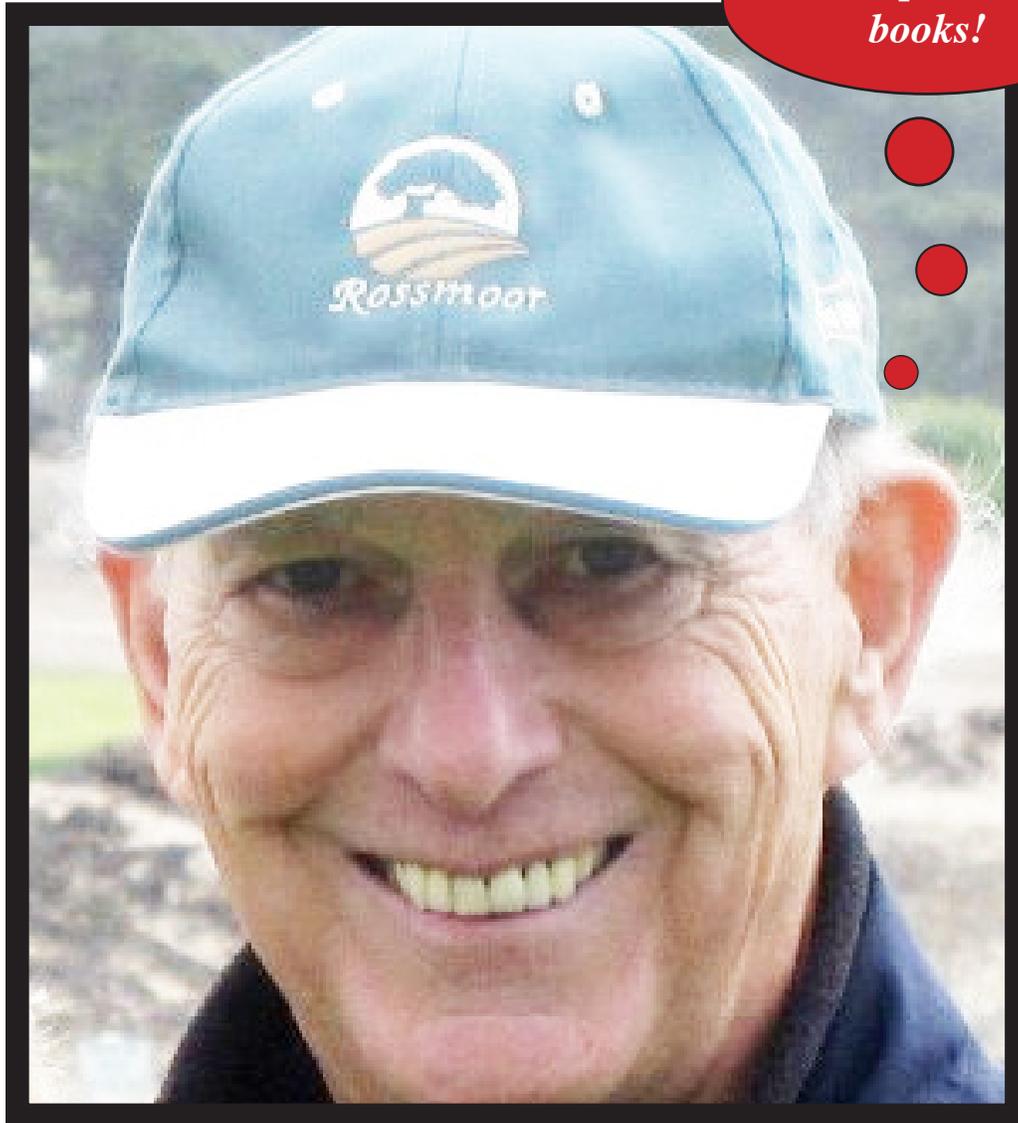


PWR Newsletter



I have published books!



