

	<h1><i>The Write Way</i></h1> <p>A publication of <i>The Writers of Kern</i> Branch of the <i>California Writers Club</i> June 2007</p>
<p>The Writers of Kern PO Box 22335, Bakersfield, CA 93390-2335 www.writersofkern.com</p>	<p>President: Donnalee Huffman, Vice-President: Rob Berry, Secretary: Lucinda Soria, Treasurer and Membership: Sandy Moffett, Representatives At-Large: Kathy Summers, Joe Tomasi, Program Chair: Margie Custer, Publicity: Camille Gavin, CWC Representative: Sandy Moffett, Newsletter: Marty Gorsching</p>



Regular meetings are the 3rd 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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ANNOUNCING:

Open contest for the cover design of this year's anthology. \$100.00 cash prize to the winner! Your **CAMERA-READY** design submission must be received by Aug. 1 to be considered. Send by e-mail to Lucinda Soria, LAS30251@msn.com, **or to**

WOK
PO Box 22335,
Bakersfield, CA
93390-2335
Attn: Cover design

Coming Up

Next Meeting: June 16

Our next meeting will be a **Birthday Party!** June is the month we celebrate the birth of The Writers of Kern. This year's fest will be at the home of Beth and Marv Davisson, 12812 Cliff Ave. (872-5328) Tickets are \$15 per person, \$25 per couple. Please submit your reservations by June 9th to Marty Gorsching (mgorsching@bak.rr.com), Sandy Moffett (sm@sandymoffett.com), or Lucinda Soria (las30251@msn.com). Make checks payable to Writers of Kern, with "birthday party" on the memo line. Mail to WOK, PO Box 22335, Bakersfield, CA 93390-2335. You may pay at the door if you have made a reservation. → Members should bring a writing sample to read. (5 min.)

At our **May WOK** meeting, **Dr. Bruce Tracy** entertained us with his

version of “Adventures in Indexing.” Dr. Tracy advises that, if you are the type of person who wants to get paid for sitting at home on your couch watching old movies, then indexing just might be for you. If you want to get paid for reading books and using your computer, indexing might be for you. In fact, indexing might be the consummate home business. He says that although indexers might at first glance appear to be a bookish, nerdish group of individuals, they probably are. They are, in fact, bookworms, homemakers, disenfranchised university professors, independent entrepreneurs. In truth, they come from every strata of American society. He points out that it is not necessary to have intimate knowledge of the topics or books you are indexing. He adds that one of the advantages of being an indexer is that you get to read and learn about all types of diverse and interesting things, such as the risks of by-pass surgery, stock investment strategies, and the Crimean War. For a small investment of time (for training) and money (for materials, resources, and marketing), you too can enter the exciting world of the professional indexer. See the American Society of Indexers (www.asindexing.org) for more information. Other resources are any book by Nancy Mulvaney, “Indexing From A to Z” by Hans Wellisch, and the “Chicago Manual of Style” – which should be in every writer’s library anyway. You can also find courses available from the US Department of Agriculture (www.usda.gov).

We have a nominated slate of officers for the coming year:

- President – Carol Black
- V.P. – Joe Tomasi
- Secretary – Lucinda Soria
- Treasurer & Membership – Sandy Moffett

All other board memberships, i.e., Programming, Publicity, Newsletter, and “At-large” members, are appointed positions. Voting for and installation of the new officers will be held at the July get-together.

- ➔ There is a lot of concern that our **critique groups** are floundering, or at least struggling for attention. The Writing for Children & Memoirs, Fiction, and Non-Fiction groups all report zero attendance for at least two consecutive months, whereas the Sci-Fi & Fantasy group is going strong (no report from the Screen Writers or Romance Fiction groups). So what are the problems? Scheduling? Location? No interest? Just too much to do each month, people are over-booked? It’s coming on summer and vacation time? People don’t see the need or value? Conflicts of interest or personality? The board members would be interested in any observations, solutions, suggestions, comments - good or bad - from the body general. Send us a note. All comments will be kept confidential.

Marty's Muse

Something to think about . . .

