



PHOTO: KEN WILKINS

December speaker, Tatjana, leads West Valley members in a dance at the end of her lively talk. She also sang songs in English and Serbo-Croatian as well as the Hava Nagila in Hebrew.

Tatjana, Joyful Songbird, Takes CWC on a Sentimental Journey

OUR December speaker, Tatjana, took our members on a melodic journey – a “Sentimental Journey,” no less.

After her opening song, the magnetic performer’s speech journeyed to the past and told us of her pleasant childhood in Yugoslavia and her great unhappiness when the country broke up into fragments.

She displayed a large map of her homeland.

“All these borders! It hurts me so much to see my country divided. I have a book in my heart to write so I can share the happiness of my childhood home in Yugoslavia and the hard times we knew after the war.

“For now, I share my memories and feelings in song.”

Ms. Tatjana was a dancer in her early years as a performer but soon felt the need to

express her feelings vocally. The young woman learned to sing in a warm personal style to her audiences in Europe and then America. Her new homes gave the versatile performer opportunities to express her longings for the home she once knew in unified Yugoslavia and share her culture with new audiences.

“Let me sing for you a song from my country and then please tell me what you feel.” Tatjana sang in Serbo-Croatian and from her soulful tone and dramatic gestures, we knew she sang of heartache.

“Yes, yes. The feelings in my songs are easily felt.”

“I sing in many languages, but I help my audiences feel the meaning of my words. I need to share with people and love the

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

We Need Your Help to Build Our Archives

THIS is an historic year for the West Valley Branch of CWC. As most of you know, we were chartered as the 16th branch of the California Writers Club on July 23, 2006. Lillian Rodich and Helen Katzman have volunteered to document our branch’s beginnings and history in the first of what I envision to be a continuing series of historical albums.

They (we) need you to help. Please send them a small photo of yourself, along with a short biography. It would be great if we could have all of the Charter Members’ pictures and a bit about each one as a part of this archive. After that, perhaps we could include all members, as each joins. Your job, as soon as possible, is to send a picture of yourself, along with a few sentences about yourself to Lillian Rodich or Helen Katzman. You can find their addresses in the roster that was emailed or sent to all members. (If you don’t have a roster, contact Art Yuwiler: ayuwiler@earthlink.net or 818-348-1027.)

There might be a small treat for all of you who have sent them your picture and biography before our meeting on January 6th. If you took any pictures of our meetings or other events, send a copy to Lil and Helen. Be sure to write the date, occasion, and names of those pictured, on the back of the photo.

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COMING EVENTS

January 6, 2007. Meeting. Speaker, Stan Mack.

February 3. Meeting. Speaker, Ray Bradbury.

March 3. Meeting. Speaker to be announced.

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, January 6, 2007
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
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Get to Know some New Faces from Our December Meeting

Interview by Elaine Shevin

KAREN CHRISTIE doesn't recall what brought her to our meeting or what encouraged her to join, but she hopes the club will give her motivation to write more. She's also looking for some inspiration and camaraderie.

Christie started writing and painting when she was a youngster and never stopped. In the past, she used a pseudonym but now looks forward to writing under her own name. A Topanga Canyon resident, Christie finds the location ideal for people in the arts. Although she's busy working on her house, she says she gets all of her energy and creativity from living in Topanga.

Interview by Arthur Yuwiler

WENDELL WASHER joined the club primarily at the urging of his close buddy and charter member, Ken Wilkins.

As an animator, Washer worked on many projects, including illustrating a children's book.

In addition to his other talents, Washer wants to write, and hopes to gain inspiration and camaraderie within the club. As a San Fernando Valley resident, our meetings are convenient for him.

Interview by Bill Sorrell

NANCY AND ANTHONY LAWRENCE are somewhat younger than most of the folks at the Motion Picture Home. However, they earned their bunks at the Home through their tremendous body of work in the film and TV industry.

As a writing team, the Lawrences wrote

Summary of December 2 Board Meeting

At the West Valley Board meeting held on December 2, 2006, the treasurer reported a beginning balance of \$1,191.03 and an ending balance of \$1,036.03. A \$250 donation was made to MPTV Fund.

The branch now has 48 members and three joined in November. Some 55 people attended the December 2 meeting.

Cartoonist Stan Mack, the January speaker, will be introduced by Susan Champlin, writer for *Bon Appétit Magazine*.