Duke Robinson

PWR's First President



PUBLISHED WRITERS OF ROSSMOOR



PUBLISHED WRITERS OF ROSSMOOR



A Club to Celebrate and Support Aspiring and Published Authors



January 5, 2019

Volume VIII, Issue 1

Board Members

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Fall Bazaar: Lee Gale Gruen

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Newsletter Editor: Paul Weisser

Coming up!

PWR's Monthly Meeting

This Saturday, January 5, 2019

From 9:45 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

In the Fairway Room at Creekside Clubhouse

Come early and enjoy complimentary coffee or tea!

January's Speakers: Panel Discussion About Writing Careers

BY PETER LI



Peter Li

At PWR's monthly meeting on January 5, 2019, in the Fairway Room of the Creekside Clubhouse, three panelists—Lee Gale Gruen, Julie Blade, and James King—will discuss their writing careers in a discussion entitled “You Are Who You Are Because of Where You Were When.”

The three panelists, who come from diverse backgrounds, will offer their differing views of the challenges, successes, and lessons learned in their writing careers.

Lee Gale Gruen grew up in Los Angeles, graduated from UCLA, and moved to Rossmoor two years ago. She had a 37-year career as a probation officer in Los Angeles County. After

retiring at age 60, she and her newly widowed father, then 85, attended an acting class for seniors at a community program. Lee Gale wrote the humorous scenes they performed together twice a year for three years in the class showcases.



Lee Gale Gruen

She then went on to become a professional actress, appearing on television, in short films, commercials, and community theater, as well as performing regularly at UCLA Medical School, portraying patients as part of student training. Lee Gale's memoir, *Adventures with Dad: A Father and Daughter's Journey Through a Senior Acting Class*, was published in 2013 and is available on *Amazon.com*. She lectures publicly on the topic “Reinventing Yourself in Your Retirement,” and has been blogging for five years under the title “Reinventing Myself in My Retirement.”

Julie Blade, a virtual Californian, grew up in Fresno and has lived in the Bay Area for more than forty years. Her career spanned the fields of social work, education, the Head Start program, and corporate learning and development, all of which taught her the art of writing. In the 1990s, Julie decided to launch her own business as a freelance instructional designer, writer, and editor.



Julie Blade

In 2010, Julie worked for the U.S. Census Bureau, interviewing more than 500 Rossmoor residents, which gave her the impetus to turn her attention to helping people record their life stories and create personal legacies to be passed on to future generations. As the principal of Lifetime Chronicles, Julie ghostwrites clients' memoirs.

James King, who is a recent resident of Rossmoor and member of PWR, will inform the group of his multifaceted career in writing and publishing. □



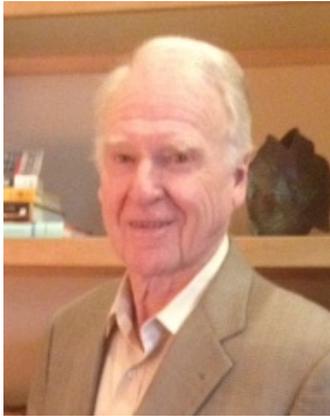
James King

(The Published Writers of Rossmoor meets monthly at the Fairway Room of the Creekside Clubhouse, with complimentary refreshments at 9:45 A.M. and a formal meeting and presentation from 10:00 A.M. until noon. Published and aspiring writers are invited to attend the meetings and learn about the benefits of membership, which may include appearances on Rossmoor's Channel 28, book launch parties, and assistance in publishing and promoting your books.)



The President's Page

BY RON WREN



Ron Wren

The Published Writers of Rossmoor sank to a new literary low at the December meeting, when a dozen alleged wordsmiths submitted entries for the Bulwer-Lytton Embarrassing Writing Awards Competition.

The goal was to outdo Edward Bulwer-Lytton with his memorable “It was a dark and stormy night...”

Cash prizes of \$1.00 and \$10.00 were awarded to three would-be writers who best exemplified Bulwer-Lytton’s ignominious, florid, melodramatic, pathetic opening style for a never-to-be-published novel. (Thank heaven, no one can remember who those winners were.)

