

SIERRA WRITERS
P.O.BOX 1595
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Winter 2012

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Special features:

- **Writing Goals**— Susan Turner Conlon writes about setting and maintaining your writing goals.
- **Molly Fisk** - will be speaking at our next meeting. More details on page 6

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Writing Goals	1
Members Corner Kudos	4
Resources Board Contacts	5
Calendar/Meetings	6
Community Events/ Announcements	7

President's Message

Happy New Year!

Welcome to a new writing year, and a new year with Sierra Writers! It has been a great privilege to be a part of this group over the last couple of years, and an even greater privilege to step into the role of president. Please join me in offering a special note of thanks to Babette Donaldson, outgoing president. She, along with Lucinda Porter, has been invaluable in keeping Sierra Writers moving forward.

Special thanks, too, to outgoing Membership coordinator Shirley Zeff, as Joanne Brown steps into that role. Marty Austin continues on as our Treasurer extraordinaire, and Susan Mone, Jennifer Dewey, and Claudine Chalmers put together our lovely newsletter. Thank you, all.

(continued page 2)

Setting Writing Goals for 2012

by Susan Turner-Conlon

What are your writing goals for 2012? While it's easy to make (and break!) those New Year's resolutions, I hope you will join me in setting a writing goal for the year, whether it is finishing a novel or writing an article for the newspaper.

At the end of 2010, I told myself that if I was going to call myself a writer, I had to truly devote time, thought, and energy to the process. I started by determining which days of the week allowed for some free time to write. Those days became my "sacred" days to get writing done, and I worked hard to not schedule activities on those days. I tried to shed some of the extra activities I tended to take on (like driving for every field trip), and not take on new obligations. While I don't do this myself, I do know of writers that put their "writing time" onto their weekly calendars like any other important appointment.

(cont. page 3)

Do the thing you fear
and the death of fear
is certain. ~ Emerson

**“What better
way to practice
than to submit
some of your
writing for the
quarterly
Newsletter. “**

Happiness is not
achieved by the
conscious pursuit
of happiness; it is
generally the by-
product of other
activities.

~ Aldous Huxley

(President's Message cont. from page 1)

What is your role?

Sierra Writers is a **member-run** organization. There are many ways you can help keep Sierra Writers strong:

- Pay dues
- Attend the monthly meetings
- Promote Sierra Writers' monthly events and special events verbally or through advertisement at your place of business (ask how!)
- Get “physically” involved. We are all busy with our daily lives. It is easy to stay in the shadows and just assume an organization will keep running on its own. Ask yourself: if Sierra Writers went away tomorrow, would it be missed by you or by someone in the community? For some, it is the only connection with writing they have, so it is important. How can you help keep that “connection” going? We are actively seeking members to help out with coordinating our monthly events, our Young Writers Contest, and our Newsletter content. Would you be willing to step into one of these places?

Practice your writing!

As we all know, one of the best ways to become a better writer is through *practice* – lots and lots (and lots!) of practice. What better way to practice than to submit some of your writing for the quarterly Newsletter. Perhaps you attended a notable workshop or class and it helped your writing blossom. Maybe some feedback on your own writing will help other writers. Or maybe you've always wanted to have a regular quarterly column offering tips from your favorite writers.

Submissions do **not** have to be long. Small “sidebars,” tips, publication notes, or snippets from your current work-in-progress are always considered.

Is there a Newsletter to which you subscribe that you eagerly await each month? Sierra Writers would like its Newsletter to be of benefit to the members, opened each quarter with the understanding that it will contain information valuable in the writing journey. Will you help?

Looking forward!

The Sierra Writers calendar of events for the upcoming year is shaping up to be a great one! In January we are excited to welcome our own Molly Fisk, award-winning poet, to share ideas on *Writing to Heal*.

Writers may be great at putting words on the page, but shy away from public speaking. How can we overcome some of those fears? In February, Emma Santa will provide ideas in a talk on *Speechcraft for Writers*.

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Our meetings – **the second Wednesday of the month** -- begin at 6:30 in the Madelyn Helling Library Community Room; we hope you can make it.

If you have ideas for events you'd like to see sponsored by Sierra Writers, please let us know.

I look forward to the upcoming year of writing and working with fellow members to provide a "writing home" for local writers. I hope you do, too.

