

**February 2015
Volume 3, Issue 2**

**Writers of Kern
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***February Speaker,
LeeAnne Krusemark,
Shares How to Write a
Query Letter***



So you finished your manuscript, and you're ready to send it out. What now?

Harvard professor of publishing, LeeAnne Krusemark, will share exactly what to say—and what not to say—in your query letter. Her talk, “How to Write an Irresistible Query Letter” covers the basics of query letters for writers who are ready to approach an editor with their manuscript.

“The query is an editor’s first impression of you as a writer. If they don’t like the query, they won’t even read the manuscript,” said Krusemark, who will cover formatting, what to include, where to send, and how to send a query letter.

LeeAnne Krusemark is an adjunct online professor of publishing for Harvard, is a nationwide speaker, and has published magazine articles and business books.

She uses her experience as a former journalist and newspaper editor to help writers navigate the business of publishing.



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

President's Message



A few months ago I asked the question, "What can Writers of

Kern do for *you*?" Many of you enthusiastically responded with wonderful suggestions and ideas, of which several have been implemented at recent meetings.

Today my question is, "What can *you* do for Writers of Kern?" I appreciate our fantastic team of people dedicated to ensure WOK runs smoothly each month, but sometimes we need a few more to step up and help. Whether it's just a few hours one month or an ongoing commitment, it would make a difference at the meetings.

A few of the regular opportunities:
Donations for the Peggy Connelly Opportunity Bag – books, notebooks, reams of paper, gift cards, etc. Greeting guests and members.

Submitting an article for the newsletter or website blog – writing tips, author interviews, etc.

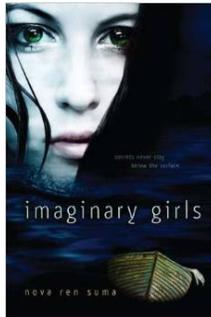
Our day-long Spring Conference is coming up April 25. We need people before and during the conference to put together packets, meet and greet guests at the door, lend a hand at the sign-in table, and help with other tasks to keep everything running smoothly.

An ongoing opportunity to serve Writers of Kern is newsletter, which Annis and Terry have addressed on the Back Page.

You have special gifts, talents and passions when it comes to helping others. Search your heart, imagine where you might fit in and let me know what *you* can do for Writers of Kern.

~ Joan

Book Review



Imaginary Girls
by Nova
Ren Suma

Chloe's sister, Ruby, is the most popular girl in town. The boys love her. The girls worship her. Everyone does exactly what Ruby wishes. Basking in the privilege of being Ruby's sister, Chloe accepts this fact of life. But, when Chloe discovers the body of a classmate in the reservoir, her seemingly perfect life is shattered. Reeling from the trauma, Chloe finds refuge with relatives in another city. And Ruby is left behind.

When Chloe returns two years later, she finds very little has changed. Her mother spends her days in the bar. Ruby has all the boys at her beck and call. And London, the girl whose body Chloe discovered in the reservoir, is alive and well. As Chloe re-acclimates to her old life, she finds herself intrigued by the power Ruby exerts over the people around her, the mystery of what lies beneath the waters of the reservoir and the dead girl

who suddenly wants to be her friend.

Chloe finds that the idyllic life she remembers is not that idyllic and that her sister's love, emboldened by mysterious powers, is as much a prison as anything else. This book explores the power and pull of family, of responsibility and the terrible things people will do under their influence.

I had mixed feelings about this book. Chloe's first person narrative is well-written and the premise is fascinating. But I found that, while I was immediately hooked by the opening chapters, my interest waned as Chloe returned to her hometown and encountered all of the strange mysteries that should have excited me. I believe the issue had more to do with Chloe's lack of gumption than any fault in the narrative itself. Chloe's character is passive and I found that frustrating as a reader.

Her rebellions were small, her choices arguably not her own. I kept waiting for her to choose something, to fight for something, to take charge of her narrative and she never really managed to do so. I thought the narrative picked up a bit at the end but I was likewise disappointed in the resolution.



Anna Stewart

"Poetry is the lifeblood of rebellion, revolution, and the raising of consciousness."

