



Since 1909

The Bulletin



California Writers Club

Vol. 2010, No. 2

March-April 2010

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Linda Ballou Travel Advisory</i>	1
<i>CB Board Members</i>	2
<i>Editor's Note</i>	2
<i>President's Message</i>	3
<i>Ina Coolbrith Award</i>	3
<i>Branching Out!</i>	4
<i>Branching Out Cont.</i>	5
<i>Jack London Celebration</i>	5
<i>Promoting Your Book</i>	6
<i>Poetree Corner</i>	6
<i>Writers Block</i>	7
<i>Writers Conferences</i>	7
<i>CWC ADS</i>	8

Linda's Faves:

- Best adventure travel writer: Jack London
- Fav Quote: "It's not in the travel it is in the writing." – Tim Cahill, Linda's hero.
- Best thing she's done for her writing career: attend the Travel Writers Conference at Book Passage, Corte Madera.
- Best travel writing site and writing org. for beginners: www.travelwriters.com
- Best travel writing newsltr: www.TravelWritersNews.com
- Favorite book on writing: Stephen King's *On Writing, A Memoir of the Craft*.



Linda Ballou has always considered herself

a writer. After graduating from college, she moved to Kauai Island for a year and worked as a journalist. When she returned to the mainland, Linda worked as a real estate agent and developed her career as an adventure travel writer.

Now, Linda has published more than 50 articles and two books. Her mission is to get to as many naturally beautiful places before they are no more. She has taken some marvelous trips - she "Googles" a region for outfitters and sends them her media kit which includes a brief bio, clips related to the adventure, and endorsements.

Linda believes that the most important marketing tool for a writer is a professional website. Her website, www.LindaBallouAuthor.com attests to this with it's ease of navigation. With a media kit, online samples of articles and photo essays, and areas of expertise and qualifications, Linda finds that most busy editors prefer this method of information today.

Linda has a blog on her

Linda Ballou Travel Advisory

- Barbara Truax, Marin Branch

website. She finds that blogging is the best way to create a public persona. She says, "Blogging brings traffic to your homepage and moves you up in the search engines. Blog sites are crying out for content and will publish your articles. You won't get paid, but you will get exposure."

For the publication of Linda's books, she opted for Print On Demand and says that Amazon.com does the

"Blogging... You won't get paid, but you will get exposure."

most for "POD" writers than any other online book distribution site. She feels strongly that if a writer chooses "POD", they must have a professional editor.

While Linda spent time in Hawai'i, she became intrigued with the story of the 1779 death of Captain James Cook and started to research the history of the Hawaiian Islands, particularly in that time period. She wanted to tell the story from the Hawaiian point of view, which brought her to Kamehameha the Great and his favorite wife, Ka'ahumanu.

Ka'ahumanu is the inspiration for Linda's heroine,

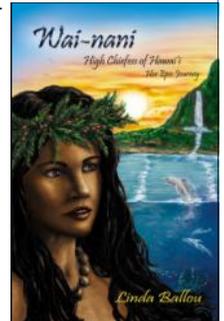
Wai-nani, in *Wai-nani, High Chiefess of Hawai'i, Her Epic Journey*, available on her website and thru Amazon.com and other online bookstores. The book is the result of Linda's extensive research but also expresses her passionate belief in the power of women, historically and today.

Linda cautions that in travel writing, articles are not the place to express personal opinion if you want to get them published. On each trip, she writes a personal essay reflecting on how the trip affected her personally. This essay collection, *Lost Angel Walkabout – One Traveler's Tales*, will soon be released.

Advice to aspiring writers: "Find your niche - something you are

passionate about. Develop a writing discipline - write first thing before the day begins and everything is fresh."

Linda graciously shares information, tips and a free download, "How to Make Travel Writing Work for You," on her beautiful website, www.LindaBallouAuthor.com.



Announcement

Sunday, April 25, marks the launch of new **gatherings in Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland** under the newly formed Friends of Joaquin Miller Park. The CWC is a member of the Friends. For details on the CWC's birthplace (this Park) and the many contributions of the early CWC members, **go to www.calwriters.org** and **click on the Events tab**, then link to details on the **Walkin' in Joaquin's Footsteps link**.



