

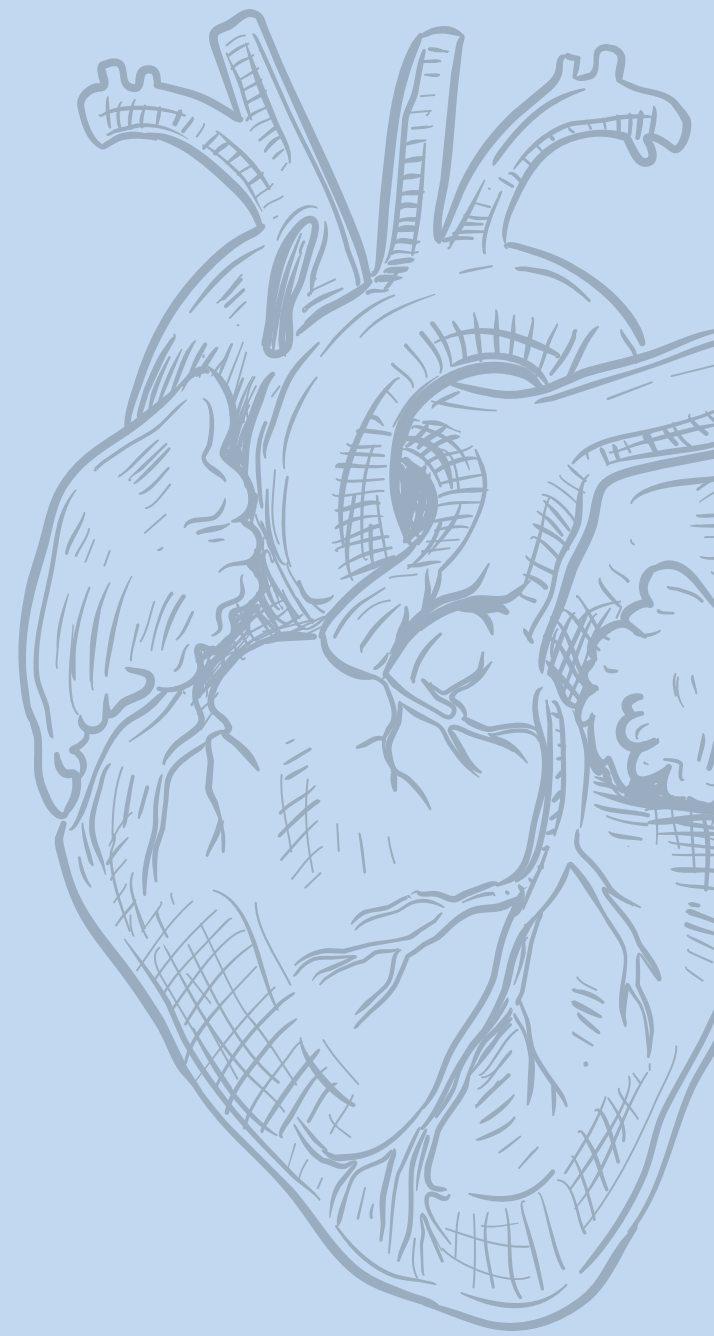
love love love

FRESH

INK



February



we love love lo
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Inland Empire
California Writers Club

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello fellow writers!

Big thank you to all who attended the panel discussion last month. We were unexpectedly displaced in the basement at the Ovitt, instead of our regular room, but it made for a cozy, intimate, discussion. One of the best!

February brings new opportunities to explore our craft. I am sending everyone a Valentine's hug and encouragement to keep the momentum going. How many of us will be on the annual Author's panel in 2026?

Whether revisiting an old project or starting something completely new, dedicate time for writing--both endings and beginnings. As writers, we can reflect on the conclusions we've written and how they've shaped our stories, but we can also focus on the fresh starts waiting ahead of us. Think of your current work--where can you give it a meaningful ending, or how can you craft a new beginning that opens up a world of possibilities? Let that duality be your inspiration this month. such amazing work. I'm excited to see where your creativity takes you in the weeks ahead. Keep pushing forward, stay inspired, and remember, every word is part of the journey! You've got this!

February's meeting will be a workshop. We will use the time to gather check-in and craft a memoir piece, a short story, or a poem, inspired by the prompt "Beginnings and Endings." The San Joaquin Valley Writers Club is requesting manuscripts for their anthology. Let us use our time to generate submissions! They want beautiful words. They suggest writing about tangible topics like birth and death, marriage and divorce, and the first and last day of school. Or, not. Maybe your idea is "metaphorical, perhaps not even visible, such as a thought that blinks into existence only to disappear just as quickly from someone's mind, or a first impression of someone or something that changes over time."

Writers begin with an empty page and end up writing beautifully. Join us for a generative writers workshop on February 22nd.

You've all been doing such amazing work. I'm excited to see where your creativity takes you in the weeks ahead. Keep pushing forward, stay inspired, and remember, every word is part of the journey! You've got this!

Write on.
Judy Kohlen

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue was edited using

Canva

Anything Under the Clouds



Hello reader,

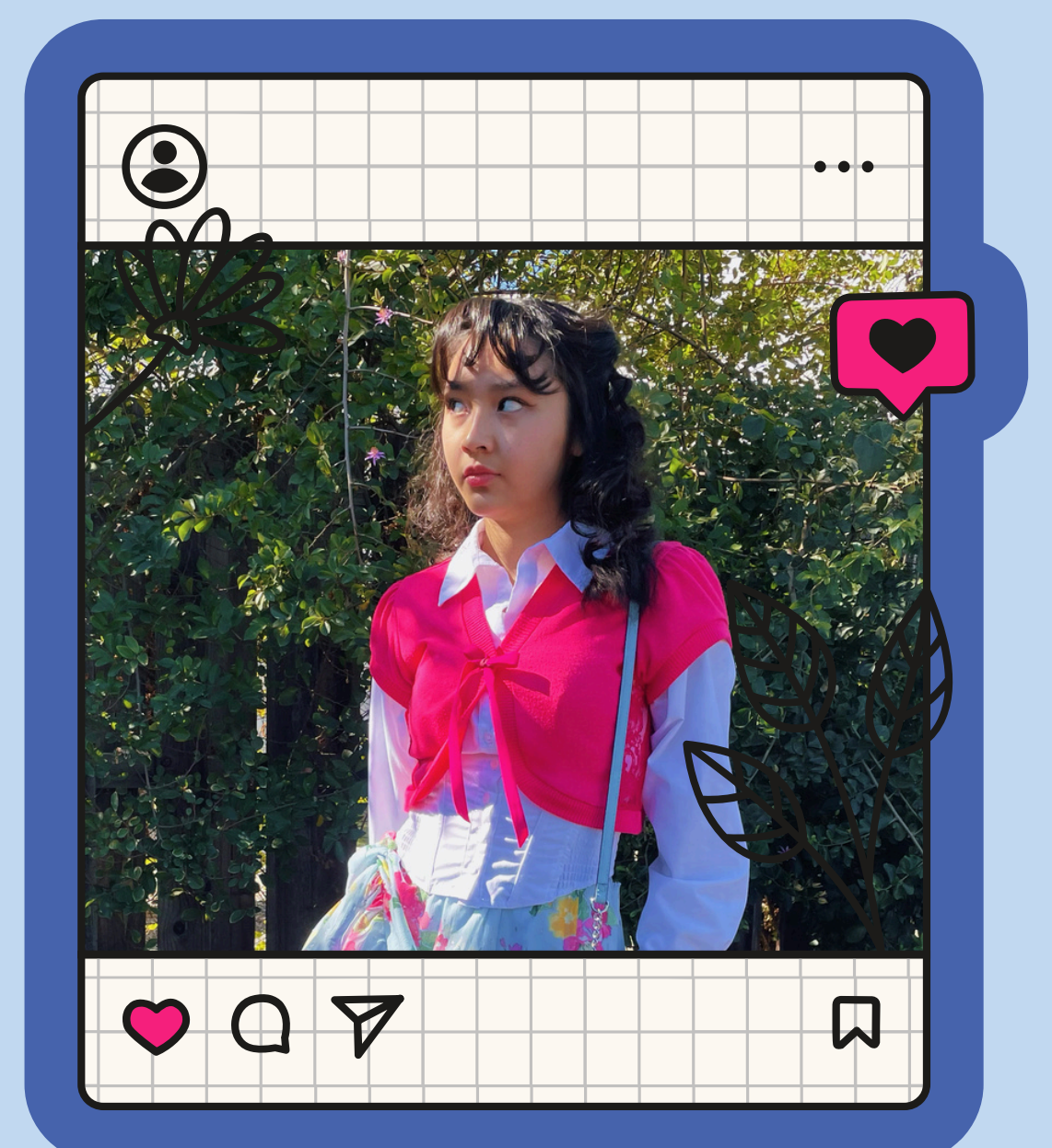
How ironic for the month of love not to be the longest-lasting. This month I explored dark pinks and light blues, rose petals and transparent background graphics. February reminds me of pink and red... but also blue skies and greenery.

