

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

New Meeting Plan Set for December Session

by Diana Johnson

AT November's board meeting we discussed changes we'd like to try, primarily in our meeting schedule. We're a brand new branch and would like to try brand new ways of arranging our meetings. Nothing is cast in concrete. Let us know your thoughts, as all our ideas are for you, our members.

For the past two months we've had our Guest Speaker first and Open Mike last. The concern is that not everyone can arrive exactly on time, and late-comers distract from the speaker. For December we're going to schedule our meeting:

- 1:00 – 1:10 Welcome (10 min.)
- 1:10 – 1:40 Open Mike (30 min.—5 min. per person)
- 1:40 – 2:30 Guest Speaker (50 min.)
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break (15 min. including CWC interviews of visitors)
- 2:45 – 3:00 Meeting (15 min. including announcements)

Try it this December and then let us know your reactions. You may send your preferences and comments on our e-mail address: billndi@verizon.net Please put CWC Schedule in the subject line as we don't open e-mails when we don't recognize the e-mail sender or the subject.

Your Board spent quite a long time discussing another meeting schedule matter, and ended up tabling the issue until next month. Here is your chance to weigh in on the discussion. After all, they are your meetings we're discussing. Our dilemma is, since the Guest Speaker is, by definition, a guest, not a CWC/West Valley member, how do we empower our members to tell us about themselves and what they are doing (San

Fernando's Member Showcase) without making our meetings any longer than two hours? The only variable we came up with was the Open Mike segment. We have four options for you to consider:

Option 1: Keep our 30-minute Open Mike segment, but encourage members to use their 5 minutes to tell about themselves and their projects, not necessarily limit it to reading what they've written.

Option 2A: Alternate a 30-minute Open Mike one month with a 30-minute Member Showcase (for one member to tell us who they are and what they're doing or have done) the next.

OPTION 2 B: Alternate the 30-minute Open Mike one month with two 15-minute Mini Member Show Cases the next.

Option 3: Offer a 15-minute Open Mike (3-4 people) and a 15-minute Mini Member Showcase every month.

Let us know what you'd like to try first. We'll tally your responses and consider them at our next board meeting. E-mail us at: billndi@verizon.net with Open Mike/Member Showcase in the Subject line. This is your club. Our desire is that you anticipate our meetings with enthusiasm, enjoy the meetings while you're here, and remember them with pleasure when you leave. ■



Tatjana

Slovene Stage Star to Speak

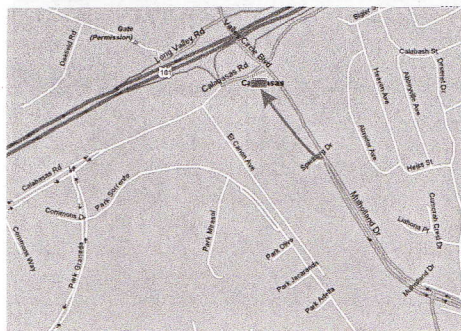
OUR December speaker hails from Slovenia, one of the countries that split off from the former Yugoslavia. Known only by one name, Tatjana (the J is pronounced like a Y), she is a performer who has been on stage in many parts of Europe.

She says that young people in her native land are greatly influenced by American writers. They sing lyrics to American music even though they cannot speak English. They know the stories of Hollywood films, the movie stars and most of the Broadway shows and music. They know the *Great American Song Book* and the singers who sang the songs. They rocked and rolled and emulated American fashions from jeans to hippies. They know much more about America than Americans know about them.

And, she says, performers need writers. ■

COMING EVENTS

- December 2.** Meeting. Speaker, Tatjana.
- January 6, 2007.** Meeting. Speaker, Stan Mack.
- February 3.** Meeting. Speaker, Ray Bradbury.
- March 3.** Meeting. Speaker T.B.A.
- April 7.** Meeting. Speaker to be announced.