Carefully edited examples of some of the shameful entries are included on pages below.

Another low light of the December meeting was Jim Ware’s “Instant Novel” concept. During a five-minute frenzy of creativity, some forty PWR

members contributed sentences to an as-yet-to-be-published book in the hope of sharing royalties when the novel is purchased by the indiscriminating great unwashed.

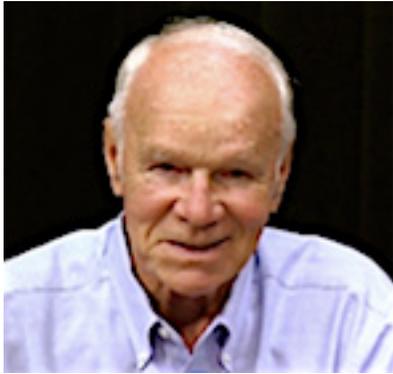
PWR Board Secretary Dorothy Pritchett offered a note of sobriety to the meeting by reading from her collection of favorite Board meeting minutes. Most agreed that for brevity the May 2017 minutes scored well with “The meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M. and adjourned at 10:06 A.M., as there was no further business.” □

(For further information, contact Ronwren@aol.com)



On Writers and Writing

BY RICHARD MCLEAN



Richard McLean

I wrote my first story when I was 5. It was about a baby elephant who got trunk-spanked by his mother, and was written in a phonetic alphabet that only I could decipher.

Today, I still have the compulsion to tell stories, but I write with the help of Spellcheck. Having lived in a literary household, I have long been fascinated by writers and the craft of writing. What follows is a buffet of tidbits that other authors might find tasty.

Orgasms and the Writing Process

One popular writer explained that writing and baby-making are the same. The underlying lust that fuels sex is the same as the human drive to express a unique tale and be recognized.

The orgasm is that out-of-body moment when a stunning story concept washes over you.

Gestation is that part when the game gets painful as the fear of miscarriage matches the burden of carrying so many

ideas.

Labor is labor, no matter how you slice it, with draft after draft and edit after edit.

Birth is that part when you see the final work in print and hope it will be the angel child you envisioned in your post-coital euphoria.

Publication is that part when you send your child off into the world as not quite the perfect offspring, but it is yours, and you love it just the same.

Royalties are scarce but precious reminders that you had a dream and did your best. Like Cyrano, you console yourself with, “When I write a line that sings myself, I pay myself highly enough indeed.”

Where to Start a Story

Starting a story at the beginning is traditional, and yet some writers find that to get the juices flowing, it is better to pick out a choice scene, get it down, do another fun scene, and then start patching.

Other writers, who have the whole story thought out, will write the ending and then work toward it.

If you have trouble starting, consider beginning at a point you have never tried before. Do whatever serves to get you out of the procrastination stage into the sitting-your-fanny-down-and-getting-to-work stage.

Share Your Gifts

Writing is a craft (and maybe a gift)

that takes years to perfect. It has many uses beyond the typical. Here is a menu of ways to utilize that talent:

1. Write a memorial for a widow or widower that expresses in specific terms your appreciation, together with real-life examples.

2. Write letters to the editor of a local newspaper (or even of the *New York Times*) to strike a “personal blow for freedom.”

3. Write letters to the president of a major corporation. These have more impact than most consumers realize.

4. Write notes of love and apology that can get you both in and out of trouble.

5. Write thank-you notes that express all the ways you will use your writing gift (and maybe a picture of you using the gift).

The printed word has a weight beyond the spoken or e-mailed word, especially when it is applied professionally, demonstrating the loving use of paper, ink, envelopes, stamps, and a mailbox.

What to Leave Behind?

Like taxes, death comes for everyone, even published writers. The neglected question is, “What have you left behind to ensure that your life’s work will not be lost or trashed?”

I always picture an unborn relative (perhaps a 19-year-old niece) who is curious about me and digs up my collected works, both published and unpublished. It would be grand to

be rediscovered and have my work celebrated as lost masterpieces, confirming that all those years of effort were not a waste.