**California Writers Club
Central Board**

Central Board	Email
President: Casey Wilson	President@Calwriters.org
Vice-President: Dave George	
Secretary: Carol Celeste	
Treasurer: Kathy Urban	Treasurer@Calwriters.org
CB Membership: Dale E. King	Membership@calwriters.org
<i>For Information about your branch membership, contact your branch Chair.</i>	Info can be found about your branch contacts at www.CalWriters.org
Member-at-Large: Margie Yee Webb	

Communications	Email
Bulletin: Carol Wood	Bulletin@calwriters.org
Bulletin Proofer: Judy Presnall	
Bulletin Ad Rep: Sandy Moffet	adrep@CalWriters.org
Branch News Editor: Lenora Smalley	BranchNews@CalWriters.org
Web Site: David Burr	webmaster@CalWriters.org

Thank You, Volunteers!

Oops!

Previous issue stated that Dale E. King was VP and Dave George was membership. As Willy Wonka would say, "Wait, reverse that."

Editor's Note:



Hey Members!

Well, this has been a wonderful second edition of the Bulletin put together by all of you and "arranged" by me, Carol Wood. Some of you may be thinking that I have been the short and cranky editor. I just want to say, I have always been 5' 4" and the only difference between many, many years of crankiness and now is... I now have a reason. Glenn and I are buying a house.

"WHAT?" you say, "How in the heck can that make you irritable?" Well, I'll tell ya. You don't actually buy a house until it's found and you don't actually buy a house till the paperwork is processed and you don't actually buy a house till the paperwork is processed a gazillion times more. No, I'm NOT exaggerating! You don't actually buy a house till that paper work is accepted. And then of course there is more paperwork. And... you don't actually buy a house till the loan is approved. And you don't actually buy a house till the closing. Okay, everybody start praying because the closing is March 31st.

If you are me, a nail biter, you worry every single step of the way while you are running your business and doing housework and worrying. Then you worry some more and then you get mad because your stupid genius husband is... CALM! How can he do that?

He says, "If we don't get this one, we'll get a better one!" It's like he just doesn't get the concept of worry. This is when the computer crashes!

So PLEASE tell me all the errors and please keep submitting. I have to hear from you in order to publish your work! Go on email me, I DARE you! I double-dog dare you, DAVE WETTERBERG! God, I love his stories. (Oh, did I say that out loud?) Please email Bulletin submissions prose, poetry, fiction, writer thoughts to Carol Wood (me) at: CWCBULLETIN@CALWRITERS.ORG.

And if your particular branch info is not listed in the Bulletin, it's because your branch rep (usually the branch rep does this, but it can be a duty that is shared) did not send a paragraph (just a few lines about what your branch) by the first of every *other* month (next **deadline** is **May 1st**). send to Lenora Smalley at: BRANCHNEWS@CALWRITERS.ORG

The Bulletin is in the process to **grow larger!** Your **Central Board** decided that **each member can chose to go digital-VERY EXCITING!** (Look for **DD** next to your branch's news.) I expect we will get a lot more contributions once we have S-P-A-C-E. (PDF files don't have printing fees!)

Keep submitting!
CW



Sail ON!

Us and the IRS

So, what's the big deal about a tax exempt 501(c)(3) status? Someone asked me that question not long ago. We had been sitting at a local greasy spoon chowing down on an artery-clogger lunch at the time. He had listened to me grousing about the IRS and the CWC status problems for about thirty minutes.

California Writers Club is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. We have an official Letter of Determination from the Internal Revenue Service explicitly stating that we are in compliance with the appropriate statutes of the Internal Revenue Code. We have since collected a number of Letters of Affirmation, verifying that status.

In addition, the central board—your corporate board of directors—filed for and received a Group Exemption Letter stretching out the figurative umbrella over the branches. Now, while that letter recognizes the branches as having the privileges of a (c)(3) entity (as long as they are in the exemption letter) it does not give the branches that status individually. We'll come back to that momentarily.

