



The Write Way

**September, 2013
Volume 1, Issue 2**

**The Writers of Kern
PO BOX 22335
Bakersfield, CA**

**Regular meetings:
The 3rd Saturday of each month,
10 to noon. Registration, 9:45.
Fee: \$10, members and guests.**

**Clarion Hotel
3540 Rosedale Hwy.
Hwy. 99 at Rosedale
Bakersfield, CA
www.writersofkern.com**

The Writers of Kern Executive Board

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SEPTEMBER SPEAKER



Dr. Chuck Wall is our esteemed speaker for the Writers of Kern monthly meeting on September 21, 2013.

Internationally known for his “Random Act of Kindness” movement, his topic will be “Is kindness still alive?” Though our society seems consumed by the need for violence, Chuck Wall believes that writers have the opportunity to deflect this attitude. He says, “Writers are the ones most likely to hold up society’s values and show how positive ideals and values can be instilled.”

Chuck Wall overcame blindness to earn a Ph.D. from UCLA in the combined fields of Management and Educational Administration. In addition, he holds a B.A. and an M.B.A. from San Francisco State

In 2010 he completed work that produced a high school stage play called *The Visitors*, which describes his concept of kindness. He has authored or co-authored six books and numerous articles.

Two of Dr. Wall’s books will be available for sale: his latest, released December 2012, *Kindness: Changing Our World*, and *Speaking with Spark* for developing public speaking skills. His inscribed Kindness Coins will also be available.

We are delighted to have Dr. Chuck Wall with us.

Summer Writing Contest Contenders

Twenty-one WOKians entered the 2013 Summer Writing Contest. Congratulations to these writers for taking up the challenge.

Karen Blake, Jason Brown, Annis Cassells, Jean Chapman, Robert Hargreaves, Patrick Kelly, Jasmine Lowe, Dan McGuire, Richard Meeks, Davyd Morris, Mary Morton, Donnée Padgett-Harris, Joan Raymond, Terry Redman, Caroline Reid, Ruth Smith, Sue Speake, Anna Stewart, Marjorie Tavoularis, Dennis VanderWerff, and Mandy Wallace.





Writers of Kern Blog Fall Blog Challenge

Joan Raymond

When Writers of Kern hosted our first Blog Challenge we learned about ourselves and each other. Fifteen excited people committed to sharing their lives, passions, and talents this past spring. Some were first-time bloggers while others breathed life into old, neglected blogs. New WOK member Donnee Harris shares, "Participating in the Blog Challenge was a great experience for me. It allowed me to get to know so many people in Writers of Kern before I even met them in person. It made it so much easier to attend my first meeting and eventually join."

The Challenge exercised writing muscles and pushed participant's creativity to the limits. Plus, winners received the coveted "Writers of Kern – To Get Ink" limited edition coffee mugs as recognition! Long time WOK member Terry Redman said, "I enjoyed reading the fresh ideas on a regular basis. People I knew revealed new aspects of self, and the others I knew only by their words on a screen...Meeting them at the July meeting was the highlight of the challenge--good people who also happen to be good writers."

Due to popular demand, Writers of Kern is starting a Fall Blog Challenge. Rules are the same – Participants must: 1.) blog twice a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays suggested). 2.) Read five different blogs twice a week, a total of ten different blogs a week. 3.) Leave

thoughtful comments and encouraging words for bloggers you visit.

Starting: September 11th. Ending: December 7th. Thirteen weeks = 26 posts. The prompt: "A-Z". Writers may choose their own theme, but must feature one letter of the alphabet each post. Winners will be recognized at the Christmas Dinner on Friday, December 13th.

NOTE: If you choose to participate, please email your blog site to events@writersofkern.com by September 9th, so we can let the other participants know who is accepting the challenge.

Conferences & Contests

Conferences

The Sonora Writers Group presents the 2nd Tuolumne Writers Retreat, September 27-29, 2013, in the State Historic Park of Columbia, CA. Registration: \$145 if paid by September 16; after that \$175. See www.sonorawriters.org for details.

High Desert Branch of CWC Workshop with James Scott Bell and the third annual "Howl at the Moon" Writers' Conference: Saturday, October 19, 8:30-4:30, at High Desert Center for the Arts, 15615 8th St., Victorville, California. Fee: \$45 - general public; \$35 - seniors 60 and over; \$25 - students. To request an application: hdcwc-web@yahoo.com.

Contests

Writer's Digest Popular Fiction Science Fiction Contest. Deadline,

October 15th. Calling all science fiction and fantasy writers! A chance to win the popular fiction awards grand prize including \$2,500 and a trip to the 2014 Writer's Digest Conference in New York City. Win the \$500 category first prize. Submission guidelines: fiction manuscript, 4,000 words or less.

