



April, 2014
Volume 2, Issue 4

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

President & Program:
Dana Martin
president@writersofkern.com

Vice President & Webmaster:
Dennis VanderWerff
webmaster@writersofkern.com

Treasurer: *Joan Raymond*
treasurer@writersofkern.com

Secretary: *Janet Skibinski*
secretary@writersofkern.com

Membership: *Open*
membership@writersofkern.com

Newsletter: *Annis Cassells,*
Terry Redman
newsletter@writersofkern.com

CWC Representative:
Sandy Moffett

Hospitality/Sunshine:
Annis Cassells
sunshine@writersofkern.com

CANCELLED

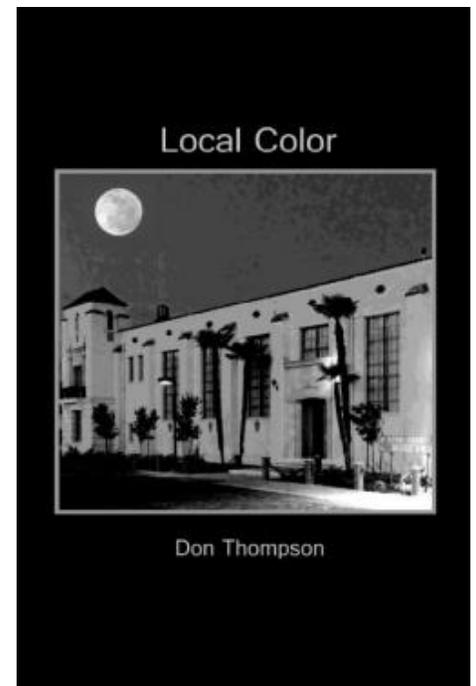
This month's third Saturday, April 19, falls between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Out of concern for lack of attendance due to holiday plans, the **Writers of Kern Board** **unanimously voted to cancel this month's meeting.**

WOK will be back in business on Saturday, May 17, with our second annual **Read the Book, Meet the Author** meeting. This year, we feature Bakersfield poet, Don Thompson and *Local Color*, his narrative poem that brings alive Kern County places, history, and people. Be sure to get your copy so you can read the book and be ready to meet the author.

Local Color can be ordered online or by phone from Russo's Books at

<http://www.russosbooks.com/how-order> and from other booksellers.

Or, you may contact Don Thompson at d_e_thompson@aol.com That's d_e_thompson.



President's Corner
April 2014



Greetings, Writers!

It's time for my once-yearly, not-so-subtle reminder for you to attend your monthly WOK meeting. Please consider this a gentle shove to do what you already signed-up to do anyway.

I've been around a long time—not as many years as some of our original members, but having missed only a handful of meetings since June, 2009, I am willing to bet that I'm fairly in the running (or well on my way) to having attended the most meetings in our branch's history.

Let's go back in time to 2008, when, as the editor of *The Northwest Voice*, I was asked to be the speaker at one of the monthly WOK meetings. I remember Robert Hargreaves being in attendance, as well as the then president, Carol Black. I think one other person was there. As the speaker, you can imagine how I disappointed I felt by the turnout. I'd prepared handouts, brought examples, and created a PowerPoint presentation to encourage this professional group of writers to write.

The room wouldn't have appeared so deserted if *it hadn't been*—i.e., if even five other people had decided to spend those two hours for that one day of the month in the room with other writers. Where was everyone?

I know. At a grandchild's soccer game, cleaning house, or grocery shopping. For those who've received messages like this from me before, you know where this is going: How many soccer games are in a season? How many days in the month to clean or shop?

How many times a month do we meet at the Clarion to discuss our writing?

I didn't get paid to speak that day; the program chair asked me to speak for free, and I said yes. These days, we regularly pay speakers so we can ensure good quality presentations for professional writers. If we don't get a certain number of meeting attendees, however, we don't cover the cost of speakers, room fee, refreshments, and even operating costs covering the Sunshine Committee, judges' prizes for the Summer Writing Contests, and opportunity bag costs.

Costs, however, are secondary to me. We have enough funds to cover our expenses most of the time. My priority has always been to encourage writers, and it's most difficult to do that if I am not seeing your face at the meetings. Plus, we take a lot of time and consideration bringing in speakers with expertise in popular areas of writing.