My school's floral team recently hosted a "perfect pair" bouquet-making event. It made me realize that writing is a lot like arranging flowers since both have recipes that masters of the craft often disregard. Add some baby's-breath here and there, toss some unnecessary fillers, add some carnations, and wrap the whole thing up with a bow.

I wish I could join you for February's meeting but I've been invited to perform a monologue on the same day. It is Portia's "quality of mercy" speech from Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, my favorite.

Enjoy writing for the anthology and tell your friends you love them.

Hugs, kisses, and Valentine wishes,
Abigail Elina Handojo



@abigail_handojo



Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 10:00 am
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 East C St, Ontario, CA 91764



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT:

February's meeting will be about fellowship and writing. We will use the time to craft a memoir piece, a short story, or a poem, inspired by the prompt "Beginnings and Endings."

The San Joaquin Valley Writers Club is requesting manuscripts for their anthology. Let us use our time to write, maybe a submission for their anthology! They want beautiful words. They suggest writing about tangible topics like birth and death, marriage and divorce, and the first and last day of school. Or, not. Maybe your idea is "metaphorical, perhaps not even visible, such as a thought that blinks into existence only to disappear just as quickly from someone's mind, or a first impression of someone or something that changes over time."



You may already have a good story about ending and beginning, if not, the workshop will generate ideas, set aside time for creating a messy draft, and touch on techniques for strengthening the piece. Writers will begin with an empty page and end up writing beautifully.

FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Check page 15 for more details on what SJVWG is looking for!

FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING
WHAT'S COMING UP



JANUARY 2025 MEETING



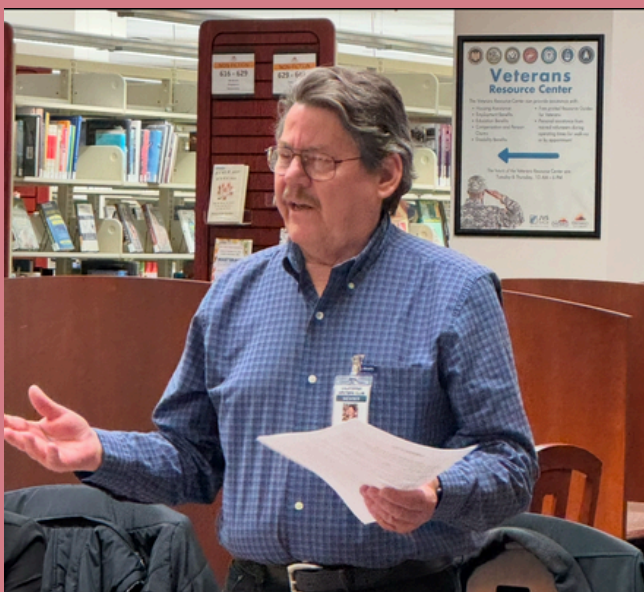
AUTHOR PANEL

Annual IECWC Published Author Panel January 25, 2025 by Elisabeth Anghel

Every January meeting at California Writers Club, Inland Empire branch is dedicated to celebrate members of our club that published during previous year.

The event was hosted at Ovitt Family Library in Ontario, CA. Club members, guests, people from the community gathered in the Quiet Area of the Reference section floor, in the basement. The area was well organized with a large long table for the presenting authors and lined-up chairs for public in attendance.

The authors in this year's panel were: Sam Nichols, Abigail Elina Handojo, John J. McBrearty, Jackie Phillips and Larry Lauritzen. Here are listed their last publications along with some other works.



Sam Nichols is the curator and publisher of the writings of his departed brother Robert Paul Nichols poetry collection title "A Passionate Life" and of the poetry collection title "The Work of a Man" by his uncle Richard David Newby.

"Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club" by Samuel Nichols , Scott Skipper, et al. | Mar 27, 2024.

Abigail Elina Handojo poetry book "Attached" and contributor to "Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club".

Jackie Phillips contributor to "Voices of Peace: a global perspective" an anthology published in 2024, "An Upward Climb toward Faith" and other independent works or contributions to collections.

John J. McBrearty author of an extensive collection of works published in diverse formats. He is a decorated veteran, active VA volunteer and mentor. Some of his recent published works:

