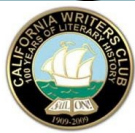




CWC Centennial



This year the California Writers Club celebrates its 100th birthday! With a membership of nearly 1200 across 17 branches, it is the largest writers organization in the state, and the oldest continuously active writer's organization in the nation. The Central Coast Writers branch of CWC received its charter in July 2002 and is proud to

represent the California Writers Club from San Jose to San Louis Obispo.

The California Writers Club grew out of the turn of the century literary movement in the San Francisco Bay area where the literary circle at the Coppia Club included Jack London, poet George Sterling and short story writer Herman Whitaker. From these informal gatherings came the Press Club of Alameda, a faction of which in 1909 formed the California Writers Club. Austin Lewis, an English civil

libertarian, was the first president. The Club incorporated in 1913, choosing as its motto "Sail On!" from Joaquin Miller's poem, "Columbus." The Club goal is to promote fellowship and personal and professional growth of writers.

Between 1912 and 1914, active membership grew from 60 to 118. Early honorary members included Joaquin Miller (Songs of the Sierra), environmentalist John Muir, Ina Coolbrith (first California poet laureate), and

Cont'd on page 3



CWC President Wilson Sept. Speaker

In 1993, after 37 years in the trenches working for the US Government, Casey Wilson changed careers to become a full-time freelance writer. "I figured," Wilson said, "with all the government reports I've written, I should be qualified to write great stuff for the fiction markets."

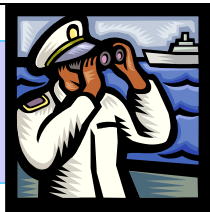
Since then, he has been moderately successful with non-fiction, collecting bylines from newspapers and magazines. In addition to many front-page, above-the-fold articles, he has written cover stories for national magazines. Along the way he created scripts and acted as production assistant for CWC/WV

two American Cancer Society public service announcements and narrated a third. "I was paid more as the production assistant than I got for the scripts," he said.

Wilson credits interviews with many interesting and informative people for his success. He has interviewed cops and crooks, admirals and sailors, congressmen and John Q. Public, millionaires and homeless. From those experiences he developed an interviewing workshop.

We welcome our State CWC President and September speaker to the Katzenberg Room.

Looking Forward to New Adventures



Welcome members new and old to our fourth year of the West Valley Branch of the California Writers Club.

I hope you're among those who sent in their checks already. If you're not, you can write one to CWC/West Valley and give it to Membership VP Sheila Moss at the coming meeting.

The beautiful room at the Katzenberg Villa is awaiting us, courtesy of Betty Freeman and the MPTV residence, cookies and lemonade on the table, Hedy Lamarr and Carol Lombard on the wall. VP/Programs Yolanda Fintor has already lined up some fine speakers. State President Casey Wilson starts it off. He's a world traveler, a freelancer writer-photographer with years of interesting experiences. And remember Kelly Lange, the television news lady? She'll be here in October. She writes mysteries now.

We elected a great Board of Directors at the June meeting. Our newsletter *In Focus* continues to charm its readers, and our website at cwcwestvalley.org is among the best in the state. We have an anthology — *Collage* — on the way, and we'll try to have it ready by the September meeting.

And besides all this good stuff, I get to see all my writing friends after a long, hot summer. See you then.

- Dave Wetterberg, CWC/WV Branch President



New Crew Comes on Board



Jay Zukerman is our new Treasurer. His job: keep track of our financial records and report to Central CWC every month.

On a recent sunny Saturday the CWC/WV Board met to look over plans for the next year. Four new members were welcomed by **President Dave Wetterberg**.

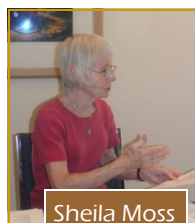


Jay Zukerman

Danielle Ste. Just has her lap top ready to take notes at our busy Board meetings. And she'll be busy keeping up with the projects and new ideas expressed by our new Vice-Presidents Sheila Moss and Yolanda Fintor.



Danielle Ste. Just



Sheila Moss

Sheila Moss is in charge of tracking Membership and **Yolanda Fintor has the heavy responsibility of providing interesting speakers** each month.

Our sincerest thanks to all Board officers.



Yolanda Fintor and Dave Wetterberg



Opportunity Knocks At A Workshop

- Lenora Smalley

One of the best ways to enhance your writing skills and take them to another level is to attend a writing conference. A conference can produce new ideas, jumpstart writer's block and impart inspiration.

Writer's conferences are offered throughout the year but there seem to be more available during the summer. You can find them in all writing magazines and websites especially *Poets and Writers Magazine*.

The well known Santa Barbara Writer's Conference was canceled this summer — partly because of the economy. Both the summer SBWC and the March Weekend of Poetry are moving next year to the beautiful **Hotel Mar Monte** on the beach in Santa Barbara, just a block or so from the old location.

The room rates are significantly less than at the previous location, but the hotel offers all the same amenities and has been recently renovated. This six-day summer conference will be June 17-23, 2010. Start thinking about attending it early — in 2009!

Meanwhile remember the CWC Peninsula's Jack London Conference comes up in October, and CWC Redwood's Conference, also in October. Check out the information on the California Writers Club state website at www.calwriters.org.

Keep in mind the CWC South Bay's East of Eden Conference, next September 2010. Having attended two years, I can recommend it highly. I will never forget eating breakfast in Steinbeck's boyhood home.

I attended a three day poetry workshop this summer. I learned that workshops truly can also inspire.

Ed's Note: Lenora's poem on page 8 was inspired by the Santa Barbara workshop.

