search for Janey Ranlett on Linked-in

Rebecca Partridge - find her at ripartridge.com

<=>

Asking for your help

We are looking for a restaurant to meet at for our quarterly Saturday meetings. It must have a separate meeting room. If you know of a place that you feel might work, please let us know at sacramentowriters@gmail.com

<=>

Holiday Party

We are looking for a few people interested in helping create the Holiday Party. Work with your fellow club members, get creative on decorating and games. Doesn't require a lot of time. Contact us board people at sacramentowriters@gmail.com.

<=>

Seeking Panelists!

As part of California Writers Week 2024, CWC Sacramento Branch will host a panel discussion on the power of speculative fiction to both reflect and shape the real world. Science fiction often explores the possibilities and consequences of new technologies and future states, and fantasy worlds often provide unique lenses that highlight aspects of power, race, class, and morality not possible in more realist works. The proposed time and place for the panel will be 6pm on Thursday, October 17th at There and Back Cafe in downtown Sacramento, but this is still being finalized.

We are seeking SFF aficionados willing to discuss speculative fiction's impact on society. Classic works are valuable to help set the genre's context, but panelists will specifically be asked to focus on the Now: that is, contemporary works, such as the Hugo and Nebula winners and finalists from within the last ten years, and what these works have to say about our present world. TV/Movies/Games are in-bounds, though the focus will be on the writing aspects. Those interested in serving on this panel should contact the organizer/moderator, Nalin Ratnayake (naratnayake@pm.me).

<=>

John Patterson has been asked to read a part of his story, "A Mother Brachiosaurus Glimpses The New World" at the Redwood Writer's Branch's anthology launch of Transitions.

<=>

Spirit and Cash Applauded!

Thanks to members who donated to the club at the September 22 meeting. And thanks to Larry Mandelberg for volunteering his time to give members a truly inspirational talk! The club is built on the premise that members participate in one way or another to keep the club running, so participation of all forms is appreciated.

As you know, unlike some of our sister branches, the Sacramento Branch does not collect meeting fees. We like offering free Open Mic and speaker meetings. Yet the annual dues we all pay do not sufficiently cover the expenses to run a club. We like bringing in out-of-area speakers you recommend. Your board works very hard to support your interests.

For this reason, members attending the Saturday library meetings will be encouraged to contribute to a branch Speaker's Fund. Meetings are free, but we are suggesting a \$10 donation towards our speaker fund. Hopefully you believe that your time spent at these meetings are well worth it. You gather with peers, bounce ideas off fellow writers, problem solve, and hear from experts. These meetings will continue free to community members, who hopefully will consider joining our great club!



[Folsom Lake Symphony](#) and choirs at The [Harris Center](#) for the Arts

Redwood Writers Sonoma County

Writers' Conference

Saturday, Oct. 19, 8:30 am–5:00 pm

Finley Center, 2060 W. College Ave., Santa Rosa

Early bird price of \$125 for CWC members. Price increases Oct. 1.

All the details and registration links can be found [here](#).

The Redwood Branch of CWC invites you to this packed one-day event with keynote speaker, bestselling author and workshop leader, [Jeff Goins](#), along with 14 other industry experts who will talk and teach on subjects that focus on Craft, Genre, Publishing and Marketing.

Choose from a variety of hour-long sessions and ninety-minute interactive workshops offered throughout the morning and afternoon. Please be sure to register early to get the sessions and workshops you want (some may fill up), along with the best rate.

Keynote topic: The Art of Being Interesting:

How to Succeed As a Writer Without Selling Your Soul

Every writer wants to write words they believe in—and not going broke doing it. It's a timeless challenge that most authors, artists, and creative professionals have struggled with since time immemorial. But what if you didn't have to choose between starving and selling out? What if you could thrive as a writer without violating your own integrity. Bestselling author, entrepreneur, and lifelong marketer Jeff Goins will share his own struggles with fame, success, and how he learned to balance the challenges of craft, market, and personal boundaries to create a writing career he can be proud of that still pays the bills.

About the Keynote Presenter:

Jeff Goins is the best-selling author of five books, including [The Art of Work](#) and [Real Artists Don't Starve](#). His award-winning blog [Goinswriter.com](#) has been visited by tens of millions of people, and through his online courses and events, he's taught over 20,000 writers since 2012. Jeff lives outside of Nashville with his family, where they spend most of their free time listening to records and making homemade pasta.

