

The Writer's Life

The Newsletter of the San Diego Writers / Editors Guild



If you put everything off until you are sure of it,
you will never get anything done.

— Norman Vincent Peale —

www.sdwritersguild.org

December 2011

'Tis the Season to be Jolly

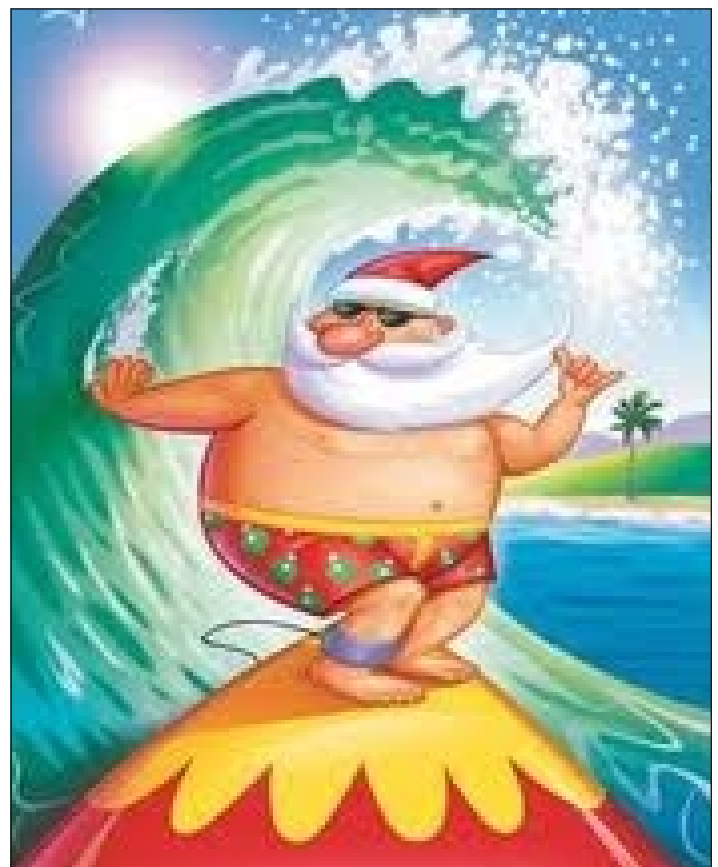
Dec. 19 SDW/EG Holiday Party

Join the jolliness with your fellow SDW/EG members and guests on Monday December 19th – same place (3851 Rosecrans Street), same time (6:30 PM); THIRD Monday this month.

Plans include music, food, prizes, and keeping in touch with fellow writers and other literary souls. Sign-up with Barb Crothers for this free event to let her know what you will bring for the pot-luck refreshments at bcrothers@san.rr.com. We will share appetizers, snacks, desserts and beverages.

We will be entertained by teen musical prodigy, Torstein King who will play holiday songs on his saxophone. He is a member of the Vilhalla High School Concert and Marching Band. He has played in many venues including Balboa Park.

If you've authored a book and would like to donate it to the raffle, please sign the book and bring it, unwrapped and give it to Linda Loegel.



Into the holidays with a master wit and joyous jester

by Ellen Shaw Tufts

It is indeed a true fact: As an eight-year-old in New Jersey, young Richard Lederer pointed to a butterfly and commented spooneristically, “A butterfly will

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Election of 2012 Officers

Following the election of the Board of Directors at the October general meeting of SDWEG members, the Board elected the following officers for 2012: President- Ruth Leyse-Wallace; Secretary-Barb Crothers; Treasurer-Gene Elmore; Membership Secretary-Rick Peterson. Bob Doublebower was not present for the election, but agreed to continue as

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A Tip of the Hat to...

by Linda Loegel



Iolanda Scripca, Guild member and prize-winning photographer for her picture, "Mutant of the Pacific" which was published in the San Diego Reader on November 24, 2011.

Caroline Mc Cullagh, Guild member and co-author with Richard Lederer, of their book, American Trivia: What We All Should Know about Our Great Nation, to be published by the Marion Street Press in February, 2012.

Barbara Crothers, Guild Board member, for heading up the December Christmas party of SDW/EG. Good job, Barb!

