	<h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;"><i>The Write Way</i></h1> <p style="margin: 0;">A publication of <i>The Writers of Kern</i>, a Branch of the <i>California Writers Club</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>April 2007</b></p>
<p style="margin: 0;"><b>The Writers of Kern</b> PO Box 22335, Bakersfield, CA 93390-2335 <a href="http://www.writersofkern.com">www.writersofkern.com</a></p>	<p style="margin: 0;"><b>President:</b> Donnalee Huffman, <b>Vice-President:</b> Rob Berry, <b>Secretary:</b> Lucinda Soria, <b>Treasurer and Membership:</b> Sandy Moffett, <b>Representatives At-Large:</b> Kathy Summers, Joe Tomasi, <b>Program Chair:</b> (TBA) <b>Publicity:</b> Camille Gavin, <b>CWC Representative:</b> Sandy Moffett, <b>Newsletter:</b> Marty Gorsching</p>



## The Writers Workshop Edition

Regular meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, 10:30 to noon at the **Best Western Inn on Buck Owens Blvd.** Join us for lunch after the meeting.

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We held our annual Writers Workshop on March 17. Twenty-seven people attended the event, and “a good time was had by all” as they used to say in the society pages. Well, I can’t vouch for everyone – I didn’t take a poll – but people seemed to enjoy themselves. Since I’m a fairly recent member and haven’t attended any of the other workshops, I can’t say this was “the best ever.” I don’t have anything to compare it to; but I thought it was a success, informative and instructive, and chock full of useful tips. And I always enjoy hanging out with other writers.

**Carol Black, Joe Tomasi, and Peg Connelly** – our Panel of Three – had mainly good things to say about **PublishAmerica**

([www.publishamerica.com](http://www.publishamerica.com)), the publishing company they all use: easy to work with, responsive, cooperative, free editing, no upfront charges to author [PA is not a “self publishing” or “vanity” press, in the current mold], and a quality product. Several other attendees echoed their comments. One attendee, playing devil’s advocate, pointed out some of the negative press PublishAmerica has received, especially on web-based forums and discussion groups (see: [www.sfwaw.org/beware](http://www.sfwaw.org/beware)). The panel admitted there were some drawbacks, but their complaints were, for the most part, minor: for instance, PA places a 7-year lock on publishing rights (all other rights revert to the author); authors have to purchase their own books (at a significant discount); and no royalty is paid on books purchased by the author. The panel’s overall experience was positive, however.

The consensus around the room was that it was the authors’ experiences that mattered, not the complaints or negative comments from other persons or groups, who might have a personal axe to grind. I leave it to the reader to explore and decide, but if you’re looking to get into print (and what writer isn’t?) PublishAmerica might be for you.

**The Writers  
Workshop, cont**

*“If you do not  
write for  
publication, there  
is little point in  
writing at all.”*  
—George Bernard  
Shaw

**Marilyn Meredith** gave us many good tips on promoting our books, pointing out that virtually all publishers expect authors to self-promote. Some of the things an author should have in the toolkit include:

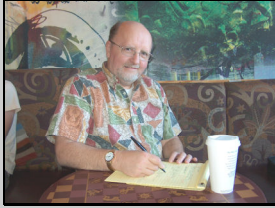
- An up-front marketing plan – start working on it now
- A Web presence – personal page, blog, a MySpace and YouTube account
- A newsletter – e-mail and printed versions

She advocated “promote shamelessly” through local book festivals and clubs, fairs and marketplaces, consignment stores, speaking engagements, and online book lists and discussion groups.

**Sheryl Giesbrecht** brought an agent/publicist’s perspective to “Understanding book contracts and marketing,” reminding us that it is a team effort, and that we should work with our publisher to produce a product both can be proud of.

**Coming in  
April:**

At our April club meeting (4/21/07, 10:30), **Mr. John Duncan**, an attorney specializing in intellectual property and copyright law, will address – well, copyright laws. He has specialized in these areas of law, and has been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, since 1999. Mr. Duncan is a member of the Law Firm of Klien, DeNatale, Goldner, Cooper, Rosenleb & Kimball, LLP and has been with them since 2002. I’m sure all of us can benefit from his presentation.