WHERE TO FIND US

From the 101 (Ventura) Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive south. Continue to Steven Spielberg Drive (on the west opposite the shopping center). Follow the drive as it turns right then continue to the MPTV parking lot. Go on to the other side of the parking lot and exit on the small road. This leads to the residential area. Pass the little traffic circle with a tree and park your car. (Be careful not to take an assigned spot as you may be towed away.) Go through the lobby of the residential building opposite the tree (east of the road) and exit the other side. Turn left and Villa Katzenberg is on your right.

MEETINGS

The California Writers' Club/West Valley meets on the first Saturday of each month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund building (Villa Katzenberg), 23388 Mulholland Drive, Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, December 2, 2006
at 1:00 p.m.

Officers and Board of Directors

- President Diana Johnson
- V. P. & State Rep. David Wetterberg
- Treasurer Dean Stewart
- Secretary Ann Stalcup
- Membership Arthur Yuwiler
- Programs ... Betty Freeman & Leslie Kaplan
- Newsletter Editor William E. Hitchins
- Sound Ken Wilkins
- Site Relations Betty Freeman
- Publicity Katherine Highcove
- Critique Groups David Wetterberg
- Member at Large William R. Johnson

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Meet Our People

Here are some of the members, guests that make up WV

Interviewers' names appear below each report.

Regina Apigo is so eager to write her novel that she sometimes brings her laptop to CWC meetings so she can work during the break. A member of the SFV chapter for about six months, Apigo was a recent visitor to West Valley.

The intriguing fiction novel this petite, attractive Korean-American is writing centers on a Korean boy watching his mother's dreams explode.

After receiving a BA in political science from UCLA and a degree in journalism from U. C. Berkley, Apigo worked as a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* Ventura and Orange County bureaus covering education and city hall.

These days she leads a busy life as a wife and stay-at-home mom caring for her six-year-old daughter and four year-old son.

Apigo, 35, came to the U.S. with her parents when she was 8. Raised in Glendale, she is now a Sherman Oaks resident.

This charming, youthful looking former reporter hopes to write more in the coming years.

CAROL FOX

Nancy Katherine Lamoureux writes mysteries and historical sagas. She comes from a literary family; her mother was a writer and her grandmother a librarian. Nancy says her passion for writing is "in her blood." And so she has been cultivating and refining her craft since early childhood, resulting in four published novels to date. Her first and second novels, *By Prescription Only*, and *Never Be a Witness*, have the same protagonist, a nurse-detective who investigates the murders of nurses. Nancy drew upon her own life experience of working in the nursing field for many years and can testify to the dangerous situations outpatient nurses sometimes walk into. Her years of working in Veterans Hospitals also gives her keen insight into the world of government medical care. Nancy's third book, *Conrad Capers*, the story of elderly psychiatric patients, can be found on the shelves at Barnes and Nobles. Her fourth novel is *Lies, Letters, and the Ring*.

JOE GREEN

Those 3x5 Cards and Contributions

WHAT to do with those 3" x 5" cards interviewers prepare at meetings? First here's *not* what to do. Do not hand the handwritten cards with sketchy notes to the newsletter editor or the president. They're useless like that. Write up the interview in prose and keep it short. The editor does not have time to prepare *In Focus* and write up your interviews.

Alternatively, you can pass them on to Carol Fox who has volunteered to do some of the writeups. But check with her first to make sure she is available. And make sure your notes have all the elements to make a story. As Rudyard Kipling put it, "I kept six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew. Their names were What and Why and When and How and Where and Who."

Some of you have submitted poems by other people. Be careful, these may be protected by copyright. Make sure there is no copyright or that we have permission to use them.

Submissions should be kept as short as possible due to limited space. Generally speaking, the maximum length should be about 250 words.

The deadline for submissions is normally the 15th of each month but, depending on circumstances, exceptions can *sometimes* be made. Please contact the editor if you need an extension or feel you have a long article he should consider.

And one final point... Please type if at all possible. It makes it a lot easier on the editor.

