



WEST VALLEY  
BRANCH



VOLUME 3

SUMMER SOLSTICE

ISSUE 1



## The Ultimate Travel Story: Exploration of Space

Forty years ago, people around the world watched astronaut Armstrong's landing and heard: "That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind."

Through the decades astronauts have been changed by their trip into the dark eternal space. They are engineers, doctors, scientists, but not reporters or writers...until they come home and think about the dark mystery just beyond the blue skies of earth's atmosphere.

Most spacemen and women are changed forever. Several have become authors and lecturers.

Neil Armstrong reveals his moment of karma: *It suddenly struck me that that tiny pea, pretty and blue, was the Earth. I put up my thumb and shut one eye, and my thumb blotted out the planet Earth. I didn't feel like a giant. I felt very, very small.* The astronaut suddenly saw his world with a new perspective. And we looked over his shoulder at Earthrise and were startled at the beauty of our world, and the miracle of life in a huge impassive universe.

Today we keep tabs on the Space Station, an outpost of science and discovery. The work done in those close

quarters, the accomplishments of Hubble and innumerable satellites, deserve our praise and applause.

Modern Americans await more spellbinding moments from space to appear on their slim line TV screens. They desire a space program that will focus on new discoveries, explore the limits of existence, and ... touch the edge of eternity.

And many of us greatly hope that someday, a poet will make the trip into the vast dark mystery of space, look around and tell us what he sees. Engage!

- K.H.



The green grass  
of the Earth  
is glittering in the  
limitless  
darkness of space.

*Tanka poetry translated  
from the Japanese, written  
by astronaut  
Koichi Watata, 2000*

## In Focus Editor Wins 2009 Jack London Award

Amid enthusiastic applause at our June meeting, a surprised Kathy Highcove, *In Focus* editor, was presented with the Jack London Award for exemplary service to our CWC/West Valley branch. She joined our fledgling branch at the beginning stages to help, and she stayed on to support us in any way she could. She served as publicity chairperson and advertised us online and in city and local papers. Before becoming *In Focus* editor, she contributed to it frequently as well as writing a regular monthly column.

"Whenever we were in a tight spot, Kathy was always the first one to say 'I'll do it,'" said president Dave Wetterberg in making the presentation. "I knew I could depend on her to fill in at a moment's notice whether it was to take minutes at a Board meeting, write about a guest speaker, do a spotlight column about a member, or anything else. When we needed a newsletter editor right away ... pronto ... an inexperienced, enthusiastic Kathy said, 'I'll do it,' and filled the spot with our beautiful monthly newsletter."

*Editor's Note:  
My thanks to  
Dave and the  
Board for their  
support while I  
have learned  
the ropes in  
my new role as  
Editor.*



After the presentation, Kathy was joined for a photo session with past award winners Dave Wetterberg, Betty Freeman, Judy Presnall, Yolanda Fintor, Ken Wilkins.





The big day finally arrived! As the UPS truck drove away, Amy Berger opened the first box and lifted out a copy of *The Twenty Year Itch; Confessions of a Corporate Warrior*. (1999) Her very own self-published book! Berger inhaled the new scent of a newly printed page, lightly traced the title with her finger-tips, listened as the pages flipped, and she knew – with all her senses – that her dream of being a published author was a reality. But...after this moment of triumph, businesswoman Berger knew she needed to get revved up again for the next stage of self-publication: marketing the book.

At our June meeting, Berger presented her own five point plan for self-publication. First and foremost, a writer must feel **PASSION** to get motivated and write the book. Berger got up early before going to work, wrote a section of her book, and then did a nine to five stint in the corporate world.

Berger turned her attention to the book marketing game: "I really wanted to write that book, so I made time and did it. I was determined!"

After several rounds of careful editing, the manuscript was ready for **PUBLICATION**. She researched at

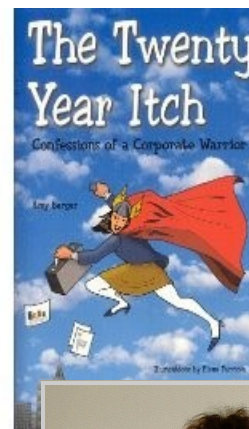
the library and from website sources on the Net. On this topic, Berger passed on a few pointers to our members, "Do your homework and research different ways to publish. Learn how to get a bar code, find an illustrator, and set a realistic price."

New writers must **PERSEVERE**: Call book stores and ask to show the community person a copy. Go to trade shows and talk to everyone you can buttonhole. Speak to clubs and always have a load of books in your trunk. Visit the art departments of the local colleges and advertise for an illustrator among the student population. Hit the road and market your book, advised salesperson Berger.

But be **PRACTICAL**, Berger cautioned. A garage full of unsold books is definitely not the way to go. Find effective ways to **PROMOTE** your book.

"Honk your own horn," motivational type speaker Berger emphasized.

Hopefully, the passionate persistent writer who perseveres will publish, and if practical to boot, will **PROFIT** in some way from the experience - the **sixth P**, a few canny listeners thought out loud.