**Terry Redman****TR's Notes**

*“I have nothing to write and it feels good.”*

**Terry Writes:****I Did NOT Give up Writing for Lent**

I suddenly realized I have nothing to write. My novel holds no allure and I have no fresh ideas for any articles. Marty asked if I had a column for this month and my inner author wanted to shout, “I have no words to write!”

I feel empty, unfilled, bare, blank, dried up, wordless, vacant, barren and dry.

Writing is what I do, not who I am. Can you identify? Emily Dickenson would say that makes two of us, but don't tell. Lent is a time to cleanse the soul, and the barren spells are a time to do some rehab. Wordlessness is a present the mind gives the writer from time to time, so enjoy the experience.

Do something fun! Take that photo day, or that drive to the desert. Do something you would have never done...alone or with someone special. Watch old movies with someone special, then turn off the TV for 3 days. Do something you have never done, something out of character. Eventually you will read. Read some author or genre you have never read before.

When the time is right—you'll know—get back to your writing routine.

I have nothing to write and it feels good.

Terry Redman, [Tredman@bak.rr.com](mailto:Tredman@bak.rr.com)

## Susan K Stewart Off the Shelf



*“Ms. Woods doesn’t just give writing prompts. Laced throughout are writing tips, some of which aren’t usually found in a book to inspire writing.”*

### Susan Writes:

*The Pocket Muse Endless Inspiration* , by Monica Wood

I have many little and big books strewn about to prompt writing on those days that I just can’t get going. I hadn’t bought a new one in quite some time, thinking I had plenty. *The Pocket Muse Endless Inspiration* landed on my desk when I didn’t tell the book club not to send the monthly pick.

*Endless Inspiration* is the second Pocket Muse from Monica Wood, published by Writer’s Digest Books. The small, hard-back book fits nicely in a corner of my desk and the heavy paper will be stand up to the many times I’ll thumb through it.

This little volume is full of inspirations to write something, anything. Some of the old stand-bys, such as “Write about your first job”, are included. Others are enjoyably new, like writing about Prince Obnoxious.

Ms. Woods doesn’t just give writing prompts. Laced throughout are writing tips, some of which aren’t usually found in a book to inspire writing. “Do I Need an Agent?” took me by surprise among write a list of homonyms and describe someone ugly. I’ve placed a bookmark at “Follow-up Notice from the Department of Procrastination Prevention.”

The writing tips and inspirational starters aren’t the only thing that kick the writer’s block away. The photos in the book inspire. The black-and-whites help writers look at the kernel of information from a different angle. One of my favorites is a photo of railroad tracks merging on the same page as the prompt to write how my parents met.

**Members Write****Contributions  
from fellow  
WOKers**

All morning on a high ladder I ply  
pruning tools, returning a naked  
fruit tree to form and order from a  
year's exuberant overgrowth.  
Ice seals the birdbath, and the  
avocado tree, its top leaves now ten feet  
above the seed I planted, is parched and  
blackened from the cold.

Elgar said that the theme of his fourteen  
variations is an enigma. He would not  
reveal its source. In his music I hear truth.  
But its source is not some simple melody.  
It is the mystery that poets and gardeners know:  
the impulse that drives a word to paper  
before it is heard in the mind, and,  
out of killing chill, a bud to fruit.

- Ann Williams  
January 17, 2007

[Ann also writes for "The Roadrunner", the bi-weekly newsletter of the  
Sierra Club]

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**Marty's Muse**

*Something to  
think about . . .*

1 April  
 All fools' day  
 I think I was crowned king  
 And such a court I had today  
 No other king in any Age  
 Could sport  
 Or match me  
 In my reign  
 - mlg

Ah, April, the month of Fools and Flowers.

Although it is now the fourth month in our (Greek based) calendar, it originally held second place in the Julian (Roman) calendar. It is one of four 30-day months – you know “April, May, June, and whatever . . .”