Charles Fletcher Lummis. Jack London, an occasional speaker at the Club, and his friend George Sterling were also honorary members. In the 30's, historical novelist and feminist Gertrude Atherton (A Daughter of the Vine) and Kathleen Norris (Certain People of Importance) were admitted as honorary members.

Large banquets and elegant affairs characterized club activities in the 1920's and 1930's. In the early 1920's, Berkeley poet Charles Keeler (The Simple Home) served as president and encouraged more emphasis on poetry and dramatic arts. The Club expanded in Northern California during these decades.

The Club soon began publishing members' works. WEST WINDS, a hardcover collection of fiction illustrated by California artists, was published in 1914, and went into eight printings. Jack London and Rebecca N. Porter were among its contributors. WEST WINDS: A Book of Verse, came out in 1925, with poetry by Ina Coolbrith, George Sterling, Edwin Markham, Charles and Ormeida Keeler, and seventy other members. Six years later, WEST WINDS 111- A Book of Fiction, was published with contributions by Agnes Morley Cleveland (No Life for a Lady) and Charles Caldwell Dobie (San Francisco Tales). Other poetry collections followed during the 1930's.

The Club tradition of planting trees to honor California writers and poets began in 1930. The "Writers Memorial Grove" at Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland is on land which originally belonged to Miller, who dreamed of establishing a memorial for artists and writers there. The first trees planted honored Joaquin Miller, Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard (South Sea Idyls), Edward Roland Sill (A Fool's Prayer), Ina Coolbrith, Jack London, Mark Twain, Charles Fletcher Lummis, and Edwin Markham. The Berkeley Branch has since added trees in recognition of Dashiell Hammett, Gertrude Stein, and historians Will and Ariel Durant. In the 1940's, the site was named "Woodminster" and expanded by the addition of an amphitheater.

At the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island, the Club presented weekly literary talks which were well received. As a outgrowth of these literary events, the Club sponsored its first Writers Conference in Oakland in 1941. By the 1950's these educational meetings had become annual affairs. The location shifted from large auditoriums to college campuses in the 1960's - 1970's and then to the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula in 2000. Many branches sponsor their own conferences, workshops, and all have regular member programs.

Today, the nineteen California Writers Club branches and their members continue to "Sail On!" exploring new literary horizons.

Branches: Berkeley, Central Coast Writers, East Sierra, High Desert, Gold Country, Inland Empire, Marin, Mt Diablo, Orange County, Peninsula, Redwood, Sacramento, San Fernando Valley, South Bay and Writers of Kern (Bakersfield), Fremont, West Valley, Long Beach, and Tri-Valley

This history is found on CWC website www.calwriters.org

"A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read."

— Mark Twain

Columbus

BEHIND him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now we must pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
"Why, say, 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

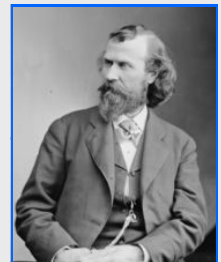
They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dead seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say" --
He said, "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck --
A light! a light! at last a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On!
sail on!"

**Joaquin Miller
1836–1913**

Poet, adventurer,
mining camp cook, lawyer,
judge, published author
and co-founder of CWC



Columbus was once learned by thousands of school children across the United States

Subject: Purple Prose



Purple Prose: Allegedly each year, English teachers from across the country submit their collections of actual analogies and metaphors found in high school essays. Here are the winners.....

1. Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master.



2. His thoughts tumbled in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without Cling Free.

3. He spoke with the wisdom that can only come from experience, like a guy who went blind because he looked at a solar eclipse without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it and now goes around the country speaking at high schools about the dangers of looking at a solar eclipse, without one of those boxes with a pinhole in it.

4. She grew on him like she was a colony of E. coli, and he was room-temperature Canadian beef.

5. She had a deep, throaty, genuine laugh, like that sound a dog makes just before it throws up.



6. Her vocabulary was as bad as, like, whatever.

7. He was as tall as a six-foot, three-inch tree.

8. The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated

because of his wife's infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge at a formerly surcharge-free ATM machine.

9. The little boat gently drifted across the pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn't.



10. McBride fell 12 stories, hitting the pavement like a Hefty bag filled with vegetable soup.

11. From the attic came an unearthly howl. The whole scene had an eerie, surreal quality, like when you're on vacation in another city and Jeopardy comes on at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30.

12. Her hair glistened in the rain like a nose hair after a sneeze.

13. The hailstones leaped from the pavement, just like maggots when you fry them in hot grease.

4. Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other



like two freight trains, one having left Cleveland at 6:36 p.m. traveling at 55 mph, the other from Topeka at 4:19 p.m. at a speed of 35 mph.

15. They lived in a typical suburban neighborhood with picket fences that resembled Nancy Kerrigan's teeth.

6. John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met.

17. He fell for her like his heart was a mob informant and she was the East River.

18. Even in his last years, Granddad had a mind like a steel trap, only one that had been left out so long, it had rusted shut.

19. Shots rang out, as shots are want to do.

20. The plan was simple, like my brother-in-law Phil. But unlike Phil, this plan just might work.



21. The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.

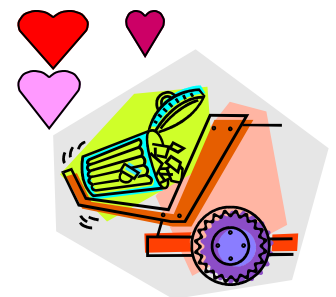


22. He was as lame as a duck. Not the metaphorical lame duck, either, but a real duck that was actually lame, maybe from stepping on a land mine or something.