-Alice Walker

WOKians Getting Ink

Joan Kerr has an article in the Gifted Education Communicator, the quarterly publication of the California Association for the Gifted. It's about the power of parents to make sure that schools meet the needs of our gifted students. <http://giftededucationcommunicator.com/gec-winter-2015/the-power-of-the-parents/>

Joan Raymond is one of four who was promoted to Senior Editor of the online magazine, Oddville Press. In addition, her article, "Four Times Blessed," about the quadruplets born to a Taft couple, appeared in the January 23 edition of the Taft Independent.

Lou Medina's first-place award-winning Writers of Kern Fall Writing Contest story, "Life, Death, and Modern Day Jalopy," was published in the January 17 edition of the *Bakersfield Californian*.

Kelsie Gates's book, *Chad'tu* was published. A young man raised by Indians grows up and returns to the white world. His wife is abducted and he sets out to reclaim her and exact revenge on her kidnappers.

Jim Magwood's 5th book, *Jacob* was published. A main character in Magwood's previous novels, Jacob's life story is laid out following the history of Israel from the early 1940s to the present.

Annis Cassells - Editors' Inkwell Column "Writing is a Gift... and a Gift" from December 2014 *The Write Way* was reprinted on the SoCal Writers' Showcase, the

website of the Southern Californian regional CWC branches. See it at <http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com/writing-is-a-gift-and-a-gift/>

Our club got ink this past month in *Bakersfield Life Magazine* with an article highlighting our **Writers of Kern** Winter Dinner honorees on page 23 of the "Short Takes" section. And, several photos from the Winter Dinner appeared in the "Snap!" pages of the magazine.

Kern County Challenge

Twelve members of Writers of Kern submitted a baker's dozen 100-word stories, taking up the Kern County Challenge thrown down by **Donna McCrohan Rosenthal** of the SoCal Writers Showcase. Now, as with all submissions, we wait to hear about publication. However, with the authors' permission, we will publish these flash stories on our Writers of Kern website over the next few months. Congratulations to each participant! You did us proud. *TWW*

"Riding Kern Canyon"
by **Annis Cassells**

"My Last 6 days of the Year 2014 ** The Grand Finality"
by **Larry Darnell**

"The Sign"
by **Mikie DeLong Pyle**

"Desperation on Call"
by **Kathleen Faulkner**

"Murder on the Mojave 1978"
by **Kathleen Faulkner**

"Bakersfield, California, Earthquake, 4:52 AM, July 31st, 1952"
by **Kelsie Gates**

"Ming"
by **R. Geffken**

"Miracle on the Circle"
by **Louis Medina**

"The Ghost at Bakersfield High"
by **Terry Redman**

"Jerky Johnson Kills a B'ar"
by **Karen Sallee**

"Daddy!"
by **Bob Weiss**

"In the Fog"
by **Wanda Winkler**

In search of the right critique partner

"My one piece of writing advice is to find a critique partner on your writing level, who shares your work ethic, and have fun learning together!" --Stephanie Bond, author of *Two Guys Detective Agency*

My takes from the statement: "On your own level." Someone who writes a little like you, has your level of skills, etc. "Shares your work ethic." Someone who, like you (?), doesn't think this is a game but is serious about doing things well and right. "Have fun learning together." That means working, not just having fun and being nice to each other.

Jim Magwood

"Putting words on paper regularly is part of the necessary discipline of writing." -Pearl Cleage

Welcome New WOK Member

Welcome to new member, **Paula Hagen**, who joined at the January meeting. She is interested in children's books, historical fiction, and freelance writing.

You May be Shot



If you've attended a Writers of Kern meeting or event, you probably noticed random photos being taken of attendees. You may have even posed for Dennis VanderWerff or another of us who routinely take photos for our recorded history and for our social media and websites. If you do not wish to be in this type of environment, we will be happy to refund your entry charge so you can remove yourself from the meeting.

Secondly, Writers of Kern has no control over members or guests taking photos which may show up on social media, and we are not responsible for anyone else's photos or actions during a meeting.