June 2007

First, many thanks to all of you for your kind words of support and encouragement during my transition to editor of the newsletter. I sincerely appreciate all the support. However, I also realize that the true quality, the strength of the product comes from the contributions of the membership at large. So keep those cards and letters coming, folks.

Charlotte White sent me a note in response to my “writing prompts” piece (*The Write Way*, May 2007), and remarked that she often uses the writings of others to stimulate her own creative juices. Well, what she said was, “Sometimes to get words on the page I respond to another writer's prose,” which I took to mean the same thing. [You can find her contribution elsewhere in this month's edition.]

I couldn't help but think, Hey, that's what I do, too.

Let's face it, no one writes in a vacuum. I am, and my writing is, a product of all the influences in my life, all the books I've read, all the English instructors I studied under, all the artists, authors, and poets I've ever admired. Even the people I don't admire influence me. I am a composite of all these things and more. And my writing reflects that.

Isn't that true for all of us? Whether it's a letter to the editor of the local rag, or a letter to grandma or a short story or an article for a magazine—virtually everything we write is in response to something someone else has said or done or written. Because, surely, as the wise man said: “There is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Nothing you or I write is one hundred percent original. It was stimulated – prompted, if you will – by someone or something else.

Oh, but you will argue, What about poetry? That's always original, isn't it? I would counter that that, too, is a response to a prompt—a sight, a sound, a smell, an emotion or event. Though the poem flows with your words, your emotions, it is in response to some stimulus, some prompt. And likely it is imitative of some other poet's work, as well. That's not necessarily a bad thing, and certainly no condemnation of anyone's efforts. It is, simply, the way it is.

So, we all use writing prompts of one kind or another, whether or not we realize it.

Happy writing!

Marty “Be Prompt” Gorsching

Members Write

Contributions from fellow WOKers

Message from Donnalee Huffman, the President of Writers of Kern

This is probably the first time most of you have heard from me through this media. I have not made a habit of writing a President's Article every month. Many of you have heard from me at the monthly meetings, readings and workshops that our club has held.

I want to take this opportunity to tell all of you that I have had a very happy two years as your President. There are many memories that I will carry with me into the future. These two years have been full of fun and excitement. We have had wonderful speakers at the meetings and the workshops.

I especially want to thank the membership for attending the meetings and contributing. Without you, we wouldn't have a successful club. I want to thank the officers, board members and other contributors for their help in making these years memorable.

Writing has always been a burning desire for me. I know all of you have gained better insight by being a member of the Writers of Kern. I have. I truly believe that I am a better writer because of the Writers of Kern, a wonderful branch of the California Writers Club.

We have had many kudos and accomplishments during the time that we have spent together. I am truly looking forward to the new anthology that will show the world we have a great number of accomplished writers in our midst.

I know that all of you will support the new officers and board members in the coming year and will continue having great success.

May God bless all of you.

The Importance of Setting

by **Marilyn Meredith**

<http://fictionforyou.com>

The setting should be the back-bone of your story.

When I was teaching for Writers Digest School many of my students were good at dialogue but often forgot to let the reader know and “see” where the conversations and action were taking place. Setting consists of the time, place and mood of a story and can help shape your story idea.

You always need to know where your story is taking place. Is it going to be in a real place? If so, it is important that you know everything about that place so a reader won't be thrown out of the story by something being wrong. If the setting is fictional, will it be more vivid than an actual place? My Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery series is set in a place much like where I live. However, I changed the name and moved the town of Bear Creek about 1000 feet higher in the mountains because I wanted better trees. At least that's what I always say, but what I really wanted was to

be able to move the geography around a bit and change some of the places that my characters frequent.

When making up a place, you definitely need enough details to be convincing. This is particularly true for science fiction and fantasy. The Harry Potter books are probably the best example of this.

Romances often are set in exotic or faraway places, large cities with mansions and expensive restaurants, in unusual and interesting businesses. Settings are extremely important to the plots.

Any historical novel or story should contain lots of period detail, what the houses and furniture are like, the food that's eaten along with other details of daily living. What happens must be accurate for the time period.

