

THE BULLETIN

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California Writers Club

March-April 2008



The Bulletin is the official publication of California Writers Club, an educational nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation.

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EDITORIAL MATERIAL

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Contact Your Branch Membership Chair

OUR MISSION

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

It's Lucky 13 for the FOB

By Allene Symons, Long Beach Branch

Boasting a prime booth location at the *L.A. Times* Festival of Books, the California Writers Club is again poised to make a strong showing the weekend of April 26 and 27, when the festival returns to the beautiful grounds of the UCLA campus.

In a new twist this year, CWC plans to highlight the educational mission of our nonprofit organization.

Under the canopy of booth 619, which overlooks a green plaza with 100-year-old trees, CWC's member-volunteers greet visitors and distribute a brochure listing all CWC

branches with contact information. If you live in or plan to visit Southern California at the end of April, it's fun to volunteer at the busy CWC booth. You'll meet other CWC members, interact with the public, and be amazed how quickly time flies. Two

Guidelines for Submitting Your Book Cover for Display

- Book covers submitted for display should be the exact size of the actual book cover.
- If possible, submit the actual dust jacket or paperback cover.
- Also acceptable: quality color copy on glossy paper.
- Book covers must be submitted by mail.
- E-mail attachments will not be accepted.
- Mail your cover(s) to:
Allene Symons
2373 N. Flower St.
Santa Ana, CA 92706.

volunteers are needed at our booth for two-hour shifts beginning each day at 9 a.m. To volunteer please contact Cyndy Largarticha, cyndycat1234@aol.com

The blue and gold colors of the festival provide the exterior theme. Decorations inside CWC's booth include a large, laminated copy of the CWC logo and a half

dozen trifold displays showing covers of books written by CWC members. Book covers from authors representing all branches are welcome. See sidebar below for details.

Our booth is a standard size with one draped

table, so unfortunately we have limited space. We do not sell any items at the festival, nor do we promote individual writers other than as part of the group cover display (in other words, we do not display

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Members' book covers on display at the CWC booth at last year's festival.



Who's Safe, Who's Going Home: Who Cares?

When your favorite writers' hangout – coffeehouse, bookstore, A.A. meeting – experiences a drop in attendance on weeknights during the spring months, it can only mean one thing.

JOYCE'S VOICE



**By Joyce Krieg
Central Coast Branch**

No, you're not all out at softball practice, nor contemplating the sunset, nor sitting on a park bench penning an ode to the vernal equinox. We know better.

You're staying at home, watching *American Idol*.

It's okay. I, too, have fallen under the spell of the amateur vocal talent contest. There's just something subversively seductive about the combination of train wrecks and true talent, the drama unfolding before our eyes on live, coast-to-coast television, that sucks us in and holds us hostage week after week.

And you know what? I don't think we have anything to feel guilty about. For those of us whose calling is to make up stories for the masses (in other words, writers of popular fiction), hit TV programs aren't just Frank Lloyd Wright's "chewing gum for the eyes," they're an important research tool.


Yes, research. I mean, if we're going to craft stories that accurately and authentically reflect our place and time in history, we've got to have some understanding of the themes and dreams that resonate so strongly in our collective psyche. Why did we turn *The Da Vinci Code* into a mega-seller? What's up with our endless fascination with Britney Spears? And what is it about *American Idol*?

Imagine you're a screenwriting pro like James Dalessandro or a plot expert along the lines of Martha Alderson, and you're

taking apart and analyzing *Idol*: a poor-but-plucky heroine or hero leaves the village (ever notice how the finalists all seem to come from one jerkwater hamlet or another?) to seek her fortune in the wide world. She has challenges to overcome (the audition, Hollywood week), a dragon or two to slay (snarky bloggers, backstabbing fellow contestants, Simon Cowell), until she finally stands alone in victory, holding high the prize, accepting the adulation of all, even the foes she just vanquished. The End. Distilled to its essence, *Idol* isn't just a television program; it's an epic adventure, a story as old as time itself.

Now, let's see if we can borrow some of those themes to make our own stories richer and more compelling.

After all, isn't this what we writers are doing every time we approach an agent at a conference, send a poem to *The New Yorker*, or enter a short story contest? Seems to me, we're behaving exactly like those *American Idol* contestants, putting ourselves out there in a literary talent search, scrambling for the grand prize of a publishing contract.