Tax exempt means just that. California Writers Club is not required to pay corporate income tax on revenue such as dues, dividends on investments, and donations. Note that this does not include state sales taxes. The California Board of Equalization and the Franchise Tax Board are the authorities there.

Now, several different categories of tax exemption exist under the IRS 501 regulations. The two we are most interested in are (c)(6) and (c)(3). The most important difference between the two is the deductibility of donations to the organization. Let's say you have \$1,000 to donate to an organization. If you donate it to a (c)(3), you may declare the \$1,000

as a deduction on your income tax return. On the other hand, money donated to a (c)(6) organization is NOT tax deductible.

Remember I said I was grousing about a problem with the IRS? Well, although we have a handful of letters declaring and affirming our status as a (c)(3) charitable organization, the IRS online database (known as Publication 78) lists us as a (c)(6).

Our Mt. Diablo branch was recently denied a substantial charitable donation because a financial advisor for the donating foundation looked us up on that IRS database. The advisor would not accept written proof, the IRS letters.

That's not to say the letters are not valid. I can show several instances where they have been accepted along with an explanation that the database is incorrect. One, for example, is the insurance company that we buy a million bucks of liability insurance from. My local United Way is another office that is happy with the letters.

I've spent many hours writing to the IRS and speaking over the telephone to various IRS offices trying to get our status corrected in the database. I'd like to think that in my lifetime, the problem will be resolved.

About the individual branches and 501(c)(3) status. As long as the branch complies with the requirements for inclusion in the Group Exemption Letter, direct donations to the branch are legitimate deductions. Does that include your annual dues? One or two other benefits exist under the group exemption. Maybe that's for a future article. You need to take that question to your personal tax advisor for an answer; I'm not qualified.

President's Message



By Casey Wilson
CWC President

Ina Coolbrith Award Winner Joyce Krieg



Former CWC Bulletin editor Joyce Krieg was honored at the November 8, 2009, Central Board meeting with the Ina Coolbrith Award. Named for California's first poet laureate, the award is a parallel to the Jack London Award, recognizing exceptional service at the state level. Joyce was editor of The Bulletin for three years, including the special edition in fall of 2009 to commemorate CWC's Centennial. The Ina Coolbrith Award is given only occasionally and is considered CWC's highest honor for volunteer service. If you meet Joyce, be sure to thank her. Congratulations Joyce!



Upcoming CWC Events!

- **March 14**, CWC Central Board meeting
- **April 5-9**, NorCal northern California branch volunteers 1st writers retreat at Pema Osel Ling Retreat Ctr., Santa Cruz Mountains.
- **April 24-25**, Festival of books! Volunteer at the UCLA booth, network!
- **April 25th** Gathering at Joaquin Miller Park
- **May 1st**, Branch news due!



Branching Out!

News from some of our 18 branches in no particular order

South Bay Writers Branch—SM (Snail Mail)

South Bay Writers finds itself producing its second workshop this year, Blogging II in April with noted blogger, Bill Belew; preparing for its famous, and fabulous, East of Eden Writers Conference to be held in Salinas in September; orienting new members to its opportunities and offerings (ten new in February); and generally addressing the new year with spring-board enthusiasm and will. We have found that “programs” are the key to acquiring new members and those “newbies” are the means of heating our “back burner.” Bill Baldwin, stalwart cornerstone of this branch and current VP, has been drawing in much of the best dais delivery in the valley and we enjoy and benefit from his efforts.

We enter the remaining 2010 facing a Young Writers Workshop in April, Karen Sweet and Suzette Gamero co-chairing, look forward, monthly, to our hardcopy newsletter—engrossing anywhere—thanks to editor, Dick Amyx, and celebrating our writers’ successes, our members service, and, the robust and receptive creative environment we enjoy. Life at South Bay Writers thrives. www.southbaywriters.com

Mount Diablo Branch—DD (Digital Distribution!)

The Mount Diablo Branch continues to provide special programs for our members.