[Registration](#) includes continental breakfast and lunch.



California State
Railroad Museum
Sacramento



Gold Coast Car Interior
California State Railroad
Museum
Sacramento



Mari-Lynne Infantino is excited to announce the publication of her new novel, The Bird Tattoo Murders, available on October 1 through [Amazon](#) and Amazon Kindle. A suspense/crime fiction, you will find the story rich with new characters, including twin sister protagonists, Ginny and Geri, three canines and, of course, the detective and serial killer.

Ginny and Geri, identical twins, are evacuated from their home during the devastating Northern California wildfires. While escaping the fire danger, they come to the rescue of a dog named Poppy and her injured owner, Hannah Caldwell—a woman who is found murdered less than a day later.

Shocked that they may have been among the last people to speak with the victim, the seventy-four-year-old sisters meet with homicide detective Irene Olson, recalling the woman's conversation about her new, and to their mind, shady boyfriend, who abandoned Hannah and Poppy in the woods.

Detective Olson believes that the young woman's murder may be related to several serial murders in Northern California where each victim's tattoo has been defaced, a fact that has not been made public. Mounting evidence begins to point the detective to an unsolved murder from her university days, leading her to ponder a possible connection.

[Mari-Lynne Infantino](#) has been writing stories and poetry since she could hold a pencil. She is a native Californian who was raised in Los Angeles and Orange County. Retired after more than fifty years in administration, she now lives in Sacramento, where she finds her imagination filled with questions, adventure, and sometimes tears—the perfect combination for storytelling.

Mari-Lynne enjoys writing strong character stories with a bit of suspense and a lot of laughter. She has published two previous novels: Grace Period, and The Sum of Her Love.

SAVE THE CAT: A NOVEL APPROACH

The art of great screenwriting applies to the novel!

New and experienced novel writers welcome!

Participants may work on writings in progress or begin new work

Zoom Six Week Class, Wednesday Evenings

October 16, 23, 30 and November 6, 13, 20

6 PM–8 PM

- Week One: Creating Your Hero(ine) & Beat Sheet
- Week Two: Your Genre & the Dark Side
- Week Three: Life’s Passage & Social Groups
- Week Four: Superheroes & Survival
- Week Five: Underdogs & Friendships
- Week Six: Magic & Quests + Reading Salon

Presenter, published author Gini Grossenbacher, M. Ed.

With guest authors: Sheryl Bize Boutte and June Gillam, PhD

Based on Jessica Brody’s groundbreaking book, Save the Cat! Writes a Novel
Each class is just \$27 + tax (textbook not included), with flexible pay-as-you-go options.

Promo: Pay for six weeks by check in advance and receive one class free.

Contact organizer Gini for pay-by-check details.

One free class if you prepay for six weeks.

ENROLLING NOW

...

California Writers Club of Marin

Wednesday, 9 October, 6:30–8:00 pm, “Who’s Afraid of Social Media? Author Platform 2-Part Workshop, Part 1: Build Your Platform,” with Dominican University professor, Claudia Morales, Dominican University communications student, Elizabeth Rosales, and CWC Marin member, Sheri T Joseph, at the Mill Valley Public Library, FREE and in-person. Registration and more information [here](#).

Wednesday, 23 October, 6:30–8:00 pm, “Who’s Afraid of Social Media? Author Platform 2-Part Workshop, Part 2: Author Instagram 101,” Dominican University communications student, Elizabeth Rosales with other students on hand to give hands-on help, at the Mill Valley Public Library, FREE and in-person. Registration and more information [here](#).

Saturday, 16 November, 1:00–2:30 pm, “The Heart and Craft of Writing Memoir, with Linda Joy Myers,” at the Mill Valley Public Library, FREE. Registration and more information [here](#).

Always Climbing New Heights



[Dierdre Wolwonick](#)

How and when did your interest in writing begin?

As soon as I learned to read & write! My mother had been an English teacher, and she taught us both to read before we went to school; reading quickly became my key to the world, and as I learned to read more & more, writing became a natural off shoot. I wanted to create my own stories, as fascinating as the ones I was reading!

What training helped you improve your writing?

