



WRITERSWORLD Newsletter - Issue No. 92

Calif. man makes bad writing judges cringe

By Ron Harris: Associated Press writer

SAN FRANCISCO - A retired mechanical designer with a penchant for poor prose took a tired detective novel scene and made it even worse, earning him top honors in San Jose State University's annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest for bad writing. Jim Guigli of Carmichael submitted 64 entries into the contest.

The judges were most impressed, or revolted perhaps, by his passage about a comely woman who walks into a detective's office. "Detective Bart Lasiter was in his office studying the light from his one small window falling on his super burrito when the door swung open to reveal a woman whose body said you've had your last burrito for a while, whose face said angels did exist, and whose eyes said she could make you dig your own grave and lick the shovel clean," Guigli wrote.

"The judges were impressed by his appalling powers of invention," said Scott Rice, a professor in SJSU's Department of English and Comparative Literature. He has organized the bad writing contest since its inception in 1982. Guigli will receive "a pittance" for his winning entry, a bit of cash he said he may put toward the purchase of a motor boat. His work for the contest represents a sampling of a career that never quite developed for him. "At one time I thought I wanted to write to detective novels," Guigli told the Associated Press Monday. "I never got a good start on it."

"His bad start was to be celebrated Tuesday, when the contest results were to be officially announced by Rice. The contest is named for Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, whose 1830 novel "Paul Clifford" began with the oft-mocked, "It was a dark and stormy night." Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest: www.bulwer-lytton.com.....**THE END**

WORDS TO THE WISE

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