Those programs include:

- Workshops on a variety of writing topics are scheduled in the fall and spring.
- Mount Diablo Branch periodically sponsors short story or other contests to CWC members and non-members with cash prizes for the winners.
- Annually, our branch sponsors a Young Writers Contest offering cash prizes to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in Contra Costa County’s public and private schools; we also offer an associated workshop for young writers.
- Door prizes are available at every regular meeting.
- Copies of our guest speakers’ books are available for purchase at our regular meetings.

More information on these items and all Mount Diablo Branch news is available at our website, www.mtdiablownriters.org

West Valley Branch—DD

West Valley branch completed and distributed its first anthology, *Collage*, a collection of member poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. *In Focus*, the monthly newsletter, continues to encourage and feature contributions from its talented members. <http://cwcwestvalley.org>

Tri-Valley Branch—DD

Tri-Valley Writers is welcoming spring by diving into writing local. The new year opened with a lecture in January by LeeAnne Jones, Managing Editor of *Diablo* and *Napa Sonoma* magazines and Peggy Spear, editor of *Bay Area Parent*. February’s speaker was Ronnie

Holland, poet laureate of Dublin. March will bring a workshop by Beverly Lauderdale, in preparation for the annual Pleasanton Poetry and Prose Festival. While not a CWC event, Tri-Valley Writers has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Poetry and Prose Festival from its earliest days. Over the years, club members have been actively involved as volunteers and attendees, as well as featured authors on Literary Row.

www.trivalleywriters.org

Central Coast Branch—DD

Imagine having access to a psychologist who specializes in issues facing writers as one of the “perks” of belonging to CWC.

That’s more-or-less the situation at Central Coast, where Vice President/Program Chair David Rasch is just that – a psy-

chologist who works with faculty at Stanford University on their writing issues. David is offering his expertise at the bargain price of \$20 at a three-hour workshop on March 13. Titled “Overcoming Writers Blocks and Procrastination,” it offers each participant the chance to create a plan to promote change. The workshop is open to any CWC member at the \$20 price. For more information, go to centralcoastwriters.org.

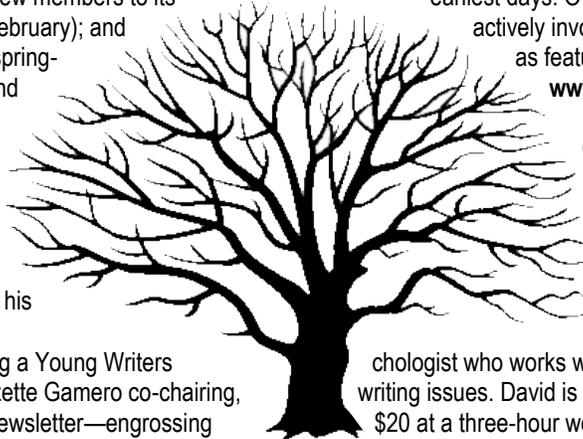
Upcoming speakers at Central Coast’s regular monthly meetings include: Dr. Andrie Aleinikov (March 16), “Wake Up Your Creative Genius;” Becky Levine (April 20), “Building Effective Critique Groups,” and Kemble Scott (May 18), who launched his novel *SoMa* and took it to the San Francisco Bay Area bestseller lists by creating a video on YouTube. Central Coast meets in the evening on the third Tuesday of each month except August and November at the historic Casa Munras hotel in downtown Monterey. <http://centralcoastwriters.org>

Orange County Branch—DD

Following the annual holiday potluck, which proves we can cook as well as write, we almost ran out the clock on our meeting space with Three-Minute Stories, our branch version of the Dime Story format heard on NPR and popular at local venues. Everyone brought the house down. Some of our members are experienced Dime Story presenters, but most weren’t, yet the quality of the writing and the readings far surpassed my expectations. The January earned just as many kudos with several members presenting short demos of how technology helps writers. We kicked the year off right with our Tech Panel of Cora Forestner, Catherine Kitcho, Sonia Marsh, Claudia Suzanne, and Allene Symons. All did an expert job of sharing their knowledge and expertise on organizing research, Web design, twitter, blogging, formatting manuscripts with Word, and adding video trailers to Web sites, all with selling our writing in mind. www.calwritersorangecounty.org

Long Beach Branch —SM

In the second edition of our newsletter, Long Beach Currents (which is delivered to members online in PDF format), the editor and branch VP Kathryn Atkins introduced a rotating feature written by board members called “Board Shorts.” In this 75-word mini-essay



about the writing life, our club secretary Richard Guiss wrote this month's "Board Shorts" about dreams as a source of material in fiction.