Speaker and author  
Amy Berger

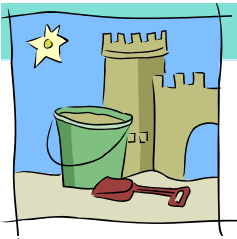
Berger's basic message to our group of CWC/WV writers: The author who diligently networks and makes new contacts in the publication circles will reap many benefits and **SELL THE SELF-PUBLISHED BOOK** temporarily stored in the garage or an extra bedroom. Clear that space with Amy Berger's five point plan.

Eds Note: Berger's *What to Do When You're Awake: An Insomniac's Guide to the Night* was completed in 2001.

## Bar Code Information from Self –Published Max Schwartz

I acquired my first ISBN and Bar Code for the books I had written and self-published over five years ago. I first applied for a Standard Address Number (SAN) which was assigned to me as a self-publisher. This unique identification number was to be used in the book publishing and selling industry. SAN then sent me an ISBN Log Book that listed ten consecutive ISBN numbers for my first and future books. After each ISBN number I wrote the book's title and publishing date, and returned the log. Then I ordered an EAN Bar Code film made for each ISBN I was assigned, and used this film on the cover of the book. For possible updates on the bar-code process, I recommend that writers contact the Library of Congress, ISBN -SAN@Bowker.com, or Bookland EAN Bar Code. - M. S.

## President's Message



I hope you're enjoying the summer in spite of the heat. Some of us have kept busy during the break with branch activities.

Our critique groups continue to meet bi-monthly at their various homes. At present we have four groups. Our newest has been meeting since April and specializes in fiction and nonfiction.

Three of our members, Leslie Kaplan, Lillian Rodich, and Bill Hitchins, devoted many of their hours working on an anthology of our writing to enjoy in September. Kathy Highcove, newsletter editor and Jack London Award winner, has prepared this off-season *In Focus* for us, and she has some challenging and creative ideas for future issues.

Webmaster David Burr remains on-call keeping our website current. Dave also maintains the Central Board website, which serves the other sixteen state branches. Photographer and sound man Ken Wilkins assures me that he's keeping his camera dusted off and ready to go at a moment's notice.

June's election brought our Board of Directors some wonderful new additions. Sheila Moss, VP Membership, is receiving your renewal checks and looking to sign up some new members. Yolanda Fintor, VP Programs, has already signed up our first guest speaker and has a list of inspiring others on hand. Jay Zukerman, treasurer, has the checkbook at his side, and secretary Danielle Ste. Just has all her pencils sharpened. We will meet in mid-August to plan for the coming year.

Our next general membership meeting comes on Saturday, September 5 at 1:15 p.m. at the Katzenberg Plaza on the beautiful grounds of the Motion Picture and Television Fund residence in Woodland Hills. Our speaker will be Casey Wilson, freelance writer, photographer, and current Central Board President. We continue to be grateful to Betty Freeman and the staff of MPTV for their generosity in allowing us to meet on their grounds.

Time flies. September is right around the corner. I'm looking forward to seeing you and starting up again if I survive the Valley heat.

## Help Us Plan 2009- 2010 Speaker Slate

To help us develop the kind of programs you would like to have for the coming year, please check those that are of interest to you. If you have other suggestions please express them below under Comments.

I prefer speakers who address these areas of interest:

- ☐ Fiction: mystery, romance, science fiction
- ☐ Non-fiction: essays, travel, memoirs, reviews,
- ☐ Poetry
- ☐ Children's Literature
- ☐ Playwriting
- ☐ Screenwriting
- ☐ Self-publishing
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Writing queries, proposals
- ☐ Process of submitting a manuscript
- ☐ Time for networking

Panel of experts (could be editor, agent, publicity, marketing) to participate in a round table discussion allowing the audience a question-and-answer time.

Workshop type where everyone participates in a writing exercise.

A panel of members who have been published and share what they've learned about finding an agent, publisher, working with an editor, marketing, etc.

Please print this out, check the boxes that interest you and give to Yolanda Fintor at the June meeting or mail to:

Yolanda Fintor  
18633 Gledhill Street  
Northridge, CA 91324  
[yfintor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:yfintor@sbcglobal.net)

Comments:





To review ... Last month in Part One I warned not to use a comma just because you feel that a comma "belongs there" or because you detect some kind of a "hesitation" in that part of the sentence. Go by the rules. And whenever you're in doubt and you can't remember the rule, leave the comma out. You'll be right more times than you're wrong.

## Introductory Expressions

Use a comma after introductory expressions like *yes*, *no*, *oh*, and *well*.

*Yes, Jim is applying for a scholarship.*

*Well, he probably won't get it.*

## Confusing Sentence Parts

Use a comma to separate sentence parts that might otherwise cause confusion.

*Whenever possible, alternatives should be considered.*

## Modifiers

Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that modify the same noun.

*Marci got a new, challenging job.*

## Repeated Words

Use a comma to separate repeated words.

*Whomever she loved, loved her back.*

## Dates

Use commas before and after the year when the year is used in combination with the month and the day.

*The club moved on October 1, 2008, and began with a new enthusiasm.*

But don't use commas when just the month and year are given.

*The last time we saw him was May 2007.*

## Addresses

Use a comma between the city and the state, but don't use commas after the parts of the address and don't use a comma between the state and the zip code.