How to enter: register and pay online or download a printable entry form. (Early-bird entry fees are \$20 per entry.) www.writersdigest.com
The Ventura County Writers Club (VCWC) announced its 14th Annual Short Story Contest, which will open for submissions on September 1, 2013 and close October 15, 2013. For the second year, the Short Story contest will accept entries from students currently enrolled in high school. The student entries will be judged in a separate category. The top three adult winners will receive a cash prize: first place \$500; second place \$250; and third place \$125. In the youth category, winners will also receive cash prizes: first place \$100; second place \$75; and third place \$50.

The contest draws entries from around the country as well as internationally. *The Ventura County Star* newspaper will publish the first-place adult entry in a January 2014 Sunday edition. The paper will publish first, second, and third-place winning entries from both categories in their online edition. www.venturacountywriters.com

"The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through the brain and goes straight to the heart." ~ Maya Angelou

MEMBER PROFILE

Robert Hargreaves

“I’m from the government and I’m here to help.”

“Yeah, right!”



In my 31 years as a government veterinarian with the California

Department of Food and Agriculture I met my share of skeptics, but, believe it or not, my primary mission was to protect the public and livestock producers from animal diseases.

More amazing is the usual response to my telling people I’m a chicken doctor. “You’re kidding, right?” No, really. I’m a poultry veterinarian, now retired.

My own path to veterinary medicine was longer than most. Before I even considered applying to veterinary school I had completed seven years of college with a B.S. in Agricultural Education and an M.S. in Poultry Management.

In addition, I had spent two years in Viet Nam with International Voluntary Services helping the Vietnamese raise chickens, and another year in Mississippi as a civil rights worker. I also taught school, was a social worker, pumped gas, picked fruit. I even boiled doll clothes for Mattel Toys. By the time I entered veterinary school at 29, I was the second-oldest person in the class.

I graduated in 1973 and started as an

avian pathologist with the California Poultry Diagnostic laboratory in Turlock.

Before I retired, most of my writing was letters to the editor and congressmen. Now it is memoir.

Freedom Summer

Robert Hargreaves

In my army days a black sergeant told me that if he had a choice between a house in Mississippi and a house in hell he'd take the house in hell!

In 1964 I had the opportunity to go to Mississippi as a civil rights worker and see for myself. I wanted to be a missionary and considered this as a way to gain cross-cultural experience. Because I had a degree in education, I was assigned as a Freedom School teacher, but ended up spending most of my time canvassing for voter registration.

I was totally unprepared for the world I entered. Hell was indeed an apt comparison. It wasn't just segregated buses and drinking fountains. The whole society was segregated from top to bottom, with blacks getting nothing but leftovers. Hospitals and ambulances were segregated. Even the Red Cross kept separate blood banks for black and white blood. Ten years after the Supreme Court ruling that segregated schools were unconstitutional not a single school in the deep South had been desegregated. The White Citizens Councils issued buttons with one word: Never.

All the good jobs were reserved for whites. Black women worked mostly as maids and black men as farm workers for 15 cents an hour. Average income for blacks in

Mississippi was four hundred dollars a year. Blacks had no say in their schools or government. Applications to register to vote were routinely denied with no explanation.

Any attempt to change this was met by incredible violence – bombings, shootings, arrests and beatings. As Stokely Carmichael was fond of saying, "If they ever drained the Tallahatchie River the bodies would come marching out for the next hundred years!"

Looking back fifty years it's easy to see the progress that's been made. The laws requiring segregation are all gone. Black mayors and sheriffs have been elected across the country, and now a president.

We still have a long way to go. The signs are gone, but segregation of drinking fountains is still informally enforced. The Klan and other hate groups are still active. When will we truly mean "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all"?

“You never have to change anything you got up in the middle of the night to write.”

~ Saul Bellow

WOK Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Karen Blake , Jason Brown, Stephen Clark, Donna Hudson-Uhles, Denis Maddox, Samantha Maddox, and Jacque Wallace.

WRITERS GETTING INK

Robert C. Hargreaves had his story “Wild Chickens” accepted for publication by *Existere, a Journal of Arts and Literature* published by York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Jasmine Lowe wrote and published an eBook: *The Beginners Guide to Becoming a Vegetarian*. It's currently available through (<http://www.missmillmag.com/vegetarian/>).

Reggie Ridgway has two books that were released in August 2013. *Endgame* is published for the first time, and *Moon Shadow*, which came out a year ago, is re-released with a new publisher. Both are available at Amazon.com in paperback and for Kindle.

Ruth Smith's story, “Two Again”, was accepted by *Chicken Soup for the Soul* for its title, *Lemons to Lemonade*, which was published in August 2013.