Writers of Kern is not only for folks who are actively engrossed in a project. Most of us want to be writers but let the business of life get in the way. We want to be considered a writer, but we often forget to put writing as a priority. Even if you aren't writing currently, come to the meetings. You'll either leave the meeting feeling motivated or you'll leave feeling better that you aren't the only writer going through a slump. But in either case, you'll leave knowing that you have a big, supportive group of friends who were awfully glad to see you.



**Official WOK Email
Addresses**

**Go to the website, or email to
the following addresses.**

Thank you.

Events:

events@writersofkern.com

Information:

information@writersofkern.com

Membership:

membership@writersofkern.com

Newsletter:

newsletter@writersofkern.com

President:

president@writersofkern.com

Submissions:

submissions@writersofkern.com

Sunshine Committee:

sunshine@writersofkern.com

Treasurer:

treasurer@writersofkern.com

Webmaster:

webmaster@writersofkern.com

Writers of Kern Annual Conference 2014

By Nancy Clover

Thanks to Dana and our Board we had three phenomenal speakers at the March Spring Conference. Each speaker had her unique focus, giving us guidance from her own experiences.

Carol Sanders, a writer and teacher with 30 years' experience, shared "A Writer's Journey." She published her first novel (paperback) in 1982 through Zebra Press. Without consulting her, the publisher changed the author's name and title of the book. They requested no input regarding the book cover. Sanders had the courage to try again after her retirement and used dMon Publishing in Texas. They worked with her during all phases of the project, and she is very happy with her second novel, *Spy on Clinton Street*. Sanders reminded us that as writers we need four things to be successful: the "spark," luck, grit/fortitude, and faith in ourselves and our work.



Esther Shifren's topic was "So You Want to Self-Publish

Successfully." She has lived all over the world as evidenced by, what I call a 'universal accent'. It's an accent that someone who speaks several languages develops. Her book, *Hiding in a Cave of Trunks*, is about her family's 100 years in China. She

introduced us to the self-publishing process called Createspace through Amazon, which she called "painless publishing," and gave us a number of valuable self-publishing sites as resources.

Nana Amir focused on "How to Blog a Book." She explained how she became an expert on blogging (she was the only one at a conference who blogged.). From there she started receiving speaking requests. Amir told us some of the reasons blogging a book works: the website becomes dynamic and you and your book become discoverable; you create a platform since more people read your writing. As a blogger, you begin building visibility and become a more recognizable author, post by post.



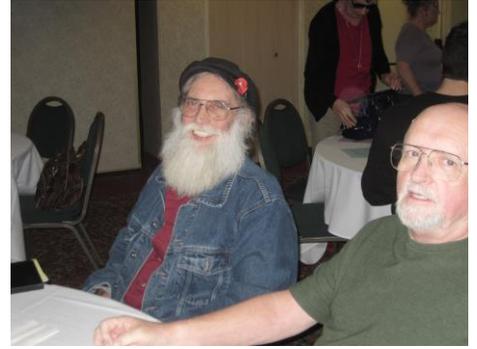
All three speakers had common messages:

- 1) In this day and age the author must do the footwork to promote his/her own book. Even if you are going with a standard publishing company, gone are the days when they do most of the work for advertising your book. That's now the author's responsibility.

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- 2) Platform. Social Media is an absolute necessity to get your name out there. Facebook, blogging, Twitter, etc.

A great conference with lots of information for us to soak up.



Photos from the Conference



Springtime is Election Time



Do you want to get more involved in our fine writers' organization?

Feel a calling to take on an office and help with the leadership and development of Writers of Kern? Are you ready to volunteer to serve your peers? Then, you are just who we need!

Submit your name and the office you seek to the current Board, which will serve as the nominating committee. You can also nominate someone whom you think has the skills, desire, and commitment to serve. All positions are open for nominations, and voting will take place at the May meeting. Elected positions and duties are: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. See the website at www.writersofkern.com for a summary of the duties for each office.

Membership Chair, which is an appointed position, is open. Here's another way to step up if you want to take an active part in helping our club thrive.

What WOKians are Reading



Writers know that one of the best things we can do for ourselves in developing our craft is reading.

We sent out the call: "What are you reading?" And WOK members answered.

I just finished Michael Connelly's *The Brass Verdict*. Good story about a lawyer with a surprise ending. ~ **Ruth Smith**

Platform: getting noticed in a noisy world by Michael Hyatt; *How to Blog a Book* by Nina Amir; *Revolution in World Missions* by K.P. Yohannan; *The Confessions of St. Augustine*; *The Question that never goes away: Why* by Philip Yancey. ~ **Jacqueline Wallace**

I just finished *A Brilliant Darkness* by Joao Magueijo and am currently reading Karen Armstrong's *The Bible: a Biography* and Adrian Goldsworthy's *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*.

