
 <p>California Writers Club SAIL ON! Founded 1909</p>	<h1>The Write Way</h1> <p>A publication of <i>The Writers of Kern</i>, a Branch of the <i>California Writers Club</i> <b>September 2007</b> © 2007, Writers of Kern.</p>
<p><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><b>President:</b> Carol Black; <b>Vice-President:</b> Joe Tomasi, <b>Secretary:</b> Lucinda Soria; <b>Treasurer /Membership/CWC</b> <b>Representative:</b> Sandy Moffett; <b>Program Chair:</b> Margie Custer; <b>Publicity:</b> Camille Gavin; <b>Newsletter:</b> Marty Gorsching</p>
 <p>TO GET INK WRITERS OF KERN</p>	<p>Regular meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, 10:30 to noon at the <b>Best Western Inn on Buck Owens Blvd.</b> Join us for lunch after the meeting.</p>

## Coming Up

### **Next Meeting: September 18** **Special Guest: Peg Connelly**



#### **WRITING YOUR PERSONAL MEMOIRS**

Peg introduces her topic this way:

“Have you ever wondered what life was like during your parents’ early years? I wish I knew more about my parents when they were young. Assuming my children will

wonder the same thing about me, I began a book of personal memoirs from birth to the time of my marriage. It ended up taking a year and I’m sure I missed a lot of stories that they would have enjoyed. It was fun to go back in time and remember some of the fun things that happened and it is something they can pass down to their children so they will know what life was like in the 30’s, 40’s and early 50’s.

Write your own personal memoirs for your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and generations to come, so they will know what the world was like when you were young.”

After retiring from the U.S. Post Office in 1994, Peg was looking for something to keep her busy. She always had the desire to write children’s stories so in 1996 she joined Writers of Kern and two years later joined the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. She became part of the

Children's Critique Group and later became the facilitator of that group. She served on the Board of Directors as secretary and publicity chairman for over six years.

She has an ongoing column in the Northwest Voice, publishes articles in the Southwest Voice and has had three books and several poems published during the past years. With four children, nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren Peg has ample resources for her children's stories.

Peg is a tremendous inspiration and cheerleader for both fledgling writers and old hands. I know all of us will enjoy and benefit from her presentation

**è We** are looking for a volunteer to be our **Hospitality Person**. This person would welcome any newcomers at our meetings and help them to feel comfortable and hopefully want to come back and be a member. If you are interested, call 213-4391.

Also, we are looking for someone to start an **"Inspirational"** critique group. If you are interested in hosting or attending, please call 213-4391.

---

## **Members Write**

### **Contributions from fellow WOKers**



**Joe Tomasi**

**On Writing:**

**Why Our Critique Group Is Successful**

At a recent board meeting there was a discussion regarding the status of our critique groups. Overall, it seems that some critique groups are under-attended, yet others have disbanded altogether. When asked why the Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror critique group, of which I am the facilitator, is successful, I decided to ask each member to tell me why they think our group works.

Now, I did say "our success" because the group only works because of the dedication of its members, (Margie Custer, Mark Mettler, Terry Redman, Anna Stewart, Jana Wong, and myself) Most of the members never miss a meeting and on several instances, schedules have been rearranged to accommodate our critique meeting.



As facilitator I realized that keeping the members notified of the meetings, usually a week in advance, and then the day before, helps keep attendance high. While we usually meet on Thursdays, there have been times when we change the day to meet the needs of

individual members, so I guess one of the keys to being a successful facilitator is to be organized and flexible. Anna Steward laughingly attributed our success to the fact that I feed everyone. I guess there is some truth in that. While we usually have cookies or pretzels, the breaking of bread just seems to solidify the family-like atmosphere.

Like any other group, we each bring something to share with the others, and it's rare that someone comes unprepared, but if someone had a bad week, they are still an essential part of the group and come to help critique other's work. Since someone else is reading your work it's a valuable lesson to hear what you have written. After reading we have a round-table discussion of the piece, stressing the positive aspects first, then the constructive criticism next. We then have a page-by-page review, helping with corrections, point-of-view, and suggestions as how to improve the piece. This is pretty much the same way all critique groups operate.

While our strategy is unexceptional, our success is the result of our efforts to keep the atmosphere as positive as possible. No one feels necessarily threatened by the criticisms because the effort is made to encourage, not discourage. All of the members indicated that since this is a "safe" environment, they are eager to have their work critiqued, and, hopefully, become a better writer.

The combined elements of dedication and a positive setting are essential [*and cake! – ed*]. It may be that the format of our group may not work for everyone, but it works for us. For that reason I am available for anyone wishing to become a facilitator, but don't just ask me, ask any of the other members, for we are of a like mind. We do meet twice a month and as my wife, Debbie, puts it, there is a "little bit of discussion wedged in between laughter." I guess we're guilty, but while we do have a good time, there is no doubt that our group is dead serious about the business of writing.



“...the most essential thing for happiness is the gift of friendship.” -Harvey Cushing

---

### *President's Column*



Carol Black

#### USELESS WORDS

Useless words? How about *very*, *carefully*, or *really*. I had been using these words in my writing for quite some time, actually, right up to the time I was attending a critique group associated with another writer's group, and a member of that group told us how useless these words are. Hmm, I thought. It had never occurred to me that they may be useless. But, after I gave it

considerable thought, I had to agree with her.