Maybe leave digital work behind on CDs and thumb drives. Glue pictures of Herman Melville, Anne Frank, and Emily Dickinson on the left-behind folder.

Do you want to leave a really unique legacy? Clip off a piece of a fingernail and tape it on a page with identification. A hundred years hence, from DNA analysis, your descendants could find all of the parts of themselves that originated from you. How’s that for immortality?

Let It Cool

When reviewing their life’s work, many writers often point to their last work as their greatest because it is freshest in their mind. The same halo effect makes all of us think that a recently completed work is our best and ready for immediate publication.

Editors know otherwise. Stephen King recommends that a writer stash a completed first draft for at least six weeks to let it cool, while immediately starting work on another project to clear the mind. The advantage of this enforced estrangement allows the writer to revisit the first draft with the critical gift of objectivity and balance. For shorter works, two weeks may suffice.

On the other hand, sometimes in rereading a stashed work, you get a

sudden rush, wondering, “Did this really come out of me?” It is similar to discovering how beautiful your children are.

Individual Writers’ Techniques

Erle Stanley Gardner

Originally a trial lawyer, Gardner turned his talent to writing, especially pulp fiction that paid three cents a word. Early in his career, he set himself a goal of 1,200,000 words a year to take advantage of the prodigious speed with which he could set down a story.

With the help of a plot wheel invented by a friend, Gardner wrote 82 Perry Mason novels. (A plot wheel offers variations on plot developments.) Whenever he got stuck for an idea, he spun his wheel until he found a stimulating plot turn. (NOTE: plot wheels and character wheels are available on the Internet.)

Originally a two-fingered typist, Gardner moved to dictation, using a secretary or a dictation machine. One time, he barked “Court adjourned” so realistically that the secretary went home.

Ernest Hemingway

With his short sentences, macho heroes, realism, and expansive lifestyle, this Nobel laureate probably had more influence on the writers of his time than any other. Despite his literary and commercial success, Hemingway ended badly, brought down by endemic

depression, diabetes, alcohol, and ultimately paranoia and suicide.

But Hemingway had many lessons for other writers. Here are a few:

“Write one true thing.” Personal integrity is the key to authentic writing.

“Back up always, back up.” Hemingway lost seven early stories in a suitcase forgotten on a Paris express train.

“Don’t tell it; write it.” He believed that writers dissipate creative energy in talking out a story rather than investing that same energy in getting the story down on paper.

Natalie Goldberg

In her fascinating book *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*, Goldberg offers a unique technique to help a writer who needs a jump-start for a scene or book. Set a timer for twenty minutes. Then take your favorite writing instrument and begin writing any element relevant to the work at hand, but do not stop writing until the timer rings.

No cheating. If necessary, begin with “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog” until your flow of words begins. Keep with it as you find yourself writing to fight the boredom and to release edge-of-mind scraps tucked away in your unconscious.

Keep pushing for the whole twenty minutes. Then read what you have set down, as you will be surprised at usable segments, images, and story directions

that have been stored inside your head,
waiting to get out.

Charles McCabe

A popular columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, McCabe would have a drink or two in the evening while outlining an idea he wanted to develop. When he had the entire article blocked out, he would take it no farther; just go to bed.

In the morning, he would sit down and feel the column flow onto the page, always submitting it before the 11:00 A.M. deadline.

McCabe, who was a personal friend of mine, had a gift for sharing riveting stories about his love affairs, divorces, and philosophy of life. A drinker and raconteur, he spent his gifts on convivial storytelling and alcohol rather than setting down the illuminating novels locked up inside.

Words for Writers to Live by

Kill your darlings.

Your best is always failure.

*I want your praise; not your critique.
(Never spoken out loud)*

Writing and ditch-digging are similar endeavors.

