	<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> May 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: (TBA) 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

Next Meeting: May 19

Bruce Tracy, PhD "Indexing"

10:30 a.m., Best Western Crystal Palace, 2820 Buck Owens Blvd., Bakersfield The meeting is free and open to the public, with a no-host lunch following for those who wish to stay.

Dr. Tracy, a professional indexer, will explain indexing and its importance for your non-fiction book, how to do it efficiently, and how to break into this little-known aspect of book publishing.

Dr. Tracy made good his escape from college classrooms about a dozen years ago when he stumbled across the idea of freelance indexing in a book with a title something like '*182 Ways to Make a Living from Home with Your Computer*.' He taught in a variety of classroom settings--ranging from junior high and high school, to community college, university and graduate school--much of it at a sister institution of CSUB in the South Bay area of Los Angeles, the California State University at Dominguez Hills.

When he isn't indexing books from his home in Tehachapi, he now lectures frequently at the New Life Foundation classes held in several Southern California locations on the powerful "Success Without Stress" principles taught by inner-development author Vernon Howard.

Dr. Tracy is a fellow member of Writers of Kern. He can be contacted at:

Bruce Tracy, PhD, Indexing Services
PMB192
785 Tucker Rd., Ste. G
Tehachapi, CA 93561
(661) 823-0814

At our April meeting, **Mr. James Duncan**, a patent attorney with the law firm Klein-Denetale-Goldner-Cooper-Rosenlieb & Kimball, LLP. Using examples from his practice and from nationally known cases, Mr. Duncan provided insight into issues of copyright, patent, and trademark law. There was so much to glean from his topic that I can include only a few summary bullet points here:

- Your work is not fully protected until it is registered, so be sure to register your copyright right away, especially if your publisher doesn't provide that service, even if your writing is not yet published (see www.copyright.gov for details)
- Copyright is constitutionally guaranteed
- Copyright protects original work as soon as that work is produced in any tangible medium of expression
- That the issues of *Idea vs. Expression* and the *Fair Use Doctrine* can result in complications for writers

Terry Redman adds more about last month's meeting in his *TR's Notes* column.

Coming Up

“If you do not write for publication, there is little point in writing at all.”

—George Bernard Shaw

I overlooked April as *National Poetry Month* (see: www.poets.org); so **I’d like to hear from the poets in our group.** We dedicate much of our newsletter space to prose submissions, to the unintentional exclusion, sometimes, of our more poetic brethren (and *sisteren?*). Not that we do not accept poetry submissions, we just don’t get very many of them. So if you’re a poet and you know it (or even if you don’t know it, but you’d like to try) send in your contributions. If I get enough material, I’ll include a “Poet’s Corner” in the newsletter. Send to:

mgorsching@bak.rr.com, or

M. L. Gorsching

c/o WOK

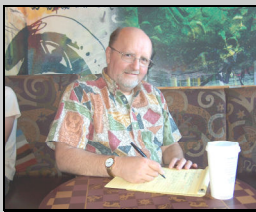
PO Box 22335,

Bakersfield, CA

93390-2335

Members Write Contributions from fellow WOKers

TR’s Notes:



Terry Redman

A Response to Virginia Tech

We all watched the tragedy of Virginia Tech unfold on our TV screens and thought of those we love and how safe they are. There will be arguments and reviews of what officials and students did that day, but blame and accusation will accomplish nothing. Have you seriously considered how challenging it would be to have a lockdown at Bakersfield College or CSUB?

In this column, I am proposing a quiet, reflective way to bring something good out of the tragedy. Read a book about some aspect of mental illness. Some topics could be schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or depression to name a few.

One in four families in this country is affected in some way by someone having a mental illness. It is difficult to find care for someone who is mentally ill, and there is a stigma about mental illness. Too much entertainment uses mental illness as the theme in horror movies and

games—not a good way to learn about a serious topic. People with a mental illness have a very hard time getting medical insurance or steady employment.

Current laws affect the privacy of all individuals with any illness, even with mental illness. It is not easy for a college to have an individual placed in a mental hospital, unless he chooses to enter voluntarily. Once an individual is 18, he can prevent his parents/family from knowing what his diagnosis may be, even what medications he takes (or does not take.)

Over the past two years I have been amazed at the number of people who are taking an antidepressant, like me.

May is Mental Health Month, so one way we could respond to the tragedy at Virginia Tech is to become better informed. I have read a handful of books on this topic over the past two years and never once regretted learning what the book had to say. If you join me in this effort, feel free to drop me an email. Terry Tredman@bak.rr.com

At Last Month's Meeting

Question: How long do you own the © copyright of the last book you just published? If you know the answer then you were at the recent WOK meeting.

Anthology: Look in this issue to find out the details for creating the cover for the new anthology. The selections have all been received and are in the reading stage—more details to follow.

Joe Gottlieb announce the creation of **The Helen Shanley Memorial Fund** which is raising money to publish Helen's final works. Portia Choi will have more details in the future.