Linda Loegel, Guild Board member for her author talk/book signing at the San Carlos Library on December 13, 2011 at 6 pm.

Mirian Raftery threw her annual Holiday Party for the "East County Magazine." Also attending was Guild president, Sam Warren.

* * *

If you, or someone you know, has published a book, scheduled a book signing, or some other accomplishment to share, please contact Linda Loegel at noirons@cox.net to be included in our next newsletter. Let your light shine!

Heaven or Hell?

A writer died and was given the option of going to heaven or hell. She decided to check out each place first. As the writer descended into the fiery pits, she saw row upon row of writers chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they were repeatedly whipped with thorny lashes.

"Oh my," said the writer. "Let me see heaven now."

A few moments later, as she ascended into heaven, she saw rows of writers, chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they, too, were whipped with thorny lashes.

"Wait a minute," said the writer. "This is just as bad as hell!"

"Oh no, it's not," replied an unseen voice. "Here, your work gets published."

The Power of the Pen

by Linda Loegel

Tawakkul Karman, a journalist in Yemen, along with two other women, accepted the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 2011 in Oslo, Norway. Ms. Karman is the first Arab woman to win the prize and, at 32, the youngest peace laureate ever.

She is the founder of the human rights group Women Journalists Without Chains. The three women fought injustice, dictatorship and sexual violence in Liberia and Yemen, calling on repressed women worldwide to rise up against male supremacy.

The pen is a mighty instrument indeed.

Self-Published eBooks take off

by Ruth Leyse-Wallace

Of the current top ten e-book bestsellers on Amazon, four of them are self-published. These aren't flukes: They've been in the top ten more than 50 days on average. At 79 to 99 cents a copy, they're priced to sell. But consider that sales estimates for some of the

top indie e-book sellers start at 2500 copies a month. Self-published e-books occupy several slots of the top ten on all the genre lists, too – sci-fi, romance, mysteries.

Excerpt from : "Why Writers Should Embrace Amazon's Takeover of the Publishing Industry" by Ruth Franklin, who is a senior editor at The New Republic. <http://www.tnr.com/article/the-read/96417/amazon-publishing-company-e-books-kindle-laurence-kirshbaum>.

REVISING TIPS

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Viewpoint Intrusion.

Certain words or phrases insert the viewpoint character into a scene and turn it into narrative instead of scene. Which example brings the reader closer to the scene?

I remember that I walked for hours in the soft rain. When I saw the sign for her street, I turned the corner and saw two policemen leaning against her fence. I noticed a man in a raincoat exit a police car and stroll toward them.

I walked for hours in the soft rain and turned the corner near her house. Two policemen leaned against her



fence. A man in a raincoat exited a police car across the street and strolled toward them.

Tip: Avoid intrusion of the viewpoint character. Let the character show the scene to the reader. Words like “remember” and “notice” often introduce telling instead of showing. Phrases like “I could see” or “I could smell” or “I could hear” do the same.

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Contractions in Dialog.

Listen to the conversations around you. Contractions are the norm, not the exception. Your character’s dialog and internal thoughts should behave the same way. If you are a writer who seldom uses contractions in your own speech, that’s not a reason to inflict the same formality on all or most of your characters.

Tip: Curry contractions in dialogue and internal monologues, particularly with first person narrators.

New President for 2012

The new president of SDW/EG, Ruth Leyse-Wallace, PhD, RD has been a member of SDW/EG for three years and has served as secretary of the Board of Directors for two years. Her writing is mainly non-fiction in the field of nutrition and mental health. Her book *Linking Nutrition and Mental Health* was self-published in 2008 and led to a contract with Taylor and Francis Group, CRC Press for an updated and more inclusive book, *Nutrition and Mental Health*, which is due to be published in early 2013. In addition she contributes to the newsletter of the Behavioral Health Nutrition practice group, associated with the American Dietetic Association. Her interest grew from a career as a clinical dietitian in psychiatric hospitals, which included treatment of patients with sub-

stance abuse, eating disorders, mood disorders, and schizophrenia, from adolescents to seniors.