~ **Phil Berling**

I've just finished Vanessa Diffenbaugh's *The Language of Flowers*. I'm starting *12 Years a Slave*. ~ **Sue Jennings**
My bedside fiction: *The Circle* by Dave Eggers. My daytime book on writing: *Let's Get Digital* by David Gaughran. My other room book (doctor's office, lunch alone, waiting for whatever, and that other small room): *Rock Don't Lie* by Dr. David Montgomery. Yes, I'm aware I'm reading three books written by guys named Dave. ~ **Dan McGuire**

I am currently reading *In the Midnight Hour* by WOK's own Reggie Ridgway. ~ **Janet Skibinski**

The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year Vol. 7, edited by Jonathan Strahan (2013)
~ **M. L. Gorsching**

I just finished reading Stephen King's Writing memoir. Fantastic! The first third is a brief bio and the rest is his writing experience. I took his advice and set my manuscript aside (he suggested 6 weeks) upon receipt from the editor and I truly read with fresh eyes. Michael Hyatt's *Platform* is an eye opener. I followed a couple of his suggestions (write a list of objectives and check every day) and it gave me the push I needed. Last but not least: Jimmy Carter's *A Call To Action*. Not finished yet, but it is amazing. ~ **Nancy Clover**

I am still reading *What on Earth am I Here For?* and *700 Sundays*, a memoir by Billy Crystal.
~ **Terry Redman**

Divergent by Veronica Roth and *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* by Martin Sixsmith. Oddly enough, I'm reading both in the aftermath of having watched their respective movies. ~ **Anna Stewart**

I'm reading a couple of books right now: 1) Timothy Egan's *The Worst Hard Time* about the folks who stayed in the Great Plains states and survived the Dust Bowl and 2) Don Thompson's *Local Color*, which brings to life the place, history, and people of Kern County. Don is our featured author and speaker for our May WOK meeting. ~ **Annis Cassells**
What fun to know what others are reading and to see the variety. Thanks, **Terry**, for this idea and for following through on it. (Ed.)

Support WOK's 2014 A-Z Challenge Participants



Three of our Writers of Kern members have jumped into this challenge.

Armed with creativity, skills, fortitude, and stamina, they are delighting us A to Z. Take a few moments to check in on their fascinating blogs and get to know them and their writing. You'll boost their platforms, too!

Clarissa Kae

<http://clarissakae.blogspot.com>

Sharon Meyer Miller

<http://www.writinginaraindrop.wordpress.com/>

Anna Stewart

ontheink.blogspot.com

This is the fifth season of the A to Z Blog Challenge that was begun by Arlee Bird

(<http://tossingitout.blogspot.com/>)

in 2010. For more information and to see the wide range of bloggers who have signed up for this year's challenge, go to

<http://www.a-to-zchallenge.com/p/a-to-z-challenge-sign-uplist-2014.html>

WOKians Getting Ink



Robert Hargreaves's story "The Chicken Wars," has been accepted by the journal *Knee-Jerk*.

Here's part of the acceptance letter he received, music to a writer's ears! "Thank you for sending us "The Chicken Wars".

We love it and would like to publish it soon at *Knee-Jerk*. Way to go, Robert!

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

Cutthroat, a Journal of the Arts announces its 2014 Joy Harjo Poetry Award & the Rick DeMarinis Short Story Award. Deadline October 20, 2014.

First Prize in each genre: \$1250 and publication.

**Second Prize in each genre: \$250 and publication. **

Honorable Mention: Publication.

For more information: See: <http://www.cutthroatmag.com/contest.html> or email cutthroatmag@gmail.com

Contests and Submissions

The San Francisco/Peninsula Branch of CWC has a call for submissions to their anthology, *Fault Zone: Diverge*. Non-members of SF/Peninsula are eligible to enter the *Fault Zone* short story contest.

First Prize is \$250 and publication in the next anthology

Second Prize is \$200

Third Prize is \$50

Contest Deadline: August 1, 2014

Reading fee: \$15

"Fault Zone isn't only about earthquakes. It's about personal faults, shortcomings, and the foibles of being human. In a way, we all live on a fault zone."