THE EDITORS' INKWELL

Annis Cassells

Being one of *The Write Way* editors has its challenges and its perks. I'm not going to enumerate the challenges, but know they are minimized because of a great team working together. Welcome to **Jasmine Lowe**, who is now onboard, doing the newsletter layout and design.



The teamwork, communication, and collaboration are huge perks. Another is that I get to learn about writing opportunities from blogs, websites, and other branches' newsletters.

With the 20,000-word challenge led by fellow WOKian **Jeff Hill** on the Writers of Kern Facebook page and the upcoming WOK Fall Blog Challenge, we are creating our own possibilities for consistent writing practice.

Teacher and writer Nancy Ellen Dodd returns to Bakersfield in November to conduct two writing seminar sessions. We now have one opening. Check the blog archives at www.writersofkern.com to find out more about this exciting option. Then there is National Novel Writing Month, NaNoWriMo, coming up in November. A number of WOKians have participated in this 50,000-word adventure, winning the honor of being added to the NaNoWriMo Winner's Page and

receiving a handsome certificate and web badge. **Dan McGuire** is about to embark on his fifth venture. See www.nanowrimo.org for more information.

Poets won't be left out this fall. For the second year, the month of October brings OctPoWriMo: 31 Poems in 31 Days. Bakersfield writer Julie Jordan Scott is one of the mainstays, writing prompts and providing encouragement. Last year, I wrote ten poems in ten days. I noticed that I saw the world differently and everything became potential material for a poem. This year, I will try out my poet's pen again. To learn more about joining OctPoWriMo, see www.octpowrimo.com.

The Conferences & Contests page in this issue lists several other possibilities for expanding our writing reaches.

We're writers, WOKians. Let's write!

**WOK
Critique Groups**

Sunday, Jana Wong,
(Sci-Fi and Fantasy) **OPEN**

Monday 1, Dan McGuire, OPEN

Monday 2, Jeff Hill, OPEN

Tuesday, 1:30 PM, Nan Rinker,
OPEN

Wednesday AM, Dana Martin,
Closed

Wednesday 1, Terry Redman,
Closed

Wednesday 2, Joan Raymond,
OPEN

THE BACK PAGE

August WOK Meeting

Janet Skibinski

If you didn't attend the August meeting, you missed another great one. After celebrating successes and rejections, president Dana Martin encouraged us to enter the WOK Summer Writing Contest, submit a piece for the California Writers Club *Literary Review*, and get prepared for the fall Blog Hop.

Part of our mission is to encourage new writers. It falls in line that we've been asked to participate in a writing competition for Kern County middle and high school students. We will manage the contest, holding it under the auspices of Writers of Kern. More specific information will be forthcoming.



When Plan A wasn't viable for the program portion of a the meeting, our resourceful president, Dana, enforced Plan B and put us to work – the kind of work we all enjoy – writing. As a prompt, Dana planted the seed for another *Chicken Soup for the Soul* entry: Home Sweet Home. We wrote for 15 minutes,

then volunteers read their pieces and were critiqued if they desired. 📷

What You Can Do

Share your successes with the Newsletter Editors at newsletter@writersofkern.com. Send your bio, with a headshot or other good photo, to the Newsletter Editors at newsletter@writersofkern.com. Volunteer to work on a committee or take on a responsibility for the good of the organization.

Write a short story, essay, memoir, or poem for the website blog and send it to submissions@writersofkern.com. **Prompt of the Month:** California writers. One who influenced, impressed, cheered, inspired, enlightened, or angered you. Try taking the title of a book by a California writer and writing a poem using that title.

“Like” our Writers of Kern Facebook page. It's the one that displays our **To Get Ink** logo.

Editors' Dialog

Annis: “Hey, Terry. What are we going do now that those submissions are all in?”
Terry: “Get involved in the blog challenge. **And we can enjoy bagels and wine, but not at the same time.**”

Calendar

September 21

Speaker: Dr. Chuck Wall
“Is Kindness Still Alive?”

October 14-19

California Writers Week
(10th Anniversary)

October 19

Speaker: TBA

November 2

Nancy Ellen Dodd Workshop, Part I, 9:00A-1:00P
at Westbrook Church Coffee Shop, Ashe Rd., south of District Blvd.

November 16

Speaker: TBA

November 23

Nancy Ellen Dodd Workshop, Part II (as above)

December 13

Winter Dinner Meeting
Awards, Open Mic,
and Book Exchange
Friday evening, 6:00-9:00P
at Hodel's

The Write Way is published monthly in Bakersfield, California.

The deadline for submission of news articles is the first day of the month of publication. Send to

newsletter@writersofkern.com



The Writers of Kern website seeks and welcomes submissions of members' writing for the website blog. Prose, memoir, poetry, essays, and book reviews should be sent to

submissions@writersofkern.com