After 8 years of grammar school (where I was always scribbling little stories), I went to a professional high school. At the High School of Art & Design, in Manhattan, our teachers knew a lot of people in a lot of different professions. We had amazing speakers, regularly, in class and in assemblies, often writers (of books, or for television or newspapers). I took 4 years of Creative Writing classes there, which I'm sure helped shape my own creative process.

What in your writing career are you most proud of?

Each recently completed work! As a lifelong language teacher, it's very gratifying to have my book about the English language (English with Ease) be published in 8 or so countries. And it was immensely satisfying to finally put together my French textbook, "Allez!", for use in 3 college semesters. Ironically, though, the book I had no intention of writing is probably the one that I had the most fun with. [The Sharp End of Life](#) is marketed as a memoir, but I had no intention of writing a memoir! I just had to write about the ineffable adventure of climbing El Capitan with my son, Alex Honnold (of Oscar fame, in his movie "Free Solo"). It was such a wild adventure that I couldn't not write about it, and it just kind of turned into a memoir (which inspired the award-winning documentary about me, Climbing Into Life). But the feedback I get from readers about The Sharp End is what makes me the happiest. People are inspired, and any time you can help inspire others to be their best, it's a really good day!

What type of reading do you do when not writing?

Not writing??! I'm always writing! Or revising. Or peddling the writing. Or doing research.... I often joke that I'm probably the only writer on the planet who never gets

to read. My life is too frenetic to allow much reading time (writing, selling, rock climbing, playing piano recitals, occasionally playing in orchestras, being a grandmother, gardening, and now, moving.) But I love reading! I enjoy the old, quality science fiction (Asimov & his gang). I love a well-paced, well-crafted romance, especially romantic suspense. Characterization is key! I love to get into a good mystery. A beautifully-written essay can move me to tears. And of course, I love reading in other languages. (I've taught 5 languages over my 44-year teaching career.) Reading will always be my first love, and my tastes are eclectic.

What words of encouragement would you give to new writers?

Keep writing! Write every day. Writers write. Others talk about writing a book someday; writers do it. My first story in the original Chicken Soup book (Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul) was about that. If you can find a copy of it (it's pretty old), the story is called "The Perfect Night to Die." My mother always talked about writing a book. All her life. Her story died with her. Writers write. Just do it!

Dierdre Wolwonick, author of the memoir [The Sharp End of Life](#) (Mountaineers Books, 2019), hails from New York City, but Sacramento has been her home for many years. She has also lived all over the world and taught five foreign languages on three continents. Her writing in books & magazines worldwide has won awards, and her independent publishing company produced several award-winners and international sellers. A musician all her life, Dierdre founded and conducted the West Sacramento Community Orchestra, and plays in many community orchestras and smaller ensembles on flute, clarinet or keyboard (piano, harpsichord, xylophone, accordion, etc.). At age 55, she began running, and has done marathons, half-marathons and other races. At 59, she began rock climbing, and at 66, she became the oldest woman to climb Yosemite's iconic El Capitan (with her son, Alex Honnold, of Oscar "Free Solo" fame). In 2021, she celebrated her 70th birthday by going up El Capitan again and camping on the summit. Last year, a documentary about her life, "*Climbing Into Life*," was made, is now available at film festivals across the country. Dierdre has appeared on numerous network and news shows, including Tamron Hall. Check out the movie trailer for [Climbing Into Life: The Dierdre Wolwonick Story](#). Currently she is busy packing to leave Sacramento to be closer to her grandchildren.

Published worldwide, in:

Spanish [El Filo de la Vida](#); French [Toujours Y Croire](#); Italian [In Cordata con Alex](#)



The Pacific Short Story Club and California's Second Poet Laureate, Henry Meade Bland



Several years before the California Writers Club came to be, the Pacific Short Story Club thrived in San Jose. This club began in 1904 with a beloved teacher at the State Normal School at San Jose, now San Jose State University. The teacher, Henry Meade Bland, would become California's second Poet Laureate and a member of the California Writers Club.

It was a time of expansion and romance in literature of the West—Bret Harte, Ambrose Pierce, and Mark Twain had all applied their pen to the emerging short story genre. George Wharton James wrote that “California ought to be the home—the natural breeding place—of great short story writers...” Charles Warren Stoddard opined that, “...a short story is one of the most difficult achievements in literature...”