Leaping into spring, the branch plans to increase visibility with affordable ads, mainly in local print media. Since digital strategies are important for current and new members, CWCLB will present its second Writers Tech event with laptop demonstrations ranging from author web sites to Twitter in a wifi-enabled meeting space.

www.calwriterslongbeach.org

Bakersfield Branch—DD

Our February speaker was Sarah Chloe Burns, author, educator and motivational speaker. Sarah's talk covered a wide range of subjects

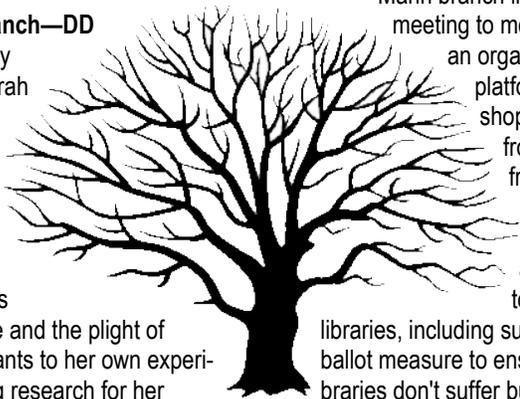
from John Locke and the plight of indentured servants to her own experiences with doing research for her book at Oxford University and her use of the Law of Attraction. In April, Writers of Kern will present a mini-conference. Some WOK members will also be participating in Poetry Month activities in April at our own local independent bookseller, Russo's Books.

www.writersofkern.com

Sacramento Branch—SM

The topic of the February 5 meeting, presented by Patricia Canterbury, was on researching to make writing more authentic. Patricia is a writer of children's' and mid-grade mystery and crime fiction books. She discussed her research on the theme of her book, *Carlotta's Secret*, the first novel in her Delta Mysteries. Her books are commercially published. Patricia is a member of Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime.

Her key themes included 1) Communicate with professionals who understand the context of research. "Librarians are wonderful," she added. 2) Writers must clarify what they need. "Research must be clear. Spell it out because of other people's mindset." 3) Writers have authority. Patricia visited the castle in the city of Iona after it was condemned. She said, "You can get into any place, locate any document, and be admitted into places that are otherwise closed off to the public just by saying, 'I'm a writer.'" 4) Visit the town you want to write about because people take



pride in their hometowns. 5) Research appropriate slang for a specific time period. 6) Consider what you can or cannot write before a certain date (ex: before 9/11), otherwise you may have to rewrite your book.

At the March 5, 2010, meeting, Frances Kagawa will speak on finding and retaining your own voice and writing style, and a writer's responsibilities.

<http://franceskagawa.wordpress.com/>

www.sacramento-writers.org

Marin Branch—DD

Marin branch introduced a monthly pre-meeting to members in February with an organizational workshop on platform building. The workshops will vary on topics from grammar/usage to free writing and more. The branch also continues to pursue avenues of development to highlight Marin county libraries, including support of a June 2010 ballot measure to ensure our wonderful libraries don't suffer budget cuts. www.cwcmarinwriters.com

Inland Empire Branch—DD

Los Angeles Times columnist and editor Chris Erskine was our guest speaker in January. He charmed us with humorous anecdotes about his family and his job at the *Times*. He reminded us that a huge part of writing is rewriting. After the meeting, several of us took him to lunch. Erskine is the author of two nonfiction books, *Surviving Suburbia* and *Man of the House*.