*Andy Griffith*

*29 Maple Avenue*

*Mayberry, South Carolina 56034*

## Local Hero - Norm

Norman Molesko was named "Featured Writer of the Month" by the Senior Citizens Section, City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation & Parks. A public notice of his award appeared in the July 1, 2009 issue of the *Senior Moments* Newsletter.

Also on May 8, 2009, Molesko was designated as "Poet Laureate" for the California Retired Teachers Association, San Fernando Valley Division, by the Board.



Leslie Kaplan, Lillian Rodich, and Bill Hitchins have been hard at work on our anthology this summer, trying to have it ready for publication and distribution early in the fall. They assure us that everyone who submitted something will be represented with at least one piece, perhaps more.

Earlybird orders are being accepted now for \$10 a copy. This pre-paid \$10 offer is good until September. After September the price will be \$12 a copy, so get your pre-paid checks in now.

Fill out the order form below and send it with a check payable to CWC/West Valley Anthology to Leslie Kaplan

5001 Orrville Ave.

Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# of copies \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ total amount\*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Quantity orders of 10 or more are \$8.50/ copy.

Support our branch. Don't miss out! Order extras for gifts. Your family and friends will treasure them.

## September Issue of *In Focus*

In September the pencils are sharpened, and all over the world, the young and old begin another year of scholarship and discovery.

Similarly, our membership regroups to learn new things, try out new ideas and welcome new speakers to the Katzenberg Room.

I look forward to new submissions to this newsletter and the September theme—because I like themes—will be discoveries, tales of a new experiences and what was learned.

Sharpen your pencils, turn on the Mac and the PC—start composing!

- K.H.

## An Interview with Kathy Highcove

### Have you lived in Los Angeles your whole life?

No. I was born in Eugene, Oregon and grew up in that state. As a result, I have little tolerance for rain storms of any length or cold days at the beach. After college I spent some time helping in Harlan County KY grade schools as a Teacher Corps intern and I learned to appreciate blue grass music and the unique American culture of the Appalachian Mountains. I came to Los Angeles in the early seventies and taught school in the barrio of East LA and then the San Fernando Valley. And here I have been ever since.

### Were there any significant events that shaped your life in that time?

My life changed drastically about fifteen years ago when I had a severe attack of multiple sclerosis. I had various kinds of nerve damage and became legally blind as a result of the attack. I - who had enjoyed 60/40 vision before my illness, suddenly couldn't read without thick glasses, couldn't drive a car or visit friends, or drive to work. I had little energy and lots of depression.

### That's terrible! What did you do?

To find release from isolation, I began my recovery by relearning the Internet, the computer keyboard and format commands, and I began to write essays, articles, poetry...anything that would help me relearn writing skills. Slowly, much of my sight returned and the writing took much of my attention. Writing restored my interest in living and helped me heal. I've written many times about the connection between my creative writing and my health.

### How did you manage to get through it all?

I wrote a lot and sent things out and around. I found publication the biggest thrill ever. And I took several poetry courses taught by local poet Nan Hunt who was once in CWC/SFV. I learned that through skillful writing I could still have an effect on the world - touch hearts and minds and all that stuff. In other words, I learned to communicate effectively from my home office.



President Dave Wetterbert and Kathy Highcove pose with the Jack London plaque.

### Did you have a mentor in the beginning?

Of sorts: I took writing classes at Pierce College while I was in remission and learned of the CWC/SFV from Joan Jones, a CWC member and an instructor there. I started visiting meetings at Fallbrook Square, joined the SFV branch and remained a member all through those moves after the Mall closed its doors.

### How did you end up as the editor of our newsletter In Focus, which, in addition to all your other contributions to our branch, led to the Jack London Award?

When the split came from SFV, I decided that I would help start the new branch in the West Valley. I signed up for publicity and volunteered to write a column on our guest speakers. When our last editor resigned, I realized that I wanted to try editing the newsletter. A perfect opportunity. I find editing quite a challenge, and I continue to learn with every issue, but I enjoy the new form of creativity. I appreciate the opportunity to read the stories written by our members and try to find attractive ways to present their work. A labor of love, I think it's called.

### Do you continue to enjoy being In Focus editor?

Oh, yes. I keep in touch with the other editors of the CWC and plan to "borrow" articles from our sister branches every issue. I like a wide exchange of information and I think that sharing our ideas on the facets of a writing career is a way to nourish the California writer - one of Jack London's main reasons for the first gatherings of the California Writers Club.

- D. Wetterberg

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

The 2009-2010 slate of presenters is off to a good start. In September we will be featuring [Casey Wilson](#) who happens to be president of the California Writers Club. His writing experience includes working as a news reporter, freelance writer and photographer. Casey will enlighten us on the techniques of interviewing interesting people; how to gain access; how to draft questions and how to incorporate insights gained from interviews into that novel or short story you are writing. More about him in the next issue.

Our October speaker will be [Kelly Lange](#), former anchor for NBC. After retiring from broadcasting, Ms. Lange turned to writing mystery stories. She has had five books published and will share with us what motivated her to transition from newscaster to author. Like the rest of us, her growth as a writer came slowly and was a result of taking writing classes and attending conferences. Now, it's all about promotion.