Dr. Henry Meade Bland recognized a trend that would kindle a new literary community. As an English professor at the State Normal School in San Jose, he visualized a student club “to study and work in the rich free life of our Coast, where the prophets have foretold a great literature, all its own, purely western in color, background freedom, swing and dare.” Out of Bland's composition class arose the Pacific Short Story Club.

Who Was Henry Meade Bland?

Born in 1863 in Fairfield, Bland grew up near the Suisun Slough and the Sacramento Valley. From an early age the sights and sounds of the river and marshes caught his attention. These lasting memories would nourish his writing throughout his life.

According to the February 1931 *Pacific Review*, Bland entered the University of the Pacific in 1882. After receiving his diploma from the Business Department, he did his first formal teaching by assisting Professor James P. Welch, by now a Superior Judge of Santa Clara County, in teaching bookkeeping. He also taught algebra, arithmetic, and US history at his alma mater.

In 1888 he married Annie Mabel Haskell, whose childhood head injury would worsen in adulthood. In 1890 he received his PH.D. from Pacific and five years later, an MA in English from Sanford University. With degrees in hand, he worked as a teacher and school administrator in Los Gatos, Santa Clara, and San Jose.

In 1899, he joined the State Normal School, a teaching college in San Jose. In his first year, he formed the Browning Literary Club. The group met regularly, even celebrating Browning's birthday. In the school's *Normal Pennant* of June 1900, a student noted that Dr. Bland “made the work so interesting that the membership increased to over sixty students.”

Bland felt it important for writers to study the literary masters. He hobnobbed with Charles Stoddard Warren, now in his 70s. Warren reminisced about the *Overland Monthly*, for which he and poet Ina Coolbrith wrote for Bret Harte. Bland also befriended Joaquin Miller, hosted poet Edwin Markham, visited the Ruskin Club with Bohemian George Sterling, and hiked with Jack London.

Bland wanted to absorb “how the trick was done.” Almost all these names would become Honorary Members of the California Writers Club, formed later in the decade.

A Literary Community that Grew

In 1904 when Bland and students formed the Pacific Short Story Club, they created their own letterhead. Enthusiasm spread from San Jose to Santa Rosa, Fresno, Stockton, Berkeley, and later Sebastopol, where branches held monthly meetings and operated with their own constitutions. The *Town and Country Journal*, for which Bland wrote reviews of work by California authors, ran Pacific Short Story Club news.



A young Henry Meade Bland (l) with Joaquin Miller, *Santa Clara City Library*

The club gave occasion for students to meet writers of “literary prominence:” poet Charles Keeler, Jack London mentor Herbert Bashford, and “Poet of the Sierras” Joaquin Miller. (Bland’s daughter would marry Miller’s grandson). Students visited Miller at his home, arriving by train at Fruitvale, 75 students at a time. Another trip took them to Starland, Bland’s retreat near San Jose, for training at a “Starland School of Literature.” Invitations for Honorary Membership to the club were issued to notables, e.g., Joaquin Miller, Ina Coolbrith, George Wharton James, Charles Warren Stoddard, Jack London.

In October 1906, a letter addressed to Bland and students arrived from Joaquin Miller. “Thank you most heartily, my beautiful and bright flower group of boys and girls and bigger folk. ...I remember your visit last year with delight, and look forward to your coming again with happy anticipation. Should I not be there, do not hesitate to make yourselves entirely at home...Love to you all.”

That same month, a letter from Jack London advised, “short story writers...be careful not to write any masterpieces. The magazine editors are the arbiters of that field...They don’t want masterpieces. You see, they interfere with their circulation; lose subscribers for them; and then the business manager gets hot and fires the editors for running down the circulation...They will talk about shape, and grip, and power...if you want to write masterpieces, for goodness sake, don’t write for magazines.”

Ina Coolbrith, who would become the *mother* of the California Writers Club and California’s first Poet Laureate, wrote. “Alas! I wish I could spin yarns; long ones, short ones, funny ones, serious ones, any kind of a yarn, and I envy you of the Pacific Short Story Club the faculty...Dear storytellers, with all my heart I thank you and I am glad in your youth your ambitions, your California heritage, to all of which you must and will honor.”