Bill Hitchins reported technical problems with the November newsletter and was authorized to hire a consultant.

scripts for more than 150 television shows starting in the late 1950's. Their credits include westerns, such as *Bonanza*, a number of medical shows and *The Outer Limits*. They were also the supervising producers for *The New Twilight Zone* and wrote the *Sixth Sense* for Gary Collins.

Their work also includes three films written for Elvis Presley.

Despite their busy schedules, the Lawrences found time to have two children of their own and adopt three more.

Kudos to this attractive, talented team, who, unlike some in the trenches of glitterville, looked beyond the screen, kept their feet on the ground and created a warm and loving family.

Interviews: Keep Them Short

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.

FROM PAGE 1

Tatjana, Slovene Nightingale

opportunity to release my feelings of joy and sorrow in song."

At 23, Tatjana developed her one woman show. Many of her songs in the routine were written by American composers.

"Where would we be as singers without the American composer and lyrics writers?" she asked her audience.

We learned that American song-writers have always influenced her choice of material.

"In my country we all know Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, all the big name movie stars and their films.

"Everyone loves American music."

Tatjana took up the mike again to warble the Leonard Bernstein ballad of West Side Story: "There's a place for us... somewhere with peace and quiet, open air."

And her CWC/WV audience felt very strongly Tatjana's longing for her Slovenian home in the days without borders.

Tatjana gave us an "up" finale. She invited all members to rise and join her in the hora. We wound around the folding chairs with clasped hands while onlookers clapped encouragingly. We danced and sang with Tatjana, the joyful Nightingale of Slovenia. We truly shared a Sentimental Journey around the Katzenburg Room of our new CWC home.

FROM PAGE 1

President's Message

They will also archive copies of *In Focus*, and a list of the charter members.

As soon as we send them material to work with, they will bring the book to our meetings for us all to see and enjoy. Let's really support these lovely ladies as they create an artistic record of our beginnings and accomplishments.

As we end calendar year 2006 and enter 2007, may I take this opportunity to wish you the very best of health and happiness. And make your New Year's resolutions include writing – whether it is an article, a poem, stories or letters to the editor. We are writers. Let's write! 📖

A Thought

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. – *William Arthur Ward, American scholar, author and pastor.*

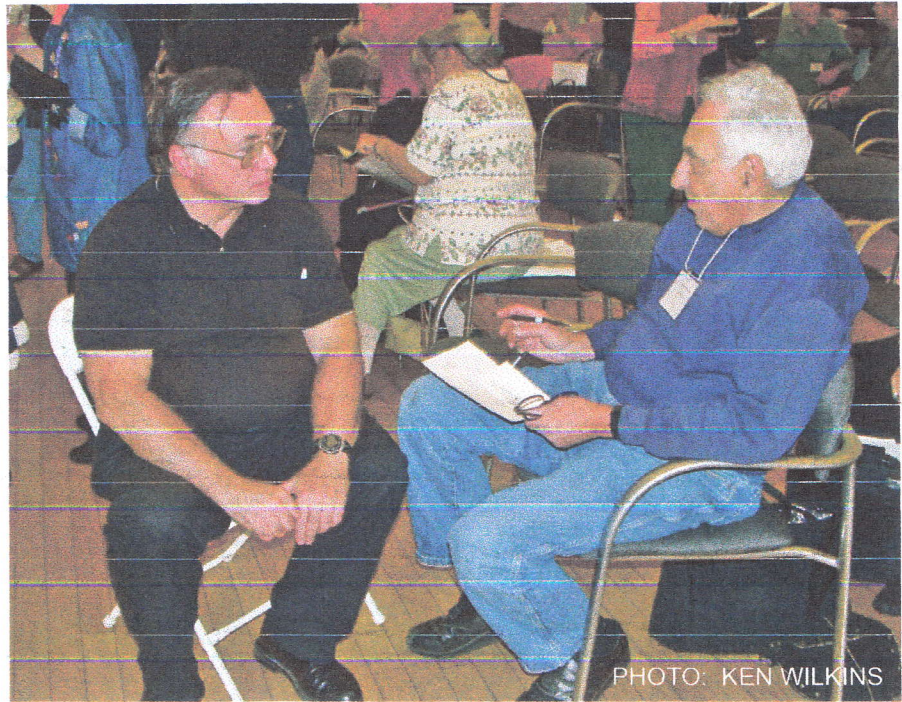


PHOTO: KEN WILKINS

Members interview other members and guests during the refreshment break in the meeting. Here new member Wendell Washer is questioned by Membership Chairman Art Yuviler at the West Valley December meeting. (See interviews on Page 2, Column 2.)

