

Sutterwriters News

June 2010

Dear Sutterwriters,

There are quite a few opportunities for writing workshops coming up in the near future, as well as some news from Amherst Writers and Artists. Please go to our web page--www.sutterwriters.com--for our current schedules.

In addition to the ongoing free writing groups through Sutterwriters and others, some of us in Sacramento are using the AWA method in other workshop settings. We want keep you informed about some of those opportunities as well. If you have questions or are interested in any of these writing offerings, you can contact Jan Haag at janishaag@gmail.com or John Crandall at john@fireartsofsacramento.com.

Keeping you informed about writing opportunities in our area is important to us. If you know of other workshops or opportunities like these, please let us know so that we can pass them on.

Many thanks to Billie Custock who maintains our webpage. Be sure to visit us at www.sutterwriters.com.

John Crandall and Jan Haag

In This Issue

Sutterwriters and AWA Sacramento: A History

New Affiliate List

River Forge Gallery

The Art of Expressive Writing

Saturday Write In The Park

Musings from MS Minds

Crandall Writers

UC Davis, Writing as Healing

East Sacramtno Writing Group

Address Change Reminder

Sutterwriters and AWA Sacramento: A History

Then:

In the late 1970s, James W. Pennebaker, Ph.D., embarked on a research project in an attempt to get some answers to the questions: Why do people throughout the world seek to tell their untold stories? Is there some kind of urge to confess? Is it healthy for people to divulge their deepest thoughts and feelings? Or, conversely, is it unhealthy, if people wish, to not to disclose the private side of their lives? Pennebaker is the acknowledged father of the American Writing as Healing movement, and researchers continue to further the understanding and prove the efficacy of writing as a way of healing.

In his landmark book, *Writing Without Teachers*, Peter Elbow fostered a new pedagogy that Pat Schneider expanded on and has brought to thousands of writers worldwide in the Amherst Writers and Artists (AWA) method. Schneider's approach starts with honoring the inherent talent in people and in the power of writing as a process that engenders the trust for writers, expert and beginner, to take the risks needed for real progress in writing. Schneider's book, *Writing Alone and With Others* is, as Elbow says in his introduction to the book, a guide that will "beat the [writer's] block, banish fear, and help create lasting work."

Pat Schneider, in *Writing Alone and With others* says "*We are all connected to one another and to the mystery at the heart of the universe through our strange and marvelous ability to create words. When we write, we create, and when we offer our creations to one another, we close the wound of loneliness and may participate in healing the broken world. Our words, our truth, our imagining, our dreaming may be the best gifts we have to give.*"

Since their inceptions, these two movements have generally grown along separate paths and have only occasionally or informally been combined as a methodology. In February 2002, Lawrence Spann, Ph.D., established the Literature, Arts and Medicine Program (LAMP) at Sutter Health in Sacramento with the mission to give patients, health professionals, caregivers (and just about anyone) a safe place to express themselves through writing. He called the group Sutterwriters, and writing sessions were held in hospital conference rooms; therefore, much, but not all, the writing was related to illness and loss. Spann did something unique, though; he took the principles of writing as a way of healing and coupled it with the AWA method. The synergy of this combination surprised even him. Starting with one weekly writing group that he facilitated, he soon oversaw the facilitation of eight writing groups at two Sutter Hospital campuses and other Sacramento venues.

Sutter Health was both the home of and provided the financial support for Sutterwriters and LAMP Press, which, under Dr. Spann's guidance, published nine books by group participants. Dr. Spann held large public readings, invited noted authors to speak and hold workshops in the hospital, lent his support for creation of a college class called "Writing as a Healing Art," and fostered a supportive

atmosphere for anyone who wished to come write in safe, protected groups. With the onset of financial difficulties for Sutter Health, the funding for LAMP and Dr. Spann's position was eliminated in 2007. Sutterwriters transformed into a grassroots group of volunteer facilitators who ascribed to the concept of writing as a healing and continued to employ AWA practices. This loosely organized coalition of facilitators oversaw eight unique writing groups in the Sacramento area and continued Dr. Spann's tradition of ensuring that free writing groups remain available to all.

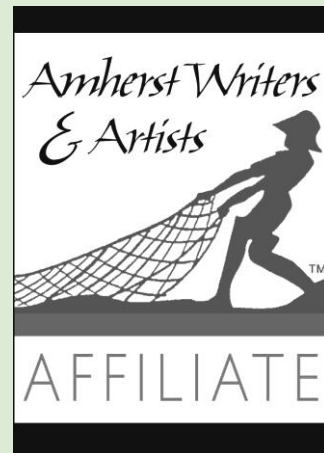
Now:

In April 2010 Pat Schneider came to Sacramento to conduct a special training for ten Sutterwriters facilitators in the area who were not already certified as AWA affiliates. This affiliation allows the Sutterwriters facilitators to officially conduct writing groups using the guidelines and practices of Amherst Writers and Artists, as well as to ally with the international group of AWA affiliates. Now that most of the Sutterwriters facilitators have been certified and are AWA affiliates (see list below), the group will change its official name to AWA Sacramento, though continuing, on its website and in all its literature, to reference Sutterwriters and the traditions begun by Dr. Spann.