23. The ballerina rose gracefully en Pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.

> 24. It was an American tradition, like fathers chasing kids around with power tools.

25. He was deeply in love. When she spoke, he thought he heard bells, as if she were a garbage truck backing up.



Three By Lillian Rodich

TEACHER CUTS CLASS

I snip black paper,
curves here, straight edges there
her rounded brow, whisper of lash,
nose long and delicate.

His chin somewhat square
and far above, hair
curled and swirled
over a proud forehead
and feathered down his neck.

I snip black paper
and look once again
at Eugenia and Francisco.

The flat black pictures
ARE my young students,
sculpted to their likeness
because I know and love these children.

I snip black paper
and think about the life, the shine
that cannot be revealed
in the silhouettes

I so diligently create,
portraits ready to be pasted
on virgin white paper
And sent home for Christmas.



AUTUMN

September leaves
September sorrows
the smiles of summer
still shining some mornings
and echoes...echoes of music
crashing waves
summer sands cooling
passions fading
mist hovering in moonlight
September songs
memories murmuring
promises
almost forgotten



FIRST DAY

I'm new in school, are you?
(My shoes are old and tight
too tight and the wrong color.
I wanted purple ...purple shoes
to match my socks
And I'm new.
I didn't want them black!)

I'm new in school too.
(But my dress isn't new.
It's long and wrong,
not right, mama!
And I'm new
and the dress isn't blue!)
Are you wearing the wrong
dress too?

I'm new in school. Are you?
(My stomach hurts.
My ears itch.
My hands are sweaty
and too big and I have
no pockets to put them in.
Why, mama, didn't you think
of pockets?)

I'm new in school. Are you?
(Something is choking me
and not letting go!
Do you know? I'm new! I'm
new!
I don't know what to do
or where the bathrooms are
or how I get a star.)

When can I go?
Let me know!
Let me know!





I Wasn't At Woodstock

- Ray Malus

I wasn't at Woodstock. That summer I was in California — ironically— plying my trade as a musician.

I won't say I was part of the "Acid" or "Flower" movement. I was much too commercial and "mainstream" for that. But working in the Bay Area, just south of San Francisco, I was certainly attuned to it. So it was only natural that I took a day to go to the west-coast Vatican of the movement: "The Haight."

It was about noon on a September day when I stood at the corner of Haight and Ashbury — the crossroads of the "Hippie Movement." I remember the sidewalks were jammed. Gawkers. Clowns. Mimes. Street musicians. Skinny long-haired men, and nubile girls skipping along braless under tie-died tees. Women in granny dresses. Men in soiled Edwardian coats. Leather... velvet... denim.

The streets themselves were crowded with traffic. Tourists. Locals. Painted V.W. vans with day-glo flowers. Thousands of flowers. Mostly plastic.

Everywhere people laughing, talking. The sound of guitars, autoharps, dulcimers, folk songs and poetry — and the pungent smell of burning "grass" and "hash." The sons and daughters of the upper-middle-class on an impossibly extended spring break, as they rebelled against consumerism by consuming, and denounced The War by condemning those who fought it.

I vividly remember a flat-bed truck, with adults throwing cellophane-wrapped apple Pop-Tarts to the crowd.

Some said they were laced with LSD.

It was a hell-of-a-party. But underneath I felt a dreadful harbinger. It's easy — in the warmer Bay Area — to forget how the fog rolls into San Francisco in the afternoon. How, when autumn slowly moves south at the end of the year, it sends its advance scouts ahead to the harbor to chill and dampen things. And as the afternoon wore on, and the air cooled and grew dank, the dilettantes slowly vanished; leaving the rest like the detritus of some riotous and powerful wave that had washed up from the bay, and then receded.

Left behind were the genuinely poor, the infirm, the addicted, and the incompetent— lying or sitting in doorways. The music had faded... the hand-outs stopped. Cold night was approaching, and the doors of the communes were shut.

It was easy to see the future. The flower children would move on — taking their dream with them — to be disbursed by the necessities of life. All that would be left: the die-hards. And the name would be more than a poetic appellation.

I wandered through the night-wreckage of Haight Street with "If You're Going To San Francisco, Wear Some Flowers In Your Hair," playing in my mind. And I felt a deep sadness.

HIPPIES
USE
BACKDOOR
→
NO EXCEPTIONS

The Times and Some Folks have been a-changin'



THE HEROES OF WOODSTOCK, 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

The Greek Theatre was rockin' on Sunday night, August 23rd! We came in droves to see and hear a few favorite musicians and groove to our beloved music of forty years ago. Our friends, Donna & Dave, invited my husband Brad and me and 14 friends to join them. It was a celebration of their first date—an evening at a concert called Woodstock, on someone's farm in a meadow, in Bethel Woods, New York. Far out!

The most outstanding element of the audience was the preponderance of gray hair in varying degrees of scarcity. Those of us who carefully crafted our hippie attire—peace symbols, tie-dyed shirts and skirts, shawls, jeans, tee-shirts and love beads—looked about the same as the authentic hippies from Topanga—who were the most enthusiastic spectators. Ample shirts covered pot-bellies and colorful muumuu's often replaced tight jeans of four decades ago.

The show opened with the tour's organizer Country Joe McDonald who emceed and created musical diversion between acts. Big Brother and the Holding Company got the audience to their feet with their Janis Joplin sound-alike Sophia Ramos belting out "Me and Bobby McGee," and "Piece of My Heart." I could have gone home happy at that point. That gal has a 4-octave range! At this juncture, an herbal scent began drifting through the audience. Canned Heat came out and wowed the crowd with "On the Road Again" and "Work Together." Many in the crowd started to dance. A big inflatable bouncing ball took flight somewhere up in the nose-bleed seating, and continued its journey downward and all across the audience.