James Duncan, a local attorney specializing in copyright law was the main speaker. Mr. Duncan was a great speaker; he is well-versed, has an abundance of anecdotes to make his points, and gave clarity to a subject that is easily bogged down with technicalities. This was a meeting those present were glad we attended.

A writer has copyright © as soon as he writes something. This protects literary expression, not the concept. I can write an article about the Iraq War and that article is mine, but others can also write about that concept. A patent lasts 20 years (think of a drug about to be turned into a generic.) Trademark is a brand, such as Honda or McDonalds. You must register a copyright in order to enforce it in court. See www.copyright.gov for more information. Look for Form TX and the fee is \$45.

If you co-author something, then both of you own it and it can get touchy if one dies because his interests pass on to the estate.

Speaking of Sonny & Cher, Sonny Bono did authors a favor when he was in Congress. The Sonny Bono Extension Act extended the copyright on your creative work to 70 years. This is the answer to the question that started the

*If there's a book
you really want to
read but it hasn't
been written yet,
then you must
write it*
Toni Morrison

article.

If you do work for hire, get the terms in writing.

One of the more heart-racing lines was the one that said you do not have to have intent to be sued for liable. Be careful.

Terry Redman

Marilyn Meredith writes:

Here's my advice to all published and pre-published authors. It's worked for me for 16 published and four pending books.

- ✚ My first advice to anyone wanting to write is to be sure and read a lot. Read the kind of books you want to write.
- ✚ Study the craft of writing. Learn about dialogue and characterization. The difference between showing and telling and when to use each. Read books about writing, go to writer's conferences.
- ✚ Join a critique group.
- ✚ And most of all, write. Set aside a certain time each day to write and then write.
- ✚ Don't send off a novel until you're sure it's ready.
- ✚ Send it to the right publisher or agent—read their guidelines and send what is asked for. Submit to more than one publisher.
- ✚ Once the book is gone, start another. Don't bug the publisher.
- ✚ When the book is accepted start planning the promotion.

Marilyn Meredith <http://fictionforyou.com>

From Ann Williams:

It has been estimated that atoms in your body
have been through several stars
--Jeremiah P. Ostriker

During an interview on public television some time ago, I heard one of my favorite conservatives, David Brooks, comment upon a conversation he'd had with his wife. She had asked him an ancient and essential question: "Do you love me?" His answer stays with me: "Love you? I AM you." Surely this is what is meant by the biblical phrase often repeated in wedding ceremonies regarding the union of man and wife that "the two

shall become one flesh”.

So it is, I believe, in the union of ourselves with the universe, whose most essential elements we share. We ARE the universe, nor have we ever been separate from it. When it came into being, so did we, and its destiny is also ours.

This is not a theological concept because, while it posits a power which is inconceivable in its immensity, it does not suggest cause. It does not take into account evolution, or the appearance and disappearance of species including ours. Nor does it hint at anything divine in our making. But it is a mystery, and I believe that it affects profoundly the response that many of us have to nature. We are free to find in the idea, or not to find in it, any belief in divinity, just as we are free to deny it, and to see in the universe nothing more than vast potential for study or for plunder.

One of the most intriguing developments in recent history is the SETI [Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, www.seti.org –ed] Institute, whose members are engaged in a search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Once an outrageous idea, the assumption of other intelligence in the universe has become common. In the minds of many, including my own, the insistence that we are the only intelligent beings in the universe is parochial at best. In the words of a long-time SETI supporter, “The real long shot is that there’s no one else out there.”

Even so, my sense of the universe is personal, and arises more from a poetic instinct than from a scientific or theological one. The thought that we are composed of materials that compose the stars, is beautiful, and means to me that everything I see or hear on earth or in the heavens is composed the same. Hence, separation is only a notion of the mind.

But it is a stubborn notion, based upon perception that is physical rather than intuitive, and it gets us into a lot of trouble. The Jewish theologian, Martin Buber, spoke in the following way of two primary words, I-It and I-Thou: “As experience, the world belongs to the primary word I-It. The primary word I-Thou establishes the world of relation.” Both perceptions are essential to our existence. It is only when we see ourselves as separate from nature that we become profiteers and users in the worst sense, and only when we see ourselves as separate from other people that we enter into war. As Buber puts it, “Man’s will to profit and to power have their natural and proper effect so long as they are linked with, and upheld by, his will to enter into relation. There is no evil impulse till the impulse has been separated from the being.”

I believe that for many of us a life-long assurance of relationship with nature accounts for our exquisite sense of the beauty of the universe. I can think of no greater destiny for our physical selves than eventually to “mingle with the planetary dust.”

Ann Williams, April, 2007

Bakersfield, April 19, 2007

My Dear WOK Friends,

You must have wished me lots of luck. Thank you all.

77 days ago, I shared with you, how I was trying to charm the Immigration Authorities with my inspiring writing. I sent them a box full – letters, memos, forms, photographs. It seems to have convinced them that the USA could benefit by having me in the country. Unless, of course, they were getting worried I would send them a whole crate, with a next batch of forms.

Yes, my writer-friends, I received my Permanent Residence Permit. You'll see me around for the next ten years.