We are working to bring interesting programs to our members and are in the process of contacting prospective presenters to fill out our calendar for the rest of this year and year 2010.

- Yolanda Fintor

It's summer time in Atlantic City, New Jersey. That's where the Philadelphian's vacation... away from the heat of the city. It's a place with wide beaches along the Atlantic Ocean, a great endless boardwalk, rolling chairs, shops, amusements, Steel Pier, Heinz Pier, good hot dogs, soft serve custard, and lots of flirting for teen age boys and girls on the beaches. At night they congregate at designated hangouts on the boardwalk.

I am one of those teens... and a fashion designer of sorts. So...I decide to design my swim suit for this season by copying the flowered sarong that Dorothy Lamour wears in one of her island movies. My mom and aunt are the sewers and I am the idea's Person. The sarong has a one shoulder affect. The left shoulder is bare. The finished product is both original and beautiful. I can't wait to wear it on the beach.

The main thing, besides looking like Dorothy Lamour, is to attain the darkest sun tan possible. As I lie there on a summer blanket, a blond Greek Adonis kneels down beside me and says,

"I'd like to give you a free sample of my special formula suntan oil and I guarantee that you will have the deepest, darkest, fastest golden tan by the second day on the beach. May I?"

Before I can respond, he proceeds to pour some amber colored oil into the palms of his hands and ever so gently rubs this lotion all over the exposed parts of my body. My back, shoulders, arms, legs, upper chest and...the tip of my nose. What a sensual massage! I feel... a sensation... like... what it would be like to fall passionately in love.

Just at this moment...a beach patrol guard approaches and spoils the feeling I'm feeling as he says to me, "Put your shoulder strap up." Being so proud of my one shoulder sarong I say with a smile on my face, "What shoulder strap?" Well...he doesn't seem to appreciate my originality or my response. What came next is...

"If you don't cover that shoulder, you will have to leave the beach, I'll issue a fine, or arrest you for indecent exposure." (These were pre-bikini days. Can you imagine that?) Soo...I got kicked off of the beach for (gulp!) INDECENT EXPOSURE!



The handsome lotion man, with a canvas shoulder bag containing his immediate tan sun oil slung over his broad, brown, well developed shoulder, offers to walk me back to my hotel. Fortunately, I did pack last years ordinary one piece swim suit.

"My name's Sammy!!...what's yours?"

"I'm Essie." My room is just a short block from the beach. He waits in my room while I change in the bathroom. It is then that my curious mind begins to think of questions. Somehow, just looking at him makes me stutter. Before I could engage him in conversation, he's ready to tell me all about his suntan lotion enterprise. He asks, "May I use your sink? I want to show you something." So I watch this young entrepreneur take out a bottle of baby oil and a bottle of iodine. He mixes this concoction together, creating an amber colored oil. This he says will attract the sun and add Indian brown to your skin at the same time.

"Sammy, what a great invention! You should bottle it!"

We both laugh.

"I've already brought empty bottles with me to refill and I've been selling them to the girls on the beach every day for the week since I've been here. I'm making enough expenses to pay for my summer vacation." I look at him and think, I wonder if he rubs all of the girls down with a free sample first. The girls must love it. At the same time...he must be enjoying his fringe benefits.

Well, we get to be a summer romance as we meet each day on the beach. One night we stay on the beach all night...sleeping together as our young bodies explore each other. But we are both innocent and remain that way. It wasn't time yet for either one of us.

Well... his promise that I will have the darkest most beautiful brown body in just a few days comes true. Now I

look more like Lena Horne than like Dorothy Lamour. This evening we decide to go to Club Harlem, a famous night club at the seashore. He sells enough lotion and rubs down enough girls...to afford it.

In club Harlem the management thinks I am a light skinned black girl and treats me like a soul sister. The host at the door greets me with "Say baby." Then he looks at Sammy remarking, "You got a fine lookin' woman there." It's a memorable experience... to go along with this conception and be a part of this community for one evening. I love it!

As for Sammy Lotion, he has become famous on the beach for his amber colored oil massages. The girls love him and so do I. But like all good things, the summer comes to an end. He goes back to Baltimore, I go home to Philly. We talk on the phone a few times but never see each other again.

I shall never forget this young man who gave me his touch... a beautiful tan ... his free samples... his beautiful body... and... the day I got kicked off of the beach for INDECENT EXPOSURE.

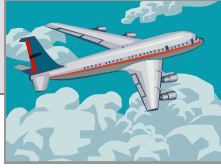
And I still wonder if his real name is **SAMMY LOTION?**

- Leslie Kaplan



# Summer Getaway

- K. Highcove



"Harold! Is this plane losing power? The engine sounds different. I hate to fly!"

"Calm down Carol. We just descended a few thousand feet. The pilot cut back power for our approach. Five minutes to Dulles."

Carol closed her eyes and listened to the high-pitched whine. *Even the middle seat is too close to those turbines. That's a weird whine. We're in trouble. I know it.*

Her eyes flew open when footsteps rushed by. *Was that a stewardess? Why was she in such a rush? And...I hear someone mumbling a prayer.*

"Harold, is someone saying prayers?"

