

November 2014
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The Writers of Kern
PO BOX 22335
Bakersfield, CA

The Writers of Kern
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Writing for the Children's Market

Mandy Wallace



Do you want to know how to write for the children's market? Find out

during our November 15th meeting. **Rebecca Langston-George**, *Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators* Assistant Regional Advisor, will cover children's market basics for WOK members and guests."

Learn children's market specifics including genres, word counts, where to find freelance assignments, formatting, query letters, and market guides. She will provide useful Internet resources for writing in the children's market.

"Who knows?" said Writers of Kern newsletter co-editor, Annis Cassells. "With the information Langston-George offers some, who have stories rattling around their heads, could be inspired to shape them into young adult or children's stories."

A middle school language arts teacher, Ms. Langston-George has published books and stories for children. Familiar with children and young adults, she is uniquely qualified to teach Kern County's published and unpublished writers to navigate the children's market.

Attend the November Writers of Kern meeting to get that story out of your head and into the world.

Saturday, November 15, at the Clarion Hotel 3540 Rosedale Hwy, next to Costco, 9:45 AM to noon. There is a \$10 entrance fee. Guests always welcome.



Mandy Wallace

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

The Writers of Kern Welcome Our New Members

Karen Sallee, Linda McMahon,
and Gay Chambers

October's Speaker, Wendy Hornsby

Phil Berling



Mystery writer Wendy Hornsby was our guest speaker for the October 25th

meeting and shared some wonderful personal anecdotes from her 27 years as a professional novelist. Wendy is the award-winning author of the 9-book *Maggie MacGowen* series; *The Color of Light*.

Though recently retired from a teaching career, Wendy began and sustained her professional writing career while also juggling the usual life-consuming roles of being a full-time wife and mother *besides* being a professor of history at a local college. Someone that can wear that many hats and still find time to produce award-winning fiction is someone we all should listen to and learn from—and Ms. Hornsby did not disappoint.

The first thing she said we all have to do is take ourselves seriously as writers and make a commitment to our craft. We have to get very real with ourselves; to understand the efforts we must make while recognizing the distractions we allow to keep us from our writing.

Many “errands” and other “obligations” are actually quite optional—we can’t let them be reasons to keep us from our work. “Give yourself permission *not* to do things,” Hornsby stated, because there are “so many things we *don’t* need to do.”

She wryly suggested the writer/cook develop a repertoire of One-Dish

Meals and, perhaps even go a step further and “Teach your *kids* to cook.” Her children were instructed to please not bother her “Unless there was blood involved; then let me know.”

When mom published her first book, no one was more proud than her third-grade daughter. She took Wendy’s first copy around the neighborhood and even to school with her.

Visit Wendy at wendyhornsby.com and also check out *Making Story: 21 Writers and How They Plot*—

Wendy’s segment is called, “It’s a Book!”



Phil Berling

The President's Message, November 2014

Joan Raymond

As Thanksgiving approaches I think about one of my family's holiday traditions. Besides the turkey dinner, I look forward to watching *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* with my family. Knowing the movie so well, we can recite each line by heart and no matter how many times we've seen it everyone still laughs (and cries).

In case you haven't seen it, it's the story of two unlikely companions (Steve Martin and John Candy) trying to get home for the holidays. A poignant comedy about friendship and family written by John Hughes

whose other movies include "Sixteen Candles," "National Lampoon's Vacation," and "Home Alone."

Up until a few years ago, I watched this movie as a viewer; now I watch it from the perspective of a writer. I enjoy Hughes' movies and aspire to create stories like him. An avid people-watcher, he knew how to give characters personality quirks along with fears and dreams making them come alive for his audiences.

How does one create such believable characters? It's not easy to make them so real you could recognize them walking down the street. Watching and observing people you know helps. But, we must go even deeper. They need to be fully developed with idiosyncrasies, doubts, and secrets. What fear overwhelms them in the middle of the night? Do they yearn for a lost love? What special memento is saved in a dresser drawer? Would they keep or return a lost wallet?

If you're aspiring to build memorable characters, take the time to observe people who intersect your path or watch in a favorite movie – it could help your next story come alive. As my family finishes Thanksgiving dinner and once again settles on the couch to watch our traditional movie, I'll be making mental notes of John Hughes characters, getting closer to creating credible characters for my next piece.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families!