In March, we will welcome branch mentor Mike Foley. As a career freelancer (more than 750 articles!) and writing teacher, Mike will give us practical advice as well as inspire us to greater achievements in our writing. Mike is co-founder of the Big Bear Writers' Retreat and editor of *Dream Merchant Magazine*.

As we have done for the past six years, Inland Empire CWC will award a \$300 creative writing scholarship to a local college student this spring. The winning essay of the "Fresh Voices" scholarship will appear in a future issue of our branch's journal, *Fresh Ink*. To read the current issue, go to <http://www.angelfire.com/amiga/iecwcfreshink.html>.

Berkeley Branch—DD

Elizabeth Wagele of the Berkeley Branch CWC has published "The Career Within You

- How to Find the Perfect Job for Your Personality" with co-author Ingrid Stabb, published by HarperCollins and one of their featured books this season. Liz includes many of her cartoons. This is Liz's sixth book on personality types. With the economy what it is, the authors state it's important to choose careers carefully. If your job doesn't reflect your true self, you may quit after several months. It's Individualized and includes detailed information on resumes, networking. www.cwc-berkeley.com

San Francisco/Peninsula Branch—SM
www.cwc-peninsula.org

East Sierra Branch—SM
www.ridgenet.net/~curtdan/ridgewriters/RidgeWriters.html

Freemont Area Writers Branch—SM
<http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org>

San Fernando Valley Branch—DD
www.CWC-SFV.com

High Desert Branch—SM
<http://hdcwc.org>

Redwood Branch —DD
www.redwoodwriters.org



Please submit Branch News to Lenora Smalley at Branch-News@CalWriters.org
Next deadline is May 1st.

Stirring the Muse!

1. Sit back, stretch, breath.
2. One word: CHOCOLATE
3. Go for a walk
4. Sprinkle rosemary on your pillow. (confidence, memory)
5. Eat something slowly, write between bites
6. Don't think.
7. Listen - in.
8. Write, "I can't write..."
9. Buy a new pen!
10. Attend a CONFERENCE! (See back page for member discount)

PROMOTING YOUR BOOK

-by Yolanda Fintor, San Fernando Valley and West Valley Branches

Promotion begins *before* your book is published. Especially if you want to go with a publishing house. A publisher will want your proposal to include a marketing plan because if he sends you a contract, he expects you to know who your



target readers are and how you expect to reach them. Even if you self-publish, you will need to map out a marketing plan beyond hitting on friends and relatives. Dan Poynter, the guru of self-

publishing says, "You must be able to *identify* your buyer and *locate* your buyer."

In the case of my book, *Hungarian Cookbook, Old World Recipes for New World Cooks*, published by Hippocrene Books, Inc., I listed my plans to: (1) identify areas of concentrated Hungarian population; (2) use exposure in Hungarian newspapers and radio stations; (3) contact Hungarian organizations that included fraternal and religious groups, culture clubs, ethnic food markets; (4) do cooking demonstrations at fairs and specialty markets; (5) provide sample tasting of recipes at book signings; (6) utilize recreational travel to stop at bookstores and introduce my book; (7) speak before writing groups. I was able to write this plan with pure confidence because of what I learned from promoting my previous co-authored cookbook, *Souper Skinny Soups*.

Once the book was in production, my editor made up flyers to be mailed out. All I had to do was send them address labels. My in-house publicist (husband) compiled addresses of everyone we ever knew and of organizations mentioned above. He ended up with almost 500 address labels. When I asked my editor for postcards as an additional marketing tool, she graciously complied saving me the trouble of designing, producing and paying for them. This is one of the perks of having a pro-active publisher.

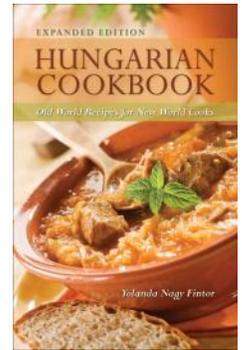
The book's first edition was published in 2001. A year later my editor asked me to add a section on Hungarian wines and another one of my choice. I chose breads. This expanded edition became available in 2003.