Harold shrugged and rolled his eyes.

"That's me, sorry," said a petite brunette in the aisle seat. "I always start a rosary when my plane's landing. Hope I didn't bother you."

"Oh please pray! I'm not Catholic but I'm for prayer. Everyone here should pray. Landings are always dangerous. I read that somewhere."

"Carol, there... is... no... danger. Stop it," Harold hissed in her right ear.

Her other seatmate reached over and grasped Carol's left hand.

"Let's form a prayer partnership. Together we'll pray this plane down to a safe landing."

Carol gave the small hand a squeeze of assent. Both women started when a loud thud came from beneath the floorboards.

"What was that? Harold!"

"The landing gear just dropped. We can't land without wheels, Carol. You always forget about the landing gear. God give me strength."

Runway lights raced by the window. "Full of grace," her neighbor softly intoned. Carol kept a tight hold on her prayer partner's hand.

*Here it comes.* Carol tensed and gritted her teeth... whump! The craft braked and rolled, then coasted smoothly toward the terminal. The cabin lights blinked on. Music piped through overhead speakers.

"We did it, friend," said her neighbor. Carol let go.

## Summer Girl



He thought back often to the first he could remember her, wondering if it might have made the difference, sent him in a different direction had she only cared and found how valuable he could be, if  
given the chance.

But they were only ten then and he did not know how to tell her or how to say the things that lay snagged in his throat and scared him hot and brought feelings he knew he could never tell, then, or later, if  
given the chance.

He looked out through the cold steel, down the dark, down the noise, into the only light, past neighbors dressed like him in wrinkled denims, hanging their hope on a miracle or taking the other turn back when, if  
given the chance.



- Dean Stewart





## MY SUMMERS IN NEW JERSEY



- Sylvia Molesko

I remember best, that part of my childhood spent in New Jersey. We spent all of school vacations there. My Dad brought us in the automobile and came on many, but not all, weekends, till it was time to go back to New York.



Bernie and Sylvia  
Sibling team

My Dad built the bungalow, which consisted of a front porch enclosed with screens a kitchen with an ice box, kerosene stove, and sink, but no

running water or electricity; and two back rooms which were bedrooms. My brother, Bernie, slept in the smaller bedroom and my Mom and Dad had a double bed and I had a twin bed in the second, larger bedroom. Did I forget to mention the bathroom? No I didn't forget, there wasn't any bathroom, only an "outhouse," which is a small building built far away from the house, with a cut out wooden seat over a deep hole. If you have ever been camping you'll know what I mean. It really didn't smell too badly, because every time we used it, we would pour some lye into it also, and that seemed to take care of the odor. It was made out of birds-eye pine, and sure enough, as you were sitting there, you could pick out pictures of bird's heads, and other things as well. There were usually some spider webs, but that was O.K. as they would control the fly population.

We lived off of a narrow dirt road with weeds growing down the middle, between the tire tracks. It was about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile long. It was named Sylvia Lane, after the three cousins with that same name.

I remember so very many things that happened during these treasured times. My first 'peak experience' was spending what seemed like hours watching this creature that was much longer than my pointing finger, and was a beautiful green, and stood up on its hind legs, with its front arms folded in prayer. It had huge eyes set in a pointy face. Every time I moved my head, its eyes followed me. We were locked there gazing at each other until it turned too dark to see. That was my first encounter with a praying mantis. Another time I saw this big furry red ant, and started petting or poking it gently with a small stick. I was so surprised when it hissed! It was letting me know that it was aware that I was hurting it, and the hiss was its way of communicating with me. I hadn't thought of an insect as this kind of 'being' before.

I loved to wander through the strip of forest by myself, looking for plants like reeds, acorns, skunk cabbage, mushrooms, and a small white plant that looked like a white stem and an inverted bell. That last one was strange, because it had no color nor leaves at all. If you followed the road a bit further in, past the strip of forest, it led to a large field, with apple trees and blueberry bushes. We especially liked the blueberry bushes. I remember one time, when Mama sent Bernie and me into the field to pick two pots of blueberries. We found some bushes and proceeded to pick, nibble, pick, snack, pick, and eat until it was time to go back. Then we picked some more and started back home, taking one-for-you-one-for-me almost all the way home. When we had almost arrived, we looked into our pots and rattled the few berries that were left. We decided that Mama would be less mad if we told her that we couldn't find any, not realizing that our blue lips and blue tongues were a give-away. Looking back, I guess it didn't

matter too much to Mama, who was able to relax all day while we were gone.

We did a lot of fun things during the summers. They helped me grow up to be the person that I am. On hot days we would pump water into big galvanized metal tubs and have water fights, running all around the bungalow, throwing water at each other using cups and pots. We used rain water, caught in these same tubs, to wash our hair. To take a shower (remember, there was no running water) we had an outside building, about 3 feet square, on top of which was set a large tub which caught rain water which was then heated by the sun, or else we pumped pails of water and carried them up the ladder to fill the big tub. A shower-head was somehow attached, and when you pulled on a string, the warm water showered down on you. What fun to do this once every week or so!

