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Celebrating 102 Years

June 2011

California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch

Welcomes all writers from aspiring to professional; to educate and encourage writing and marketing skills.



## Matt Wagner Crafting a Career in Nonfiction

June speaker Matt Wagner is a literary agent who specializes in nonfiction books, often for Dummies. After working as an agent for Waterside Productions, where he sold in excess of 1,000 books to more than 30 publishers, he started his own agency, Fresh Books.

In the past six months, he has seen more than a dozen books published. They include: *The Glycemic Index Diet Cookbook for Dummies*, *Investing Online for Dummies*, *Prezi for Dummies*, *Droid X for Dummies* and *Droid 2 for Dummies*.

Matt enjoys working with fun nonfiction and reference. "I work personally with my clients toward their long-term goals. I also represent clients for corporate writing gigs, white papers, online training gigs and DVDs," he said.

"I try to keep up to date with client news and links to news of note from the publishing industry at large. For regular updates, or to see what catches my eye, you can visit the Fresh Books Blog, or follow me on Twitter. If you'd like to send me a query, please check out my submissions page."

Before becoming a literary agent, Matt worked as a coffee jerk, cab driver, and book clerk and buyer at the famed Boulder Bookstore in Boulder, Colorado. He holds a B.A. in Creative Writing and Literature from U.C. Santa Cruz, where "I spent a year in the stacks at McHenry Library supposedly 'shelving' books."

For more on Matt and his agency, come to the June luncheon meeting and visit his website, [www.fresh-books.com](http://www.fresh-books.com).

## CWC Sac. Branch Short, Short Story Contest Winners

Congratulations to the following CWC Sacramento Branch members who were winners in the Branch's Short, Short Story Contest. They will be honored at the June luncheon meeting.

### First Place - "The Next Table" by Louise Munro Foley

Lou Foley is the author of 29 books for children and young adults. Her fiction has been translated into nine languages and her articles have appeared in *Writer's Digest* and *The Writer*. She joined CWC in 1974 and has served as vice-president and board member.

### Second Place - "Akira's Flashlight" by Frances Kakugawa

Frances Kakugawa is a published author of nine books, two of her children's books received Best Children's Book of the Year awards. She was named one of the outstanding women of the 20th century in Hawaii and received the Hawai'i - Pacific Gerontology Society Award for her work with the elderly.

Frances taught in Hawaii, Michigan and Micronesia and was a



### Membership Renewals Due June 30

Watch for your annual CWC membership renewal notice in the U.S. mail. Return it by June 30 with your check or money order. Thank you!

**Saturday, June 18, 2011 - Luncheon Meeting 11:00 a.m.**

**Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sac., CA 95815 (see back)**

**Members \$12.00**

**Non-Members \$14.00**

## CONTEST, *continued*

curriculum writer and lecturer at the University of Hawaii. Frances devotes her time giving lectures, workshops and readings throughout the US. She has become a spokesperson for caregivers and the elderly. She presently facilitates a writing support group for caregivers in Sacramento.

### Third Place - "A Serendipitous Visit"

by **Tanya Grove**

Tanya is a member of CWC-Berkeley and the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators, writing mostly for children. Her day job is editing and proofreading, and she volunteers as a writing coach for 8th graders. She blogs about books and publishing at <http://tanyagrove.wordpress.com>. Hear one of her poems at [www.smories.com/watch/blue](http://www.smories.com/watch/blue).

## The Judges

A big thank you to the judges who took time out of their busy schedules to read the short, short story entries.

J.S. Graustein  
Managing Editor, *Folded Word*  
[www.foldedword.com](http://www.foldedword.com)

Don Chaddock  
Managing Editor, *Folsom Telegraph* and *El Dorado Hills Telegraph* newspapers  
[www.folsomtelegraph.com](http://www.folsomtelegraph.com)  
[www.edhtelegraph.com](http://www.edhtelegraph.com)

Catherine N. Fraga, English Professor  
California State University, Sacramento

# Writers Network Meeting News

by *Jamie Laster*



May's Writer's Network speaker was Vina Parmar, an experienced workshop facilitator, trainer, author, retreat leader and life creativity coach. Parmar was raised in India, Africa and the United States and has studied spirituality since 1997, utilizing East and West traditions in her workshops to awaken creativity.

"We have to keep our creativity alive, and to keep learning by taking workshops and classes to stay on the cutting edge," she said. In her workshops, Parmar helps participants tap into inspired creativity to bring about transformation at mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical levels, and has conducted workshops for the military.

"Our mind is a very powerful instrument. When it is scattered we are not resourceful or creative. Meditation is necessary to clear the noise, because our challenge is to tune into the right channel," she said.