*Whom the gods have loved,
They have given both gifts and ambition.*

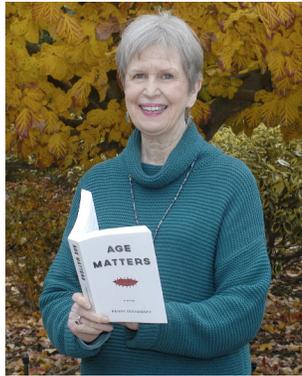
*Whom the gods have hated,
They have given ambition without gifts. □*

(Dick McLean would welcome any comments at tellastoryd@comcast.net)



PWR's Author of the Month: Peggy Dougherty

BY PETER LI



Peggy Dougherty

Peggy Dougherty will discuss her new novel, *Age Matters*, at her book launch on Thursday, January 17, at 4:00 P.M. in the Dollar Clubhouse.

Peggy is an award-winning playwright, whose plays—all comedies—have been performed in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Houston, Boca Raton, London, Toronto, and elsewhere with more than thirty-five productions. She is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, Inc., and The Drama Association of Rossmoor.

Age Matters, Peggy's first novel, was published in October 2018 by Big Hat Press. The novel is a satiric take on age, Hollywood, and relationships. The protagonist, Kay Baldwin, following a financially crippling divorce, writes a cathartic screenplay that becomes slated to win a prestigious competition—if only she were younger. By convincing her thirty-year-old daughter to impersonate her, Kay manages to

outsmart Hollywood ageism—and thoroughly disrupt her daughter's life.

Red City Review called *Age Matters* “a love letter to Los Angeles and the art of writing,” noting that “the author's light touch of humor and gift of description keep the plot moving.”

A clinical psychologist now retired, Peggy has thirty-five years of clinical experience working with adults, couples, children, and families. In 2013, she published a self-help book, *The Ten Minute Cognitive Workout: Manage Your Mood and Change Your Life in Ten Minutes a Day*, which won the 2013 San Diego Book Award for Best Self-Help. The book teaches a simple version of Cognitive Restructuring, a tenet of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Just as its name implies, Cognitive Restructuring modifies thoughts, which in turn changes emotions. How we feel derives from what we think.

Peggy will be discussing *The Ten Minute Cognitive Workout* at the March meeting of the Women's Collective in the Fairway Room at Creekside on March 21, 2019, at 10:00 A.M.

Peggy was born and raised in Philadelphia, where she attended the University of Pennsylvania. She resided in Germany for five years and in Kansas for three. From Kansas she moved to San Diego, where she lived for thirty-seven years before moving to Rossmoor in August 2017. She is enjoying an active, fun, and stimulating life in this wonderful community.

(continued on page 11)

Put Peggy’s book launch on your calendar (Thursday, January 17, 4:00–6:00 P.M. in the Dollar Clubhouse). Assorted appetizers, as well as coffee, tea, and wine, will be served. Not only that but Peggy has been busy arranging some surprise entertainment depicting just how much age matters. For further information, contact Peggy at peggydougherty@gmail.com.

Age Matters and *The Ten Minute Cognitive Workout* are both available on Amazon. They can also be purchased directly from the author. □

Marketing Your Books

BY JIM WARE



Jim Ware

Once or twice a year, Henry DeVries, founder of Indie Books International, holds a free half-day Summit in the Bay Area for writers and public speakers interested in enhancing their marketing and promotion activities.

The next Summit, called “Marketing with a Book and a Speech,” will be held

in San Francisco, at 1700 Montgomery Street, on Monday afternoon, February 11, 2019, from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.

The Summit is accurately labeled this way: “There is no cost to attend this private event. There will be no selling of services. No cost. No selling. No kidding.”

You can read more about the workshop and register (for free) at:

<http://marketingwithabook.com/san-francisco/>.

I published my last book with Indie Books International, and I credit the Summit for much of the book’s success—including its title. Henry and his business partner, Mark LeBlanc, are not only brilliant authors and public speakers, but they are incredibly generous with their time and their insights. I can’t speak highly enough about them and their ideas.