Fueled by short story fever, the club grew to 250 members in two years. A student in the June 1908 *Normal Pennant* referred to Bland’s “qualities of a born leader” who “has so shaped [instruction] and led to a wider literary field [for] the hundreds of those of literary bent who have come within the range of his inspiration.” By 1911, 350 members belonged to the club, holding semi-annual meetings in Berkeley, Fresno, and Santa Cruz. Meetings were held in San Jose during summer session. The winter session took place in connection with the State Teachers’ Association.

Vol. 4. THE Pacific Short Story Club Magazine No. 1.		JANUARY, 1911.	
CONTENTS.			
Cover Design Henry Van Dyke, Samuel Richardson.			
A Queen's Reason,	Jessie J. Davis	PAGE	14
After the Fight,	Raymond Sumner Shortell		19
In the Garden,	Edith E. Patton		20
In Tune With the Infinite,	Joe Wright Hanson		26
It Will Soon Be Dark,			27
Jerry,	Mrs. Mary B. Williams		30
Johnny's Little John,	Henry Meade Bland		6
Keeping Up Appearances,	Agnes Anna Johnson		21
Powerton,	Lillian Tuller		26
Reincarnation,	Henry Meade Bland		30
She Sleeps,	Edith E. Patton		9
Susanna,			29
The Lane of the Desert,	Elizabeth Anthony		14
The Tenderfoot and the Bear,	Robert Sped		17
The Spirit of Things,	Elizabeth McFadden		26
The Law of Faith,	Nellie Apsteinworth		27
The River of Dreams,	Mary B. Williams		20
The Line of the Plume,	Clara Martin Partridge		32
The Return of the Sparrow,	Nora Tenney		37
Ulysses at the Happy Isles,	Henry Meade Bland		25
Book Reviews,			33
Bibliographical,			31

THE PACIFIC SHORT STORY CLUB MAGAZINE is published semi-annually by the Pacific Short Story Club. The headquarters of the Club are San Jose, Cal., where all communications should be addressed. The price is 10c per copy. Editors: Henry Meade Bland, Managing Editor. Margaret J. Hale and Beatrice Jackson, Assistants.

In 1908 the club began issuing the semi-annual *Pacific Short Story Magazine* carrying poems, stories, literary history, and articles by Bland and students. Ads promoted textbooks and school supplies, and soon broadened to businesses such as photography, teacher recruitment, clothing, laundry, furniture, ice cream and pianos. The magazine would later become the *Pacific Short Story Quarterly*.

Bland publicized the club by contacting leading figures. On February 15, 1909, he wrote to John Muir: “It affords us a great deal of pleasure to inform you that the officers and executive committee of the Pacific Short Story Club, recognizing the place you hold in the field of Western literature, and in appreciation of your efforts in its advancement, have unanimously elected you as an Honorary Member of the Pacific Short Story Club. We...convey to you the congratulations and good will of the entire membership...”

Time Spent with Other Writers

In 1911, Bland was invited by Joaquin Miller to live on his property, “The Heights” in the Oakland Hills. These six months were among the most energizing. When Miller died, Bland felt downhearted, as he had developed affection for the temperamental Miller. Bland sought solace in writing. Poet Markham came to the rescue, bringing Bland back “among the bards.” Bland would soon pay visits to Muir and London and meet Luther Burbank.

When Jack London died in 1916, Bland again found consolation in writing. He wrote in the 1916 *Quarterly Bulletin* of the California Writers Club:

In October of this year when I was about to leave the Valley of the Moon after a brief sojourn, this kindest of all good friends handed me a volume of his short stories in which he had written, “Tell me which one you like best for the best of old sake’s sake.” I did not get a chance to tell him, for before I had finished my careful reading, every English book-lover knows what happened. But I am now prepared to say that *Just Meat* is not only the best of this book...but it is one of the best English short stories—balanced and harmonious in plot, true in character, clear and striking in style, rich and strong in imagery...

I was closer to Jack London’s heart of hearts in this our last hour together than ever before. He analyzed his literary ideal which he said was to adhere to “unity and reality”... He was even then working on a story, “The Water Baby,” in which he sketched the repulsive character of an aged Hawaiian fisherman, but whom he revealed as having as beautiful and as ideal dream of the future...