-John Crandall

New Amherst and Writers Affiliates

Matthew Abergel
John Crandall
Janet Rogge Johnson
Lorri Lovett Gill
Ellen McCreary
Liliana Medez-Soto
Raquel Ruiz
Sue Staats
Cary Tennis
Sarah Wenstrand
Terri Wolf



We welcome these new Affiliates. For their contact and group information, please go to Sutterwriters.com. We expect to have a complete list of all Sacramento AWA Affiliates on our web page soon.

River Forge Gallery

2nd Saturday Art Reception

River Forge Gallery

1425 North C Street ,

Sacramento, CA 95811

(This gallery specializes in all work hand-forged by heat and hammer)

This 2nd Saturday show will showcase current artworks by John Crandall-artist/blacksmith/author.

Music by "The Jazz Report". Blacksmith demonstration by Fred Gerlinger. Food by Kathy Smith

Large red brick building at the corner of North C and Ahern

Saturday only 6/12/2010. Hours-4:30pm to 9:30pm. Free.

Questions? Please contact Laura Parker (916) 203-0466

John Crandall (916) 708-9708

Look for a map to the Gallery on the [Fire Arts of Sacramento](#) webpage.



The University of California, Davis, Extension presents the Art of Expressive Writing

The Art of Expressive Writing (Section 101WRT150; 2.5 quarter units academic credit, X410.26)

Discover how your inner voice can gain strength when committed through the written word. Using the Amherst Writers and Artists (AWA) method of journal writing, you'll produce first drafts of expressive creative writing across genres, as well as create writing that heals. Practice writing to suggested prompts provided by the facilitator and, if you wish, read your newly minted words to the group. Listeners are allowed only to respond to what they remember, what stays with them, and what is strong about the writing. This is a writing group-not a therapy group-but the act of writing in this method offers healing to those who participate. No previous writing experience necessary.

This course may be substituted for one elective course in the Creative Writing Certificate Program.

Instructor: John Crandall

When: July 7-August 25: Wed., 6-9:15 p.m.
Where: Sutter Square Galleria, 2901 K St, Sacramento, CA

From quarter-long creative and nonfiction writing courses to the acclaimed Tomales Bay Workshops, UC Davis Extension's writing program gives you the tools, techniques and writing community you need to take your writing to the next level.

As a Sutterwriters member, you can save 10% off your enrollment fee! Some restrictions apply - Contact Kate Asche at 530.757.8625 or kasche@ucde.ucdavis.edu for details.

Second Annual Sutterwriters Picnic

Last year's *Saturday Write in East Portal Park* was such a success that David Peters has stepped up to organize it again this year--Thanks David. This will be a Pot Luck affair with writings planned for before and after lunch.

We have East Portal Park from 10 AM to 4 PM. Corner of M and 51st Streets; we have areas 2 and 3 reserved for us, along M Street. There is plenty of shade and grass and some tables for eating

Here is the schedule:

11:00 to 12:30	Write #1
12:30 to 1:30	Lunch
1:30 to 3:00	Write #2

What to bring: finger foods; potluck salads and casseroles; and some deserts; your own knives, forks, spoons and plates; napkins and cold drinks and cups will be provided; we can have no alcohol in the park. COST: \$2 PER PERSON TO COVER THE PARK FEES.

Tell other current and former Sutterwriters about this day.

Musings from MS Minds (another UC Davis offering)

The first two sessions of this group were a resounding success. Come and put pen to paper and find how the freedom to write, whatever needs to be written, opens new doors to living with MS. It will be facilitated by John Crandall (see his bio below)

Our next group will begin in mid June. If you are interested, please contact John Crandall 916-708-9708, Annette at 715-4973, or Irene 536-9116 to register, there is no fee but only a limited number of seats are available. We do limit participants to this group to those who have been affected by MS.

Writing for Self Expression

Writers tell stories. If you tell stories, and all humans do, you are a writer. Whether you have years of experience and published work under your belt, or if you have never put pen to paper before, know that you are a storyteller, and a writer. Whether it is fiction or non-fiction, when we write in workshops that are safe and nurturing, our creativity and explorative side are supported allowing us to generate new works.

Writing with others is inspirational, fun and healing. When we can share our experience in a safe, supportive environment, we realize even deeper benefits. We no longer endure in a vacuum, we become part of a community, supporting and being supported, by others.