AMERICA

*There once was a gal from LA
Who often had too much to say.
Her voice was a bell
Rung with nothing to tell.
She should just go out and play!*

LILLIAN RODICH

*When Eastern weather becomes unkind,
Unwanted guests you will surely find.
But do not despair,
Head up to Big Bear
And enjoy the snow they left behind.*

KEN WILKINS

*There once lived a fellow named Larson
Who sometimes flirted with arson.
But it wasn't a joke
When he went up in smoke
As he found the windows had bars on.*

KEN WILKINS



Part of the crowd enjoying Doug Wood's talk at CWC's November meeting at MPTV.

Husband and Wife Team Make It by Thinking Big

Wood Surprises WV Last Month

Editor's Note: Due to circumstances beyond our control, this article did not appear in the November issue.

by Katherine Highcove

THEIR MOTTO: "Think big. You can always act small later," was the succinct advice of October guest speakers Dr. Jerry Newark, and his wife Deborah Newark. The dynamic duo enlivened our fall meeting with a peppy two part version of "How to Succeed in Publishing Using Your Instinct."

"I'm an accidental writer," Dr. Newark confided cheerfully to the CWC. "I write about what's important to me, and it turns out that people want to hear my ideas, and then they want to buy my books. I don't pursue publishers; they come after me!"

Issues important to Jerry have resulted in an eclectic collection of published works: *Raise Emotionally Healthy Children*, *This School Belongs to You*, *Dentistry as if People Mattered*, and *Meeting the five Critical Needs of Dogs*. He promotes his advice-themed books at schools, hospitals, the Rotary, cruise ships, business conferences – anywhere he finds good karma and open minds. He does not venerate prickly agents and publishing houses, to say the least.

"If you want big success, ignore the experts," Jerry advised us and passed the

mike like a baton to his wife and fellow author.

Deborah Newark took the floor and backed up her mate's assertions. Ten years ago, the expert shopper dreamed of finding everything she wanted at discounted prices. She firmly believed that "It's a sin to pay retail." After research began, her shopping discount dream expanded to find a way to inform all shoppers of our community's consumer resources. Next dream development: Deborah wrote a book listing the best places in Los Angeles to find a bargain. She planned to title it *Buying Retail is Stupid*. The uppity experts told Deborah she would never sell a book that insulted the buyer. Her instinct told her that the experts were nuts.

WHERE do I want to market this *Stupid Book* without paying someone to do it for me?" She thought. "I know. Trader Joe's wine drinkers like to read." Once more, the experts told her she was nuts and Trader Joe's was not Barnes and Noble. Deborah made her own decision, called Trader Joe's and sold a pile of *Stupid Books* to the patrons of wine and cheese. Instinct won another round. Her book also sold well when Deborah developed a following among the radio and newspaper audiences.

The duo passed out T-shirts emblazoned, "Think Big and always ask 'Why Not?'"

by Betty Freeman

DOUIG WOOD, the favorite improv teacher at MPTV, surprised us with his amazing background of acting, consulting, administration, and other talents in production. Delightful were his filmed samples of seven years plus – as half of the of the comedy duo "Fire Lines." This couple of professional Improvs were hilariously funny and drew an enthusiastic response. (It is hoped that we can arrange to show the films strips on Channel 22.)

At the moment, Doug is in Israel.

His broad scale administration roles in our country extend into Jerusalem where he has conducted workshops for corporations seeking to maximize creativity, improve communication and bring humor to the workplace. At this time he is in Israel helping them in production, but returns soon. His enthusiastic group will be waiting. Doug Wood has introduced his improvisation program to many businesses, building enthusiasm and motivating production. He offers online consulting services. 📖



Douglas Wood drawn by Wendell Washer

ARTHUR YUWILER'S COLUMN:

Days to Remember this December

BECAUSE Julius and Augustus Caesar each squeezed in their own 31 days, December (as in dime, decimeter or deciliter) became the twelfth, instead of the tenth, month of the year. Still the earth takes 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes and 9.54 seconds to go around the sun and its tilt of 23 degrees 27 minutes smears winter light across a smaller area of the southern hemisphere than the north. Thus, December becomes summer there with its fruits and flowers while here it is cold, dark, winter. In *Sonnet 97* Shakespeare notes "What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen, What old December's bareness everywhere" and in *Cymbeline* he comments that "the rain and wind beat dark December days." Lord Byron compares critics to winter, writing "As soon/seek roses in December-ice in June/hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff." And good old James Walker brings up the eternal question of "Will you love me in December/ as you did in May?"

On December 2 we meet for the last time in 2006.

The 3rd of December marks Illinois' admission to the Union and the day Buddha achieved "enlightenment" in 596 BC.

December 7 is Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – "A day that will live in infamy" when Japanese Imperial Forces attacked our fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and began the war in the Pacific. On that same date in 1787, Delaware ratified the constitution.

December 15, 1791, is the birthday of our Bill of Rights.

A day later, on December 16, Hanukkah (variously spelled Chanukah, Chaunka, or Hanunkkah, meaning "dedication"), the festival of lights begins. It marks the date in the 2nd century BCE when the Syrian-Greek Ruler, Antiochus Epiphanies IV, descendant of Seleucid, general to Alexander the Great,

set an altar dedicated to Zeus in the sacred temple in Jerusalem. A huge fuss followed started first in the Hosmonean (*Chashmonai*) family and culminating in Judah Maccabee (*Yehudah HaMakabi* – the hammer) swooping down the Judean hills to destroy the Syrians. The temple was cleansed on the 25th of Kislev (a lunar month, accounting for Chanukah's changing dates) only to find one day's worth of purified olive oil to light the temple's menorah (or holy candelabrum). But by some miracle the single batch lasted fully the eight days needed to obtain new purified oil. In commemoration, a candle is lit each night until all eight (and the lighter) burn and presents are given to children each night.

On December 18, 1787, New Jersey ratified the Constitution.

December 21 officially begins winter though days shorten until the 25th when the sun once more mounts its heavenly throne.

FROM December 17 to 24, ancient Romans celebrated Saturnalia, the precursor to Christmas, some believe. Then, lamps in northern climes were kept burning to avoid darkness, as friends visited each other with gifts of dolls, jewelry, incense, cakes and evergreens were cut down and decorated to pay homage to Saturn, god of farming. On that same date Scandinavians celebrated Yule (or *Jul*), burning giant logs to augment the sun and devouring the summers bounty. Simultaneously Celtic Druids hung magic mistletoe (called All-Heal) cut from trees by priests using golden sickles and hung it and holly over their doorways.

But December 24 is officially Christmas Eve, the last day for shopping, for filling stores, for seeking just the right gift for somebody. It is the season for advertisers, the day Santa Claus separates good and bad

children, traveling on his sled pulled by reindeer from the north pole to rooftops where he fills stockings with goodies or coal. It is the night for putting another log on the fire, for slipping gifts beneath the decorated Christmas trees after children have gone to bed.

AND then comes Christmas Day, December 25, which, in AD 348, was named by Rome to replace January 6, as the birthday of Jesus. In the Julian calendar, it is also the winter solstice when the sun is lowest in the sky and daylight shortest and by a strange coincidence it is also the birthday of the sun-god Attis in Phrygia and the Persian sun-god, Mithras, with whom early believers had so much trouble. Christmas is a day of good cheer, of caroling, of giving and receiving gifts. It is a day for going to church to celebrate promised eternal life and the birth of a child.

December 26 is Kwanzaa, a seven-day holiday for African-Americans created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga professor at California State University and derived from the Swahili phrase *Imatuda ya kwanza* which means "first fruit."

On December 28, in 1846 Iowa was admitted to the Union and on the 29th of 1845 Texas became a state.

Thus ends the year. Hope 2006 was terrific. ■