For submission information and guidelines, see <http://www.cwc-peninsula.org/fault-contest.html>

Calendar

April 19 *Canceled*
due to holiday weekend

May 17
Read the Book. Meet the Author
Don Thompson, *Local Color*

June 14 (2nd Saturday)
Summer Members Dinner Meeting
KCYW 2014 Writing & Poetry Contest winners announced



Member Profile

Meet Jason Brown

Jason Brown is the current Bagel Angel of Writers of Kern. He found great success and admiration when he made the change from a pure bagel breakfast to an inspired presentation of both bagels AND donuts. It's hard to live with all this fame, but he makes do with the life that was thrust upon his shoulders.

Jason joined the Club in summer 2013 after an unsuccessful trip to the library provided no information on writing groups or lectures in town. A quick Google search proved to be more fulfilling and Writers of Kern seemed to be exactly what he was looking for. He now frequents the Wednesday night "Pizza Group" for critiques and laughter and hasn't missed a WOK meeting to date.

Jason's first foray into the world of writing consisted of a number of beautiful poems about teenage angst and a seven chapter epic fantasy novel about roses that never saw the light of day. He's currently working endlessly on an urban fantasy novel about an evil villain with the literal power to heal. It's nearly completed and he eagerly awaits the moment when he can write "The End" on his first full-fledged writing attempt.

When not writing, Jason spends most of his time as manager at Sequoia Sandwich Co. He collects books and reads quite frequently, 48 novels in 2013, and is looking to beat that number this year. His favorite books are *The Kingkiller Chronicles* by Patrick Rothfuss and *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. He lives with his precious girlfriend in North Bakersfield, where he's saving to buy their first house.

Book Review

By Anna Stewart

Assassin's Apprentice by Robin Hobb



Fitz's memories begin with abandonment. In a world where members of the royal house are named for their virtues, Prince Chivalry's illegitimate son is a problem. Abandoned by his mother's family and an unwitting game-changer in the lives of his royal kin, Fitz soon finds himself sworn as a King's Man and apprentice to the Royal Assassin.

Life as an assassin's apprentice is not easy. Fitz must learn his craft in secret, hiding his true purpose from those charged with his daily care and concealing, even from his teacher, the magic – the Wit – that allows him to join minds with the animals.

Fitz soon finds himself embroiled in political intrigue as raids along the coast terrorize the kingdom. He must learn to use his skills to serve his king, hero and anti-hero

both, murderer and savior. All the while, he struggles to understand his fascination with the street urchin turned woman in the lower town and the warnings offered him by the mysterious fool.

In the end, I thought this was a fantastic book, if somewhat slow to start. Fitz does seem a bit detached at first but, as the book progressed, and especially after he starts his training as an assassin, I found myself enthralled by Fitz's quandaries, his betrayals, his unshirking loyalty to the few people who had dared to show kindness to the bastard son of a disgraced prince.

I recommend this book wholeheartedly.

It seems to me that those songs that have been any good, I have nothing much to do with the writing of them. The words have just crawled down my sleeve and come out on the page. ~Joan Baez

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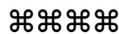
Editors' Inkwell By Annis Cassells



Pouring it out onto the page day after day invigorates some writers but depletes many. Attending a conference is one way to recharge a writer's batteries while we gain knowledge, encouragement, and new ideas. Often our process or feelings are validated. We learn that we are on the right track. After participating in conference sessions, on reflection we realize that we've taken something away and now incorporate it in our work. Or, the new learning percolates for later use.

At the WOK Spring Conference last month, Carol reminded me that the craft of writing is in rewriting. (*Patience and perseverance, Annis.*) Ester made self-publishing, for the first time ever, sound less daunting. (*Maybe I could do this.*) And, Nina's talk was the catalyst for the blog content organization that I've done since the conference.

The networking that happens at a conference brings valuable contacts and information. I loved when Carol Sanders mentioned needing new business cards and Rakel Sampson immediately whipped out hers, providing Carol and all of us with information about good-looking, reasonably-priced cards. Whether it's a local event, or whether I travel a distance (think San Miguel de Allende), conferences help me grow as a writer. They fortify my intentions and commitment to my writing.



What You Can Do

Take a look at the WOK Board positions and decide you want to be a vital part of making our club work. Then contact the Nominating Committee and toss your name in the running.

Step up for an appointment position to help with Membership or Publicity.

Let us know when you GET INK at newsletter@writersofkern.com.

Send your bio, with a headshot or other good photo, to newsletter@writersofkern.com.



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