The Amherst Writers and Artists (AWA) method as developed by Pat Schneider, author of *Writing Alone and with Others*, welcomes writers of all skill levels and life experiences. Crandall Writers offers Writing Groups and Workshops, as well as Writing Retreats that follow AWA principles. The cost for each six week series of writing groups is \$180, for class dates and times or for more information, please contact John Crandall (916-708-9708 or john@fireartsofsacramento.com) or visit fireartsofsacramento.com.

Come tell your story.

John Crandall holds a master's degree in Counseling Psychology. He has participated in Sutterwriters since September 2003 and also facilitates anger management groups. John is the author of Poet Healed, published by LAMP in 2005. John is an AWA Affiliate, certified to lead workshops in the AWA method as described in Writing Alone & With Others by Pat Schneider, Oxford University Press.



UC Davis Writing As Healing

The UC Davis Writing as Healing continues into 2010 and we look forward to writing with you. Our next weekly sessions begin Tuesday, March 2 (10 am-12 noon) and Wednesday, March 3rd (6 to 8 pm). There is no cost to participate and no writing experience required, but space is limited so register early.

We've created a year-long schedule of 6 week sessions with 2 week breaks. For the session schedule see the UC Davis web site:

http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer/calendar_events/consumers.html or the Sutterwriters webpage at: <http://www.sutterwriters.com>

For more information or to register contact Patti Robinson at patricia.robinson@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu or 916-734-0823.

Terri Wolf, RN, BSN, OCN
Clinical Resource Nurse
Radiation Oncology
UC Davis Medical Center
Cancer Center
916-734-5823

East Sacramento Writing Groups

Who We Are

East Sacramento Writing groups use the Amherst Writers and Artists Method (AWA) developed by Pat Schneider. The philosophy is simple: Every person has a story to tell-that makes every person a writer. The power of telling one's story cannot be underestimated. Its power lies not only in being heard and witnessed without judgment, but in letting words flow out of one's body onto the page. Whether the words come from personal experience or one's imagination, the East Sacramento Writing Groups provide the time and space to tell one's story.

The Practice

The group writes together in response to a prompt and the leader writes and reads along with the participants. The group responds to new writing with positive feedback gently guided by the leader focusing on what was strong and what stayed with you. No questions or suggestions are offered to brand new work. All work is treated as fiction to protect the vulnerability of the writer and is not discussed outside the group. Although the AWA method is not therapy, it has a great healing potential and is a wonderful outlet for creative expression and generating new material. Beginning and experienced writers are welcome. We also encourage individuals who are dealing with health concerns, life transitions, caregivers, and health care providers to participate.

East Sacramento Writing Groups also offers a group that is focused on receiving feedback from other writers on work that is submitted in manuscript form.

Participants need to have a solid foundation in writing and group participation with the AWA method before participating in this group. Contact Lilliana for more information.

Expressive Writing As Healing

Expressive writing has the potential to:

*Reduce stress
Decrease symptoms
Strengthen immune systems
Shorten recovery periods
Improve family relationships*

There is a growing body of literature which shows that recording our deepest thoughts and feelings about stressful events can be healing for body and mind. The AWA method provides a unique and safe space in which to tell stories of both joy and struggle which can help one move through and beyond life's complicated events.

Schedule

Thursday Morning Writing Group 10:00am-12:00pm
Summer Sessions (6 weeks)
June 17- July 22
July 28- September 2
Cost: \$30/session

Fall Sessions (8 & 6 weeks)
8 week Session
September 9 - October 28
Cost: \$40

6 week Session
November 4 - December 1
(No meeting on Thanksgiving)
Cost: \$30

Groups are limited to 14 participants, with a minimum 6. Please plan to attend a minimum of 4 of the 6 six sessions, as this is important to the group process. Registration deadline for groups is 1 week prior to beginning of session. Groups meet in East Sacramento & the facility is wheelchair accessible.

For more information or to register Contact Lilliana at:

lcmendez@gmail.com

(916) 548-2352

www.lillianamendezsoto.com Payment may be made by cash, check or PayPal.

Lilliana has been a practicing pharmacist for over 20 years specializing in the fields of cancer treatment/pain management, psychiatry, infectious disease and IV nutrition. She currently works providing home infusion pharmacy services for Kaiser Permanente. She began participating in Sutter's Literature Arts and Medicine Program writing groups (Sutterwriters) in 2003 after undergoing surgery. She led Sutterwriters groups in the hospital from 2005-2007 under the direction of its founder, Dr. Lawrence Spann. Since then, she has led and participated in the Thursday morning writing group in East



Sacramento. She has been a writer since early childhood and has a novel and collection of poetry in progress. Lilliana, an Affiliate of Amherst Writers and Artists, has trained with Pat Schneider, the founder of the AWA Method.

Address Change

Please send all correspondence to our new address:

P.O. Box 19730
Sacramento, CA 95819