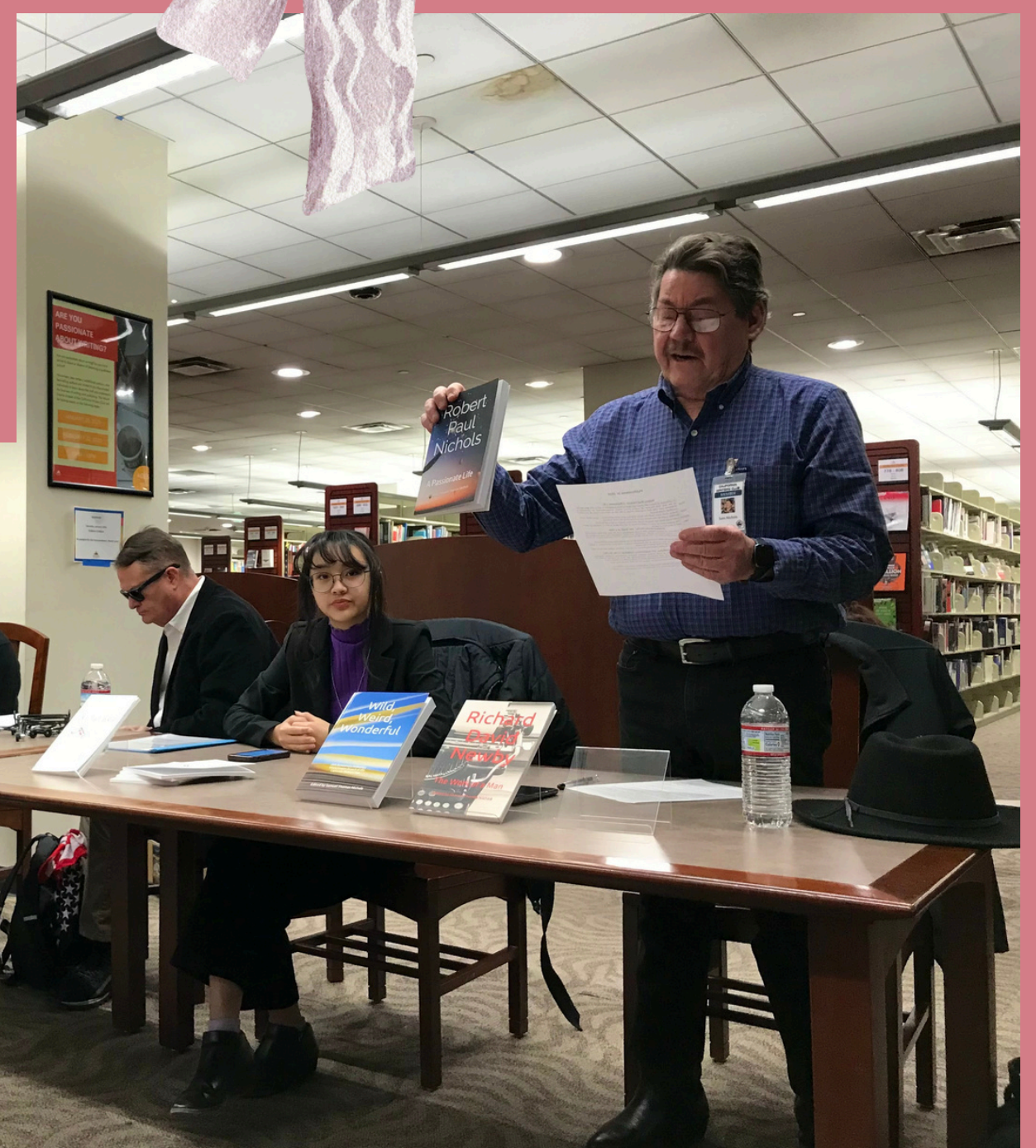
"Veterans' Survival Guide: Volume 1, PTSD is Not a Four-Letter Word!", Dec 24, 2024. *"HOW TO GET PUBLISHED ON AMAZON: Volume 2, everything you need to know about how I went from a publishing zero to a publishing hero within one year!"* – September 11, 2024. *"ARMY VALUES: Lessons in Leadership, from Operation Iraqi Freedom"* – March 30, 2024. *"LITERARY WORKS OF JOHN J. McBrearty: Volume 1, From Military History and Leadership, to How to Write and Get Published on Amazon, and even Learning"* – July 4, 2024.



Larry Lauritzen is the author of the Lance Tallbear series: the first book "Regardless of the Consequences" and the second volume published in 2024 "The Killing Ground". A third volume will follow. Also contributor to the most recent club's anthology "Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club", 2024.

The meeting was moderated by the club's president, Judy Kohnen. She prepared a list of 11 questions and the authors took turns in answering. It was a dynamic interaction between the authors and the public.

Authors took turns to share from their experience of writing and presenting their work in the most favorable and powerful way.



Sam Nichols the editor of his poetry books created to preserve the family legacy, family history and to honor his close relatives. It took him a period between 6 to 22 years. Editing and publishing of the club's last anthology took him 18 months.

Abigail Handojo, young poetess, self published her book, a collection of 21 poems depicting emotions. The volume titled "Attached" is the result of 2 years of work.

John J. McBrearty presented the successfully published children book "Claire: the magical dog" and "How to Get Published on Amazon" V. 2, among his many other publications. He writes one month, edits one month and than self-publish.

Jackie Phillips, author and publisher, presented her last contribution to anthology titled "Voices of Peace".

Larry Lauritzen, talked about creating the character Sheriff Lance Tallbear and the first book of his series "Regardless of the Consequences". The success of the first book brought the second volume in the series "The Killing Ground" and a third volume is in the works.

The questions about publishing process, cost, marketing strategy and how to become a successful writer, the presenters offered a variety of answers.

- Use writer's help software like Scribner, Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Libre Office Writer, Open Text Voice Typing, Adobe editor.
- Hire an artist to design the cover/covers, self create the cover, edit oneself, hire an editor, self publish on a variety of venues, hire a publisher/editor, and proofread self or hired service.
- Became part of support groups, critique groups, take planned breaks from writing, use audio to listen to your work or read aloud to help improve writing, make notes along the creating process.
- Contribute pieces in anthologies. Organize the work by the deadlines for submissions. Participating in collaborative work brings more exposure and knowledge of the current publishing market.
- All branches of California Writers Club accept contributions from all members to their anthologies.
- Reviews of our work on public media of any format are very important. Reviews could be posted on Amazon or other book sellers on line or could be published in traditional publishing magazine for a fee.



The questions about “what was the idea of a book”, personal life style as an author, discipline on writing, the writers offered these answers.

- Ideas of writing could come from dreams, brain storming, notes of personal thoughts, family lore, news, real life stories. Also writing inspiration comes from emotions, people we meet, research, life experience, writing prompt in a meeting, write about anything in life, take notes to refer later, develop a given or independent topic.
- Join a writing group, a critique group, talk with people with same interests, write reviews for fellow writers and develop a writing ritual.

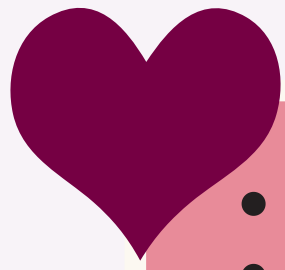
The event continued with public interacting with the authors and buying books offered for sale. Congratulations to all authors participating in the panel.

Note: Thanks to Sue Andrews for sharing some of her notes with me.

FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Photos taken by President Judy Kohnen and Theresa Handojo

A Benefits of IECWC



- ALL AGES are welcome!
- Entrance into monthly meetings
 - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Access to monthly speakers on topics related to the craft
- Exposure & practice by submitting to our monthly literary newsletter, FRESH INK
- Network with other club members
 - (various levels of expertise, mentors)
- Participation in Critique Groups
 - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Your OWN PAGE on our Club website at no additional cost
 - Highlight your bio, photo, website, social media, and published books
- Opportunities to serve on the board or on committees of our branch
- Camaraderie among other writers at all levels, all genres, and all ages!
- Partake, volunteer, and/or help plan our Spring and Fall Conferences which are provided at little (or sometimes no) cost to our members
- Annual opportunity to showcase your work at Open Mic events.
- Annual opportunity, each January, to attend/appear on our Panel of Authors
 - Members who were published the year before
 - Learn/share advice on the publication process, ask/answer questions, and buy/sell your books on site
- Annual opportunity to submit, read, and assist with judging the competitive Statewide CWC Literary Review, with readership of about 2,000 members and their readers and associates
- Simultaneous Co-Membership into California Writers Club
 - Our state-level parent organization at www.calwriters.org, with additional volunteer opportunities