So, like, when are they going to give us a TV show? 

CWC Bulletin 2008 Schedule

May-June 2008

Deadline: April 21, 2008

July-August 2008

Deadline: June 23, 2008

September-October 2008

Deadline: August 25, 2008

November-December 2008

Deadline: October 27, 2008

EDITOR

Joyce Krieg (Central Coast)

joyce@joycek.com

CIRCULATION

Barbara Truax (Marin)

PRINTER

Spectrum Graphics,
Ridgecrest CA

Submissions: CWC members are invited to submit articles related to writing and the writing life via e-mail to Editor Joyce Krieg. Be sure to indicate "CWC Bulletin" in the subject field. Submissions are subject to editing for length and grammar. Sorry, we are unable to print news of members' sales and publications.

Sue Tasker: 1960 – 2008

By Kathy Urban, Tri-Valley Branch

CWC is mourning the loss of Tri-Valley founder Sue Tasker, who died unexpectedly on February 3.


Sue's passion for travel and history lead her writing journey, and inspired her to pursue the idea of starting a writers group in the Pleasanton-Livermore area.

From the nugget of an idea and a fledgling group two-and-a-half years ago, the Tri-Valley branch has grown to over 50 members. As a charter member of the group and its first president, Sue poured

her heart and soul into the organization. The seeds she sowed years ago are in full bloom, and our speakers regularly comment on the energetic enthusiasm they find among our members. They are impressed with our knowledge, and they often comment that our branch is "known" for its innovative programs and its warm, welcoming manner.



Sue displayed an endless passion and drive for the Tri-Valley branch in her two years as president and most recently as vice president and program chair. As we move forward with our programs and continue to forge friendships with other members, we will always remember Sue and the gratitude we owe her for making our writing lives so much richer. Her generous heart and giving spirit will always live on in the wonderful club we have today. Sue once described creating the Tri-Valley branch as "quite a thrilling ride" for her, but it is the branch members who have been thrilled to be along for the ride.

Her loss leaves a legacy to be admired and respected by all. Her selection as the club's first Jack London Award winner establishes a standard of performance and leadership to be admired by all. 

Festival, Centennial and More: CWC Moves Forward

For the fourth year in a row, Allene Symons has taken on the leadership role for CWC's presence at the *L.A. Times* Festival of Books. This year's event is April 26 and 27 on the UCLA campus. This is an event where CWC has a booth and displays the front covers from published authors who are members of CWC. In addition, attendees have an opportunity to sign up for contact regarding membership in CWC.

This is quite an event where usually 70,000 people attend each day. Every part of the writing world attends from every area of the country. Publishers, agents, publicists, writers, and readers – you name it. This is the only event of this kind that CWC sponsors with our membership dues.

The booth always requires volunteers who are willing to give up a few hours of their time to help in this project. CWC Secretary Cyndy Lagartiche has also agreed to fulfill the role of volunteer coordinator. Contact her at cyndycat1234@aol.com and plan to spend an enjoyable day at the festival.

Please read Allene's article on Page 1,

which is full of information as to how you can receive exposure for your books, no matter where you live in California.

At the October meeting of the Central Board of the California Writers Club, the board voted to make 2009 the official Centennial Celebration for our organization. This is no small accomplishment, an organization (generally all volunteer) that has been in existence for over 100 years.

In fact it is unique in a country that prides itself on a tradition of citizens getting together for a common interest or cause. The most outstanding fact about our celebration is that CWC is the oldest continuously meeting writers organization in America.

It all started when some a group of journalists began meeting in the Bay Area for lunch about 1904. Their purpose was merely to assist each other as they pursued the art of writhing. Eventually several of them split off to pursue a more formalized approach of assisting each other in their personal development and the publication of their manuscripts. In the mix, sometime

and somewhere, Jack London was involved.

In and around 1909, according to our in-house historian Dave Sawle of the Berkeley branch, the group began to adopt all the trappings of formalized meetings and record-keeping.

The rest is history – as they say. Now it's time to begin preparations for our glorious celebration. With the consensus support of the Central Board, I have appointed Donna McCrohan Rosenthal (East Sierra branch) chairperson of the event. We all need to help her to make this a successful event for all our members, past and present.