For more information, feel free to contact me at jim@jimware.com/. □



Grab Bag

Kudos

BY JOANNA KRAUS



Joanna Kraus

Kudos to the following authors who were interviewed on Channel 28 this past year: Eva Angvert Harren, Lynn Goodwin, Ben Zikria, Peggy Snyder, Jon Foyt, Joanna Kraus, Harvey Meyerson, Nathan Stone, and Roslyn Nelson.

PWR offers opportunities for authors who have new books to be interviewed on Channel 28. The next taping will be held in the spring of 2019, date to be announced.

Contact Joanna Kraus at:
tjkraushouse@hotmail.com

(Learn about Joanna's new children's books, *Blue Toboggan* and *Bravo, Benny* at:
www.joannakraus.com/.)



My Next Novel

BY JON FOYT



Jon Foyt

My Friends,

We're living in a hotbed of stories here in our community of Rossmoor.

Who among us, or among those of us anywhere, is writing these readily apparent stories?

Not about what degrees or what careers people flaunt, but about the emotions and the travails of members—individual people—living in our advanced age group—while at the same time dealing with society's stereotypes?

My next novel, now with the publisher, is entitled *The Third Half of Our Lives*. It picks up on the theme of my earlier novel, *Time to Retire*.



PWR Writing & Publication Resources

By **RON WREN**



Ron Wren



The following PWR members are available for consultation on various aspects of writing and publication:

Art & Design

Polly Bernson: drpplot@pacbell.net

Children's Books

Joanna Kraus: tjkraushouse@hotmail.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Desktop Publishing

Polly Bernson: drpplot@pacbell.net

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Editing & Proofreading

Julie Blade: julieblade@gmail.com

Ellen Sarbone: editor@etraveller.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Fiction

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Ben Zikria: baz2@columbia.edu

Ghostwriting

Julie Blade: julieblade@gmail.com

Ellen Sarbone: editor@etraveller.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Grant Writing

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Memoir Assistance

Julie Blade: julieblade@gmail.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Nonfiction

Ellen Sarbone: editor@etraveller.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Ron Wren: ronwren@aol.com

Ben Zikria: baz2@columbia.edu

Playwriting

Joanna Kraus: tjkraushouse@hotmail.com

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Poetry

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Ben Zikria: baz2@columbia.edu

Promotion & Publicity

Ron Wren: ronwren@aol.com

Screenwriting

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

Speeches & Dramatic Coaching

Paul Weisser: editinggg@gmail.com

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

BY ESTHER ESCOTT



Esther Escott

It was a dark and stormy night when suddenly, at midnight, the sun came out, which caused great confusion, apprehension, hilarity, consternation, joy, and terror among the residents of planet Earth, who, as they whirled through space locked in a new orbit, became hotter on the side facing the sun and colder on the side facing the frigid space through which they whirled dizzily. □



It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

BY MARY JEAN BOYDEN



Mary Jean Boyden

It was a dark and stormy night when her heart skipped a beat as she walked downstairs, holding tight to her kimono as she nearly fell over the antique Oriental rug in the hallway that had belonged to her first husband's cousin, who died right after he gave it to them as a wedding present, when she heard the deep clanging of a church bell ring out with an eerie, almost shrieking sound that made her recall those terrible Baskerville dogs she used to hear from her upstairs widow's walk when she dared to brave the cousin's ghost and open the cracked glass doors to the night air. □