The aroma in the air got heavier as the British group, Ten Years After took the stage. They played "I'd Love to Change the World," and their guitars were remarkable. Jefferson Starship was less than exciting with their Grace Slick replacement trying her best singing "Find Somebody to Love." Guest singer Linda Imperial of '70s fame grooved to other Starship hits.



Dolly and Brad Wiseman

After 3-1/2 hours of loud rock music, we oldsters were ready to go home. Dave & Donna and friends smiled with nostalgia, and then we all yawned. As Peter Albin of Big Brother and the Holding Company so aptly stated, "We used to have acid flashbacks. Now we have acid reflux." Right On!

Peace—Dolly Wiseman

Contributed by Ross Eldridge, reprinted from his blog: Barking Mad in Amble-by-the-Sea. Eldridge is a published author and journalist, living in northern England.

from across the pond

**Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time passing.
Where have all the flowers gone?
Long time ago.
@Pete Seeger**

LAST NIGHT, 15 AUGUST 2009, I sat down to watch the three-plus-hours-long film commemorating the Woodstock Festival of 1969, forty years to the day later. I was almost 20 in August 1969. I was a college drop-out, working at columns of figures in an unpleasant office housing the forerunner to *American International Group*. I had quite long hair, a moustache, and tended to dress rather well. I thought I looked good in dark suits, pin-striped shirts, and polka-dotted silk ties. I only cheated with my shoes, using squeeze-bottle liquid shoe-polish rather than cream and brushes. I think it was laziness to use liquid shoe-polish; forty years on I rather enjoy the exercise and effort, the ceremony, of applying dense cream and then working on my shoes with brushes to bring up a deep shine.

As the Woodstock Festival was happening (it was a *happening*) in New York State on 15, 16 and 17 August 1969, we heard regular reports on the radio and television that updated what might have been the world on the trickle of music fans, hippies, American boys and girls, that became a rush. Max Yasgur's farm filled up and overflowed. The organizers had told the local authorities that 50,000 might turn up, and then it seemed that close to 200,000 would rock and roll in. Reports finally settled on 500,000, though tripping hippies could be heard to say, like, man, there are a million. One

over-optimistic performer announced that there would be one-and-a-half-million by tomorrow.

In 2009 we'd have the ability to look down from spy satellites at a concert site and could pretty much count heads.

Watching the film, I rather enjoyed some of the performances, which had excellent sound recording, if dodgy visual work. I got goose-flesh when *Richie Havens* opened with *Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child*. However, I thought *The Who* were weak, and *Roger Daltrey's* ridiculous rawhide string-vest is as horrible today as it was in the day. I liked *Jefferson Airplane*, but not *Grace Slick's* explosively permed hair. What were you thinking, Gracie? Exploring your African heritage? *Jimi Hendrix*, with Grace Slick's hair and Roger Daltrey's vest, pulled them off, and played himself into the history books as the greatest rock guitarist in history. Hendrix had *The Star-Spangled Banner* flow into *Purple Haze*. And Jimi was dead a year later at the age of 27; he has been dead for more years than he lived. *Janis Joplin*, also at Woodstock, outlived Jimi by a few weeks, dying aged 27 on 4 October 1970.

In 2009 the male and female performers would be wearing make-up (as might the concert goers of all persuasions). I like that for people on stage, it allows one to better see their features. The Woodstock artists looked as if they'd wandered out of the crowd and onto the platform.

In Britain and the USA there are potholes in the roads that look like those one might see in a war zone. Bridges are crumbling. The ocean is washing away the coast for want of barriers. Highways are unimproved and deaths result. Millions live in sub-standard housing. Millions are hungry. Is that our lot for the next forty years, Mr. Brown, Mr. Obama? Who is it that is winning the War?

Long time passing. Long time coming.

@ Ross Eldridge



Driving '60's mile per hour

- Kathy Highcove

**SHE CAN'T ABANDON HER BOXY BLUE VAN
TO THE TIE CINCHED SALESMAN
IN THE SOULLESS USED CAR PARKING LOT
TOO MANY TIE-DYED MEMORIES
RIDE BEHIND HER
FLOORBOARD
SHIFT.
SHE LOVES TO PUNCH INTO FIRST GEAR
AND JOLT INTO SECOND
SINGING BACKUP FOR GRACE
AND THE STONES
HEAD BACK
STRONG.
SOMETIMES SAM RIDES SHOTGUN
LONG BARE TOES KEEPING TIME ON THE DASH
SWAYING IN THE PASSENGER SEAT SIPPING
STRONG STARBUCK'S COFFEE
FROM A STYROFOAM CUP
SWEETENED BY MICK'S
BROWN SUGAR
STICKY.
HER CHILDREN CHORUS THE CLASSICS
ROCK AND ROLL IN THEIR
SEATS HYPNOTIZED
BY THE TRIBAL CRASH OF DRUMS
AND THE WILD CRIES
CALLING HER
BACK.
THE VALIANT VW VAULTS PAST
RED PEACE SIGNS OF THE ROAD
UNDER A PSYCHEDELIC SUNSET LIGHT SHOW
DYLAN SNARLS A WARNING
TRUCKS KNOW THEIR PLACE
AND CLEAR THE WAY
FOR THE SIDE BURNED
KING.
SHE SWITCHES ON SYNCOPATED SIGNALS
SWINGS HER ROLLING JUKE BOX UP THE HILL
THE MOTOR WHINES INTO THIRD
CLIMBING WITH ERIC'S ELECTRIC SCALES
LEAVING THE LONG AND LONELY ROAD
GETTING BACK HOME AGAIN
SATISFACTION.**

Inspiration Is Where You Find It

Here...There...Everywhere

At Santa Barbara Writers Workshop in rustic hills 'round Westmont College an instructor suggests we go outside to be inspired- to observe, to think to write a poem in the afternoon sun.