The New Year

By Marguerite McCormack

*It's a brand New Year. It's 2007.
What will it reveal this side of heaven?*

*Its pages are blank for us to fill.
We have freedom of choice to follow at will.*

*Yesterday's trials are part of the past,
Our todays and tomorrows ahead coming fast.*

*There are problems to solve, new goals to meet
With a full year ahead to begin and complete.*

*It's exciting to be part of the play,
A part of the story unfolding today.*

*So look to the future, enjoy every minute.
Be present in the moment be happy you're in it!*

Our thanks to Betty Freeman for supplying this ode

South Bay Hosts Workshop in Sunnyvale 21st

The CWC South Bay Branch is hosting its East of Eden Writers' Conference on Sunday, January 21 in Sunnyvale, CA. The workshop, entitled "The Art & Craft of Story Structure," will be conducted by Tod Goldberg, an author of novels and short stories.

The program will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. at the Lookout Bar & Grill, 605 Macara Avenue, Sunnyvale. The price is \$60 for CWC members and \$75 for guests and will include a continental breakfast and lunch.

The workshop will cover the art and craft in structuring your novel or story. Goldberg promises that "you'll leave the workshop with a roadmap towards publication, no matter what genre you work in." Full details are on South Bay's website at www.southbaywriters.com/meetings/2007_Jan_workshop/2007_wrkshp.html.

Goldberg is the author of *Living Dead Girl* (Soho Press) which was a finalist in the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, *Fake Liar Cheat* (Pocket Books/MTV) and the short story collection, *Simplify* (OV Books). He teaches creative writing at the UCLA Extension Writers' Program where he was named 2005 Outstanding Instructor of the Year.

The Big Difference

There's a big difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do. – *Potter Stewart, Supreme Court Justice (1915-1985)*

ARTHUR YUWILER'S COLUMN:

Janus Started It and Julius Caesar Changed It

JANUARY is named for Janus, the two-headed Roman God of gates and doorways, of beginnings and endings. Janus is supposed to have come from Thessaly, married Camese and had a child named Tiberinus, after whom the river Tiber is named. In off moments he sheltered Saturn fleeing from the king of the gods, Jupiter (the Roman gods, like the Greek gods before them, were like big, stupid, people always quarreling, always fornicating, always getting into mischief, always wearing disguises and generally having a good old time).

Originally the Roman calendar began in March (Martius to December), had only 10 official months divided into 304 days but included about 61 days of a month-less winter in which nothing got done anyway. Of course, January didn't exist until 713 BC when King Numa Pompilius added both January and February to the calendar to yield 355 days. He did this by reducing all 30 day months to 29 days (except for poor February which only had only 28).

ONE-HUNDRED-FORTY-ONE years later in 153 BC, two Roman consuls decided to start the year with January instead of March so that they could finish their ceremonies and reach their respective armies before spring. Of course, Julius Caesar converted the month of Quintilis to July (Augustus Caesar did the same for Sextilis) and updated the calendar in 46 B.C. to the 365.25 day Julian Calendar with a leap year added to February every 4 years.

Alas, even that produced a mean year slightly too long for the 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes and 9.54 seconds it takes for the earth to travel around the sun. Thus we use the Gregorian calendar (first proposed by Aloysius Lilius) omitting 3 Julian leap days every 400 years.

By the way, Janus is also the name of the tenth moon of Saturn inhabiting the gap between the F and G rings with an orbital radius of 151,452 kilometers, a period of 0.6545 days, and a size of 96 by 192 by 150

kilometers. (Anyhow, I thought you might like to know.)

January was called Wulf Monath (wolf month) by the Saxons, Tammiku (month of oaks) by the Fins and Leden (ice month) by the Czechs. The month is just too cold to have much happen beside the usual births and deaths.

January 1, of course, is the New Year's Day, and the night before is the time for funny hats, wishing in a diapered New Year bidding adieu to the tottering Old Year and kissing someone you love under the mistletoe. New Year's Day itself is a day for eating popcorn and watching various football teams batter each other senseless while fans scream.