Other members of the Central Board are busy working on expense reimbursement policies, updating the Policy and Procedures of CWC, standards and guidelines for the admission of new branches, rules and guidelines for the Central Board to do business on the Internet, new systems to make our Web site more of an interactive vehicle for the Central Board – whew!!!

I have to arise earlier in the morning just to keep up to this bunch of dedicated writers.

Join in and help – we can always use an extra head of words, ideas, and solutions



Dorothy K. Dowdell: 1910 – 2007

Death has claimed long-time CWC member Dorothy K. Dowdell. Mrs. Dowdell was involved with CWC for some 40 years, serving as president of the Sacramento branch in 1953. She was also president of the Berkeley branch, and according to the recollection of her friends and relatives, was involved in the Peninsula and South Bay branches during their formative years. She organized a national writers conference at Stanford University in 1977, and was a recipient of the CWC Jack London Award in recognition of her outstanding service to the organization.

Mrs. Dowdell was the author of 27 books, many of them romances and historical novels, seven of them in collaboration with her husband, the late Dr. Joseph Dowdell. She also penned numerous articles and short stories.

A scholarship in Mrs. Dowdell's honor has been established at Sacramento City College.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Anthony R. Folcarelli
CWC President

Lucky 13 at the Festival of Books

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or distribute bookmarks, business cards, individual flyers, etc.).

The primary goal is to promote California Writers Club, and this event provides a world-class opportunity to do just that. To this end, one brochure provides visitors with Web site and location information for each branch and includes our educational mission. We also display a map of branch locations.

The nation's largest book event draws an estimated 140,000 attendees and features more than 450 authors, 100 panels, 300 exhibitors, six outdoor stages and two children's areas. The festival takes place on Saturday from 10 to 6 and Sunday from 10 to 5. The event is free, though parking is \$8 per day.

Author events are also free but require

advance ticketing except for outdoor venues. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster outlets, including online, starting at noon on Sunday, April 20, and ending at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 24. Each person may receive up to four tickets per panel or a maximum of eight tickets total. For driving directions, map, and program updates see www.latimes.com/festivalofbooks

For a dozen years at the end of April the weather has been ideal. The 13th annual *L.A. Times* Festival of Books promises to be no different – but in case you are superstitious about the number 13, instead think of chocolate cookies and call it a baker's dozen. Above all, if you love books and if you can make it to Los Angeles the last weekend in April, this is a tremendous show and one well worth catching.

Draft Minutes of the Jan. 20, 2008, Central Board Meeting

Note: The following are draft minutes, subject to correction, revision, and final approval by the Central Board at the May 4, 2008, meeting. Due to space limitation, some agenda items have been summarized.

Representatives present: Berkeley: Dave Sawle; Central Coast: Joyce Krieg; East Sierra: Casey Wilson; High Desert: Barbara Schultz; Inland Empire: Cyndy Largarticha; Long Beach: Allene Symons; Marin: Barbara Truax; Mount Diablo: David George; Orange County: Carol Celeste; Peninsula: Ann Foster; Redwood: absent; Sacramento: La Rhonda Bowen (no proxy); San Fernando Valley: Scott Sonders; South Bay: Ro Davis (proxy); Tri-Valley: Kathy Urban; West Valley: Dave Wetterberg; Writers of Kern: Sandy Moffett

Also present: Anthony Folcarelli, CWC President; Donna McChrohan-Rosenthal, East Sierra

15 votes present

On January 20, 2008, at 8:56 a.m., the meeting was called to order by President Anthony Folcarelli. Location: the Best Western Heritage, Rancho Cucamonga. **Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of October 21, 2007, were approved with one minor correction.

Treasurer's Report:

Barbara Truax presented a second quarter summary report dated October 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007. Wells Fargo checking account balance as of 12-31-07 is \$40,168.85. An overview of state treasurer's duties was presented. The treasurer's report was approved by unanimous vote.

Motion: To authorize the treasurer to transfer the CWC checking account monies into an interest bearing account as soon as possible. Moved by David George; seconded by Sandy Moffitt. Passed unanimously.