Etymology of the word *April* is somewhat speculative, suggesting a kinship with Latin and Greek words meaning “opening,” an allusion, perhaps, to the opening of flower and tree buds at this time of year. Relatedly, since the Romans honored their deities through the naming of their months, and, since April (Aprilis) was sacred to Venus, and since Venus is Aphrodite to the Greeks, therefore, Aphrodite=Aphrilis=Aprilis=April. Okay. Maybe.

Astrologically, April begins with the sun in the sign of Aries and ends in the sign of Taurus – or so I'm told. I'm no astrologer, so I'll take their word for it.

Of course, our *Easter* arises from the Anglo-Saxon celebration of *Oster-monath* or *Eostur-monath*, the period sacred to *Eostre* or *Ostara*, the pagan Saxon goddess of spring (compare to Astarte, Aristarte and Astaroth). The good, sensible monks of the Christian mission to pagandom merely superimposed the celebration of the Christ's resurrection on an existing feast day. Other Christian Church traditions for this month include St. George's day, the twenty-third of the month; and St Mark's Eve, on the twenty-fourth. According to tradition, St Mark's Eve is the time when we see the ghosts of those who will die within the year passing through the church. [Strange. I thought our ghosts came after our demise.]

So where does All Fool's Day (April Fool's Day) come into the picture? As with many of our traditions, this one has a long, varied, and mostly obscure history. We're not quite sure where it comes from. The tradition of the tradition is that in the 1500s, when the Greco calendar replaced the Julian, the celebration of New Year moved from the first of April to the first of January. Some hard-headed individualists insisted on continuing

to celebrate the arrival of the new year on April 1, or just plain forgot, and subsequently earned the sobriquet “April Fools” for their obstinacy. Those with a prankish nature would drop in on unsuspecting neighbors, and try to convince them that it was a “New Year” celebration visit, thus giving birth to the plague of pranks which descend on this day.

However, there are other contenders for the title of Origin of April Fools Day Pranks:

- The fickleness of Mother Nature and Her weather fool us into thinking spring is sprung
- The day commemorates the fruitless mission of the Rook (the European crow), which was the first envoy sent out from Noah’s Ark
- It commemorates the Vernal Equinox
- It ties-in with *Hilaria*, Rome’s year-end celebration, or the end of the Celtic new year festival

Personally, I like the *Rites of Spring* connection. Is there anything more foolish than a young man in springtime? “A young man’s fancy” and all that. April always seems to me a much more romantic month than February. February? Heck, it’s still winter. April is much more warm and snuggly. The only reason February gets that honorific is that St. Valentine (again, according to tradition) died on February 14<sup>th</sup>. That was the day the Romans kicked off their annual *Feast of Lupercalia*. Boys and girls – normally strictly separated in Roman society – picked names from a jar, and then were allowed to have a play day with the one picked. A sort of love lottery, from which arises our tradition of the Valentine Card.

Tradition. Ever notice how our long held beliefs and traditions are often not really ours? They grow out of some much older custom seemingly unrelated to the current celebration or activity, from a different culture, or even from pagan rites and rituals? So why do we hold them so dearly and defend them so passionately? Because, it’s Tradition. [Cue music: Fiddler on the Roof, Tevye sings.]

**- Marty “Be Mine” Gorsching**

**WOK-Abouts:  
Clips, Quips, &  
Kudos**

*Brag, boasts,  
and bravos --  
What are you up  
to?  
Tell us all about  
it!*

**Peg Connelly** - Will be autographing all three of her books, Grannies' Shorts, Grannies' Critters, and the newest one, My Quirkey, Oddball, Eccentric, Unpredictable Grandma at Russo's on April 28th from 1pm to 4pm.

**Joe Tomasi** will be there also to present his latest book.

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**Susan Stewart** – has an agent! (She says she just loves saying that) She writes: *Before signing with Les Stobbe, I had sent my book proposal to Dan Penwell. I got a rejection from Dan; but, it was one of the most encouraging I've received in awhile. He said, "I read through the materials and was very impressed with your writing style and the focus of your book."*

Woo-Hoo! Way to go Susan!

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We are still looking for someone to host or lead the Poetry and Fiction groups

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**Camille Gavin** will sign copies of her latest children's book, "Biddy Mason: A Place of Her Own," at 1 p.m., Saturday, April 14, at Russo's Books at The Marketplace. And she's been asked to speak about writing and publishing, as part of the National Library Week observance, at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 19, in the Tejon Room at Beale Memorial Library, 701 Truxtun Ave.