Membership News

Associate or Active ~The meaning of membership designations Writers of Kern encourages writers, both novice and veteran, to succeed in their publishing endeavors. For those eager to learn the craft of writing, please join and enjoy the benefits

of an Associate member. Your membership grants access to quality critique sessions as well as monthly meetings and workshops.

An Active membership is achieved after a writer has begun publishing his works, through blog, online or traditional means. Attaining Active status takes work, rejection and in many cases, tears. Writers of Kern would like to acknowledge every member who has realized Active status with a Pinning Ceremony at the W.O.K. Honors Dinner, May 16, 2015. Please contact a member of the board if your membership designation has changed.



Clarissa Kae

Peggy Connelly Scholarship

The Peggy Connelly Scholarship application is posted on the website at www.writersofkern.com/about/scholarship. Students at Bakersfield College and Taft College are eligible to apply. If you have family members, friends, or former students who wish to pursue a career in writing or have superb writing ability, please direct them to the Peggy Connelly Scholarship application page. The application deadline is February 15.



“From Inspiration to Publication”

Writers of Kern Calendar

February 21, 2015

LeeAnne Krusemark
“How to Write an Irresistible Query Letter”

March 21, 2015

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

April 25, 2015

WOK Annual Spring Conference
8:30 AM to 3 PM
Featured Speakers:
David Congalton
Toni Lopopolo
Allison Crotzter-Kimmel
Herb Benham

May 16, 2015

WOK Honors Dinner
Hodel's 6:00 PM

Young Writers of Kern Competition
Peggy Connelly Scholarship
Pinning Active WOKians

June 20, 2015

Victoria Zackheim
“Writing the Personal Essay”

July 18, 2015

Judy Salamacha
“A Novel Way to Write a History Book”

“You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence.” — Octavia E. Butler

Photos from the January 17 meeting



Photos by Dennis VanderWerff
See more at <http://writersofkern.com/photo-gallery/2015-0115>

Official WOK Email Addresses

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

Events:
events@writersofkern.com

Information:
info@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

Critique Coordinator:
critiques@writersofkern.com

Meet Jim Magwood



Jim Magwood was born too many years ago in Vancouver, Canada. He was dragged south across the border by his parents when he was too young to protest and has lived in California the rest of his life.

He entered the military right after high school, then attended college and began a career in business. His military work and years in various business management positions had him traveling to many parts of the world, and he remembers well the beauty (as well as the poverty and unrest) of so many places.

Jim is married to Gayle and they have five magnificent kids (plus spouses), twelve fantastic grand-kids and five superb great grand-kids.

He retired early and moved from the city to their quiet country place in Twin Oaks, California. The loudest noises now are the few barking dogs, some howling coyotes, the wandering cattle and a million raucous birds. The rabbits and quail have come to recognize that Shiloh (the ranch) is a sanctuary for them, so they hang around every day looking for handouts.

Jim just hangs around the ranch trying to be a hermit (at least that's what a lot of people think.) He does still manage to get shaved once in a while and can look half-way presentable when someone comes up the driveway (if given enough warning.)

Jim's work now appears to be writing. SANCTION took about ten years to finish, as it was written in bits and pieces. However, right after it was sent to the publisher, what was left of the old mind began churning and there are now EVIL FOR EVIL, COP, NIGHTMARE and JACOB waiting for you to read.

Jim would love to hear from you, especially if you've bought a dozen or so of the books and passed them out to all your friends and neighbors. Give him a write some day, ask questions and swap stories. After all, he doesn't have *anything* else to do. You can catch him at JimMagwood@aol.com. (And he does answer his mail.)

Remember ~
You can pay your meeting fee online at
<http://writersofkern.com/meeting-fee>



WRITERS OF KERN ANNUAL SPRING WRITING CONFERENCE
 APRIL 25, 2015
 CLARION HOTEL AT 3540 ROSEDALE HWY, BAKERSFIELD

- 8:30 - 9:00** Sign-in, Social Time, Snacks
- 9:00 - 9:15** Welcome. Writers of Kern President, Joan Raymond
- All day** Door prizes, book sales and signings, networking, a cornucopia of learning opportunities



9:15-10:15 -- DAVID CONGALTON, Author, Screenwriter - "The Writer's Journey: Rules of the Road" No two routes on writers' journeys are ever the same, but the experienced writer understands that a good map, a clear sense of destination, and knowing when to ask for direction can often determine creative success or failure. Learn some basic rules of the road and how to apply them to your own writing.

