

**San Diego Writer's/Editor's Guild**  
**Post Office Box 881931**  
**San Diego, CA 92168**

# The Writer's Life

The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas – Alfred Whitney Griswold 1906-1963

The Newsletter of the San Diego Writers/Editors Guild

[www.sdwritersguild.org](http://www.sdwritersguild.org)

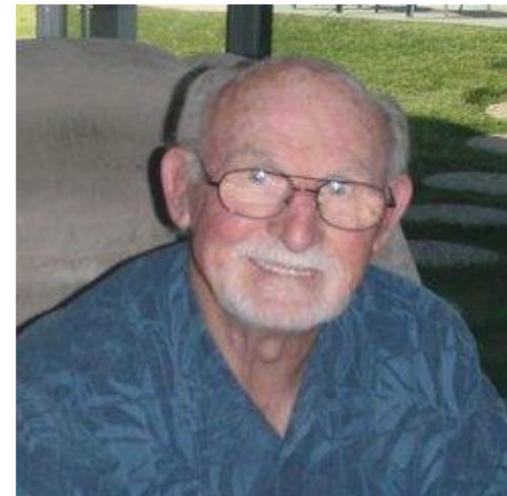
January 2012



## AN EVENING WITH CARL NELSON

At our January 2012 meeting we will kick off the New Year right.

Guild Life Member, Past President (twice!), prolific author in both non-fiction and fiction, and a highly decorated Naval Officer, Carl Nelson is a natural force for excellence. Add to this, he holds advanced degrees in economics with a doctorate in international finance and trade. In numerous editions of Who's Who you will find Carl's name. With such an array of accomplishment we sometimes must remind ourselves that we are describing just one person.



Carl has recently completed his innovative memoir, *The Message of the Puzzle Ring*. Here he intertwines and unites his own story with the history of a beloved mentor. And in the process he presents an ethical roadmap for those determined to better their lives. With this and many other works to his credit, we can look forward to a night of Carl's wisdom and insight.

Come join us Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> for enrichment and fun that you cannot duplicate anywhere.

From Joseph Conrad 1857-1924. *Notes on Life and Letters*

"Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are the nearest to us for they contain our very thought, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth."

## "Work In Progress" - New Series for Newsletter

Members are interested in what other members are working on: Are you researching an idea? Stuck on page 10? Ready to submit a finished work? Needing ideas for marketing? Members might be able to offer ideas or resources if you let it be known you are open to input. Maybe you can be the one to provide assistance to another member.

A new series for the SDWEG newsletter is beginning with this issue . . . join in. Write a 1-2 paragraph, (150-word±), summary of what you are working on and where you are in the process, and email to Ruth Leyse-Wallace at [RthLys@cox.net](mailto:RthLys@cox.net) or hand it in at any meeting. One to three members' reports of "Work in Progress" will be featured in each issue of *The Writer's Life*.

Get to know the writing interests of fellow members of SDW/EG. Claim a publishing credit for your contribution ! Submissions need to include your name and contact information and an identifying subject line if you send by email.

**The next meeting will be January 23 , 2012**

*The Writers Life is published by*

*The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild*  
*P. O. Box 881931*  
*San Diego, CA 92168*

*Telephone: (619) 445-6656*

*Regular Meetings: 6:30 P.M.- 8:30 P.M.*  
*The Fourth Monday of each month*

*3851 Rosecrans*  
*San Diego County Health Services Complex*

*Visit our web site*  
[www.SDWritersGuild.org](http://www.SDWritersGuild.org)

*Membership: \$36.00 per year*  
*Guests: \$5.00 per meeting*

*Mission Statement: The Guild shall promote, support, and encourage the writing art for adults and youth*

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## Tip of the Hat to . . . by Linda Loegel



**Chet Cunningham**, for his two new ebooks-- *Dirty-Bomb Terror* about terrorists making plutonium-laced terror bombs, and *North Korean Blowup*, a Seal team novel. Both books are available for download on Amazon (Kindle) and Barnes & Noble (Nook).

**Anne Hoiberg**, for receiving the George Washington Honor Medal in November from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. The piece that won her the medal was, "Women's Struggle for the Right to Vote," published in the Union-Tribune.

**Ruth Leyse-Wallace**, for taking the reins as the new president of San Diego Writers & Editors Guild for 2012. Way to go, Ruth!

**Iolanda Scripca**, for her gripping earthquake survivor story at <http://eastcountymagazine.org/node/8257>

## Call for Entries

Entries are being accepted for awards sponsored by San Diego Book Awards Association, Inc. For rules, guidelines, fees for submission, and entry form go to [www.sdbookawards.org](http://www.sdbookawards.org). The address for the San Diego Book Awards Association, Inc. is P.O. Box 501953, San Diego, 92150-1943. The entry deadline is February 11, 2012 for work that has been published. The deadline for unpublished work was January 15, 2012.

## Coming Soon to SDWEG

February 27<sup>th</sup> –Publishing through an agent: Jill Marr from The Dijkstra Agency

March 26<sup>th</sup> – Intellectual property (copyrights licensing, other legal aspects of the writing and publishing business): Mark Reichenthal from Branfman Law Group, PC.

Mark your calendar . . . . .