Ruth has three adult children and five grandchildren from ages 3 to 22 years old. Her oldest granddaughter is now in Beijing, China on scholarship studying international business journalism. Ruth lives in Alpine and enjoys the view of the mountains, which remind her of Colorado, where she grew up. Her favorite activity of all time was owning and flying her hot air balloon, The Green Apple, when she lived in Topeka, Kansas and was raising her family.

She is looking forward to a great year and helping members support members in realizing their writing aspirations. Her request: “Let me know what you want to contribute or would like to receive from your fellow Guild members.”

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3rd Vice-President in charge of publicity and the manuscript review program. Gered Beeby will continue as Official Greeter; Sam Warren will continue as publisher of the newsletter. Ellen Shaw-Tufts and Linda Loegel will continue as columnists for the newsletter. Anne Casey will continue serving as a member-at-large.

Members of the Guild are encouraged to contact any board member if they have ideas for speakers or programs they would like to see, items they would like to contribute to the newsletter, information about events that members would be interested in, or if they have questions or need information.



Hoffman Photographic

Lederer on Language

by Dr. Richard Lederer

An Anthology of Flowery Words Richard Lederer

An anthology is a collection of literary, musical, or artistic works gathered in a single setting. The Greek forebear is *anthologia*: *anthos*, flower + *lego*, “gather = ”a gathering of flowers.” Our English language is made more exquisite and colorful by an anthology of flowery words:

The English used to call the yellow, shaggy weed a “lion’s tooth” because the jagged, pointed leaves resemble the lion’s snarly grin. During the early fourteenth century, the lion’s-tooth plant took on a French flavor and became the *dent-de-lion*, “tooth-of-the-lion.” Then it acquired an English accent: *dandelion*.

In Greek mythology, the blessed spent their after-life in the Elysian fields, which were carpeted with a flower the Greeks named *asphodelos*. Over time the word acquired an initial *d* and eventually became *daffodil*. That’s fortunate because we now have the best of all flower palindromes: *lid off a daffodil*.

Also from ancient mythology we inherit *narcissus*, a handsome and usually white or yellow flower. The name echoes the ancient Greek myth of the handsome Narcissus and the doomed Echo. Echo was a beautiful nymph who once upon a time aided Zeus in a love affair by keeping Hera, his wife, occupied in conversation. As a punishment for such verbal meddling, Hera, the queen of the gods, confiscated Echo’s power to initiate conversation and allowed her to repeat only the last words of anything she heard.

Such was a sorry enough fate, but later Echo fell madly in love with an exceedingly handsome Greek boy, Narcissus, who, because of Echo’s peculiar handicap, would have nothing to do with her. So deeply did the nymph grieve for her unrequited love,

that she wasted away to nothing until nothing was left but her voice, always repeating the last words she heard.

The fate that befell Narcissus explains why his name has been transformed into words like *narcissism* and *narcissistic*, “pertaining to extreme self-love.” One day Narcissus looked into a still forest lake and beheld his own face in the water, although he did not know it. He at once fell in love with the beautiful image just beneath the surface, and he, like Echo, pined away for a love that could never be consummated.

Daisy was created in Old English from the poetical “day’s eye.” The flower is indeed a metaphor waiting to be born, with its sunburst center, its radiating white petals, and its sensitivity to the progress of the day, opening during the sunny hours and closing in the evening and extinguishing its brightness. The poet Geoffrey Chaucer, without benefit of any linguistic manual, referred to the sun as “the day’s eye, or else the eye of day.”

The unusual double bulbs of the orchid bear an uncanny resemblance to male gonads. That’s why the beautiful and expensive flower receives its name from the Greek word for “testicle,” *orkhis*. More than two thousand years ago, Pliny the Elder observed, “Mirabilis est orkhis herba, sive serapias, gemina radice, testiculis simili.” Even if you don’t know Latin, I’m confident that you can deduce the meaning of the first and last parts of that statement. Pliny believed that just holding an orchid in one’s hand would expand sexual desire.