- Read/advertise in the Tri-Annual CWC Bulletin available online, free of charge
 - Access to news from the other CWC Branches throughout California, gaining perspective about other serious, mostly published, writers, editors, Web designers, graphics experts, etc.
- Potential for your writing to be chosen to be displayed in the Southern California Writers Showcase at www.socalwritersshowcase.com
- A wonderful addition to your curriculum vitae or resume!
- Access to the monthly IECWC Blind Review Team
- Utilize our FACEBOOK PAGE to get your works word out to the public interested in writing

JOIN or RENEW at:

<https://iecwc.com/membership-meetings/>

Active
\$65

Supporting
\$65

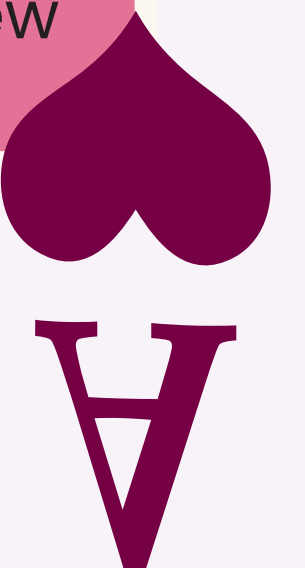
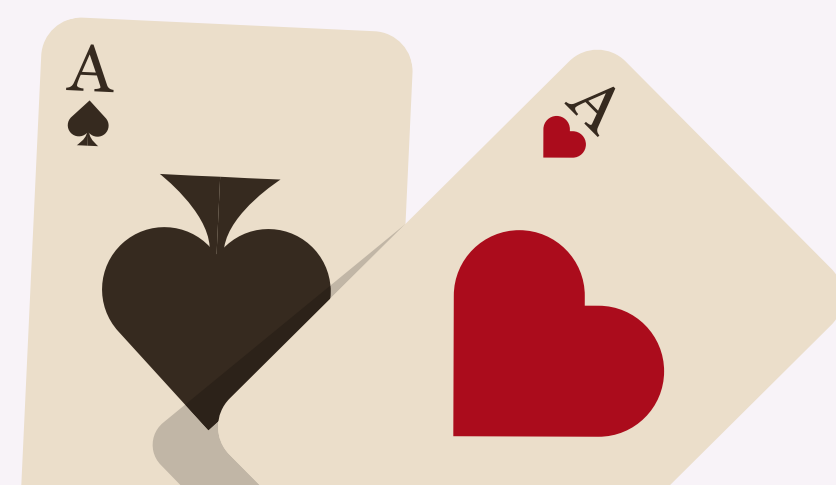
Student
\$15
ages 8-22

Renewal of Membership
\$45

Renewal deadline September 30.
On October 1, CWC shall drop all delinquent members from the rolls. If dropped, you must pay the new \$65 member enrollment fees.

Membership

9

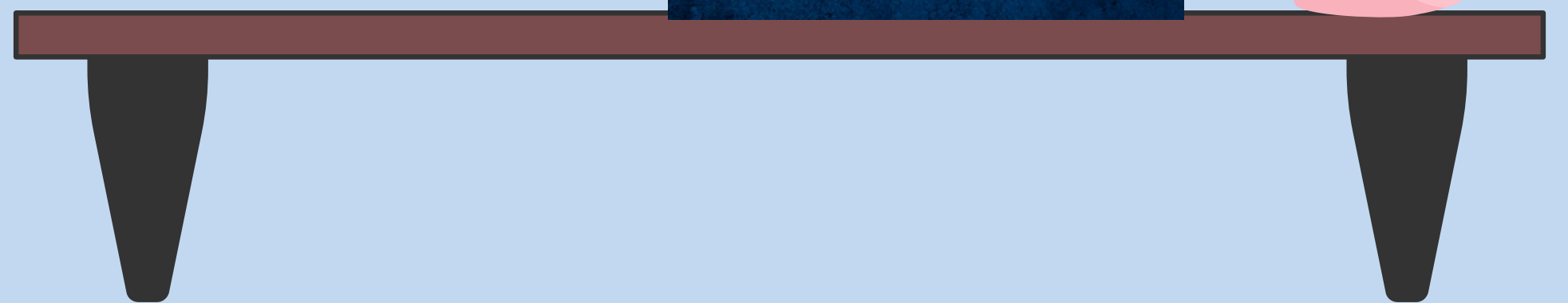


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THE SMALLS

The Smalls includes selections from the California Writers Club 2024 "Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose." This is a vibrant collection of unique voices chosen from the contest entries.

<https://a.co/d/45iqsdm>

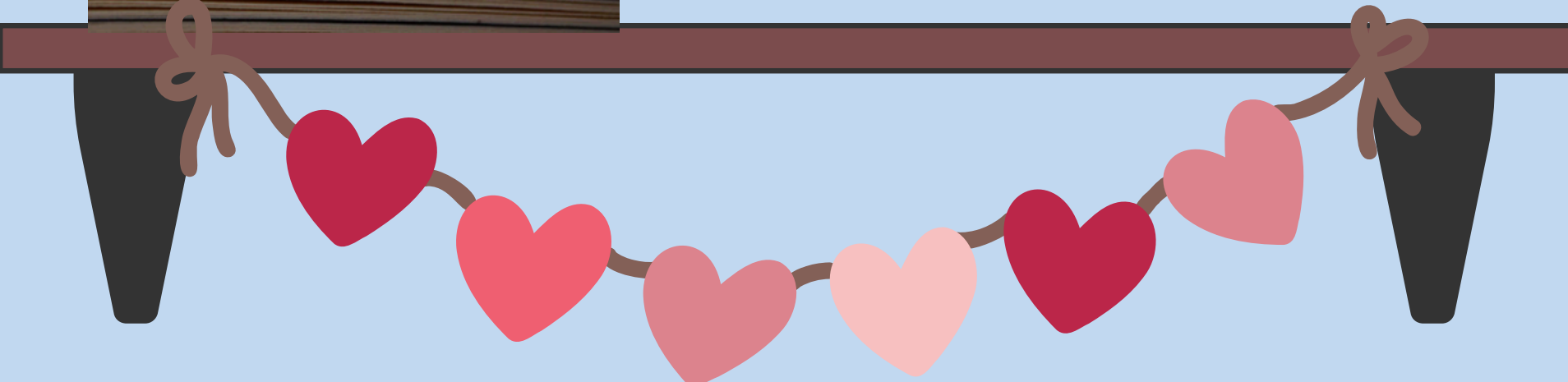


Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club

<https://a.co/d/0SVxuPt>

This collection includes short stories, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, memoir, original drawings and photographs, and one novelette entitled *Murder in Huckleberry Heights*.

This anthology contains the varietal work of eighteen members of the Inland Empire Branch with several genres being represented.