Forever Friends



A grassy slope stretches up to a stand of trees I've never seen. Triple trunks fan across the entrance to an upper level of rugged grounds. Between the trees in an opening I see a house on a road leading up to the campus center. A group of students walking by were overheard to snicker and say. "Look at that bunch of poets lying around in the grass."

My gaze shifted to the attention-getting flare of one of our poets lying face down her denim-covered derriere' rising up to meet the air. Inspiration? Thank you, yes... She gives me something to write about.

- Lenora Smalley

Don't Miss Me Too Much

Don't miss me too much
for I was with you for a good long journey.
Don't miss me too much
for your lives must go on and take their rightful courses.
Don't miss me too much.
May the memories of me live in your hearts and spirits.
Don't miss me too much
because I will always be watching over you.
Don't miss me too much .
Remember the past live in the present
and look forward to the future.
Don't miss me too much
Or I will whistle " I've Grown Accustomed to her Face"
In your ear each night."

- Marcy L. Young

1952-2008

Many of our early members will remember Marcy Young. She had a lot of wisdom and a sense of humor which shows in this poem she wrote during her serious illness. - Lenora Smalley

Where are you my childhood friend?

Perhaps you hide away in the spark of dawn

Bending with the shadows at night---

Seeking your face---

Even in between the green grass.

Haven't you heard? I'm searching for you

In the miles that stretch my vision

To forbidden lands and shores---

Your voice is silent now

But I still listen

To secret childhood valentines and baby kisses

Stretching like chewing gum

Into the hot sand near the sea---

I will find you again my friend

Together we will climb trees once more

To rescue baby birds

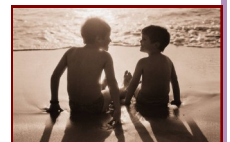
Hanging upside down as before

With splinters in dirty nails

Hair flying in the wind

Like scarecrows forgotten in the night.

- Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein





THROUGH THE RICE PADDIES

- Leslie Kaplan

稻

In the late
1970's I

became an importer and designer of women's accessories by sheer trial, error and tenacity. My fascination with things and places of Asian origin took me to countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, Japan and last but not least, Mainland China.

At that time in China all the people wore khaki baggy uniforms. Men and women alike. Billboards glorified communist leaders Lenin, Stalin, and of course, Mao Tse-Tung. I saw only bicycles hauling baskets of stuff, busy on most of the dirt roads. Little children wearing trousers that split open could be seen squatting to relieve themselves on the streets or wherever. The women wore no makeup and there was one hair style: Two braids or two pony tails, period. No jewelry, not even a wedding band on married folks. At first the Chinese didn't smile much at foreigners, especially Americans, but that soon changed, as we kept returning to do business. Little did I know that by the year 2000, almost everything made in China would be flooding American markets.

Entry into the Mainland was by way of Hong Kong and an official invitation from China. My agent in Hong Kong was Peter Shum. Peter was delightful to work with and very accommodating.

"Peter, I would like to go to see the factory in China that is producing my beaded belts and bags."

"Well Leslie, it's quite far. We have to take a boat, a train, and a private taxi. It will take most of the day until we get there and back. But I can arrange it."

And so we began the journey. As the train crossed the border from Hong Kong to China, the first city being Guangzhou, we had to get off the train, show our documents and be treated to a twelve course lunch right in the train station. The thing I remember most about the train is that the windows all had hand made lace curtains. The food was tasty and plentiful. To drink

was orange soda, beer or tea... but not the water. Peter taught me to say the food is delicious, so I said, "Hen how chew," and was rewarded with a big smile.

Guangzhou once was called Canton, and even though they held trade fairs there for foreign buyers, the city was mostly farming country and the population mostly peasant farmers. They spoke Cantonese as opposed to Mandarin which was the national language spoken by those considered more literate. However, the men and women working at the trade fairs were educated and spoke excellent English.

After lunch we hailed a cab which looked like an old tin lizzy and were driven to a body of water, a river of some sort. From there we hopped onto a junk... of some sort. It looked home made and run down, but Peter assured me that we were safe. I learned a few polite words of greeting. With a smile and a "Nee How Ma," which means "Hi," and a "Sh Sh," which is comparable to "Thanks," I managed to capture a few more smiles.

When we finally docked, it was approximately 4 hours since we left Hong Kong, and we traveled by taxi to the beaded belt and bag factory. We were now in the wide open spaces.

I observed flat lands of watery soil. Blades of tall grass grew straight like little green armies. These rice fields sustained all of China. No one starved in this country anymore. I saw farmers standing knee deep in the watery fields, their straw pyramid shaped hats protecting them from the sun while tending their crops. Happy looking water cows lazed alongside the workers. Houses were few and far between. Every now and then, men and women carrying poles across their shoulders with a bucket hanging at each end wandered by along side roads.

Peter explained, "These bucket patrols collect human waste used as fertilizer for crops that they grow." This information made me a bit queasy. There was probably no sewers or sanitation way out here in rice land. It seemed like we drove endlessly

past nothing but rice fields.