On the 6th we meet once again.

The 7th marks the first Presidential election in 1789.

On the 8th George Washington delivered

the first State of the Union address in 1790.

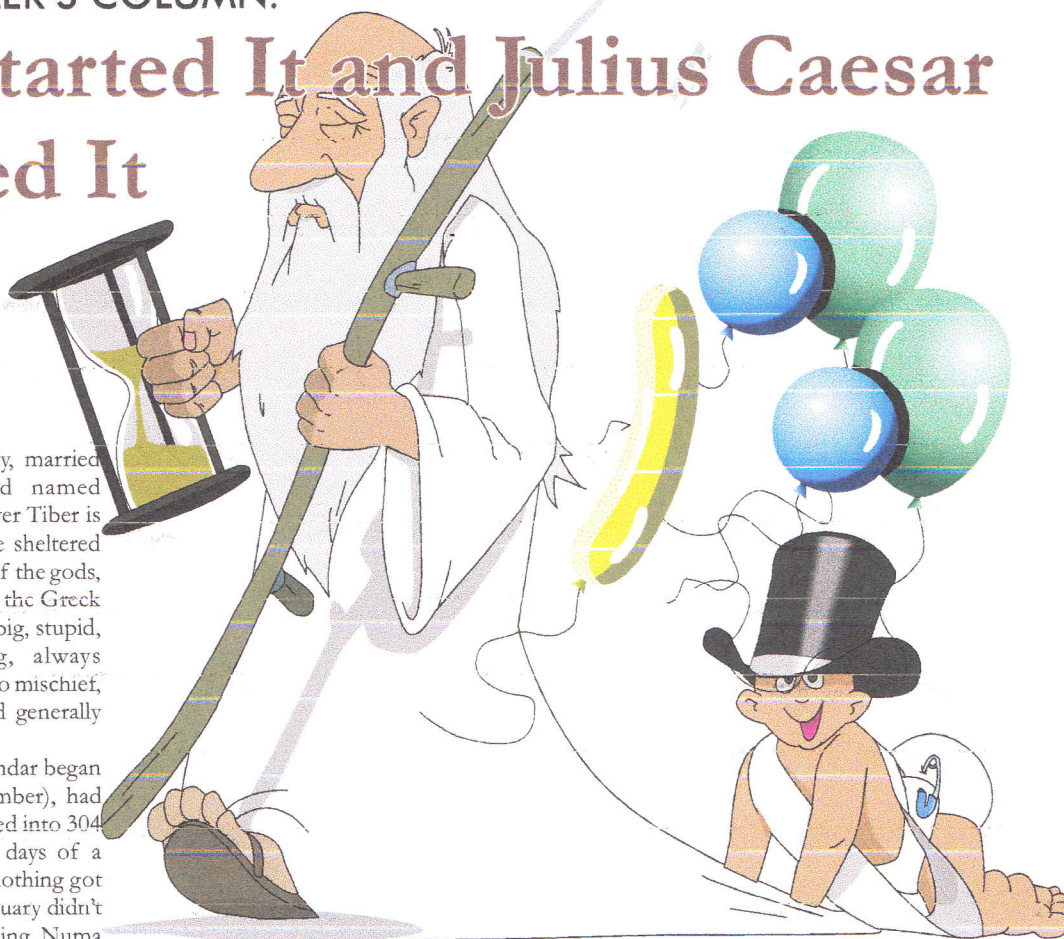
On the 10th of January, 1946, the United Nations General Assembly first met in London.

THE 15th honors Martin Luther King Jr. who had a dream in which the color of a man's skin was much, much less important than the color of his character. The bill establishing the holiday was signed on November 2, 1985, by President Ronald Reagan who was personally opposed to any bill singling one of the many individuals contributing to this great nation.

January 20 is the first day of Muharram of the Islamic calendar when fighting is looked down upon for the month. Muharram is one of the four sanctified months of year.

Gold was discovered in California by James Marshall on January 24, 1894, and those few tiny nuggets resulted in a half million people coming to California hoping to find their fortune.

Finally, on the 29th of January this year Shia Muslims spend the day mourning the martyrdom of Husayn Ibn Ali, the grand-son of Muhammad at the battle of Karbala in AD 680. ■



Julius Caesar