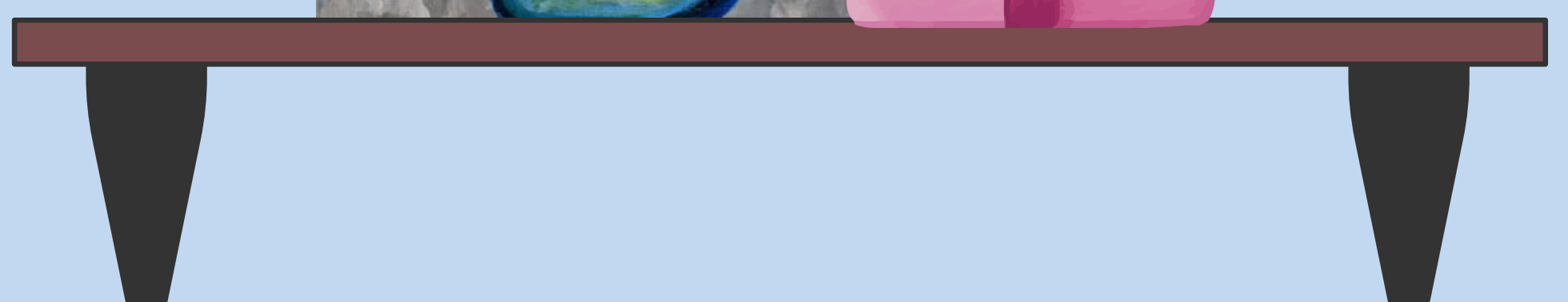
Vision & Verse: A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry

The multi-talented artists and writers featured within these pages have come together to create a dialogue between their respective mediums. This collection showcases the beauty of visual art married with the magic of the written word.

<https://a.co/d/2zu0Afx>



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Kudos Korner



Congratulations **Abigail and Kate!**

On January 18th the two performed Abigail's duet poem "My Roommate the Mourning Dove" at Rival Coffee Co. for Poetry with Purpose. A recording of their performance can be viewed on YouTube and Instagram. https://youtu.be/_mwantcYYDQ?si=duLiVxz6X8pq-EMp

Afterward, they were invited to perform at the Murrieta District Office on February 4th.



Tuesday, February 11, 2025 6-8 pm
 Ovitt Family Community Library 215
 E C St, Ontario, CA 91764

Author Spotlight with



MATT COYLE



Step into the gripping world of Rick Cahill mysteries and discover the creative process behind the character, the investigations, and the art of crafting a compelling crime thriller. Don't miss this chance to explore the mind of a crime novelist!

Brought to you by Ontario Mayor and City Council.

@CityofOntarioCLC

AGES 18+



@OntarioCLC @OntarioMuseum_ArtsCulture @OntarioRecreation @OntarioCLC

For more information, visit
OntarioCA.gov/Library or
 please call (909) 395-2205.

De-Mystifying Publishing Options

Diamond Valley Writers' Guild Meeting presented by Holly Kammier

The road to publication involves understanding what your publishing options are. Writers often have a single-minded dream of selling their projects to traditional publishers and becoming bestselling authors. In reality, there are many other options, and it can be overwhelming to understand where your book would find its best fit in the publishing spectrum.

To help you sort this out, Holly Kammier will discuss the pros and cons of the five main publishing options today:

- Traditional Publishing
- Small Publishers
- Self-Publishing
- Vanity Press
- Hybrid Publishing



Saturday, February 15, 2025 at 9:30 am
Hemet Public Library, 300 E. Latham Avenue, Hemet



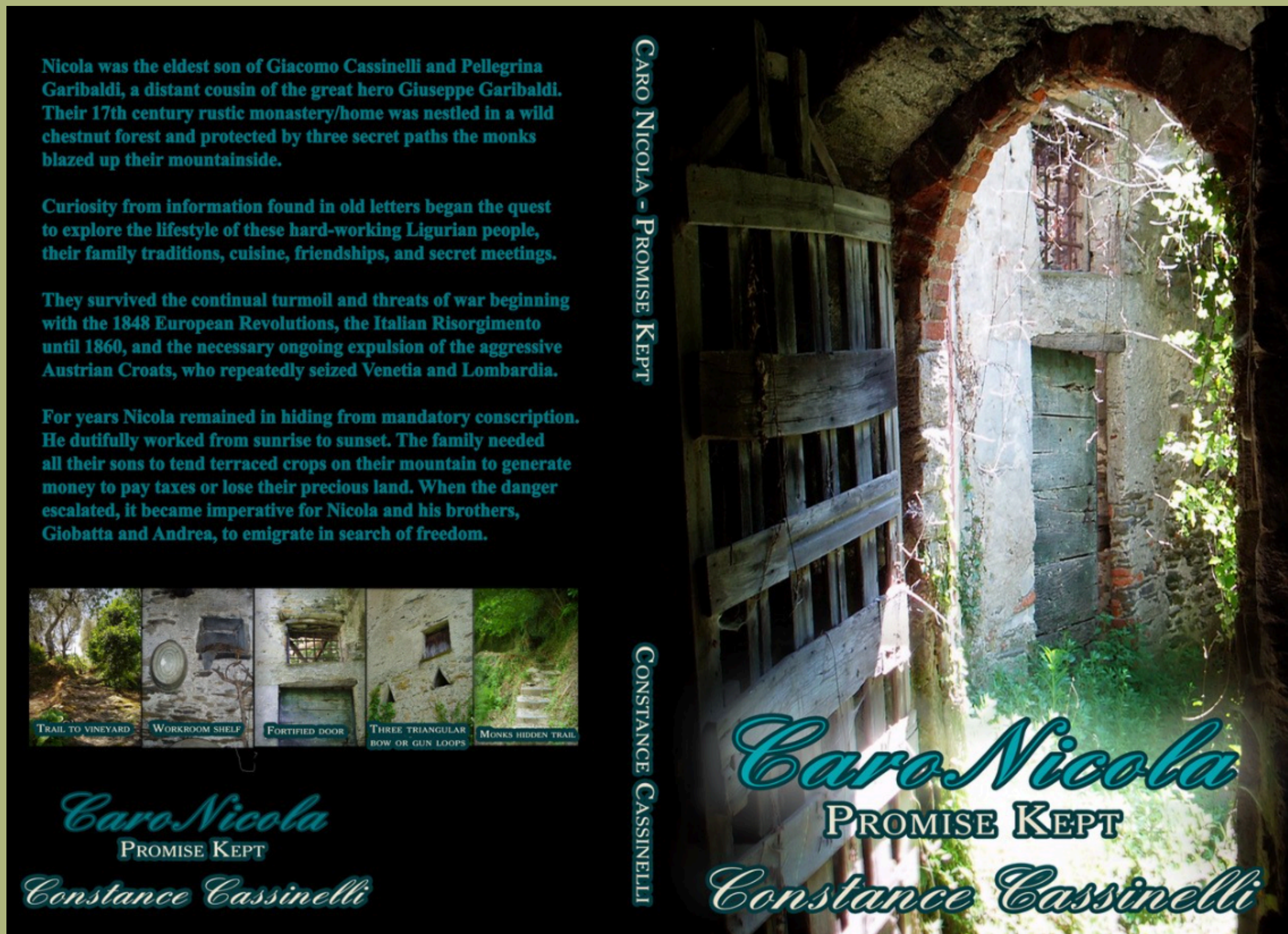
Gaining a working understanding of the range of publishing options will facilitate reaching your goal of successful publication.