There were some trees in back of the bungalow. They were quite large. A hammock was hung between two of them, and a wooden swing that Dad made from a piece of 2 by 6 board was hung from a big strong branch, about twelve feet up. What fun to pump that swing as high as I could, till the tips of my toes could just touch a leaf on a high outreaching branch, or to stand up and pump really high. Once, when my Dad's family was visiting, I asked my Zayda to lay down in the hammock. I then started rocking him, gently at first, but got carried away, I guess, because he rocked high, tipped over, and fell out. Then he chased me into the forest. Boy, was he angry! I didn't come out until after they left



Young Sylvia at  
the cabin





was he angry! I didn't come out until after they left that time. Maybe that's part of where I got my reputation for being a brat.



Gathering of the clan for summer fun.

Sometimes, Mama and Bernie and I would walk up to the ice cream place called Hilltop. Usually we all went with Mama's sisters, Anna and Dora, and both Sylvias. So Dora's daughter, Sylvia, was called Tzipka, Anna's daughter Sylvia kept her full name, and I was called Tzipkala. When we got to Hilltop we bought triple cones, which had 3 round openings in the shape of a triangle on top, allowing us to order 3 small scoops of ice cream. Heading back down the road, Bernie would always finish his ice cream first, I would lick mine all over and then tell him how yummy it was. I teased him a lot. Maybe that's where I got part of my reputation for being a brat.

When Daddy came on some weekends we would do special things. Sometimes we would all go swimming in Watchung Public Pool. Once, when they had a slide that went into the water, my brother promised to catch me when I slid down. Did he? No. I was sliding down and saw him look away to talk to some kids. In I splashed and went down at least twice and almost drowned. To this day I can't swim, and can't stand water splashed on my face.

We dug a garden most summers, and planted radishes, carrots, squash, corn and lettuce. Sometimes the cutest bunnies would come and eat some. We also visited some local farms. I had milk 'direct from the cow', but didn't like it because it was still warm and smelled of cow. The cats and kittens liked it though, when it got squirted right at their open mouths. I have a picture taken on a pig farm. I used to say, "This is me, guess which one is my brother."

When it came time to sell the bungalow, Bernie and I tried to sabotage that project. When people came to see it, we would tell them about the 'cute mousies' that we caught in the kitchen, and that the mosquitoes that were really not too bad, some of the time, as we scratched our heads and arms and legs.

One year, when I was about half a dozen years young, all the little kids went down into Aunt Minnie's cellar to play. Robert (pronounced Wobbert) and I dressed up as bride and groom, and Bernard performed the wedding ceremony. So I was first married at the early age of six. At the end of the summer, we both cried when we had to say goodbye. My next boyfriend was Ralph, but that's another story...



## VOICE OF THE SEA

The sea speaks to me in twilight,  
a red sun painting beach sands  
my love and I sitting close,  
wrapped in a blanket of silence,  
savoring the drama of sky and surf  
and echoes of waves caressing the shore.

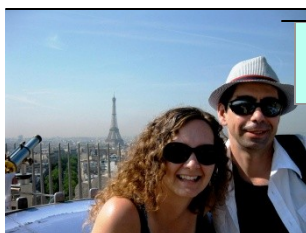
The sea speaks to me in noon's warmth  
and laughter of my childhood,  
dancing in foam,  
building sand castles,  
shouting at breaking waves  
watching sea life bubble up  
through wet sand.

The sea speaks to me in morning's tranquility,  
in mist during long walks along the shore,  
water lapping at my bare ankles,  
depression eased into fog.

The sea speaks to me of strength and continuity,  
my children baking in the sun,  
playing tag with the ocean,  
their children's laughter an echo not yet heard  
among the crashing waves.

- Lillian Rodich





## "Paris in the summer!"

Danielle Ste. Just and George Gomes da Costa. in Paris

The accompanying reaction to my travel plans was either wistful jealousy or smug I-know-better attitude. A year and a half ago, I conceived of a trip to Paris in July. My birthday happens to fall in July, and having never been to

Europe I blithely decided, *What the heck, I'm going!*

Everyone's reaction neatly divided into the two camps – either jealousy mingled with good wishes, or a smug conviction that I'd hate Paris – and Europe in general – in the summer. My response to the first group was that I'd take lots of pictures and tell them everything about my trip when I came back. My reaction to the second group was slightly less forthright. I nodded and smiled while they told me how rotten Paris becomes in the summer, meanwhile I was thinking, *How on earth could I go to Paris and hate it? What are you thinking?!?*

Well, I did go to Paris this July. It was warm, and muggy, true. Lots of tourists clogged all the sights, myself included. However, my boyfriend George and I had a magnificent time. Rain, that bane of all European travel, didn't dampen us literally or figuratively. We were able to plan our days with no regard to umbrellas, rain hats, or strategic paths chosen to allow us to duck into a café within a moment's notice to shelter from a rainstorm. We were able to maximize our time because of the extraordinarily long, luxurious days. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, for example – our first day in Paris – the sun rose at 5:50 am and lingered in the sky until 9:58 pm. That's 16 hours and eight minutes of luxurious sunshine! And we took full advantage of it.