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**Carol Black** had a book signing for her novel, "Never Ask Permission" in California City at their "What Women Want Expo" on March 31st. Also, she will speak and do book signings in Lompoc on April 14th at their Library Foundation Annual Authors Brunch.

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Our local **Nation Public Radio** station, KNPR (89.1, FM) is planning it's 2008 "Valley Writers Read" programming schedule, and is now accepting submissions (see guidelines, below). They are also planning a tribute to Helen Shanley sometime in 2008.

**VALLEY WRITERS READ**  
**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS – DEADLINE: APRIL 28, 2007**

*Valley Writers Read* announces its 15<sup>th</sup> season of airing original works of Central California authors read by either the author or an experienced reader. You are invited to submit your literary prose, either serious or humorous, for inclusion in next year's award-winning series of radio programs, which will be aired two times during 2008 on Wednesday evenings on Valley Public Radio KVPR-Fresno (FM89.3) and KPRX-Bakersfield (FM89.1). **Material must be received by April 28, 2007.** Results will be announced by mail about a month later. Valley Public Radio reserves the exclusive right to choose the material used.

#### **TYPE OF MATERIAL**

- Material should be suitable for general audiences.
- We do not accept children's stories.
- Our preference is to use general fiction over genre writing.
- There is no limit as to themes or topics, but the material needs to be handled tactfully.
- No gratuitous sex or profanity.

#### **READING**

- We have found that the way a story is read is indeed very important to its success on the air; consequently, you do not have to read your story on the air if you prefer not to.
- We prefer authors to read their work, but in order to give each piece its best chance at a maximum impact, we will decide whether you or one of a number of top-notch readers we have available will be asked to interpret your story.

#### **LENGTH OF STORY**

- The minimum length of your story when read out loud should be about 25 minutes. Please don't make them longer than 35 minutes—that's about 15 to 18 typed, double-spaced pages, or about 4,500-5,500 words.
- Please select one story to submit. No collections or novels.
- Send to *Valley Writers Read*, 3437 W. Shaw Avenue, Suite 101, Fresno, CA 93711.
  - Be sure to include your address and phone number.
  - If you have never been on the show before, please submit a tape (homemade is fine) of 5-10 minutes of your story. This tape will not be used on the air. Also, please enclose a short (150 word) resume describing your writing background and publishing credits.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

- Author should currently reside or have lived in Valley Public Radio's coverage area.
- Author should have at least one literary fiction story (not necessarily the story submitted) accepted for publication by a recognized literary magazine—or have been recommended.
- Author must be willing to sign a release allowing the material to be aired and granting non-exclusive rights to White Ash Broadcasting, Inc. (dba Valley Public Radio) for non-commercial use of the material and recording, with no remuneration or infringement of other copyrights.

For more information, please contact Don Weaver at Valley Public Radio (800) 275-0764 or e-mail [dweaver@kvpr.org](mailto:dweaver@kvpr.org).

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## Places to visit

### WOK Members' Websites

**Annis Cassells**, [www.connectionsandconversations.com](http://www.connectionsandconversations.com)

**Carol Black**, [www.publishedauthors.net/CarolBlack00](http://www.publishedauthors.net/CarolBlack00)

**Maggie Caldwell Smith**, [www.magpiepress.com](http://www.magpiepress.com)

**Robbie Byrne**, [www.robbybyrne.com](http://www.robbybyrne.com) is dedicated to my writing, and another website is dedicated to cultural music, [www.bagpiper-weddings.com](http://www.bagpiper-weddings.com)

**Peg Connelly**, [www.grannywrites4kids.com](http://www.grannywrites4kids.com)

**Marilyn Meredith**, author's website, <http://fictionforyou.com> . Enter the contests on my website, <http://fictionforyou.com> and <http://www.marilynmeredith.blogspot.com/>