Finally we came to what looked like a bombed out adobe building in the middle of nowhere. Peter says, "We're here."

I said, "This is the factory?" He replied, "Yes." So we got out of the car, legs a little stiff, stretched, and headed through an open doorway, and climbed a flight of stairs.

It's dark, damp, dreary, and depressing to think that people worked here under these conditions in this so called factory. A woman- evidently in charge- greeted us. "Nee how ma," she said with a bow and a smile. She had a rusty looking teapot from which she poured tea into two chipped porcelain cups and handed them to us. I did not drink this tea even though I was thirsty.

We followed her to another area where I observed two young girls - and I mean young. Maybe twelve to fourteen, sitting at small wooden tables and sewing by hand tiny beads onto belts, the pattern of which is my design. There were large plastic sacks of beads on the floor. Different colors in each sack. I asked Peter, "Why are these children doing this kind of work?"

He spoke Chinese to the woman supervisor and translated back to me. "They must use young eyes to do this kind of work."

The work was really beautiful...leopard...zebra and elephant patterns... but I felt a bit of a heart ache about these kids and the conditions under which they had to work.

It was now time to leave for the long haul back. This visit was quite an experience and an eye opener for me. Little did I realize when I received a shipment of one hundred beaded belts and bags, just where they came from and what it took to produce them. Now I knew.

At the fine jewelry show my belts and bags were a tremendous hit, especially amongst buyers of high class accessory shops catering to a wealthy clientele.

I thought that unless folks travelled through the rice paddies, saw the bucket brigades, the water cows and finally the little girls who made these gems, buyers really couldn't appreciate the beauty of the hand beaded purses.

KEN THE CAMEL KILLER

(DON'T TELL
P.E.T.A.)

- KEN WILKINS



I had just finished a brisk game of soccer with the school boys one late afternoon on our mission compound in Kal-lafo, Ethiopia. It was a typical hot day in the Ogaden Desert, dry and dusty. I wore no shirt, only our school's khaki uniform shorts and they were soaking wet. I didn't always enter in to the after-school athletics for a couple of reasons: the students always made me look like a fool and secondly I needed to prepare for night school ESL classes offered the to the military and local shop keepers. The students always enjoyed it when their Ma'alim joined them in games.

While walking back to my house for a quick shower under sun-warmed water in a "jerry can" I noticed a local policeman with shouldered rifle and mounted bayonet approaching me. He quickly let me know that the District Governor wanted to see me. That's strange ... usually His Honor came to the compound himself and then for a favor ... a free bottle of Tylenol (which in his opinion cured all ills) or for an injection of Atabrin for malaria. I sensed the urgency when the messenger sprinkled his conversation with "Duckso", the native "hurry up" command.

I skipped the shower, but did put on a fresh set of clothes. I told the policeman to climb into my Land Rover and we'd proceed to the Governor's headquarters high on a hill in the center of town.

Entering the high-ceilinged edifice built by the Italians during their occupation in the 1930's I found the Governor at his desk and five or six tribal chieftains sitting along one side of the room. All wore red beards signifying they had made the Hadj to Mecca some time in the past. I was introduced to each one. As we shook hands, none of them offered the slightest smile.

Through an interpreter I was informed that these chieftains had lodged a complaint against me in that I had killed one of their camels and they were demanding payment for their loss. At first I thought it was a joke since I had never killed a camel in my life. Astounded I asked for clarification whereupon I was told my LandRover had committed the crime. "Impossible! I've never hit a camel with my vehicle. It's parked outside. Go out and inspect it and you'll find no dents of any kind."

The Governor quickly replied, "Oh, they are not saying you actually struck it, but the noise from your vehicle scared the camel which was hobbled behind a tree near the road on which you passed. Since its feet were tied together, it tripped, fell over and broke a leg. They had to kill it."

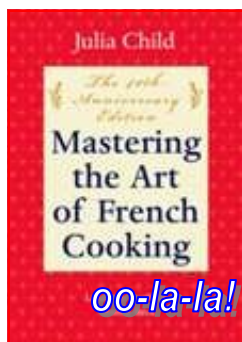
The absurdity of it all, especially for a Westerner, was both laughable and frightening. I expressed my sympathy and contended there was no reason I should compensate for the camel's demise.

What followed was a lengthy, heated exchange between the Governor and the chieftains. Finally the Governor informed me he was dismissing the case. I was free to go. Was he looking forward to the next free bottle of Tylenol?

I have yet to read on a Tylenol bottle that one of its cures is for "False accusations of killing a camel."



Writing Skill is the Needed Ingredient



Since I had met Julia Child personally at a book convention some years ago, I was eager to see the movie *Julie & Julia* now being shown locally. I was pleasantly surprised to find it was a movie more about writing than it was about cooking.

Both characters struggled to see their intellectual property accepted by the public. Actresses, Meryl Streep and Amy Adams deserve to be considered as Oscar nominees for their brilliant performances. Every writer or wannabe should make it a point to view this film.

- Ken Wilkins

Editor's note: I second Ken's motion to view this entertaining film that focuses on the art of writing a cookbook and highlights the modern appetite for an entertaining or informative blog. - KH



Dwarfs Among Giants

. Helen Katzman

Along the highway leading to Anza Borrego State Park in the high desert our car veered to the left as if it was a human

seeking nature's beauty. It stopped before a field of golden yellow sunflowers, stems ten feet tall, shifting in the breeze. "We're dwarfs among these giants of nature" I exclaimed to our children who were staring with wonder at this miracle of nature.