We got up each morning, slathered on sunscreen, and left our rental apartment early. We drank in the beautiful city all day, then lingered at restaurant sidewalk tables while the sunset painted the sky pink, orange and purple. We picnicked in the *Parc du Champ de Mars* and watched while schoolchildren ran laughing through the sprinklers the city put out. We enjoyed everything that Paris is.

Perhaps we wouldn't have foregone the trip up to the top of the Eiffel Tower if there hadn't been such a long line, and perhaps we wouldn't have gotten quite as tan if we'd gone in the spring or fall. But I look good with a tan! Especially a European tan.

This trip was magical. It confirmed a long-held belief that sometimes you have to do something just for yourself, not listening to anyone else. You have to seize the time you are given.

And what the heck, you have to go to Paris in the summer!

- Danielle Ste. Just



At the Orangerie Tearoom

## London Lecturer

This summer I attended an international educators conference at the University of London.

I am a member of a group of international foreign language educators. Once a year we meet in various university locations. In the past we met in Chicago, New York, Palo Alto, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Sydney, and this year we met in London. It was a gathering of over 250 people who exchanged literary, cultural, and pedagogic information via lectures and seminars.

Of course there were a lot of personal exchanges among the attendees. For the first time since I joined the group I was among the presenters. My presentation (which dealt with using technology in the lecture hall) was received by my colleagues very favorably. I am already looking forward to the next gathering. During our free time we visited the Fine Arts Museum and the British Museum. We saw a matinee musical in the West End of London, and we rode the underground.

The whole trip was a very big success. This picture was taken of me as I was one of the lecturers at the conference separately.

- Marganit Lish



Excerpt from  
Di's  
travel diary



Di and Bill Johnson in Ireland

### Best of Ireland & Northern Journey 2009

*Friday, July 10th*

The Waterford factory is no longer here.  
They still sell some pieces for prices quite dear.

Irish immigrants and prisoners, too,  
Set sail from Cobh to cross the seas blue.  
Bound for the States, and Canada, north,  
Or Australia's shores, as ordered by courts.

It's last port of Titanic on its fateful trip,  
Where hundreds died on the "Unsinkable Ship".

*Saturday, July 11th*

This morning to Blarney, to kiss the famous stone.  
Climb round and round up—then lay all the way down!  
The rain starts falling as we leave Blarney.  
It falls, and it falls, all the way to Killarney.

Muckross House is lovely to have seen.  
It was all spruced up, fit for a queen.  
Victoria's visit bankrupted the owners.  
Her two-day stay was really a downer.

*Sunday, July 12th*

Today we drive the Ring of Kerry,  
With sunny skies making us merry.  
Thatched-roof homes of the Village Bog,  
Then a sheep-herding show by two very smart dogs.  
Beautiful scenery of mountains and lakes,  
Makes happy shutterbugs, as photos we take.

- Diana Johnson

## Red-Tailed Hawk

With broad wings and fan-shaped tail  
up high the red-tailed hawk will sail.  
He circles all around the sky,  
keeps watch below with his keen eye.  
When rabbit, mole, or mouse he spies,  
he plummets down and grabs his prize.



## Mockingbird

Mockingbirds are champs at singing;  
their notes set the region ringing.  
When they open up their beaks,  
out come whistles, cackles, squeaks.  
They will mimic sound with glee:  
barks or trills or melody.

In garden, field, or city park,  
often they'll sing after dark.

- Erica Stux



Poems from *The Wonder of Wings* book for  
children available on Amazon.com



**warm days**  
**cool words**

## Summer Day

Lying on a bed, countless years ago.  
Air-drying,  
after a hot soak.  
Sun-stung skin — redolent of coconut and citronella.  
Air caressing — warm enough to not be there at all.  
A sip of orange juice and rum,  
Icy, sharp, and sweet.

Idle, but not bored.  
Alone, but not bereft.  
Bare, but not exposed.  
Ripe, but not decayed.  
Young, but not naïve.

Curiously aware  
I was happy.

- Ray Malus



## Summer Haiku

The morning sun turns  
My skin into reddish scars  
From immense distances

Behold the bird sings  
Responding listener's are quiet  
Contemplating navels

The Silver trails of snails  
Lace tight the edges of the night  
While my beloved sleeps

The bird in that tree  
Sings her song so sweetly to  
Awaken golden thoughts



The Golden fish swims up the stream  
The frog jumps in the water  
Summer once more comes

- Art Yuwiler



## TWITTER ANYONE?

I do not twitter nor do I tweet  
For the thoughts I have are not complete.  
Perhaps I'm too much like the snail,  
Since I've yet to master my email.  
From the latest fad I will retreat.