**Sandy Moffett**, [www.sandymoffett.com](http://www.sandymoffett.com)

**Debra Blackmon**, [www.debrablackmon.com](http://www.debrablackmon.com)

**Susan K. Stewart**, [www.skstewart.com](http://www.skstewart.com)

**California Writers Club**, [www.calwriters.org/](http://www.calwriters.org/)

**Writers of Kern**, [www.writersofkern.com](http://www.writersofkern.com)

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**WOK members: Do you have a personal site you would like to list here?**

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## Critique Groups

## Where We Gather

**Children's: Peg Connelly**, 399-0423, e-mail [mispegg@aol.com](mailto:mispegg@aol.com) , 1<sup>st</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Mondays

**Non-Fiction: Donnalee Huffman**, 859-1572, [donnalee\\_huffman@hotmail.com](mailto:donnalee_huffman@hotmail.com)  
2nd Saturday at 2:00 PM at 602 H Street, Donnalee's office.

**Fiction:** To Be Announced

**Poetry:** To Be Announced

**Romance Writing Group: Carol Black & Bertie Warren**, 2nd Tuesday at 6 PM, 7105 School House Lane. For information, contact me at 832-9242, [Nanab5@bak.rr.com](mailto:Nanab5@bak.rr.com) .

**Sci-Fi, Fantasy Critique Group: Joe Tomasi**, 391-9124, [jtomasi@bak.rr.com](mailto:jtomasi@bak.rr.com),  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays, 7 PM, [jtomasi@bak.rr.com](mailto:jtomasi@bak.rr.com) (currently closed to new members)

**Screen Writing: Carol & Terry Baker-Willey**, 588-4943, e-mail [Cinehunden@juno.com](mailto:Cinehunden@juno.com), 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday 10 AM at the Barnes & Noble Café in Barnes and Noble on California Avenue.

\* Regular club meetings are held at **10:30 AM the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday** of the month at Best Western, **2620 Buck Owens Boulevard, Bakersfield, CA** (next to the Crystal Palace).

## Conferences, Contests, and Other Things

### **Maui Writers Conference** [www.mauiwriters.com](http://www.mauiwriters.com)

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**The Second Annual Flash Prose Contest** sponsored by Writer Advice is searching for flash fiction, memoir, and creative non-fiction that grabs, surprises, and mesmerizes readers in under 750 words. Contest details and prize information is available at [www.writeradvice.com](http://www.writeradvice.com) or by e-mailing [Lgood67334@comcast.net](mailto:Lgood67334@comcast.net). The deadline for entries is April 15, 2007.

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**The 27th Annual Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition** is now accepting entries. \$2,000 in cash prizes will be awarded. Stories must be original, unpublished, and postmarked by May 1, 2007. Contest guidelines are available at [www.shortstorycompetition.com](http://www.shortstorycompetition.com)

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**“Where and how to sell what you write”**  
[www.writersmarket.com](http://www.writersmarket.com)

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**Writer’s tools and resources**  
[www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)

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**A good source for market, contest listings, etc**  
[www.writeradvice.com/markets.html](http://www.writeradvice.com/markets.html)

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**Coffeehouse For Writers**  
<http://www.coffeehouseforwriters.com/>

“Coffeehouse for Writers is an internet-based community of writers from all genres. There are more than ten thousand members all over the world including ships at sea!”

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Quotes used here are found @ [www.quotationspage.com/](http://www.quotationspage.com/) and [www.thinkexist.com](http://www.thinkexist.com)

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### About Our Organization...

**Writers of Kern** is one of fourteen branches of the **California Writers Club**. CWC was started by Jack London and fellow writers for the purpose of socializing together, and helping aspiring authors.

The **Writers of Kern** was formed in 1993 by Helen Gordon (an English professor at Bakersfield College) with the help of underwriting from The Arts Council of Kern, to bring together professional and aspiring writers in a creative atmosphere, sharing their knowledge and skills through critique groups, general meetings, conferences and workshops. WOK became associated with the California Writers Club in 1995.

We now have over 60 members in our club.

Based in **Bakersfield**, Writers of Kern serves the western half of Kern County while our sister branch, **The Ridge Writers**, based in Ridgecrest, serves the eastern half.

The Writers of Kern  
PO Box 22335, Bakersfield, CA  
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