Holly Kammier is the co-founder and acquisitions editor of Acorn Publishing, the largest publishing house in San Diego and one of the largest in California. Acorn publishes a wide variety of genres and currently has over one hundred books in its catalogue, including several award winners and best sellers. Kammier is the bestselling author of *Kingston Court*, *Choosing Hope*, and *Lost Girl*, A Shelby Day Novel. She is also an accomplished content editor whose clients have gone on to become USA Today and New York Times bestsellers. On faculty with the prestigious Santa Barbara Writers Conference, and publishing director for the San Diego Writers Festival, Kammier is a nationwide lecturer. The former journalist's professional resume includes Channel 9 News in Los Angeles and CNN in Washington, D.C. A UCLA honors graduate, Holly resides in San Diego with her brilliant and often sarcastic children. She is always on the hunt for the next great story.

Constance Cassinelli will be the guest speaker (with a slide presentation) for the Pilgrim Memorial Library's annual meeting.



Sunday, February 16, 2025 at 1:00 pm
600 Garey Avenue, Pomona
(rear entrance)



This is free and open to the public. Hors-d' oeuvres will be served. The topic, *Journey to Another Century*, will cover her lifetime quest to gather information to write *Caro Nicola Promise Kept*.

At age 17 she promised to remember siblings found in letters written to her great grandfather who found him after believing he was dead for 35 years. The letters were stolen, then returned decades later. Three times she ventured back to the mountainside of Liguria, Italy in search of the family's 17th century monastery/home that everyone said no longer existed. Her final discovery appears on the cover of her book as a result of her persistence. (This search and novel were featured in the Claremont Courier March 8th.)

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO SOCALWRITERSSHOWCASE.COM

- You must be a member in good standing
 - AKA submitted application & paid your dues
- Maximum length of submissions: 500 words
 - You can add 1 link to your website
- Software: Microsoft Word (.docx) file attachment
- No indents, columns, tables or bullet points
- Subject line must read: SUBMISSION FOR SOCAL SHOWCASE
- In Body of email: list (1) your name, (2) your branch name, and (3) title of work
 - Also in the Body, include this permission: "I am submitting this for use on the CWC South website and confirm that I am a member of a Southern branch of the California Writers Club. I further confirm that it is my original work and all rights to its use belong to me. CWC South may use this on its website, archive it for future use on its website or choose to not use it, however the rights I grant are non-exclusive and I retain the right to sell it, allow its publication elsewhere including simultaneously, and all other rights to its use. CWC South is not paying me for its use. CWC South may not sell it or authorize its use outside of the CWC South website without"
- Send email & attachment to the current branch President, Judy Kohnen.
 - She will verify membership and will forward it on to be published.



Visit www.socalwritersshowcase.com to familiarize yourself with the categories of content.

- Short fiction: "flash fiction" - stories with beginning, middle, end
- Memoir: short memoir pieces or vignettes about our past
- A Writer's Life: ideas, humor, tips to keep your writing going
- Craft: "how-to" articles related to writing or marketing your work

Most work is accepted by the Editor if it is of appropriate quality. The site is updated monthly, but there may be a backlog in a category. Once your work appears on the site, it stays on the site for 6 months. After that, your name and the title of your work will appear on the Archive List page by month. You retain the copyright for your submission. Our website copyright notice: Articles or stories appearing on this website submitted by members are copyrighted with all rights reserved by their respective authors. Note that some contests/publishers will consider posting on a website to mean that the piece has been previously published and perhaps ineligible for a contest or future publication, so keep that in mind.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WRITERS BRANCH

Announcing our 2025 Anthology

The San Joaquin Valley Writers branch is pleased to announce the theme for its next anthology, to be published in the fall of 2025: *Beginnings & Endings*.

It is human nature to conceptualize the world consisting of beginnings and endings. This duality permeates almost everything we see, imagine, feel, and hope for. Beginnings and endings can be real and tangible such as birth and death, marriage and divorce, the first and last day of school. They can be metaphorical, perhaps not even visible, such as a thought that blinks into existence only to disappear just as quickly from someone's mind, or a first impression of someone or something that changes over time. Beginnings and endings can be fast, sudden, or they can be slow, gradual. They can be far apart or blend into each other. Maybe a beginning is also an ending and vice versa. Send us your stories, memoirs, essays, or poetry in which a beginning and/or an ending takes center stage or is the background for something else. Show us the human experience through images, dialogue, verse, but no matter what, with beautiful words. And maybe, just maybe, show us a new take on beginnings and endings.



Participation is open to all CWC members in good standing. Submission information and guidelines can be found on our website at www.sjvalleywriters.org/publications or by using the QR code to the right below.



2025 ANTHOLOGY ANNOUNCEMENT

Deadlines

Submissions are due the **15th** of every month

For example:

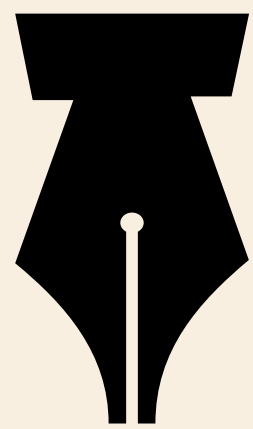
The deadline for March's issue is February 15th



Content Limits

Submissions with the following will not be considered:

- Excessive or gratuitous violence (violence for violence sake)
- Excessive or gratuitous profanity
- Excessive or gratuitous sexual situations or pornography
- Political or religious agendas that are meant to persuade or denounce



FRESH INK

guidelines



Form

- Prose word count <1,200
- No line count on poetry

Send as an attachment
Google or Word document
Times New Roman
12pt font



Photos

Accompanying images are optional

We can only publish digital images that **do not violate copyright**

You are encouraged to submit photos you have taken



Email

Share with Abigail Handojo at iecwcfreshink@gmail.com

Subject line must read "FRESH INK - month"

Replace "month" with your target month for publication

Check your email periodically for suggestions from the editor



Poetry Musings

SAMUEL THOMAS NICHOLS



Secret Admirer

A secret admirer is a person who has a romantic interest in another, that they keep a secret for various reasons, although they often send secret gifts, notes, and letters. It can be an innocent affair, or it might border on the creepy, or maybe fully immersed in the creep. There was a time way back in the sixth grade where I was smitten by a classmate. She had dirty blond hair, blue eyes, and was fond of Juicy Fruit chewing gum, which in 1965 sold for 5¢ for a package of five sticks. I wrote my first poem in the first grade and continued throughout elementary school and, along the way, had developed an interest in secret codes. So this eleven-year-old secret admirer would write a short love poem, use a cipher to encode it, and leave it with a package of Juicy Fruit inside her desk.

hflzzlhcnrtzmc fivbtynhr txfqrvbxtk vkc p f h j b
nasiaabmvagfrbyfiidxxbjpoxqdwydpvidcox!

To my knowledge, she was never able to decipher my little love poems, although I did come clean that I was the one leaving the notes and gum inside her desk. She thought I was cute to do so, and we remained great friends through the sixth grade. I never did tell her how I felt and remained her secret admirer for several years.

I believe the most famous of our clan of secret admirers would be Cyrano de Bergerac, who in reality was a 17th-century French novelist, playwright, and duelist. However, it is the fictionalized character made popular in the play by Edmond Rostand, titled *Cyrano de Bergerac: A Heroic Comedy in Five Acts* and loosely based on the life of the man, that we are most familiar. As for the fictional character, Cyrano is a brilliant poet and swordsman who falls deeply in love with his intellectual and beautiful cousin Roxane. As Roxane has feelings for another, Cyrano, who feels unworthy because of his looks, writes love letters and poems to her using the other man's identity, which only intensifies Roxane's feelings for the other man. The entire play is written in verse by Rostand and is, of course, a tragedy. As a mortally injured Cyrano faces the end of his life, Roxane has discovered it was he who wrote to her and realizes it is Cyrano she loves. She tells Cyrano, "You've suffered, and through me." Cyrano's reply is:

Through you? Not so!
I never knew a woman's gentleness.
My mother found me homely. Sister, none;
And as to lady-loves, they would have laughed
At me. Through you, at least, I had a friend;
Through you I've known the spell a gown can bring!