David Congalton is a screenwriter, nonfiction author, freelance writer and radio talk show host. His first movie Authors Anonymous was released last April. A second film, Seven Sisters, is in production.



10:35-11:35 -- TONI LOPOPOLO, Editor, Agent - "Mastering Editing Skills"
 Techniques that help the writer learn the all important skill of self-editing: Avoid The 10 Most Common Mistakes First Novelists Make. Insights you've not heard before from an agent or an editor.

Toni Lopopolo worked 20 years in New York publishing, from Bantam Books to executive editor at Macmillan and St Martin's Press, before opening her literary management company in 1991. She conducts a popular workshop, Tea With Toni, for writing fiction and narrative non-fiction.

11:40-12:30 LUNCH



12:35-1:35 -- ALLISON CROTZER KIMMEL, Middle Grade Author - "Finding Your Fiction: Building Blocks of a Great Story"

This workshop takes writers through the essential parts of crafting a quality story with exercises devoted to strengthening characters, creating setting, building plot, and finding theme.

Allison Crotzler Kimmel published her first Middle Grade non-fiction book January 2014 with Capstone and has two additional titles coming out this spring. A former teacher, she now serves as the SCBWI Kern County regional advisor.



1:55-2:40 -- HERB BENHAM, Columnist - "That was Easy"

Favorite stories through the years, the great people I've met, the balancing act of writing about one's family, and some "million dollar"-writing writing tips.

Herb Benham has been writing columns for almost 30 years for the Bakersfield Californian. "I've written probably close to 5,000 columns. The hope is that one day I might get it right." Most recently, he's published That Was Easy, his third book of collected columns.

2:45-3:00 Wrap-up & Acknowledgements

EARLY REGISTRATION: February 1 - 28, 2015: \$35 for WOK/CWC members, \$40 for non-members, \$25 for students 14-22. REGULAR REGISTRATION: Begins March 1 until Sold Out: \$50 for members/non-members, \$25 for students. Catered box lunch by Sequoia Sandwich Company, add \$5.00. Seating is limited - Register today at www.writersofkern.com

THE BACK PAGE

Editors' Inkwell



Terry & Annis

Editors Wanted

Almost two years ago someone asked if I was interested in serving as WOK's newsletter editor; "No," but whoever takes the job needs to understand *The Write Way* is a work of art as well as a vehicle for information. About two weeks later an email invited me to join Annis as co-editor. Annis and I work well together and we both learned the value of being a co-editor, instead of a struggling editor. **What a ride!**

The thing is, we were both willing to give it a go when we knew the other was onboard. We could share the responsibility and consult with each other for ideas. And, having a back-up editor/proofreader is priceless.

In August 2014 we agreed over coffee and a bagel (our signature delight and indulgence) that the May 2015 issue would be our last. So we are looking for two or more writers to take over. Are you a member of WOK? Do you like to write? Would you like to see your name flung across the state as editor of very cool newsletter? Do you have some ideas for a newsletter you'd like to try? Have you thought the newsletter could use X and Y to attract more interest? If you answered yes to three or more of these questions, Writers of Kern sees you as a person of interest.

We see you as someone who is primed to make a contribution to this awesome club, keeping WOKians informed and providing other readers with a glimpse of what we are all about. If you've made it to The Back Page, you have a good idea of what goes into The Write Way.

Each branch of CWC has a newsletter showcasing the character and talents of that local group—you will exchange newsletters and other announcements to see what is going on across the state. We liberally ~~stole from~~ studied what other editors were doing as we found our way.

It was illuminating! We checked them out and put our own twist on ideas we liked for WOK.

You will not be doing this by yourself. Heck no! We already have a great team of regular contributors, and the two of us are here to help, guide, or advise the new editors for the next few months. We could even be persuaded to write an occasional article.

Let us hear from you. Email us at newsletter@writersofkern.com or, even better, chat with us at an upcoming meeting.

Your Soon-to-be Retired Co-editors