Executive Committee:

President Anthony Folcarelli informed the Board that CWC's insurance coverage with Jay-Marie Garcia Insurance agency is defined as non-profit. Mr. Folcarelli read a

prepared statement regarding the omission of a fourth signature on the Wells Fargo account, that of the vice president. Secretary Cyndy Largarticha volunteered to facilitate the process of resolving that issue.

Membership Report:

As of December 31, 2007, we have 1,107 members.

Policies and Procedures:

The Central Board approved a variety of changes in the Policies and Procedures for greater clarity and/or to reflect how the organization actually does conduct its business.

Section II. ORGANIZATION, B. Unless otherwise stated in this document or the bylaws, the Central Board conducts the corporate business in accordance with a majority vote or the representatives present at duly called meetings. Moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Barbara Truax. Passed unanimously.

Section II. ORGANIZATION, B. Unless otherwise stated in this document or the corporate bylaws a quorum consists of half

of the duly appointed branch representatives or their proxies. Moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Barbara Truax. Passed unanimously.

Section II. ORGANIZATION, B. 2. If an appointed representative cannot attend a duly called

meeting, the branch president may appoint a proxy. Moved by Joyce Krieg; seconded by Sandy Moffitt. Yes: 10. No: 3. Motion passed.

Section II. ORGANIZATION, B. 2: A representative may carry only one proxy representing another branch. Motion moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Ann Foster. Yes: 11. No: 1. Abstention: 1. Motion passed.

Section II. ORGANIZATION, B. 3. No person (delete representative) may serve more than six consecutive years as an officer or representative, but may return after an interval of one year. Moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Barbara Truax. Yes: 11. No: 1. abstention: 2. Motion passed.

Section III. MEMBERSHIP, L. 3. to strike the entire paragraph, which reads: Supporting membership is limited to three consecu-

tive years. One a case by case basis, at a branch's request the Central Board may permit an additional three year extension of a person's supporting membership. Moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Scott Sonders. Passed unanimously.

Section V. OFFICERS OF THE CENTRAL BOARD, B. Clarifying the duties of officers, especially in regards to co-signing on the CWC account.

Section VI. NON-VOTING OFFICERS OF THE CENTRAL BOARD, E. 1. The president may (delete "shall") appoint special consultants to the board. Delete all language in VI. E. 2. Moved by Casey Wilson; seconded by Dave Wetterberg. Passed unanimously.

Section VII. ELECTIONS, B.2. a). Strike the entire paragraph. Moved by David George; seconded by Casey Wilson. Passed unanimously.

VII. ELECTIONS, A. Strike the word "new." Moved by Ro Davis; seconded by Casey Wilson. Passed unanimously.

VII. ELECTIONS, the following corrections were approved by unanimous vote:

A. 1. The normal term-of-office for all officers is one year or until a successor is elected.

B. In January of each year, the president shall appoint the chair of the Nominating Committee subject to approval by the Central Board. The chair shall not be from the president's home branch. 2.b) Candidates for president and vice president must be active members of their respective branches. 2.c) Candidates for president and vice president must be active members of their respective branches.

VIII. COMMITTEES: Various changes were made to the duties and structure of the Standing Committees.

In the interest of time, further discussion of changes to the Policies and Procedures was tabled until the next meeting.

Conducting business via the Internet:

Joyce Krieg presented a topic overview including advantages and disadvantages of conducting business via e-mail, chat room, or electronic bulletin board, as well as a proposed addition to the P&Ps outlining parameters of conducting business via electronic meetings. Ro Davis, CWC webmaster, presented a detailed visual of the proposed bulletin board website.

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**Next CWC
Central Board Meeting
Sunday, May 4, 2008
8:30 a.m.
San Jose**

**See Your Central Board
Representative for Details**

Write About What You Don't Know

The sages tell us to write about what we know. That is good advice—providing you don't mind treading in a rut. I will admit that my first published article was about electronic technology back in the late 60s and that technology was my career for almost forty years.

Today, several hundred magazine and newspaper articles later, the majority of my writing has been on subjects about which I started with little or no knowledge.

I have never jumped out of an airplane but I sold an article about skydiving. I'm not a doctor but several of my articles on medical themes have appeared in magazines. I have a private pilot's license, but that hardly qualified me to write a front-page story about the crash of a Marine Corps Harrier jet for the local newspaper.