For those interested, the entire text of the play is available on Project Gutenberg.



The American poet Sharon Olds, who, amazingly at 82, is still teaching creative writing at New York University, penned a poem entitled *To You, from Your Secret Admirer*. The poem begins with:

I love the conversations we have
after making love—of course it's just me, making
love to myself, talking to you,
loving you—though I do not really
know you, so I guess not loving you—
craving the dream of knowing you.

Since it is to the object of her secret admiration, we do not learn of their identity, but we learn that it is a male figure later in the poem. This poem appears in the April 2023 issue of *Poetry*, and is available online at the *Poetry Foundation*.



The *Poetry Soup* website (www.poetrysoup.com) has quite a few Secret Admirer poems written by their members. While the object of these poets' affections are primarily anonymous, the member poet Daniel Moscovitz makes it perfectly clear that Rebecca is the object of his admiration, although there is no evidence she read any of these poems. I found his series of nine poems posted in September 2018 to be of interest and his titles amusingly clever. Here are three examples:

Cry, My Beloved Rebecca
In the Kingdom By the Sea, My Pretty Becky
I Want To Date Rebecca, How Shall I Ask Thee



Sadly, this series of nine poems are all that appear on the website by Daniel. You may read them here:

https://www.poetrysoup.com/poems_poets/best/86961/daniel_moscovitz.



Here's an excerpt from Daniel's *I Want To Date Rebecca, How Shall I Ask Thee*:

My heart and brain just do not want to agree
It feels like a Pirate battle in the deep blue sea
I shall ask her for afternoon scones and Earl Grey Tea
I Want To Date Rebecca, How Shall I Ask Thee

Daniel's obsession with Rebecca reminded me that back when I was a teen and my older brother was serving in the Coast Guard, he had a girlfriend named Rebecca, who went by Becky. My brother served on the USS Glacier, a United States Coast Guard icebreaker, and was aboard during scientific expeditions to both the Arctic and Antarctic. Being at sea for long periods of time, he would send me money to have flowers sent to Becky from time to time. So when these requests came, I made it over to a flower shop on Western Avenue in Torrance near where Becky lived, picked out a nice bouquet, and wrote little love poems to which I signed my brother's name. However, the Secret Admirer slant to all of that was, even though she was five or so years older than me, I was quite fond of Becky and those little poems were from me. These were spontaneous lines written in the flower shop so I never kept a copy, but I suspect they went something like this:

While it's true I'm at sea
 My love for you is strong
 But soon I will be on leave
 & you will know we belong



It also seems likely that there were variations of the old standby theme,
 Some roses are red,
 Some violets are blue,
 as well.

The cavalier poet Richard Lovelace, penned one of my favorite secret admirer poems while imprisoned in 1642 for protesting the Bishops Exclusion Bill. The poem, *To Althea, from Prison*, was addressed to an unknown woman that was later believed to be a woman named Lucy Sacheverell. The poem begins:

When love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates;
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the grates;
 When I lye tangled in her haire,
 And fetterd to her eye,
 The birds, that wanton in the aire,
 Know no such liberty.



This is the same poem whose renowned fourth stanza begins:
*Stone walls doe not a prison make,
 Nor iron bars a cage.*

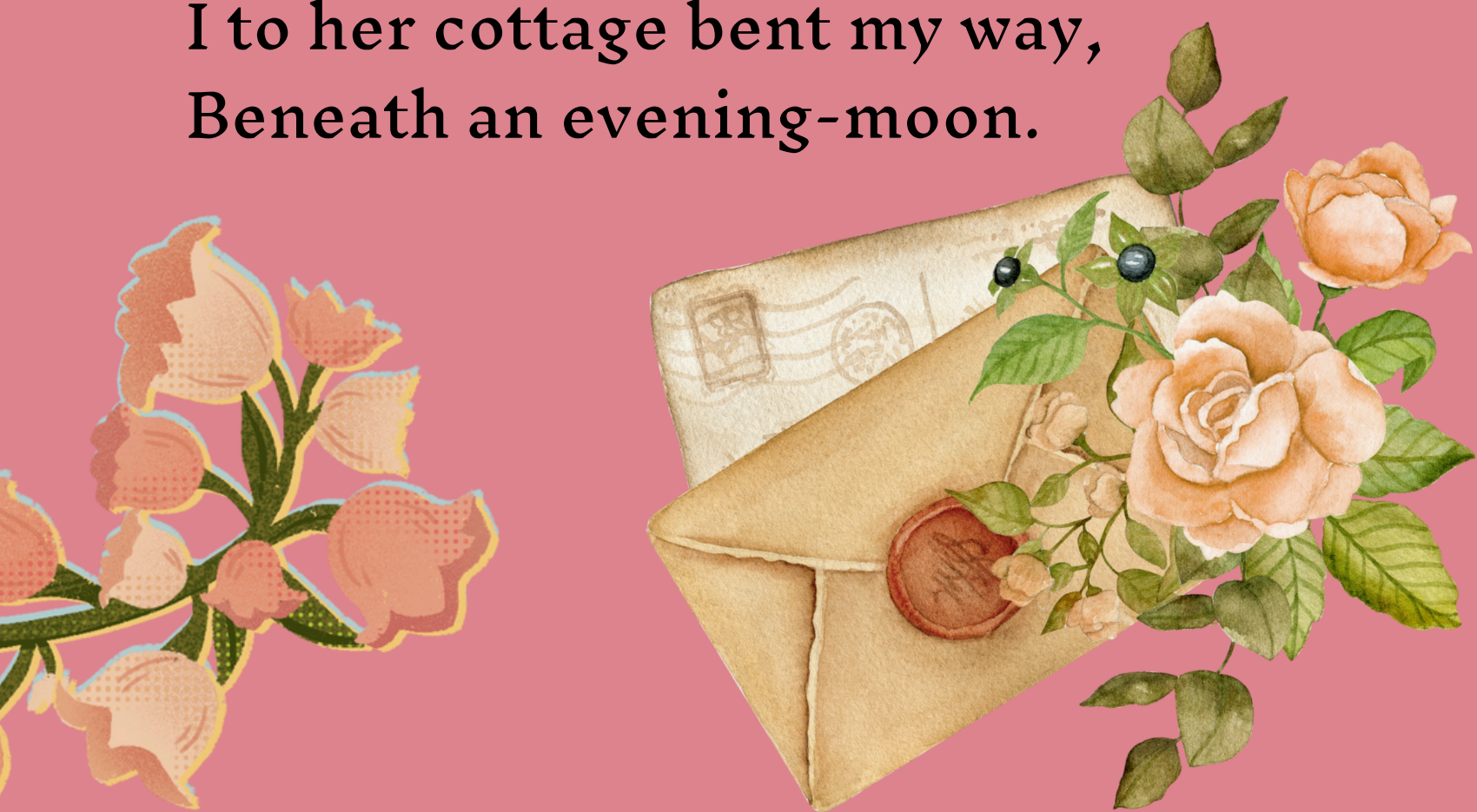
Speaking of Lucy, anonymously Althea, the English poet William Wordsworth penned a series of five Lucy poems. I've long enjoyed these poems and wondered who Lucy, who tragically dies, could be. Depending upon which of the five poems are under scrutiny, it seems she could be a lover or even an illegitimate daughter. Richard E. Matlak, in *Wordsworth's Lucy Poems in Psychobiographical Context*, writes:

Consequently, one hesitates to ask, "Who was Lucy?" because, as one critic (Geoffrey Durrant) has stated, "there is no answer to this question except to say that it is irrelevant."