It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

BY PEGGY SNYDER

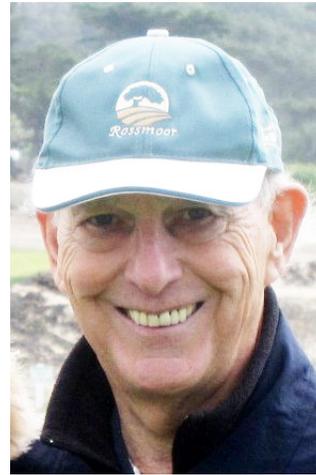


Peggy Snyder

It was a dark and stormy night as the deserted two-lane highway drew my Dodge Dart down into a dale—or was it a dell?—then up, up, up...and up!...a mountain road that curved, bent, veered, swung, and meandered meaninglessly into the blackness of a nothingness lit only by my one headlight—the other being burnt out...as was I. Oh, why, oh, why..., oh, why?... had I begun this damn, dreary, desperate drive on such a dank December day in Doylestown, Delaware, only to end up at midnight, lost and alone, in this desolate godforsaken wilderness? Despondent and disconsolate, I munched a Dorito. A clock bonged eleven. A clock? Was there a church nearby? Could I seek refuge? ...And maybe bread and wine? Or...pretzels and Irish whiskey? But...eleven???? My own trusty timepiece read twelve. Did the pastor forget to “Fall back”? I ate another Dorito. My last one!! No longer in the chips, I became diligently determined to find this church. I would keep on driving until I found it. It had to be somewhere... somewhere!... on this dark, deserted what-was-once-a-highway now a ditch-pocked-nothing-of-a-dirt-road. And then I saw him..., Sasquatch! Or was it...Yogi? □

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

BY DUKE ROBINSON



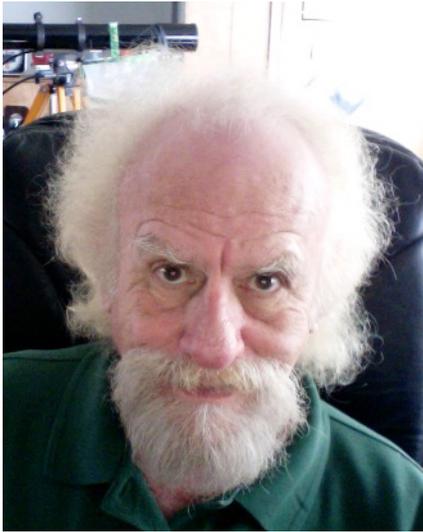
Duke Robinson

It was a dark and stormy night in my brain that bright, beautiful, sunny morning of yesterday, because as a writer, my dear reader, I actually was trying to be good at being bad (or was it bad at being good?), because I so desperately wanted your attention, which, of course, is both trivial and important, but I thought it would chase a cloud or two, maybe seven, but no, no, no, realize this dearest reader; in addition, I was begging and groveling for something much more important than your attention, that is, I mean too, or also, in my heart I was after your affection (I can't believe I am confessing this to you), and, of it, you gave me a little truffle (or was it a truffle?), which made some of the nighttime thunder and lightning go away (or did the lightning go first? Hmmm), but, but, but—oh, my goodness—I remember now where I was going with this—and why I was about to scream, or faint, or throw up, because, believe me, much more important than both your attention and affection together, was, you know, I mean, I'm just saying, I had set aside morality, decency, correctitude, properness, and ethics, and shame—fully..., or shamelessly (it kills me I've never been able to tell the difference between those two different

adverbs), I want you to understand, I craved truth without proof or ruth (that is, ruthlessly, I, I, I have been dishonest with you), your attention affection were nothing, zip, zilch, I actually and literally and figuratively lusted and busted my gut for your approval, because deep down in my black, bruised, and bleeding heart, I dunno, let me see, maybe, because your approval would make the sun slowly rise, maybe creep up subtly over the western horizon, and, believe me, it would be huge, really huge, and would mean more to me than winning the lottery (I think, but I'm not absolutely sure about that)..., uh, but okay, let me put it this way; I'm just saying, as a writer..., for you, my most precious reader, not to give me your approval, would have kept that dark storm brewing or boiling ferociously deep inside my visceral regions, forever, and endlessly, that is, without ceasing, and that would have been infinitely worse than, I don't know, (uh, yes, I do), you know..., infinitely worse than ten days of diarrhea or a sharp stick in the eye. □



From the Editor



Paul Weisser

On the front page of last Sunday's *New York Times* (12/30/18), there was an interesting story about how the copyright will be expiring on January 1, 2019, for the books of thousands of authors, including classics by D. H. Lawrence, Marcel Proust, Robert Frost, and many others. The consequences of that expiration are fascinating. If you haven't already read the story, I highly recommend it.