As we drove further into the Anza Borrego State Park we were aware that the sunflowers looked much the same in size and color. However, as we left our car and cautiously zigzagged thru this magnificent colorful field we noticed dissimilarity among the plants. Stems of different heights and flowers of various shades of yellow created this panoramic sunflower extravaganza. Despite their difference, the flowers living side by side swayed to their own tune of the gentle breeze.

The sun disappeared and a drizzle cooled the earth and us too. The sunflowers drank the delectable rainwater and became refreshed, ready to welcome winged visitors to suck their nourishing nectar in the warming sunlight. Slowly we backed away from the swarming bees towards our car and the trip home.

We arrived at dusk to a gentle breeze swaying purple and white gladiolas, pink geraniums and tiny rosebuds. These too appeared to be living in harmony on one small plot of land in the front of our house, as did the sunflowers in the vast Anza Borrego Desert.

Over dinner we discussed this dilemma: if plants can live in harmony why can't man, woman and child of different colorations, size and cultures do likewise? Further, why are there so much rancor, jealousy, and brutality among neighbors, neighborhoods, families and nations of the world? There were no answers, except for the idea of visiting serene, colorful majestic national or state parks, nourishing one's soul, feeling happier within and content as to live in harmony with all humanity.

Sleep tight little ones and dream of a world full of color, where men, women and children live in harmony.

Capitalization — When? When Not?

-DW

When a word is used to refer to a member of a class larger than itself, the word is **not** capitalized. These words are usually preceded by possessive pronouns like *a, an, the, my, his, her, their*.

My mother (class = mothers)

the colonel (class = colonels)

their father (fathers)

the president of our club (presidents)

When one of these is used with a name that is normally capitalized, it is capitalized also because it is considered part of the name.

Mother Teresa

Colonel Whipple

Father Briggs

President Obama

President, when it refers to the *President of the United States*, or any governmental official. The title is always capitalized.

We waited for the President's speech.

The Vice-President spoke off the cuff.

Has the Secretary of State visited Borneo?

Senator Boxer spoke to a town hall last night.

When a relative is described as one of a class of uncles, aunts, mothers, etc., the word is **not** capitalized.

My favorite uncle dropped in yesterday.

My lazy cousin still owns me twenty bucks.

My mother went to see Rod Stewart in Vegas.

When the relative's name is used with the relationship, both are capitalized.

My Uncle Jim always gives the kids five dollars whenever he comes over.

Aunt Rosa makes the best tamale pie.

Make sure Grandpa Bill gets on the right plane.

When the same word is used in direct address in place of the proper name, the word is capitalized.

When do you plan to retire, Colonel?

What time is the performance, Dad?

Where did you hide the gifts, Auntie?



Purple Haze Phase Revisited

A mob of moths circled the floodlights like chaotic ions of energy. I inhaled from Greg's joint, held the hit and passed the weed back to him.

"All along the watch tower," Jimi's deep voice drawled in dark honeyed tones. Several hundred sang the next line along with Hendrix.

I exhaled and leaned forward to watch his famous sliding finger work. Yeah, we can't get no relief. Vietnam, the draft, assassinations, parent and school hassles - the only way out of here is to smoke the joint, and trip on the vibes blasting off the stage. Nirvana.

Greg hugged me close and kissed my ear lobe, but Jimi kept most of my attention. Hendrix spun and gyrated like an African fertility god clothed in neon orange raiment.

Then I heard a loud droning overhead and peered up into the dark sky of the New York countryside. Hard to see anything flying above the glare of the super bright stage lights.

"What's that noise? Sounds like Viet Nam 'copters found us!" I cried in mock alarm.

"Cool it babe," the bearded guy behind me chuckled. "That's just Joan Baez comin' in for her gig tonight."

"Oh wow," his braided braless girlfriend said. "Everyone's comin' here to sing for this happening right here, right now. Just for us."

"Have you ever been experienced?" Jimi asked us. Yeah, and ready for more, I thought.

"Nah, that's a news 'copter. Walter Cronkite is takin' a look at the party," said Greg. My guy swung his arms in a big wave at the 'copter. "Peace and love, man! Flower power! Come on down, Walt, and join the love-in!"

I couldn't believe this scene. I felt so loved, so comfy with my fellow man and so-o-o turned on by the rock music. Flower children forever. Right on. Make love not war. Never want to work on Maggie's Farm-unless it's an organic foods commune in the countryside...somewhere.

"How ya doin', Jeannie?" someone - Greg? - asked me. I closed my eyes and grooved.

"Totally turned on. Woodstock has been...far-r-r out," I answered.

"Take another hit. Everything's going to

get better." I reached again for his joint.

Greg's low voice insinuated itself into my dreamy happenings. "Jeannie, wake up, you're moaning." I turned my head, wiped the drool off my chin and squinted in the bright morning light. Geez. Our Myrtle Beach condo.

And there stood my plain vanilla balding Greg, with my morning coffee tray and the New York Times.. As I sat up in bed, I felt a pang of protest from my arthritic right hip. And I suddenly felt a big need for caffeine. I looked at the alarm clock...already past ten o'clock! I had slept right through the 8:00 alarm, evidently. Good thing I'm finally retired from the CPA firm of Harriman and Holtz. No commuting.

"I told you that Columbian hashish smelled too strong," he said with a grin. "Sure would've clashed with my blood pressure meds, so it's a good thing I didn't smoke any. Had to put you to bed when the Woodstock movie finished last night. Here, drink this."

I sipped the hot brew. "Thanks, needed coffee. But...I'm getting hungry now that I'm almost awake. I have a breakfast request, dear husband.

"Lox and bagels?"