Gary Friedly and Gary Winters select book-mark party favors

## A Good Time was Had By All by Ellen Shaw Tufts

'Twas the Monday before Christmas weekend and about 30 members and guests gathered at our splendid venue at the San Diego County Health Building, 3851 Rosecrans for one splendid grand finale to another year. And thanks to Holiday party co-ordinator Barb Crothers and her crew, the festive buffet table groaned with elegant casseroles, salads and luscious offerings such as guest Nancy Clement's Persian cucumber salad, Wanda Elmore's Russian meatballs, and Anne Casey's stuffed cabbage, just to mention a few gustatorial treats.

But the sweetest music came with the arrival of the three kings: Grandfather Walter King, Sr., Dad Walter Kings, Jr. and our musical star of the evening, 14-year-old Torstein King, a Valhalla High School sophomore whose musical medley on his alto saxophone----Christmas favorites along with jazz and pop favorites made for a super-festive evening.



Torstein King plays the saxophone for our entertainment.



Robyn Proiette and Jean Douglas enjoy the refreshments .



Jarold Stratton wins one of the raffle prizes.

## Remembering the Great Charles Dickens by Richard Lederer

Two centuries ago—on February 7, 1812—Charles John Huffam Dickens entered the earthly stage. Born into an impoverished family, his father having served a term in debtor's prison, Charles, worked as a child slave in a London blacking factory.

The rags-to-riches life of Charles Dickens's was more remarkable than any of his stories. From such unpromising origins, he arose to become the best-selling writer of his time and one of the most enduring and quotable writers of all time.

What has been described as the most successful writing career in history was launched when Dickens was 24. On March 31, 1836, he published the first installment of a comic novel about a bunch of bumbling gentlemen who knock about England getting into various scrapes. At the center of the group was one of the greatest comedy teams in all literature—Samuel Pickwick, a fat retired businessman, and a jaunty young cockney by the name of Sam Weller. The novel emerged as *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, popularly known as *The Pickwick Papers*.

Following *Pickwick* came 14 more enormously popular novels, from *The Adventures of Oliver Twist, or the Parish Boy's Progress*, to the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and hundreds of stories, including "A Christmas Carol."

How did Dickens do it? First and foremost, he possessed a preternatural feel and ear for the hum and buzz of human life. People and situations endlessly flared up in his imagination; he said he could literally hear what his characters said before he wrote the words down. A supporting cast of more than 300 fantastic bit players floats in and out of *Pickwick*; over his career Dickens gave birth to thousands of characters.

Dickens not only wrote about people; he spoke to the people, who gobbled up every one of his books and stories. Like most of his works, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) was published in serial form. The novel won a vast readership on both sides of the Atlantic, and as interest in the fate of the heroine, Little Nell, grew intense, circulation reached the staggering figure of 100,000. In New York, 6,000 people crowded the wharf where the ship carrying the final *Master Humphrey's Clock* magazine installment was due to dock. As it approached, the crowd's impatience grew to such a pitch that they surged forward and cried out as one to the sailors, "Does Little Nell die?"

Alas, Little Nell did die, and tens of thousands of readers' hearts shattered. The often ferocious literary critic Lord Jeffrey was found weeping with his head on his library table. "You'll be sorry to hear," he sobbed to a friend, "that little Nelly, Boz's little Nelly, is dead." Daniel O'Connell, an Irish M.P., burst out crying, "He should not have killed her," and then, in anguish, threw the book out of the window of the train in which he was traveling. A diary of the time records another reader lamenting, "The villain! The rascal! The bloodthirsty scoundrel! He killed my little Nell! He killed my sweet little child!"

James Nathan Miller describes the results of Dickens's literary empathy: "Incredibly, Dickens's career never had a pinnacle. It was *all* pinnacle. From, the appearance of Sam Weller in 1836 to the day in 1870 when Dickens died while writing *The Mystery of Edwin*

Charles Dickens . . . Richard Lederer cont.

*Droid*, his career was like a Roman candle that went straight up and just hung there, shooting one brilliant shower after another." We today are still being showered by those sparks, as witness the more than one hundred motion pictures made from Dickens's works.

No wonder that G.K. Chesterton said of him: "Whatever the word *great* means, Dickens was what it means."

## Revising Tip no. 25 by Laurie Richards

**The Glanceback.** The glanceback may be only a few sentences or a phrase or phrases that are generally much shorter than the flashback. "Harry decided to tell Sally how much he loved her. He had loved her since their first date when she had turned somersaults on her front lawn." "[W]hen she had turned somersaults on her front lawn" is a glanceback to that first date.

Glancebacks slow the action, but can be effective to round out a character and provide insight into his or her feelings.

**Tip:** Use the glanceback sparingly so that the stilted past perfect does not bog down your writing.

## Work in Progress . . .by Gary A. Friedly

The working title of my next book is *Cottonwood Road-The Twisted Path in Finding Justice for Bobbi Clark*. Bobbi was brutally murdered, December 23, 1964, allegedly by a Montana State University football player. Her battered body was found on an isolated road south of Bozeman. She was hit and dragged by a car. The defendant was charged, served two years of a life sentence, but later he was acquitted in a second trial after the Montana State Supreme Court reversed the conviction. The supposed killer remains at large. In recent trips to Montana,

I interviewed Cottonwood residents that remembered the crime, the defense attorney, the pathologist that examined the body and picked through newspaper articles, court transcripts, police records and visited the crime scene. Finding and talking with family and close friends of the victim have been the greatest challenge. Presently the victim's sister is helping by providing pictures and filling in informational gaps. This has been a far harder story to write than my novel.