Somewhere in your writing career, you must step into a different pair of shoes and write about what you don't know. The worst thing that can happen is you get a rejection letter. If you don't have a drawer full of those, you are not submitting enough.

THIS 'N' THAT



Photo by Suki Manouar

By Casey Wilson
East Sierra Branch

When I sent a query letter to *Wings* magazine and told them a Soviet built MiG-21 fighter was sitting on the tarmac at a nearby airport, all I knew was that it was an enemy jet fighter. By the time the 2,500-word article and 15 photographs went to print—including the cover photo—I was an expert on fighters built by the Union of Soviet Socialist Repub-

lics.

I had already contacted the guy who had bought that airplane in Poland along with

two others of the same model and gotten his permission to write about his airplane. While I was waiting for the magazine editor to give me the go-ahead assignment, I depleted the local library branch's stash of Soviet airplane references.

This was all happening in the pre-Google era. When the assignment came in, and it became apparent that I still didn't know enough to write a good article, I made a deal with an undergrad student to be my research assistant. For a percentage of the payment for the article, he sent me a two-foot stack of information gleaned from the university's archives. Much of the material was in public domain and permission for using the rest was acquired with a simple promise of attribution.

By the way, the share of the payment that I gave to my research assistant was recouped by selling an article to *Writers Digest* about how to get a research assistant.



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Draft Minutes of the Jan. 20, 2008, Central Board Meeting

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Motion: To adopt the [bulletin board] discussion forum for a trial period until the next meeting. Moved by Dave Wetterberg; seconded by Casey Wilson. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To adopt the P&Ps electronic meetings guidelines as prepared by Joyce Krieg. Casey Wilson and Joyce will work together to further refine the language. Moved by David George; seconded by Casey Wilson. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To lift the moratorium on conducting business via the Internet. Moved by David George; seconded by Joyce Krieg. Passed unanimously.

Tax Exempt Status:

Casey Wilson reported that he wrote a justification and request letter to the IRS on November 5, 2007. As of today's date, the action has not been denied. We are awaiting CWC's 501 (c) 3 status to be confirmed in the IRS database of Publication 78, *Cumulative List of Organizations*, which updates on January 27, 2008.

New Branch Development:

Allene Symons presented a standards and admission outline for new branches. She

welcomed comments/suggestions.

L.A. Times/UCLA Festival of Books:

Chair Allene Symons will formulate an educational mission statement as well as organize displays and sign-up sheets. The Festival of Books is April 26 & 27, 2008.

Centennial Celebration:

Donna McCrohan-Rosenthal was appointed by unanimous approval to continue as Centennial Chair. She presented an outline discussing ideas such as a centennial edition to *The Bulletin*, p/r strategies, commemorative items, and possible banquet/special events.

Proposed CWC Anthology: David George reported that Igal Levy of Mt. Diablo needs volunteers to aid in the production of a club-wide literary anthology. Reps are asked to inquire within their branches for possible volunteers.

CWC History Project:

Berkeley rep Dave Sawle presented an impressive rough draft including branch histories and archived photos and documents. All branches should have their branch histories submitted by March 15, 2008.

Old Business:

The motion concerning proportional vot-

ing was withdrawn via South Bay proxy Ro Davis.

New business:

Joyce Krieg was appointed Nominations Chair by unanimous approval.

Carol Celeste was appointed as Expense Reimbursement Policy Chair by unanimous approval.

Donna McCrohan-Rosenthal was appointed as Member Benefits chair by unanimous approval.

Barbara Truax was appointed by unanimous approval to coordinate a CB Representative handbook.

Tabled business:

The following agenda items were discussed and tabled until the next meeting:

- (1) Tabled: Change of restrictions for Barbara Truax's \$5,000 donation for production of the *Bulletin*/centennial edition.
- (2) Tabled: Change in P&Ps article XXII. ROSTER, C. which authorizes the distribution of the CWC roster to the general membership.

Adjournment at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyndy Largenticha, Secretary



Berkeley

What does it take to win writing contests? Susan Bono, editor of the literary journal *Tiny Lights*, told Berkeley members that as a contest judge, she looks for stories that “feature a distinctive voice, discernable conflict and an eventual shift in the narrator’s perspective.” Yes, grammar and spelling do count. “Sloppy copy” can and will prevent your entry from getting past the first round. And finally, don’t forget that judges are human with wildly disparate tastes, making writing contests “more like dog shows than foot races.”