All best,

Susan Turner-Conlon

(Writing Goals cont. from page 1)

Next, I joined writing groups to encourage me to write. Honestly, I'm not a terribly disciplined writer; unless I have a goal in front of me, I don't make the time to write. Monthly and twice-monthly meetings help ensure that I'm always working on some piece of writing to share. Since I write in several genres, I enjoy receiving feedback from Sierra Writers' fiction and nonfiction groups, as well as fellow poets I've met through the group.

Can't make a meeting? Join a list. One of my favorite e-mail lists is the Creative Writing Opportunities list through YahooGroups. I receive nearly daily e-mails on writing opportunities across the genres.

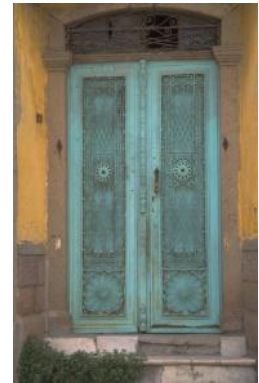
Often there will be a call for a specific type of writing (such as a holiday theme or women writing about nature), and these calls inevitably spur me to get ideas on paper.

There are an incredible number of ways to get published these days, both in-print and online, so take advantage of those opportunities! Rejections will happen--and I've received plenty of them--but if you keep working on your craft, and tailor your submissions to the appropriate forums, publication can happen, too, if that is your goal. Start small, and allow one publication to lead to the next and to the next.

Looking back at 2011, was goal-setting important to my writing year? You bet. I got more writing done in one year than I have in several. I also saw some publication success this year that has encouraged me to keep writing and devote more time in the coming year to word-crafting.

Certainly there will be times when the writing doesn't happen. There are days that are simply too full of kids' sports, grading papers, and laundry. Some days the inspiration has taken a vacation. On those days I allow myself to let go of the writing goals, and know that tomorrow I will try again.

It's the "trying again" that is important, though. We can't let the writing goals slip away if we have a bad day or even a bad week or bad month when we don't write a single word other than a grocery list. If writing is important, keep the goals always in front of you. Tape them to the wall where you work, tape them to your forehead if necessary! Like a sport or a foreign language, one must keep practicing at writing, one sentence at a time. Having goals for ourselves can help us maintain a practice schedule. ~



For less ambitious, but still serious goals, consider Julia Cameron's suggestion from *The Artist's Way* to write 750 words every morning.
www.750words.com

If you need a little sterner incentive, check out *Write or Die*
www.writeordie.com. This site forces you to write delivering undesirable punishment, by destroying what you have written if you don't keep up a reasonable writing pace.

If you want more rational and fun motivation, check out Seth Grodin's blog. In his entry, *Talker's Block*, Grodin wrote, "No one ever gets talker's block. No one wakes up in the morning, discovers he has nothing to say and sits quietly, for days or weeks, until the muse hits, until the moment is right, until all the craziness in his life has died down."
www.sethgodin.com

MEMBERS CORNER

2012 Directory Distribution

The new membership directory is planned for distribution via email during the first half of January. Please be sure to check your listing for accuracy. Any corrections or omissions can be directed to Joanne Brown at jobrown5273@sbcglobal.net

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Kudos

Susan Turner-Conlon's short story "What She Should have Said" will be published in the Social Justice issue of the *Little Patuxent Review*, and she has been invited to read the piece in a public reading at the end of January.

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Sierra Writers' Board Members is looking for the following:
Program Coordinator
Publicity
Webmaster
Workshop Coordinator
Volunteers to help with raffle, newsletter and events

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Sierra Writers is looking for more news, writers, KUDOS, and information to include in our newsletter. Please send material to jennyd@cybermesa.com

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Beginning with this issue, the Newsletter will move to a *quarterly* format. The Board has determined that this might allow writers within the group to better contribute to the content of the newsletter. Our goal is to have a newsletter that can benefit the group with useful tips and ideas for the writing journey. With that said, please consider contributing a short article on a topic that is related to writing; a 200-word brief article can be knocked out quickly and can be an inspiration on your fellow writers.

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Resources

Have you visited any great websites for writers?
Found must-have software, applications, or tools?
Share what works for you.

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For a fun and enlightening poem, check out this web page.

From the site: "If you can pronounce correctly every word in this poem, you will be speaking English better than 90% of the native English speakers in the world. After trying the verses, a Frenchman said he'd prefer six months of hard labour to reading six lines aloud."