Now I can concentrate on writing and re-writing my resume, and try to snare this wonderful job. After all, I'll need to pay for the luxury of being granted permanent residence here.

In the meantime, I'd better find a cheaper place to live than this expensive NE resort-like setting.

Shall I start writing about my fascinating Immigration experiences now? Maybe I should wait a while, and instead study "The Law of Attraction" first.

Wish me luck.

Kripalini

e-mail : mail4kripa@yahoo.com

THEY BID ME...

They bid me good morning.
Each one unique
And yet the same,
Ablaze in their array.

Soft, silvery lavender
Like velvet wrapped on itself.

Each layer more beautiful,
More delicate than the one before.

Brick, or maybe pumpkin.
Who's to say, to choose
The label that is placed
On such a creation?

Pink, ah pink.
Tender as the cheek of a baby on a cold, windy day.
Alive with color and yet fleeing
When the warmth arrives.

And yellow.
Like creamy, lemony butter.
Oh, that it tasted as it looks, but alas
Some things are best consumed by the eyes.

They bid me good night.
Their gentle fragrance a gift
That no man can hope to match
A reminder of the power of God's love.

Sandy Moffett

Marty's Muse



Something to
think about . . .

Writing Prompts

Last month's "Off The Shelf" column by Susan Stewart was about one of her favorite books of writing prompts, *The Pocket Muse Endless Inspiration*, by Monica Wood. Writing prompts? Who needs writing prompts? Most writers I know don't require any prompting to write. We do it compulsively. Need a shopping list? I'll do it! A note to the teacher? Ooh, let me, let me! We'll write anything, anywhere, any time. We'll write at the drop of an infinitive. Some of us will even volunteer to be the reunion committee correspondent or the club newsletter editor, just to have an excuse to write stuff. In fact, we're so compulsive, Terry Redman had to give us permission **not** to write, in his piece for last month's newsletter.

In college, I wrote term papers for all my friends, my only reward being the A's they received for the excellence of my handiwork. Someone once asked me why I didn't charge people for my services. I replied I couldn't; I was too busy doing it for free. I'm reminded of the "Simpson's" episode in which the teachers are on strike, and home-bound over-achiever Lisa roams the house begging her mother "Test me. Test me." We writers are that obsessive.

Why, then, do we need writing prompts? Well, maybe we don't precisely need them – not in the sense that anything is lacking. But we can use them. They can be fun little diversions or useful tools. Think of them as aerobics for your mind, word games, a challenge, a boost, a kick-start, a stimulant. They're a double espresso jolt to your creative juices when you're feeling a bit dull witted, or need a break from that Great American Novel.

When you next feel a writing slump coming on, or that dread disease "writer's block", or just need a change up from your current project, try a prompt. As Susan points out, you can find whole books dedicated to them. *Writers Digest* online magazine (www.writersdigest.com) includes a section just for prompts. In fact, check out the prompts you'll find in the "Consider This" section of this newsletter. Take twenty minutes, sit back, relax with your favorite Earl Grey blend, let your mind flow, and crank out a couple of paragraphs. Send them to me at mgorsching@bak.rr.com or to the WOK PO Box, and I'll include the best ones in next month's publication.

Happy writing!

Marty "I Need to Write" Gorsching

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

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

** To write
something, you
have to risk
making a fool
of yourself.
-Anne Rice,
American author
of horror and
fantasy stories.
b.1941*

Online interview with **Marilyn Meredith**:
<http://www.myshelf.com/aom/07/meredith.htm>
She also has a new **blog**:
<http://marilynmeredith.blogspot.com/>

Seeds of Violence: the Autobiography of a Subversive, by **B.J. Mitchell** has been named an Award Finalist in the "BEST BOOKS 2006" NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS. There were more than 1,200 entries from a wide array of publishers, including Simon & Schuster, Warner Books, New American Library (a division of the Penguin Group), Red Wheel Weiser and Conari, New World Library, and hundreds of independent press titles. Dr. Mitchell's book was published by Viewpoint Press and is available from local bookstores.

Annis Cassells presented two programs at the 18th Annual Bakersfield Women's Business Conference, Options Unlimited. "Self-Care isn't Selfish: It's Essential!" and "Team Esteem: Feed the employees so they don't eat the clients."

Consider This:

Writing Prompt: What is your most indispensable possession and why?

+++++

Places to visit

WOK Members' Websites

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>. Enter the contests on my website, <http://fictionforyou.com> and <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)

Poetry: To Be Announced

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 fifth annual BEA/Writer's Digest Books Writers Conference will be held May 30, 2007 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York.

- The all-day event, which takes place prior to the BookExpo America trade show, offers information sessions and workshops on the business and craft of writing.
- Keynote speaker is *The New York Times* best-selling novelist Jodi Picoult
- The registration fee is \$199, which includes a 6 month subscription to WritersMarket.com.

Additional information and registration available at www.bookexpoamerica.com/writersconference. If you have any questions, please contact publicity@fwpubs.com

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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The Writers of Kern

PO Box 22335,
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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