Write Angles – Tina Stinnett, Editor

Central Coast

President Ken Jones reminds us that we’re all surrounded by characters and for the writer, the more unpredictable and quirkiest, the more fortunate we are. “Few of us would stay with a book populated by one dimensional, uninteresting characters who drift through the story without making waves or forcing issues... if the characters in your life are peculiar, sharp at the edges, and sometimes difficult, consider yourself lucky. They’re what it’s all about.”

Scribbles – Joyce Krieg, Editor

East Sierra (Ridge Writers)

Member Allison Aubin was brave enough to participate in the grueling NaNoWriMo novel-writing marathon this past November, and discovered several helpful online tools for increasing her productivity. Evernote (www.evernote.com) organizes material like plot points and character tags. If you ever get so engrossed in your writing that you forget to feed the cat – or yourself – a free downloadable timer is available at www.spacejock.com. To reduce distractions, blank out your desktop with the Dropcloth (available at lifehacker.com/software/distraction/lifehacker-code-dropcloth-windows-24574.php). Allison says, “Looking at that black screen creates some kind of mental barrier between me and my ‘quick’ game of 35 rounds of Solitaire.”

Writers of the Purple Sage – Liz Babcock, Editor

High Desert

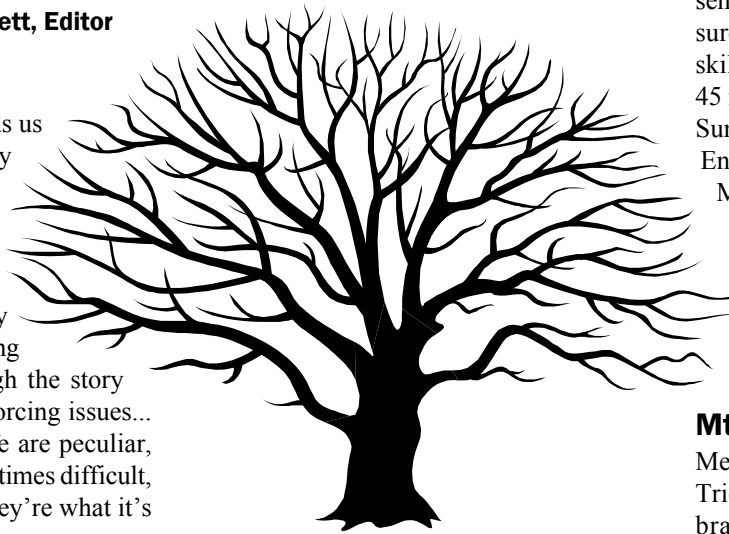
“Don’t start with the lead – the initial sentence or paragraph,” guest speaker Stuart

Branching Out

“Nuggets from the Newsletters”

Kellogg told High Desert members at a recent meeting. “You will fall in love with your own cleverness.” He explained how he starts with the “nut,” the crux of the story, and then works outward, finally achieving a lead paragraph and an ending, closure.

Ink Slingers – Barbara Bailey, Editor



Inland Empire

“Face it – you can’t write.” How’s that for a discouraging rejection letter! Columnist Mike Foley knows of a writer who did, indeed, receive just such a rejection. He continued to submit, and eventually landed an agent and a publishing deal. Mike’s advice: “Recommit to the idea of writing, the idea that you and your work are valuable. If nothing else, recognize that at this very moment, you’re reading a column about writing. So you’re a writer. Face it.”

Fresh Ink – Laura Slattery, Editor

Long Beach

The year-old Long Beach branch meets in the spacious community room of a neighborhood library, where – thanks to a recent bequest – the library now owns a state-of-the-art digital projector and a new overhead screen. It just happens that our next author-speaker asked if the branch had access to such equipment, and he accepted our invitation when we said yes. Now our branch can offer future speakers an option that keeps pace with changing and increasingly visual times. It also gives our members a chance to hone a speech and add a

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graphic presentation, as did one of our members recently, an architect who has written a memoir. As we continue to attract both new and younger members, the opportunity to use the library’s digital projector should enhance our chances of staying current and shaping an exciting speakers’ calendar.