I shall never forget the picture of the novelist made that October Sunday morning. Dressed from top to toe in immaculate white, he moved around among his employees directing his plans and breathing intense pleasure in what he had already accomplished. I fully believe, though he said nothing about it, that Jack London intended so to combine the real in his “Valley of the Moon” farm, as to show to the world a working modern Utopia; and I say now, our greatest loss in the early death of our friend, is in the fact that this his dream came to so early an end.

In the next few years, Bland became friends with Senator James B. Phelan, who desired to propel California into a golden age of art and letters. The Senator opened his villa in the Saratoga Hills for Bland’s students to hold poetry contests for a volume published at the senator’s expense.



There was nothing more important than teaching

San Jose State University



With students

San Jose Public Library, Roland Eberhart Papers, about 1913

Clyde Arbuckle collector/San Jose Historian

A Teacher's Teacher and a Poet's Poet

As a devoted teacher, Bland vigorously read and provided criticism to all students on their work. When not guiding students, he churned out poetry such as “In Yosemite,” prose and poetry for children, and articles and poems published in *Sunset*, *Overland*, and elsewhere.

When the Short Story Club published Bland's *Sierran Pan and Other Poems* in 1922, Edwin Markham praised Bland for his study of the great poets, his urging of students to get to “know and love” famous poets, and his help to students in knowing the “literary promise and performance of the Far West.” Bland's *Stevenson's California* told of Robert Louis Stephenson's time here. In 1925, the California Writers Club's anthology *Westwinds A Book of Verse*, included three of Bland's poems: “In Camp at Tahoe,” “Love's Purpose,” and “Sunrise Over the Sierras.”

Bland was known to compose verses in parks, on streetcars, and on benches near City Hall. His technical mastery was legendary. He wrote ballads, odes, Spenserian stanzas, couplets, triolets, and sonnets, often with California as a setting. He was proud of a particular quatrain, which he believed was the best he had written to date:

For souls immortal always were
 And only briefly rest or stir
 In human clay—on earth, a day—
 And then are on their wonder-way.

By now Bland's beloved wife Annie Mabel was confined to bed. At home in San Jose, he worked in the garden. He did much housework. Every evening at sunset, he was said to lift his invalid wife to the window to see the sun setting behind the Santa Cruz Mountains. She died in 1926.

Again Bland wrote to soothe his soul. His philosophy was, "We go on a search for truth and we ultimately find the beautiful. Then we know that beauty is truth." He believed that expressing truth brings out beauty in verse and in the hearts of readers.

He was known for helping even the most unlikely students. The student-published *The Quill* of June, 1925 shed light on his teaching:

To be builded [sic], there must be a builder; to be led, there must be a leader—buildings, movements—all depend upon a personality. So Dr. Bland has been to us, a leader in new movements, a helper in old, and a comforter in times of discouragements...

The 1926 *State College Times* stated: "If you are interested in poetry drop around and talk to Dr. Bland. If you aren't interested go anyway, and if you return without admiring Dr. Bland, there is something wrong with your make-up."

In 1928, a committee of friends began advancing Bland's name as Poet Laureate of California following Ina Coolidge, who died earlier that year. Joining the call was the alumni association of the College of the Pacific, Bland's alma mater. On March 22, 1929, Senator Herbert C. Jones introduced a Joint Resolution in the California Legislature stressing that the Poet Laureate should be a Californian "filled with its spirit, its history." Mrs. Leda Jackson sang some of Bland's poems set to music by Merrill Knighton, including *The River* and *Sierran Pan*. Bland forgot to make hotel reservations, so after the ceremony at the Capitol, he and his sister spent the night in the car in drizzling rain.

Afterwards, the *State College Times* newspaper churned out a special "Bland Edition." Senator Phelan wrote, "It was his hand which led the students into the domain of poetry and developed their love from the Muses." Requests poured into speak. The *Pacific Weekly* of May 2, 1929, reported that the new Poet Laureate of California was coming to speak at the College of the Pacific on "The Portrayal of the Beautiful in Poetry" during the campus chapel hour. A luncheon in his honor took place after the speech, which was open to students and faculty. Ever the teacher, Bland made time to visit the English Survey class.

The May 12, 1929, *San Jose Mercury Herald* trumpeted "Poet, Writers Meet to Crown State Laureate," describing a function at the Hotel St. Claire with 100 attendees. The event was sponsored by the Santa Clara County branch of the League of American Pen Women, the San Jose Poetry Society and the English Club of the San Jose State Teachers College.