Personally, I like to think it is relevant.

In *Strange Fits Of Passion Have I Known* Wordsworth writes:

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.



Here, Lucy is clearly a child, three years of age, who Nature takes for her own leaving the earthly girl, perhaps an illegitimate daughter, dead. In *She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways* Wordsworth writes:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

Now, Lucy is a maid, older than three, but not yet a woman. In each of the five Lucy poems, we get a different view of this elusive object of his admiration. Tragically, she dies in each.

I am reminded of the movie *The Letter Writer* (2011) with the charming Aly Underwood playing the role of Maggy, a troubled teenager. The late actor Bernie Diamond played Sam, is the secret letter writer, who randomly chooses names from the phone book and writes them encouraging letters. One of these letters reaches Maggy and sets in motion a life-changing series of events. Perhaps one of us may receive such a gift or, alternatively, one of us might send such a gift to another. Have a blessed season of love.



Here he identifies her as his lover, which he clarifies in the last stanza with: "What fond and wayward thoughts will slide / Into a Lover's head!" In *Three Years She Grew In Sun And Shower* Wordsworth writes:

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.





Secret Admirer

Shirley Petro

Who can conceal a heart entombed in fire?

Classical music fades to white

The fighter hides against a Jekyll and Hyde funeral pyre

All disguised as a bitter fight.

The secret is whispered in furtive tone:

Some One can survive alone

A Valentine describes an empty heart

One that will abide with a drenched depart,

Our cultures do not match

No common traits for a heart to catch

The valentine day will pass

With no melted chocolate or wilting flowers. Alas



ANY INSECT BUT
BUTTERFLIES I
Abigail Elina Handojo 2023

My world caves in for the third time

Pressing the purple bruises of my past,
Draining the scarlet in my cheeks for wine
Cursing my lungs for inhaling too fast,
For imagining a life where you are mine

Where our conversations age like cabernet,
Like resting bones and old cliches
Night showers singing to Lana Del Rey
Two tears for every eyelash you blink away,
For every feeling I can write but cannot say

Make me forget every book I've ever read,
Give me a good reason to get out of bed
Sweep the cobwebs stuck inside my head,
And fill my chest with luna moths instead

"Love unrequited, can I tell you a secret?"

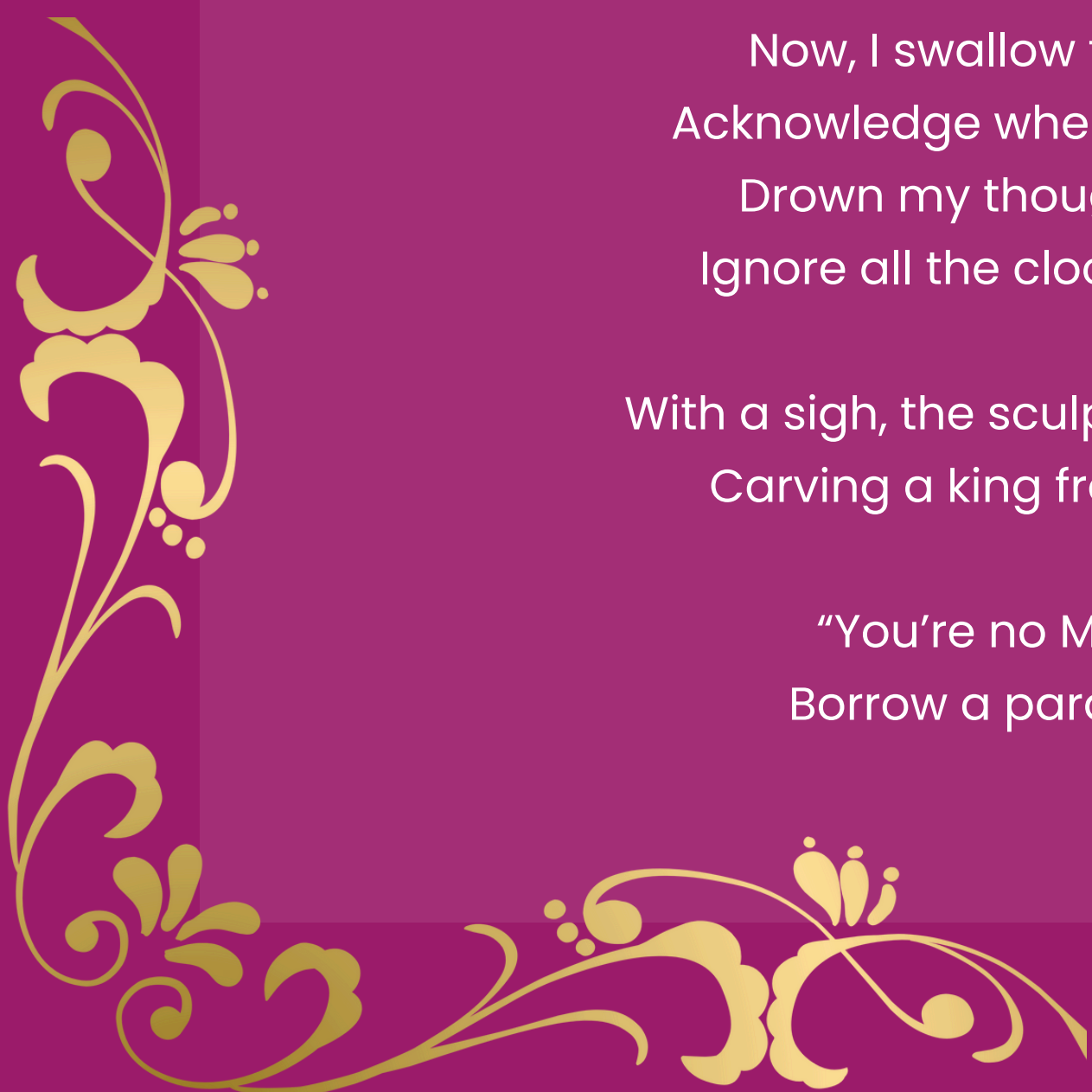
"Maybe if you hold me close enough,
My heartbeat will play our favorite song"

No stranger is the ache, no friend is the fall
My pulse is my greatest instrument after all

Now, I swallow the blood-soaked flowers,
Acknowledge where I'm at is not where I belong
Drown my thoughts in Spotify's sad hours,
Ignore all the clocks at school that are wrong

With a sigh, the sculptor of coping takes over again,
Carving a king from a rejected marble block

"You're no Michelangelo, my friend,
Borrow a parasol and go take a walk"





NEXT MONTH'S
THEME IS...

LUCK