When writing suspense or mysteries, the physical setting should somehow contribute to the suspense. It can darken the mood through the descriptions of the locations and the weather.

Science fiction might be a future far advanced from the present, but it must be believable. Often in science fiction the plot will develop from the setting.

Be careful not to put too much description of the setting in. You want just enough to convey the essence of the place. Years ago I edited a wonderfully written novel about a soldier's

experience in Vietnam during the war. The author wrote pages and pages of description of the jungle, leaf by leaf. It was wonderfully written, but there was just too much. The reader would have been able to "see" the scene with about 1/4 of what was written. Unfortunately, the author was too much in love with his words to get rid of any of them and a wonderful story never found a publisher.

Don't forget to add weather, smells, and how things feel. Put color into your descriptions.

A writer who does an exceptional job describing Louisiana and other locations, using all the senses to do it, is **James Lee Burke**. Though his mysteries are dark and often brutal, the descriptions of the places are poetic and lyrical in flavor.

The setting should be the back-bone of your story. It can move a plot forward, create atmosphere or tension, and it also can affect a change in your character.

If you think of your novel or story as a movie in your head, viewing the setting of each scene as your character acts and reacts, seeing and experiencing everything through your character's eyes, that's what you want to get down on paper in such a convincing manner that the reader will see the same movie

CALLING ALL POETS!

Ann Williams reports: We have a meeting place and time for the poetry critique group. Eight people have already expressed interest, and we hope for more. We will meet, as before, on the **first Saturday of every month**. The place: **McRay Lab, at 3123 19th**, diagonally across from Jim Burke Ford. Our first meeting will be at **10:00 a.m. on July 7th**. At the first meeting we can discuss any new ideas for logistics and procedures. Everyone should bring a poem to share.

Country Road

by Caroline Reid

The road was dirt and gravel; mostly gravel,
 And it pierced her bare feet.
 But the birds singing in harmony
 And the swish of the wind through the wheat
 Made the pain go away.
 And she walked on satin pillows.

Going by Dinghy to Butchart Gardens

by Ann Williams

“There will be no light,” I said, the weather being
 wild and full of rain. “What flowers can there be
 in a season wrong for them?” But they would go, regardless.
 And down upon its cable, winched and swaying,
 the dinghy was wrestled into place.

Starfish and jellies lined our way and, over dark water
 along the heavy woods, signs and arrows and the words,
 “This Way to the Garden.” A little dock, a path to the gate,
 and then the vivid shock, a brilliancy of state,
 darkness pierced and parted, acres of light on flowers
 all around.

‘Remember this,’ they said, “when next
 you’re bound in doubt.” And so I hope I will remember all,
 when winter with its shadows comes, and petals fall.

Charlotte White writes:**My response to *I was wise when I was five***

I was so smart when I was five.
 Brilliant when I was sixteen.
 Full of opinions on every subject,
 My first university diploma under my arm at
 21.
 Wife at 26, mother at 28, and widow at 51.
 Ignorant, a sage at age 58.
 I no longer know exactly what I will be:
 Eventually a retired teacher, finally a full
 time artist,
 While continuing to serve in missions.

Hopefully a grandmother.
 I know how many cats I don’t want to have,
 and
 What I named my daughter.
 That I am shaped like a pear, continually on
 a diet,
 And how I must color my hair
 Every three weeks whether it needs it or not,
 And it always needs it.
 The world continues to be a stage to me,
 But I don’t love every part!

The curtain doesn't go up and down as smoothly as I would like.

The lights are bright so I wear prescription sunglasses.

I once knew my lines by heart.

Shuffling my index cards, I now adjust my tri-focals in this the third scene of my life.

First my life made sense and then it didn't.

Then it made sense again and then it didn't.

Make sense? What sense? Or what cents?

Single for 26 years, then married for 25.

Should I remain single or take a second chance on love?

I got baggage, but it's not Samsonite.

Confident, yet it continues to be weird that I am less assured at 58,

Than at 16 when I applied for my first summer job at the clinic.

No experience but certain I could do the job.