"Nope. I want Trader Joe corn muffins with sweet honey...organic clover honey...Honey. That'd be far-r-r out."

- K. Highcove

*Trick
or
Treat?*



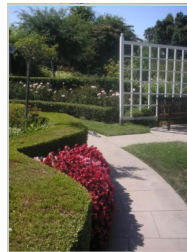
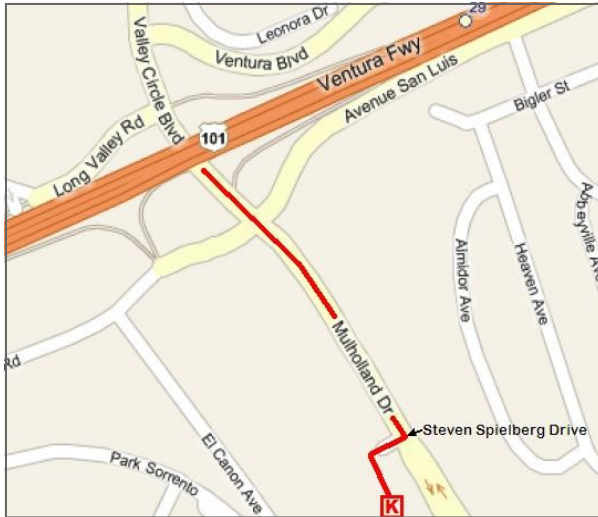
October In Focus Theme: **MYS-**

A common theme for an October newsletter is "Spooky Halloween." *October In Focus* will try to be more creative. Mystery will be our theme. The supernatural and witchy brews may come quickly to mind, but let's explore the many uses of the word "mystery."

Kelly Lange, our October speaker, is a mystery writer. Hmm. Maybe that's where I got my idea for the theme.

What mysteries make you scratch your head in puzzlement? An actual puzzle, the opposite sex, modern art, the erratic motorist, human nature, the antics of a pet? So many ways to feel mystified.

Please send in creative poetry, and essays. Be creative! We're a writer's club, not a coven of statisticians. (Of course, statistics these days can be the result of very creative thinking or presentation of the stats.) I'll be waiting with a bag of fonts.



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 except July and August at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

Villa Katzenberg

23388 Mulholland Drive

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, Sept. 5th. 2009 at 1:15 p.m.

MAILING ADDRESS

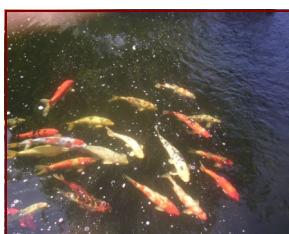
c/o Dave Wetterberg, 23809 Friar Street

Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

Contents copyrighted by the respective authors.

Unattributed articles copyrighted

by



CWC/WV Branch Officers

Executive Board

President ... Dave Wetterberg
Vice-president/Membership ... Sheila Moss
Vice-president/Programs ... Yolanda Fintor
Secretary ... Danielle Ste. Just
Treasurer ... Jay Zukerman

Board of Directors

Newsletter Editor, Publicity ... Kathy Highcove
Webmaster ... David Burr
Photographer ... Ken Wilkins
On Site Coordinator ... Betty Freeman
Critique Groups Coordinator ... Lillian Rodich
Open Mike ... Bill Sorrells
Members-at-Large ... Bill Hitchins, Leslie Kaplan

Submission Guidelines

1. **Submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.**
2. **Keep prose short, between 200 and 300 words. Contact 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 make needed grammatical corrections.**
6. **Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.**

Announcements from Sister CWC Branches

FOR SCREEN WRITERS AND MOVIE BUFFS ONLY!

Contributed by High Desert Branch The Inkslinger August 2009, Naomi Ward editor.

Creative Screenwriting Magazine's annual Screenwriters Convention at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles, California. An outstanding writing educational and networking event! Registration is now open with a discount for early birds! This is definitely worth checking out, even if you are not a screenwriter! Oct. 16th-18th

CWC member Bob Isbill enthuses, "I know a whole bunch about the Creative Screenwriting Magazine's annual convention because this will be #8 and I have gone to all but one of the others. I cannot be objective about it at all. It's too exciting! They have EVERYBODY in the business at these things. Syd Field, Michael Hauge, Dara Marks, Linda Seger, Hal Ackerman, John Truby-- you name it, they're there!"

Bob continues, "It's \$99 to register for the 4 day event and classes are \$5 apiece.

You can go online and get all the info at www.creativescreenwriting.com/expo

I will be there again this year. I would recommend the Holiday Inn if the Wilshire Grand is

unavailable, but of course, you guys could drive there and back in one day. If you or any of your group is into screenwriting, this is a MUST GO!" says Bob Isbill

More from the Inkslinger Editor Naomi Ward:

An unusual opportunity has come to our attention through the Creative Screenwriting Magazine's (CSM) solicitation for ideas for articles. People in the movie business, especially free-lance screenwriters trying to break into Hollywood, are their target market. If you have an idea for an article that you think should be included, you can now submit that idea directly to CSM. For complete details:

<http://creativescreenwriting.com/pitch.an>.

Article.idea.html

From Berkeley CWC – Spy Watch

Know any spies? Bill Roller, a 25-year member of the Berkeley Branch is working on a book of first-person accounts by children of CIA, FBI, Secret Service, and other similar operatives, domestic and foreign. Contact Bill in confidence at <http://www.thedeaddaredancing.com> or Vivbill@aol.com. Or

call him at (510) 525-9215 .

The copy has been approved by Bill Roller.



CWC/West Valley

%Dave Wetterberg

23809 Friar Street

Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235