- Ken Wilkins





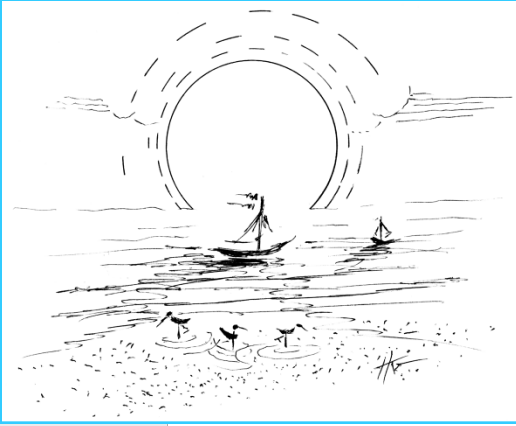
## Summer ends

Summer ends,  
and with it,  
friends have sailed  
as well.  
(Don't ask me for the reasons.)  
I shouldn't be surprised,  
I know. It is  
the ebb and flow  
of seasons.  
(Smell the rain?  
The wind is from the east.)  
It comes in sympathy  
with tears  
we shed for those  
we'll never see again.  
(Not in the here, at least.)

I search for meaning  
in the words  
they leave behind.  
In pictures...  
echoes...  
in my mind.  
It's change, I know.  
It's change,  
and reason tells me  
all things end.

And yet, still  
yearning after  
love and friends,  
hearts  
will never  
comprehend  
why summer  
ends.

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hg.8.23.2004

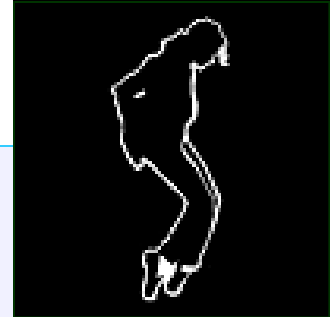


# moon walks

### Fast-Fading Fame

A celebrity passes, unexpected  
Crowds gather, memorials erected  
Sobbing fans come from afar  
Showing respect to a fallen star  
Time will fly at a rapid pace  
Few will remember the once popular face.

- Ken Wilkins



*Ground Control to Major Tom  
Your circuit's dead, there's something wrong  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you....*

*"Here am I floating round my tin can  
Far above the Moon  
Planet Earth is blue  
And there's nothing I can do"*

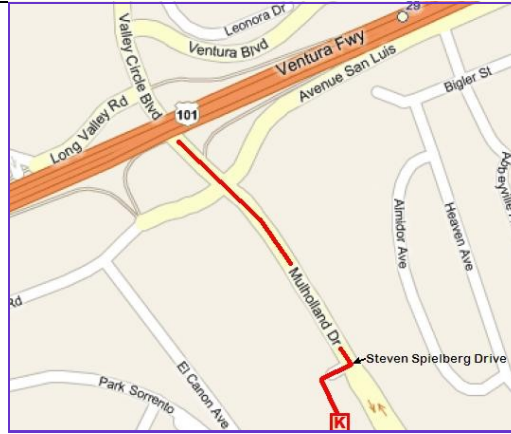
- David Bowie

*Excerpt from "Space Oddity"*





Planet of the Apes statue in the Roddy McDowall Memorial Rose Garden at the MPTF



From the 101 Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive. Travel south on Mulholland and turn right at Steven Spielberg Drive. Then turn left and follow the route to the large parking lot on the left for Villa Katzenberg. If you are stopped by the MPTF Security, tell the official that you are attending a CWC meeting.

### MEETINGS

The California Writers Club meets the first Saturday of the month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

#### Villa Katzenberg

23388 Mulholland

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

#### NEXT MEETING

Saturday, . 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

#### MAILING ADDRESS

c/o Dave Wetterberg, 23809 Friar Street

Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

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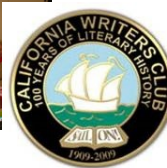
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### Submission Guidelines

1. Submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.
2. Keep prose short, between 200 and 400 words. Alert editor if work is longer.
3. Poems also should be short, approximately three to four stanzas.
4. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any work submitted. Space might be limited and the omission based on editing difficulties.
5. Editor reserves the right to correct grammatical or text typos not intentionally part of the creative presentation by the author.
6. Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.



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Chicago Manual of Style Online: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Lots of info here: <http://www.writing-world.com/index.shtml>

Dictionary: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

The Word Detective: <http://www.word-detective.com/>  
Online Thesaurus: <http://thesaurus.reference.com/>

Get some free business cards at <http://www.vistaprint.com>  
Writer's Digest: <http://www.writersdigest.com>

OWL, the Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Grammar Errors: <http://www.grammarerrors.com/siteindex.html>

Guide to Grammar and Writing: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index.htm> and the companion page, Principles of Composition: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/composition.htm>

How To Do It Frugally: <http://www.carolynhowardjohnson.redenginepress.com/>  
Over 800 pages about writing: <http://www.write101.com/>  
Strunk and White online: <http://www.bartelby.net/141/>

Here is the entire volume in PDF format: <http://www.cs.vu.nl/~jms/doc/elos.pdf>

Find a summary of the rules here: [http://www.tcnj.edu/~penny/cmssc485/strunk\\_summary.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~penny/cmssc485/strunk_summary.html)

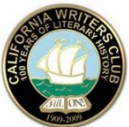
Writer's Digest 101 best sites for writers <http://www.writersdigest.com/101BestSites>

Extraordinary Literary Journeys: <http://www.inkwaterpress.com/index.php>

Adventures in Reading For Lovers of Fiction: <http://tristudio.com/index.html>

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