In 2009 Hippocrene issued a paperback version with a new paprika-colored cover that shows a mouth-watering photo of a typical Hungarian dish.

As chance would have it, a relative in Orange County got me on the mailing list of a newly-formed organization called "Orange County Hungarians." Through this connection I learned of an event that was to take place in August at the Mission celebrating an important Hungarian historical figure. I contacted the leader and took her to lunch and gave her two books to raffle off at the event. I then asked her permission to email flyers to her Internet audience. She went a step further and emailed them herself with a personal note about meeting the author and recommending the book. Two weeks before the event, I visited bookstores in the area telling the managers of the upcoming event and asking if they would order a few books.

They all said yes.

Another avenue of promotion is the Internet. Geri Spieler, author of *Taking Aim at the President, the Story of the Woman Who Shot at Gerald Ford* says this: "I maximize my marketing time by writing substantial articles on highly visible Internet publications as well as freelance for print. I write articles I re-post on EZine Magazine, Red Room and on my Amazon site. I also write book reviews for Web sites, including *Good Reads*." In other words, just get your name out there and what faster way than on the Internet? So that is my next marketing step. Bloggers, here I come!



Poetree Corner

Catching A Dream

By Ray Malus, San Fernando Valley Branch

I lay in misery, one milk-warm day,
Abandoned by my muse.
Hounded by a host of hostile words that scorned
The game I'd scheduled for them.

A truant soap bubble happened by,
Filled with joy and possibility by the breath of some unseen child.
It flirted shamelessly.

I stood and grabbed at it.
Laughing and giggling, it danced out of reach.
And riding the free wind,
Raced across the park with me in hot pursuit.

We chased
Past matriarch trees that had watched generations of sandlot ball.
Past scarred benches that had couched gasping new lovers.
Past new-mown lawns perfuming the air with scents of green and umber.
Past bearded boulders that had ridden mighty glaciers, but crumbled under gentle rain.

At last, it relented, and gleefully hovered, jumping up and down on springs of air.
I snatched, and — cat-quick — caught the prize.
Then opened my hand in exultant triumph, and found
nothing.

But oh God, the journey it had taken me on!

When Writers Block Strikes

By Roberto de Haro, CWC Marin Branch



Roberto de Haro

“Oh, no, what now?” This is the question we as writers ask ourselves when an impasse is reached. Without the luxury of a *Muse*, or someone to motivate us to continue writing, what do we do when

“writer’s block” strikes? Consider the following tips that work for many writers.

Some writers are not enthusiastic about rewriting; but this is a good time to do so. Why? It forces us to examine what we’ve written and think about our story. Most of us have a well conceived plot, and a story outline. Rewriting compels us to reconsider our ideas and initial message. As we rewrite, it’s natural to reflect on how we reached the stopping point, and what we wanted to say. This recapitulation of ideas and words often triggers new concepts and places to go. It can impel us to continue the story, even if it’s simply jotting down thoughts. We will rewrite, because friends and editors reading our drafts will help us tighten the writing. Keep in mind your original ideas and where you want to go with them.

Another tip is to read a book within the same genre as yours, or see a film that covers the topic you’re developing. Determine whether you want to go in the same direction as the book or film, or if you have a new perspective. Don’t be afraid to experiment, to add something fresh, controversial, or whimsical as you write. Think, “I like the theme but want to do it different and better!” Then get busy writing.



“Don’t think of it as failure. Think of it as time-released success.”

- Robert Orben, Magician, Author of *Speaker’s Handbook of Humor*

Writers Conference, Writers Community

- by Dave LaRoche, South Bay Branch

You can feel it as you enter a conference parking lot, the ambiance you anticipated as you registered—a feeling that you’re back in your hometown. It’s a familiar and exciting place, full of peers and professionals, all of them family at least for the duration.

It’s been said that writing is a solitary event—done alone; it’s the nature of the cat. Even as you sit with a dozen or so others in a nanowriting charge, you write alone; only you can generate the text and push the keys. The fascinating juxtaposition is that writers are community. We need and depend on each other, our special groups, and the whole of us. We migrate toward, offer to and take from, plan and work for, insist upon and enjoy community. We speak of ourselves as “family.”