Recently at Writers of Kern



Writers of Kern Annual Winter Dinner
A Special Event for Members and Guests
Saturday, December 13, 2014

Winners of the Fall Writing Contest will be announced.

1st place - \$200, 2nd place - \$75, 3rd place - \$50

The WOK Book Exchange: To participate please bring a gently used and wrapped book to share with a fellow writer.

To make your reservation, go to <http://writersofkern.com/annual-winter-dinner>

Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2014.

The Details: Saturday, December 13, 2014

Time: 6:00 PM, dinner begins at 6:30 PM, **Cost:** \$20.00 per person,

Location: Hodel's Country Dining, 5917 Knudsen Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93308

Take the Olive Drive off Highway 99, exit west, turn right at Knudsen Dr.



NaNoWriMo Participants: Three Saturday NaNoWriMo Write-Ins are scheduled for November 8, 15, and 22 -- 1:00-5:00 PM, Russo's Books, 1601 New Stine, Ste. 182.

Open to all writers, WOK members and friends. Space is limited so reserve your spot at events@writersofkern.com. *The Write Way* knows of the following WOKians participating in NaNo.... **Anna Stewart, Donnee Patrese, and Mandy Wallace.** If I have missed you please let me know. -TR

Official WOK Email Addresses

Go to the website, or email to the following addresses. Thank you.

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events@writersofkern.com

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info@writersofkern.com

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Meet Joan Lindsay Kerr



Joan Lindsay Kerr has enjoyed being a member of Writers of Kern for

three years. She currently is a part of **Phil Berling’s** multi-genre critique group where she is working on turning some of her travel journal stories into articles to be submitted for publication. Two of her stories have been published on Dave Fox’s travel website, *Globejotting.com*.

Joan retired in June from a thirty-year career in public education, and is finding that she is so busy she wonders how she ever had time to fit in a full time job. She was the GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) teacher for 7th and 8th grade English and social studies at Emerson Middle School from 1984 through 1996. Her happiest memory of those years (besides getting to work with so many wonderful kids) was introducing her students to the world of Shakespeare. Her students competed annually in the Foothill High School Shakespeare Festival, which was started by Joan’s own high school drama teacher, Peggy Pauly. Joan loves staying in touch with many of her young Shakespearean actors, some of whom continued on with careers in the arts.

After receiving her M.A. in educational administration at CSUB, Joan went on to become a curriculum specialist and GATE

program director for Bakersfield City Schools and then for Rosedale School District, where she worked from 2000 through 2014. She currently serves as the President of the *California Association for the Gifted*.

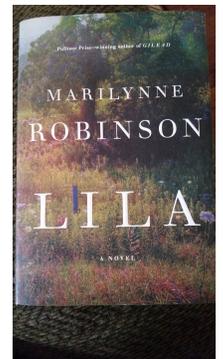
Joan developed her love of travel during a childhood of moving around the United States because of her dad’s job and a year of study at the University of Bergen, Norway with the U.C. Education Abroad program. She and her husband, Rob, share a wanderlust that keeps them on the road (or in the air) at least three times a year. They have enjoyed visits to many of the countries of Europe, as well as to the South Pacific, New Zealand, and South America. The most important item on her (carry-on only) travel list is her journal.

When they are at home, Joan and Rob love spending time with their family and pets. Their “blended” family includes Joan’s son Brian, his wife Deena, and their 3 year old, Luke, Joan’s daughter, Libby, and her daughter, 14 year old Ruby, Rob’s daughter Michelle, and her two toddlers, Mikey and Ellie. Rob and Joan’s “children” at home are dog, Maggie, cat, Scamper, and Lily, their chatty parrot.

Lila by Marilynne

Robinson
Anna Stewart

Lila’s earliest memories are of sitting, scared and lonely, on the front stoop of



My medical thriller ***In The Midnight Hour*** has made it into the top ten hot new releases

on **Amazon**. And it's on sale for \$.99. Thanks, **Reggie Ridgway**

her home as she waits for the fight inside to finish and for someone to let her back in. Doll rescues her from that stoop and from that home and, while it might be kidnapping, Lila latches on to Doll as her new mother. As Lila grows up, she and Doll are drifters, following the work where it goes and never settling in any place for too long. Settling is dangerous. After all, someone is looking for Doll.