Allene Symons, Presidnet

Marin

When was the last time you diagrammed a sentence? The Marin branch wants to make sure all of its members have basic literary skills by offering a series of mini-classes 45 minutes before the start of their regular Sunday afternoon meetings. Led by retired English teacher and past branch president Mary Jane Essex, the topics include grammar, structure and vocabulary, historical accuracy, and – yes – how to diagram a sentence. Sister Emily would be so proud!

Marin Writes – Jett Walker, Editor

Mt. Diablo

Members of Mt. Diablo and neighboring Tri-Valley are reminded of a tremendous branch resource – the online message board, the Back Fence. Coordinator Julie Dowling says, “Here you can interact with more than fifty other Mt. Diablo and Tri-Valley CWC members every day, not just at our monthly meetings. You can form a critique group, seek feedback on a story idea, post details on a local literary event, query other members about carpooling to a conference, and share your writing successes (or frustrations).” Check it out at www.groups.yahoo.com/group/cwcbackfence.

The Write News – Catherine Accardi, Editor

Orange County

The opportunity to write comes in many forms, as President Carol Celeste discovered when she was called upon to write a commentary about her late mother for a celebration of life. “The task seems daunting. Yet, as a writer, it occurs to me that there is a market for this type of writing. Not everyone with a loved one has the skill to express feelings and memories in an articulate manner . . . no event is beyond the reach of a writer.”

Orange Ink – Ro Woodruff, Editor

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Branching Out

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Peninsula

Peninsula has launched an ambitious series of monthly workshops for middle school writers on Friday afternoons at the Burlingame Public Library. Using volunteers from within the organization, Peninsula is offering workshops to young writers on such topics as Brainstorming, Revision and Proofreading, and Publishing World 101. This program offers a variety of volunteer opportunities for members, ranging from helping an individual student revise his manuscript, to reading and discussing a published work.

The Peninsula Writer –
Linda Okerlund, Editor

Redwood

Redwood is on fire – but in a good way. President Karen Batchelor says, “This passion has pushed us forward – another anthology (2008), the third annual Youth Writing contest, RWC-sponsored book readings every two months, and a series of four consecutive editing workshops. We’ve warmed up to the challenges. In fact, it looks like we are on fire.”

The Redwood Writer –
R.K. Koslowsky, Editor

Sacramento

Sacramento’s Nonfiction Network recently heard a presentation by freelance journalist Richard Langtree who had this advice: Become familiar with a wide variety of newspapers and magazines. Pick up copies and research their particular field(s). Write articles that editors might want for publication. Then call an editor and tell him you are interested in writing for his newspaper or magazine. Enthusiasm is important!

Write On – Julie Bauer, Editor

San Fernando Valley

Literary agent Ashley Grayson recently assured San Fernando Valley members that despite all the gloomy news about the future of book publishing, he is still optimistic that new writers can get published. Mr. Grayson advised SFV members to create a “Can-Do” list, a compendium of activities that we are willing to do for money or other rewards – PG-rated, of course! *Valley Scribe* reporter Kelly Jungersmith said the

presentation “lifted spirits and made us believe publishing was again within our reach.”

The Valley Scribe –
George Hirai, Editor

South Bay

We hear a lot about creative nonfiction these days, but what, exactly, is it? Contributing Editor Lita Kurth defines it as essays and memoirs that use fiction techniques such as plotting and backstory, remembered conversations set on the page as dialogue, sensory details, vivid descriptions of setting, metaphors, and novelistic structures. And it is 100 percent factual. “Creative nonfiction is telling the truth,” Lita says. “Scrupulously but beautifully and often after painstaking research.”

Writers Talk – Dick Amyx, Editor

Tri-Valley

Writers are always looking for good critique groups. Tri-Valley met that challenge by turning the February meeting into one big critique session. Members brought four copies of a manuscript (maximum five double-spaced pages). At the meeting, members divided themselves into genre-specific groups to read and comment on the manuscripts. After a designated time, they mixed up the groups to give members a chance to receive feedback from readers outside their genre. As an added incentive, the Pleasanton Poetry and Prose Festival is

right around the corner, and it includes a writing contest!