In these later years, Bland was known around campus for the cap that he wore. As his clothes grew shabby, he was as revered as ever, never bragging, nor acclaiming himself with loud voice and sweeping gestures, but as expecting great thing of students and rejoicing in their success.

Former student and classmate Alma Lowry Williams recounted in the February 1931 *Pacific Review* that Bland's earliest acquaintance with verse was gained through Mother Goose, his favorite line being, *Over the hills and far away*. By now, more than 200 articles had been published, many on literature and teaching pedagogy.

There are in all, eight books of verse and three of prose. A projected biography of Joaquin Miller is partially completed... His name has crossed the Atlantic, for the *Poetry Review* of London has published his works and has acclaimed him as one of the major American poets. The present total of Dr. Bland's titles exceed 600, a third of which have been added since his accession to the laureateship. Nearly 300 sonnets have come from his pen in the last three years. Of particular interest to students of poetry are the six chants royal he has composed. One of these, *The Search*, is the only double chant in the English language...

He impresses upon the student the power of great ideas and then encourages him to react through the medium of creative writing. [He] believes that the highest achievement to be gained by a student of literature is the ability to express himself with power and simplicity...he does not resort to sarcasm or ridicule in the classroom. Neither does he lavish his interest and attention upon a chosen few but gives to the faltering writer and to the erratic or iconoclastic thinker an impartial hearing and an honest criticism.

Legacy of Bland and the Pacific Short Story Club

On April 30, 1931, Bland died. *Westward* magazine paid tribute in August 1931, noting that he “loved California as the late Senator Phelan loved it, as not merely a territory of this earth, but as a field of cloth of gold spread out over the asphodel of the Elysian Fields.” Bland’s memory was honored posthumously with *The Laureate’s Wreath*, a 1934 anthology published by The Edwin Markham Poetry Society Chapter of the Poetry Society of London. The book includes poems by Bland, some found in his desk after his death.

A plaque with his poem was placed on the west side of Tower Hall in the San Jose College where he devoted so many years:

The College Tower Speaks

I stand four square upon the ancient Earth,
And keep my hold upon the solid real;
Yet, like a soul that seeks a newer birth,

I climb in joy unto the high ideal.
My guardian walls shut lurking evil out,
Lying and hatred, and the hidden sin;
And cheer and grace encompass me about;

My doors are open to let honor in.
I am not one of those who only seem,
Steadfast am I, and destined to endure;
And yet my greatest glory is to dream—
Dream of the youth who seeks the true and pure.

Bland’s contribution left a stamp on California. He inspired thousands of students. The footprint of the Pacific Short Story Club founded and nursed by the cherished teacher lives in a 1908 letter from George Wharton Jones:

Your club has a worthy aim...more power to our pens, more fire to our brains, more discernment, as to our ability, in our publishers, more craving for our work, from the public more craving for our work, more cash in our purses and more joy in our souls both in the doing and in the reaping.

Board of Directors

Officers

President: [Bernard Wozny](#)

First Vice-President/Programs: OPEN

Second Vice-President/Membership: [Bonnie Blue](#)

Treasurer: Tim Schooley

Secretary: Mari-Lynne Infantino

Directors

Kimberly Edwards (Board Member Emeritus)

Chris Hennessy

William MacDonald

Cheryl Stapp

Club Positions

Contest Coordinator: OPEN

Historian: Julie Bauer

Marketing Consultant: Alysse Adularia

Newsletter: [William MacDonald](#)

Open Readings Host & Coordinator: [John Patterson](#)

Publicity Chair (Print/TV/Radio/Social Media): Chris Hennessy

Webmaster: Bernard Wozny

Writers Network Coordinator: Cheryl Stapp

POST SCRIPT

by William MacDonald

Many writers have discovered the website [Daily Writing Tips](#), a valuable resource for various questions cropping up while editing, such as the correct phrasing of an idiom or capitalization issues. While the blogs are now posted every week or two, rather than daily, they date back to 2007 and are searchable.

There are several posts clarifying commonly confused words, like this [one](#) on homonym pairs from 2017. While working on a final edit of a piece, search a document for some of these words you may have inadvertently misspelled. A word processor's spell check function will pass all of these words, and grammar checking software may miss some incorrect usage. There's no substitute for careful consideration.