

Dear Friends of the Pub Quiz,

Happy Presidents' Day! Presidents' Day was a big deal when I was a kid not only because of the day off, but also because of the profound respect we children had for our U.S. presidents. Long before I took a class with Howard Zinn, I used to love stories about the formative experiences of American presidents, especially their childhood experiences. In fact, my entire month seemed filled with celebrated yearly rituals that were associated with Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, and my mom Mary's birthday.

Today the main February ritual that I celebrate, in addition to Black History Month, is the San Francisco Writers Conference, held every Presidents' Day weekend at the InterContinental Mark Hopkins Hotel. I'm still not sure what is "InterContinental" about the Mark Hopkins, except perhaps that from the Nob Hill location, one feels as if one can see different continents, as I am sure is the case from the Intercontinental Hotel in Istanbul, with views of Europe and Asia. At the Mark Hopkins, from north-facing rooms of the top floors one can see Chinatown, North Beach, Alcatraz, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Marin County, while from the south-facing room (such as my room this year), one can see Market street, the East Bay and South Bay, and even Fort Funston, a hang-gliding haunt in the southwest corner of the City that we got to explore yesterday.

I've given as many as seven talks over a four-day weekend of the San Francisco Writers Conference, but this year I gave merely five presentations (all on poetry), hosted the open mic with a live jazz trio (with almost 40 signups), and consulted with attendees about their poetry, fiction, and non-fiction manuscripts on Sunday morning. I value the conference not only because of all the aspiring writers with whom I get to converse and work, but also because of the many friends that I have made at the conference while serving on the faculty over the last 12 years. Like summer camp for adults, the conference gives me a chance to catch up with old friends, hear about their families and book projects, and discuss new trends in writing and publishing.

This year my wife Kate brought the two boys and the bulldog to the Mark Hopkins, using the trip as an opportunity to explore San Francisco's sites and events. They interacted with sea lions, magicians, and city folk and tourists who evidently had never before seen a bulldog. As you know, many of the streets are dizzyingly steep – one can see why much of the Alfred Hitchcock film *Vertigo* was filmed in The City by the Bay. Kate and the boys found that every short walk was like a serious work-out on a stair-climber, while the dog discovered that she likes to be carried. No doubt that was one reason she attracted so much attention.

My literary agent, Michael Larson, co-founder of the Conference, wants to see the proposals for my two new non-fiction books (one of them a Pub Quiz book). I hope to have at least one new title to share at the 2018 San Francisco Writers Conference, to be keynoted by California Poet Laureate, Dana Gioia. Especially when I can be

accompanied by family, Presidents' Day weekend is the time of my favorite February tradition.

My favorite weekly tradition is, of course, our pub quiz. Tonight expect questions on some of the topics I raised above, as well as the following: people who are on the fence, the need to rush, people who are not Elvis, Frankenstein's monster, other Universal villains, iterations of time tracking, Davis landmarks, invisible men, living for the movies, U.S. presidents, the Hubble Telescope, birds of prey, new positions, Pub Quiz irregulars, people that encircle warrens, people who purchase flowers, people who buy oranges, windy days, popular election losers, nearby countries, rebellions, expenses in Greenwich Village, what living authors think of the dead, local authors, Oscar nominees, early works, travel to Houston, people born in Mexico, salons, competition for the notable Bruce Lee, running after The Beatles with nine letters, leftover Grammys affiliations, poetry in Davis, painting pictures, incumbents, Civil Rights pioneers, nice shapes, the masks we once had to wear, icons, Tarzan, apocalyptic overtones, and Shakespeare.

I hope you can join us this evening. As the all-male dance troupe [Brotherhood](#) recently taught me, we can't be consistent together unless we are consistent individually.

Your Quizmaster

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Here are three questions from last week's quiz:

1. **Mottos and Slogans.** "We can remember it for you wholesale" was a slogan and the title of a Philip K. Dick short story. In 1990 and 2012 the film was adapted into two different movies with the same title. Name the films' title.
2. **Internet Culture.** What does IP stand for in an IP address?
3. **Justice.** What actor played Texas Sheriff Buford T. Justice in the Smokey and the Bandit series of films from 1977 into the early 1980s?

P.S. The next Poetry Night, featuring Amos White, takes place on March 2. Circle that date on your calendar!