Write Around the Valley –
Kathy Urban, Editor

West Valley

Comedy acting coach Paul Ryan challenged West Valley members at the January meeting to participate, react, and think about the benefits of a positive, healthy lifestyle. “Writers need energy: physically, mentally and spiritually,” he said. Among other exercises, he had members stand, breathe, and project positive thoughts. His personal philosophy – laugh when possible, question the status quo, turn stress into positive energy, banish those negative vibes, and keep writing and submitting.

In Focus – William E. Hitchins, Editor

Writers of Kern

President Carol Black has a suggestion for describing characters in fiction – use the indirect approach. “You don’t always have to hit the reader over the head with a character’s physical attributes. An effective technique for subtly describing one character is divulging information about him/her through the viewpoints and actions of another. A mother telling her child not to stare at a certain person tells us plenty about the character without having to describe that he has terrible burn scars.”

The Write Way –
Marty Gorsching, Editor



CWC Member Benefits

Heyday Books

20% discount on all *California Legacy* titles. Phone 510/549-3564 ext 304; e-mail orders@heydaybooks.com. Details on titles and prices are available at www.heydaybooks.com.

Dollar Rent a Car

Corporate discounts when booking online at www.dollar.com, or through a travel agency, or by calling 800/800-4000. Use CD # TA2253.

Bay Tree Publishers

30% discount on all titles. Call 510/526-2916 or visit www.baytreepublish.com and identify yourself as a CWC member.

Dramatica Pro Software

Discounts on this popular screenwriting software are available by ordering through www.storymind.com. CWC members get a \$5 discount off the already-low price. Use coupon code DISCOUNTBONUS and enter CWC in the comment box.


Tallfellow Press

20% discount on titles in the “10 Minutes to Success” series. Visit www.tallfellow.com for details on titles and prices. To order, phone Claudia at 310/203-3837 and identify yourself as a CWC member.


Disclaimer: These offers are made for the benefit and convenience of California Writers Club members, and do not represent an endorsement of, or recommendation by, the CWC Central Board.

The California Writer's Calendar

Central Coast Writers Spring Contest

What: Short story and poetry contest.
Who: Sponsored by Central Coast branch of CWC, open to all.
Theme: Open.
Deadline: March 31, 2008.
Entry Fee: \$15 per short story, \$5 per poem.
Prizes: \$250 in each category and publication in the Hartnell College *Homestead Review*.
For more information:
www.centralcoastwriters.org 


Sacramento Limerick Contest Reminder

The deadline is March 31 for Sacramento's limerick and poetry contest. \$50 first prize for limericks, \$100 for poetry. See the January-February issue of *The Bulletin* for details, or go to www.sacramento-writers.org. 


Portia Steele Award for Poetry and Prose

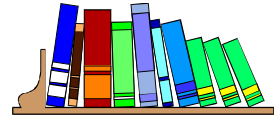
What: Writing contest in memory of Portia Steele, long-time member of the Peninsula branch.
Who: Open to women over age 50.
Theme: Open.
Prizes: \$100 prose, \$100 for poetry.
Entry fee: None.
Deadline: April 15, 2008.
For more information:
<http://portiasteelaward.org>

East of Eden is Coming!

Reserve the weekend of September 5, 6 and 7 for the 2008 East of Eden Writers Conference in Salinas, sponsored by the South Bay branch. In 2006, headliner Jean Auel said this was the best conference she'd ever been to, and many other attendees agreed. Subscribe to the conference mailing list by sending an e-mail message to:
eoel-list-subscribe@southbaywriters.com. 

Pleasanton Poetry, Prose and Arts Festival

What: Major weekend festival with heavy emphasis on the literary arts.
Who: Peninsula branch member Martha Alderson is one of the workshop presenters. A number of members of the Tri-Valley branch are involved in this event, which is sponsored by the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council.
When: April 5 and 6, 2008
Where: Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Boulevard, Pleasanton
Cost: Varies, many events are free and open to the public.
For more information:
www.pleasantonarts.org 



The Bulletin

California Writers Club
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www.calwriters.org

Showcase **YOUR** Book
at LATFOB! See Page 1



This Issue of
The Bulletin
is Dedicated
to the Memory
of Sue Tasker.
See Page 2

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