Of the various plants associated with the Christmas season, the *poinsettia* possesses the most intriguing history etymologically. A Mexican legend tells of a penniless boy who presented to the Christ Child a beautiful plant with scarlet leaves that resembled the Star of Bethlehem. The Mexicans named the plant *Flor de la Noche Buena* (“Flower of the Holy Night”) Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first U.S. minister to Mexico, discovered the Christmas flower there in 1828 and brought it to this country, where it was named in his honor in 1836. The flaming poinsettia has become one of the most popular of Christmas plants—and one of the most misspelled and mispronounced (*pointsettia*, *pointsetta*, *poinsetta*) words in the English language.

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flutter by” and a few years later, he noted on seeing a dragon fly: “– A dragon fly will drink its flagon dry..”

During his annual gig at the November 26 Guild membership meeting, Dr. Richard Lederer used an old – make that a joke – opener:

“We’ll make this a marvelous three-hour deal, as soon as I lock the doors,” (implying, of course, that “I’ll lock you in and keep you in the palm of my hand as you listen to my extraordinary spiel...”)

It was funny then, back in 2007, 2008, 2009 – and this year, just as welcome. The gentleman’s a superb comic artist, among his other massive talents.

This year, Dr. Lederer remarked how the meeting coincided with his seventy-third-and-a half birthday (make that natal date May 26, 1938) as well as the eve of his 25th wedding anniversary. He mentioned how he met his wife, Simone, at a San Diego Mensa meeting.

Our speaker had more good news: Lederer has just completed the final pass for a new book, *American Trivia: What We All Should Know about Our Great Nation*, which he co-authored with longtime SDW/EG member Caroline McCullagh, to be published by the Marion Street Press in February, 2012. And, he’s working on final editing for several children’s books.

Indeed, he mentioned, re his Classic Literary trivia, our three mightiest sources of thought and reference – the Bible, Greek mythology and William Shake-

spere. He commented how, as a Life Guild member since ‘79, “There’s little distance between who I am and what I do...”

As usual, his frame of reference ran from James Michener to a barrage of jokes to philosophical remarks (To wit: True love is like a pack of cards – you need two hearts, just one diamond, a club and—finally – a spade.) And he reminded us that “English has been transported around the globe and become the most widely spoken language in the history of mankind, the linguistic wonder of the modern world...”

This year, the speaker set an all-time attendance record of 48 members and guests, including members of Irene Eckstein’s Writing Class at West Community College in San Diego.

Dr. Lederer closed with an offer to help any San Diego school in fundraising with his current best seller, *A Tribute to Teachers: Wit and Wisdom Information and Inspiration for Those Who Change Our Lives One Day and One Lesson at a Time*. And if Santa needs help, Lederer’s books remain awesome, from the ever-popular: *Presidential Trivia: the Feats, Fates, Families, Foibles and Firsts of our American Presidents* to the *Bride of Anguished English: a Bonanza of Bloopers, Blunders, Blotches and Boo Boos*.

We thank this extraordinary American scholar, author, teacher, bookseller, philosopher, friend, and comic artist with a toast to him and his family for happy holidays, now and as the years flutter by – our cherished San Diego Writers/Editors Guild Life Member, Dr. Richard Lederer. www.verbivore.com



SDWriteWay Webzine on Hiatus

Sam Warren, the publisher/editor of SDWriteWay and Miriam Raftery, the editor of the “East County Magazine” ezine announce that they have joined together to continue publishing the SDWriteWay, founded by Warren in 2008.

The popular webzine for all San Diego writers his not on hiatus and will resume publishing in late January of 2012.

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When we call someone *precocious*, we are complimenting a talent of theirs that they evince at an early age. *Precocious* literally means “cooked too early,” from the Latin *prae-*, “before,” and *coquere*, “to cook.” The word was first used in English to describe plants that blossomed or produced fruit prematurely.

The *tulip*’s cup-shape “mouth” may remind you of “two lips,” but that is not how the flower got its name. The Dutch borrowed *tulip* from the French (*tulipan*), who purloined it from the Turks (*tulbend*), who noted that the shape of the flower reminded them of a turban.

San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

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Who doesn't want to save money, especially at the year's end? Renew your annual SDW/EG membership now and save \$5.00. But hurry. This offer expires on Decembe 31! Your dues entitles you to free admission to all Guild meetings, a membership roster and exposure to of the finest writers in San Diego.

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