By the time Lila meets John Ames, the preacher is an old man and Lila is homeless and squatting in an abandoned shack. Doll is gone and everyone else she knew has drifted away to parts unknown. The courtship that ensues seems to surprise them both and Lila must somehow reconcile the two halves of her life, the one she shared with Doll and the one she now shares with the preacher whose beliefs would seem to condemn both the people and lifestyle that were and still are so very important to Lila.

Marilynne Robinson is a Pulitzer Prize winning author who returns, in this newest novel, to the town and characters of *Gilead*. As highly praised as *Gilead* has been, I have found my interest more actively engaged in the other books of the series. With *Lila*, we get to explore the life and history of Reverend Ames's enigmatic wife and explore some of the harder questions of religion and the difficulties of coming late to any particular belief system.

I have long admired Marilynne Robinson's narrative style and strong sense of perspective and was not disappointed with the latest addition. While I would consider this more a character study than anything else, I was

immediately drawn in and enchanted by both the narrative and its subject.



Anna Stewart

Journaling Workshop in Bakersfield on December 5-6

In a presentation on journaling at a Writers of Kern meeting in October 2013, **Dennis VanderWerff** talked about the **Progoff Intensive Journal Method** developed by **Dr. Ira Progoff, Ph.D.** The Intensive Journal Method is a full-scale active method of personal life integration for continuous and cumulative self-development and creative work. As a result of interest in the Progoff method, a workshop is scheduled in Bakersfield on December 5-6, 2014.

Learn the Progoff Intensive Journal[®] Method: More than "journal writing" an integrated process for your ongoing self-development A Classic Tool for Gaining Clarity and Awareness. By Ira Progoff, Ph.D
Develop a More Meaningful Life

"The Intensive Journal[®] method is not journal keeping, not introspective diary keeping, and it isn't writing therapy...it is the full scale active method of personal life integration for continuous and cumulative work." For further information on the workshop see Writers of Kern @ writersofkern.com/events.

“From Inspiration to Publication”

September 10 - December 6
Annual WOK A-Z Blog Challenge

November 15
Rebecca Langston-George,
Children's Writer
“Writing for the Children's Market”

December 13 (2nd Saturday)
Winter Dinner Meeting at Hodel's,
6:00 PM

Fall Writing Contest winners
&
WOK Blog Challenge recognition

January 17
Writers of Kern Panel
“Editing”

February 21
LeeAnne Krusemark
“How to Write an
Irresistible Query Letter”

March 21
Nancy Curteman, Mystery Writer
“How to Increase Tension in Your
Novel”

April 18
Our annual Spring Conference
featuring several guest speakers.

THE BACK PAGE

The Editors' Inkwell

Terry Redman



There are people who start their journals by listing three reasons to be grateful and as time goes on they keep finding reasons. I have done it a few times and know that it lifted my spirits so this column is a reminder to get back into the habit. My reasons include the good retirement my wife and I are enjoying, our daughters are both working and doing well, technology enables us to keep in easy contact with friends and family across the country, and despite my handful of ailments I have access to good medical care. I could go on citing the trivial (good dramas on TV) to important (this Thanksgiving the family, including a 2-year old granddaughter, will gather to celebrate the day.) I mention all this to suggest you can make your own list—small or large to do a reality check on your good fortune.

In December WOK will celebrate the **Writers of Kern Annual Winter Dinner** at Hodel's. Then we will learn the results of The Fall Writing Contest. Prizes are \$200, \$75 and \$50. I'm not in the running so I can root for a member of my critique group to win. Then we will have the WOK book exchange. I got a good one last year and expect another winner this time. For details see the announcement above.

Each year my critique group moves into our holiday schedule. We hold one meeting in November and one in December. We're retired and have a lot to do. December's meeting is actually a party hosted by **Janet Skibinski** who hosts all our meetings. The critics who eat together write together!

There is often so much stress during the holidays along with all that togetherness and gift giving. Writers can turn an overheard comment into a short story, or a bad memory into a suspense novel; glean wisdom from Thanksgiving or Christmas should be easy for a member of WOK.

So here is *The Write Way's* Holiday Prompt. [What have you learned about gift giving during the holidays?](#)

Length: up to **30 words**, based on gifts and the winter holidays. Due **December 1st**. Submit to newsletter@writersofkern.com . We will publish as many as we can.



Terry Redman