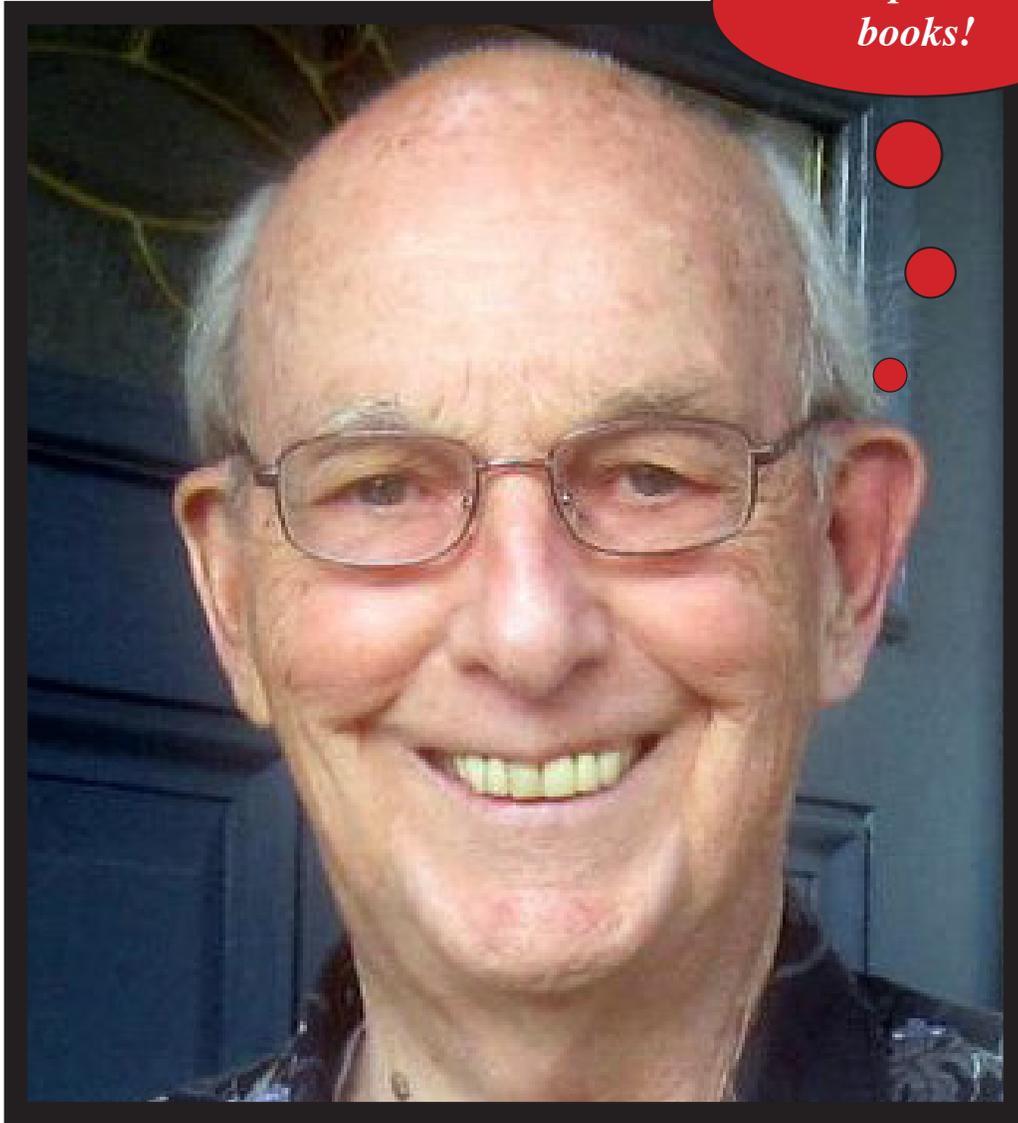
You can access the article at:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/29/books/copyright-extension-literature-public-domain.html>. □



PWR Newsletter



I have published books!



Duke Robinson

PWR's First President



PUBLISHED WRITERS OF ROSSMOOR