Or at five when I so very self-assuredly wobbled

In my mother's new red high-heel graduation shoes.

The curtain went up and I stepped up hearing,

"Lights, camera, action."

The curtain went down.

The curtain went up and then down again.

How many times will the curtain fall before my final curtain call?

As a Christian, I am cognizant that only God knows when that curtain will rise

For me to step upon the stage in heaven.

Continually I step up as the curtain rises,

Praying that I am stepping in his spotlight, and

Relying on the knowledge that He is the director in charge.

I may not always see the directions on the teleprompter,

Say my lines with clarity,

Hear the curtain call,

Experience a standing ovation,

And the reviews may not be stellar.

I know that God is giving me wisdom for today,

As He never lets go of my hand.

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." - Psalms 16:8.

WOK-Abouts: Clips, Quips, & Kudos

Brag, boasts, and bravos —

What are you up to?

Tell us all about it!

Marilyn Meredith is happy to report that the next in her Deputy Tempe Crabtree series, Judgment Fire, will be available this summer. She's been busy promoting Calling the Dead by attending Mayhem in the Midlands in Omaha and has two book signings coming up in Ventura.

Vicki Jameson has a one act play being produced by Bakersfield Community Theatre

Consider This:

Writing Prompt: You are running for the office of President of the United States. What is your campaign theme song; why?

** To write something, you have to risk making a fool of yourself.*

-Anne Rice, American author of horror and fantasy stories. b.1941

WOK Members' Websites

Places to visit

Annis Cassells, www.connectionsandconversations.com
 Carol Black, www.publishedauthors.net/CarolBlack00
 Maggie Caldwell Smith, www.magpiepress.com
 Robbie Byrne, www.robbybyrne.com is dedicated to my writing, and another website is dedicated to cultural music, www.bagpiper-weddings.com
 Peg Connelly, www.grannywrites4kids.com
 Marilyn Meredith, author's website, <http://fictionforyou.com> .
<http://www.marilynmeredith.blogspot.com/>
 Sandy Moffett, www.sandymoffett.com
 Debra Blackmon, www.debrablackmon.com
 Susan K. Stewart, www.skstewart.com
 California Writers Club, www.calwriters.org/
 Writers of Kern, www.writersofkern.com

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

Critique Groups

Where We Gather

Children's & Memoir: Peg Connelly, 399-0423, 1st & 5th Mondays, mispegg@aol.com
Non-Fiction: Donnalee Huffman, 859-1572, 2nd Saturday at 2:00 PM, 602 H St. (Donnalee's office), donnalee_huffman@hotmail.com
Fiction: Vicki Jameson, 831-2046, 2nd & 4th Wednesday at 7:00 PM, 1301 Taft Hwy #3 (call for directions) meawrtr@sbcglobal.net
Poetry: Ann Williams, 324-1055, 1st Saturday, 10:00AM, 3123 19th St. awmidge@atginternet.com
Romance Writing Group: Carol Black & Bertie Warren, 832-9242 2nd Tuesday at 6 PM, 7105 School House Lane. Nanab5@bak.rr.com .
Sci-Fi, Fantasy Critique Group: Joe Tomasi, 391-9124, 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 7 PM, (currently closed to new members) jtomasi@bak.rr.com
Screen Writing: Carol & Terry Baker-Willey, 588-4943, 4th Saturday 10 AM at the Barnes & Noble Café in the Barnes and Noble store on California Avenue. Cinehunden@juno.com

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

Conferences, Contests, and Other Things

The Muse Online Writers Conference:

<http://www.freewebs.com/themuseonlinewritersconference/>

“Where and how to sell what you write”

www.writersmarket.com

Writer’s tools and resources

www.writersdigest.com

A good source for market, contest listings, etc

www.writeradvice.com/markets.html

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!”

Freelance Writing e-zine

<http://www.writersweekly.com/>

Quotes used here are found @ www.quotationspage.com/ and www.thinkexist.com

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Bakersfield, CA
93390-2335**

www.writersofkern.com



**EDITOR:
mgorsching@bak.rr.com**

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.

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