Take *very*, for instance. One can write that a person in the story could be *very* tired, *very* good, *very* much involved, or *very* anything. But wouldn't the story be just as meaningful without the word *very*? In other words, the person in the story could be tired, good, involved, or anything without *very* attached to it. Omitting it seems to clean up the story. When I was reading Alan Alda's *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed*, I noticed that he used *very* twice in one sentence: "A *very* tall, *very* muscular man in his thirties called Nick came over." Does *very* make the man any taller or more muscular? If he was more tall and muscular

than normal, he might have wanted to actually describe the tallness and the muscles.

How about *carefully*? There we go again. Could Peter Piper *carefully* pick a peck of pickled peppers? Couldn't he just as easily pick a peck of pickled peppers? Actually, pickled peppers must already be picked to have been pickled, but we won't go there.

Then there is *really*. The girl was *really* nice. She was *really* happy. Does *really* make her any nicer or happier? Not *really*!

---

## Marty's Muse

Something to think about . . .  
September 2007



Words.

They are the tools of our craft. They are our hammers and chisels, our saws and wrenches. Used well, they make us laugh or cry. Used badly,

they make us laugh or cry. Often, we become obsessed with them, even possessive of them, and the little squiggly trappings that go along with them, arguing *ad infinitum* about correct or incorrect usage, word order, punctuation. Who but a writer would care about the proper placement or – oh, gad! – the omission of a comma?

Carol Black, in her "President's Column" this month writes about "useless words" – words that do not add to the quality of the writing or to the understanding of the reader. I would not call these words useless. They convey meaning of a sort to the reader. Rather, I would call them lazy words, fillers. The laziness is not on the part of the words themselves, but reflect more the laziness of the writer. Why look for a better word, such as "exceedingly", when "very" will do just as well. Why stretch for a hammer when a rock will do the same job?

We devalue our words through misuse or over-use. We writers are, by the nature of our craft, and the workings of our imaginations, prone to exaggeration, hyperbole, and wordiness. If "very" is good, "very, very" must be better. We get lazy.

So break out that thesaurus and dictionary. Exercise that brain muscle. Find a better word. Your writing will improve, and your readers will thank you.

Of course, we must temper our use of thesaurus with some self discipline. If you run that last sentence through your word processor's thesaurus, it might come out something like this: Your letter-forming activities will be enhanced, and the persons who view your communicated ideas will be grateful.

\*

Our Word for the Day is *Inspiration*. According to my Webster's Unabridged (which is, by the way, the only authorized source for the interpretation of regulatory language and meaning for certain

departments of the federal government), *inspiration* means to blow or breath into or upon, or to animate. It imparts the idea of breathing life into, often in a religious or theological sense, as in "...the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (Genesis 2:7) Yet, we use the word almost flippantly. "His poems are so inspiring." "The trees inspire me." Really? They breath life into you?

So use your words wisely, fluently, creatively, judiciously, but, above all, have fun with them.

Happy writing!

Marty What-Inspires-You? Gorsching

---

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

*Braggs, boasts, and bravos –*

**Susan K. Stewart** – Susan will present "The Art & Science of Self-Publishing" in an online broadcast (real-time chat) as part of the 2007 "Muse Online Writers Conference". As a self-publisher, Susan understands the process for a small niche market book. Unlike many self-publishing seminars and books, Susan speaks to the issue of small run projects. Whether it is a book for an organization, a small local audience, or a family history, Susan will explain how to find reasonable prices, design the book, and all the niggling details like copyright and ISBN.

Real time chat Saturday, October 13, 9:00 am.

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

---

## 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> .  
<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)  
Vicki Jameson, [www.thegolden10.com](http://www.thegolden10.com)  
California Writers Club, [www.calwriters.org/](http://www.calwriters.org/)  
Writers of Kern, [www.writersofkern.com](http://www.writersofkern.com)

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

## Critique Groups

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

è **Non-Fiction:** Sponsor/facilitator need

**Fiction:** Vicki Jameson, 831-2046, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 7:00 PM, 1301 Taft Hwy #3 (call for directions) [meawrtr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:meawrtr@sbcglobal.net)

**Poetry:** Ann Williams, 324-1055, 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, 10:00AM, 3123 19<sup>th</sup> St. [awmidge@atginternet.com](mailto:awmidge@atginternet.com)

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

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

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

---

## Conferences, Contests, and Other Things

The Central Coast Branch of the California Writers Club Announces  
Fall Writing Contest

Poetry and Short Story Winners Published *and \$250!*

The two winners will get \$250 each and their work will be published in the Fall 2007 *Homestead Review* produced by Hartnell College. Finalist judges will be *Review* editors Maria Garcia Teutsch and Dr. Jessica Breheny, who are published authors in their respective genres of poetry and fiction.

Visit [www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org) for more information.

---

**The Muse Online Writers Conference:**

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

---

**“Where and how to sell what you write”**

[www.writersmarket.com](http://www.writersmarket.com)

---

**Writer's tools and resources**

[www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)

---

**A good source for market, contest listings, etc**

[www.writeradvice.com/markets.html](http://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/>

- 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).
- Contact **The Writers of Kern** or the editor of *The Write Way* for information regarding reprinting any of these articles. Articles are the property of the authors and *The Write Way* is pleased to publish them for this one time use.
- Quotes used herein are found @ [www.quotationspage.com/](http://www.quotationspage.com/) and [www.thinkexist.com](http://www.thinkexist.com)

## The Writers of Kern

PO Box 22335,  
Bakersfield, CA  
93390-2335

[www.writersofkern.com](http://www.writersofkern.com)



**EDITOR:**  
[mgorsching@bak.rr.com](mailto:mgorsching@bak.rr.com)

© 2007, Writers of Kern.

### 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  
93390-2335