The conference is the manifestation of that communal spirit, embodying all that we are. It is the actual, tangible community. We hang out our flags—our books and our knowledge—and salute all the others. We integrate, cogitate, and collaborate. We share.

Occasionally we may step aside from our writing selves and ask, what makes me a legitimate part of all this, why am I writing? Some find the answer easily, others are puzzled, and some quit asking, the answer proving too elusive. Conferences assist in that search and underscore the revelations. At conferences we discover why we write.

Our craft is on the move—different ways of expressing our ideas emerge: new genres, new structures, new approaches to theme and development, and certainly new publishing and selling ideas; and what is old hat to some is experimental to others. We catch up at conferences—restore or add to our inventory.

Another conference feature is this exchange we call networking. We like hobnobbing with our peers and the pros, and dote on the success stories that abound.

We may imagine them ours; after all, seeing one’s self on the bestseller list is an excellent start at achieving it. We enjoy the camaraderie, the flow of ideas, easy laughter, and warmth.

I have yet to attend a writers conference when I didn’t leave eager to get at my computer—inertia transformed into momentum. It’s a full service tune-up. I chug in with the sluggishness of a worn old sedan and roar off as a sports car. We all feel it—it’s unavoidable.

Most important to me is the spiritual effect. The notion reinforced at a conference that I am a writer. When there, I speak the language and become familiar with the techniques discussed—the tools, the means, and the break-loose energy. I am opened to inspiration; it comes in, and I mature. Indeed, I am a writer.

Our East of Eden Writers Conference is coming up, and I wouldn’t be exaggerating if I said it is the most robust and least expensive of any South Bay Writers has produced. Of course it’s in Salinas; that’s John’s country, and if you open your mind’s eye as you drive through the yellowing fields, you will see him over there on a tractor, stroking his stubble and grinning—as it is in his honor.

East of Eden 2010, Sept.24 - 26

- 48 workshops within five tracks - fiction, nonfiction, mystery, poetry, and publishing.
 - Two night owls, two panels, two happy hours,
 - Pitching, with agents galore
 - Professional editors will critique your submissions
 - Contests - a grand prize of \$1000, of course others.
 - All meals including a Sunday noon barbeque on the lawn
 - Special Early CWC full admission: \$325 thru April 15, see website for details
- www.southbaywriters.com



Hot this down!

2010 East of Eden Writers Conference

Join us in Steinbeck Country - Salinas, California

CWC Members: register before April 15, 2010 and save!

Only \$325 for Full Conference Reg. includes:

- All 3 days - September 24, 25, and 26, 2010 - all meals and events!
- 48 workshops!
- Pitch Sessions - multiple opportunities to pitch your work to literary agents at no additional charge!
- Saturday evening gala dinner and Writing Contest awards ceremony (grand prize is \$1000)

That's \$110 off the regular price and a \$50 savings compared to the public early registration fee!

Saturday Only (7:30 am to 5 pm) option available for only \$179!

For more info, conference details, and to register, visit southbaywriters.com.

Offer ends April 15, 2010 -- so sign up today!

www.CalWriters.org



**Bulletin
Current
Distribution
1077**

Would \$1000.00 first prize tempt you into a ghost story writing contest? How about a gorgeous trophy? Check out www.clarklibraryfriends.com.

WGOT-NC POETRY & SHORT FICTION CONTEST Prizes: \$250, \$150, \$100. Unpublished 5 poem sets and/or 1 short story. Deadline: April 30, 2010. Complete guidelines, www.triadwriters.org or E-mail questions to www.wgot2010@triad.rr.com

CWC ads are submitted to **Sandy Moffet** \$20 for 30 words and \$40 for 60 words. Ads must be related to the field of writing. Contact Sandy at adrep@CalWriters.org



**California Writers Club
PO Box 1281
Berkeley, CA 94701
www.calwriters.org**

**Nonprofit Org
Us Postage Paid
Permit 37
Ridgecrest, CA**