<http://spelling.wordpress.com/2007/09/05/english-pronunciation/>

Groups

Note: Critique and writing support groups are open only to members of *Sierra Writers*

Poetry Critique Group

Contact Susan Turner-Conlon
sturnercon@sbcglobal.net

Fiction critique group

For information, contact Ron Cherry (530)
478-5616; romuluswolf@comcast.net

Nonfiction critique group

For information, contact Jan Westmore (530)
265-0718; jwestmore@sbcglobal.net

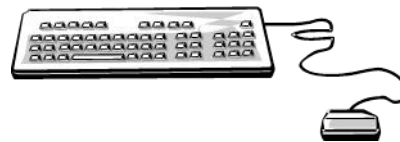
If you want help starting a critique group, or want to be in touch with members with similar genres, information may be found at:

<http://sierrawriters.org/events/critique-groups/starting-a-critique-group>

Get involved with *Sierra Writers*

Sierra Writers is looking for help with the website, special events and whatever interests you. If you are interested in helping, contact Babette Donaldson babettedonaldson@sbcglobal.net or Lucinda Porter lucindaporter@yahoo.com

Members may have their own web pages, which they may use in a variety of ways. Members may use their page to introduce themselves, to link users to information on how to purchase their books, or to link back to their own website. A new feature of the *Sierra Writers* website is a page listing links to our members' blogs. To add your info, contact Lucinda Porter: lucindaporter@yahoo.com Check it out at www.sierrawriters.org



Our Board

President, Susan Conlon, sturnercon@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer, Marty Austin, homebookkeeper@yahoo.com
Membership Coordinator, Joanne Brown,
jobrown5273@sbcglobal.net
Publicity, Babette Donaldson, babettedonaldson@sbcglobal.net
Webmaster, Lucinda Porter, lucindaporter@yahoo.com
Program Coordinator, Open
Young Writers Contest, Open
Hospitality, Carol York, carol-york@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Staff

Jenny Dewey, jennyd@cybermesa.com
Susan Mone, susie3@wordmagick.com
Claudine Chalmers, claudecameron@yahoo.com

Spring Newsletter Deadline: March 15, 2012

CALENDAR

Unless noted otherwise, all meetings are held at the Madelyn Helling Library Community Room 980 Helling Way, Nevada City at 6:30 PM

Coming up in January:

Prize-winning poet **Molly Fisk** is a recognizable voice in our community with frequent public readings and radio essays. She offers writing workshops and groups that use the creative writing process as a tool for healing.



Upcoming Meetings -

Wednesday, January 11, 6:30 PM
Molly Fisk – *Writing to Heal*
Open to the public

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Wednesday, February 8, 2012
Emma Santa – *Speechcraft for Writers*

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Wednesday, March 14, 2012
Open Read

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Wednesday, April 11, 2012
Celebrating National Poetry Month – Speaker TBA

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Wednesday, May 9, 2012
Young Writers Contest Winners

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Our Last Meeting

Sierra Writers held its Holiday Party in early December at Babette Donaldson's lovely home in Nevada City. About 30 members and their guests attended, and provided fabulous food and company. Thanks to all who made it such a success.

Sierra Writers offers speaker meetings, critique groups, a newsletter, a membership directory, the young writer contest, and our ever-expanding website. Sierra Writers supports the Nevada County library and other community activities. Membership in Sierra Writers provides peer support and a venue for all of us to grow as writers.



SIERRA WRITERS
P.O. BOX 1595 GRASS
VALLEY, CA 95945

We're on the web.
www.sierrawriters.org

Everyone has a talent, what is rare is the courage to follow the talent to the dark place where it leads.—Erica Jong, American Author



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Details on each event are listed on our website at www.sierrawriters.org

Playwriting: The Artful Dialogue

A workshop series with Sandra Rockman

8 WEDNESDAYS—Location: TBA

January 11 – February 29, 2012 Time: 2:30 – 4:30 PM

Fee: \$120

Skill with dialogue - this workshop will place one of the most useful items in your writer's toolbox. Whether or not playwriting is your main endeavor, every writer who integrates monologue or dialogue in their journaling, memoir or fiction will benefit from this meaningful focus and enjoyable practice. This class will be tailored to the participants' interests.

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Women's Writing Salon

The Women's Writing Salon is a **FREE** event featuring six local and regional women writers as they share poems, short stories, or memoir pieces. It's a very special afternoon. Though the event features women writers, men are very welcome to attend.

Saturday, January 28th from 4-5:30 or so. Arrive early to get your snacks and beverages and settle in for the 4pm start time.

Location: Sierra Mountain Coffee Roasters/Tomes at 671 Maltman Drive, Grass Valley

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