Parmar's mentor is Amma, a meditation instructor known as "The Hugging Saint." Amma blesses others through hugs, and is known for her great humanitarian efforts. In 2006, Amma chose Parmar to teach Integrated Meditation Technique (IAM). Over 1.5 million people have been trained in IAM. Parmar's workshop instruction is also based on the book, *The Artist's Way*, by Julia Cameron.

A writer's creativity can be blocked when the work becomes so demanding that the inner child closes us down. Parmar said that creativity is found in the subconscious. To tap into this realm and be able to write, writers must quiet the noise, offering the following four tools:

- 1) Writing in a journal helps empty the mind and create a stream of consciousness
- 2) Make a two-hour appointment to nurture your creativity.
- 3) Connect with a support system – crucial for successful writers
- 4) Tap into your subconscious higher force, where creativity comes from.

Parmar said writers should write about what inspires them, because that is what will touch other people. Her e-book, *Living on Sunlight*, is about harnessing the power of sunlight to heal the mind, body, and spirit.

She closed the meeting with handouts and a meditation that seemed to soothe and revive those present.

The Writers Network is held the first Friday of every month, 9 a.m., at International House of Pancakes, 2216 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova (north of Highway 50). The next meeting is June 3. Regular attendees are encouraged to become members of CWC.



## Open Mic for Writers

Sponsored by the CWC, Sac. Branch  
Second Friday of each month, 7 p.m.  
(Sign-ups begin at 6:45 p.m.)

**Next Open Mic is June 10**

Barnes & Noble Booksellers  
Birdcage Center, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610

Readers and Listeners Welcome  
Contact: **Julie Bauer**; [joolieb@aol.com](mailto:joolieb@aol.com);  
**(916) 344-5778**

# President's Message

by Margie Yee Webb



June marks the end of the membership year and my four years as president of the Sacramento Branch. It has been an honor to serve and support our club and members. I am pleased to see many of you make connections and progress in your writing goals, whether completing writing projects, publishing articles and/or books, winning writing contests, receiving book awards or landing a literary agent.

Our club continues to offer numerous opportunities for members and others to learn, network and make connections. Currently, we offer third Saturday luncheon meetings, first Friday breakfast meetings, second Friday Open Mic for Writers, annual writing contests, workshops and annual holiday socials.

We also participate in various community literary events and I am proud of our club's successful participation in the following:

\* 5th Annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration, San Francisco – May 16, 2009

\* Folsom Public Library Local Author Fair, Folsom – April 10, 2010

\* Local Author Appreciation Day at Barnes & Noble, Citrus Heights – April 24, 2010

\* 6th Annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration, San Francisco – May 15, 2010

\* Northern California Storybook & Literature Festival, Roseville – July 31, 2010

\* An Evening with Writers at Luna's Café, Sacramento – September 21, 2010

\* Authors Among Us at The Market Place, Rancho Cordova – weekends during November 27-December 5, 2010

\* Folsom Public Library 2nd Annual Local Author Fair, Folsom – April 9, 2011

\* 7th Annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration, San Francisco – May 21, 2011

\* Sacramento County Fair—Authors Booth, Sacramento – May 26-30, 2011

Some of our members participated as authors or club representatives at these events. At the Sacramento County Fair, the Sacramento Public Library partnered with us to encourage fair attendees to read and write.

Our many successes would not be possible without the support of our members, and I want to acknowledge and thank current members who contributed during the past four years serving as officers, board members, key volunteers or representatives for club events. These dedicated members include: Cheryl Stapp, Nancy Ware, Robert E. Cooper, Marilyn Smith-Murphy, Denise Lee Branco, Kimberly A.

Edwards, Steve Liddick, Susan M. Osborn, Bob Quinlan, Marsha Robinson, Ken Umbach, Michael Finch, Jamie Ervin, Julie Bauer, Amy Rogers, Kiyo Sato, Frances H. Kakugawa, Suzanne Blaney, Shirley Parenteau, Cindy Sample, Karl Palachuk, Grace Ertel, Robin M. Ginley, Laurie Hoirup, Marsha Porter, Robert Schladale, Elaine Adams, La Ronda Bowen, Anthony Folcarelli and George Anthony.

Highlights of the key areas where we made great strides include:

**Public Relations** – Steve Liddick took on the role of Public Relations Director in 2009 and publicity for our meetings and events started to appear regularly in *The Sacramento Bee*, and the club was featured in the Books & Media section. This publicity may have been the reason our club has been mentioned in *Sacramento Magazine*.

**CWC Open Mic for Writers** – In 2009, Susan M. Osborn coordinated the startup of Open Mic at Barnes & Noble, Birdcage in Citrus Heights. This provided writers a venue to read their work, published or in progress.

**Workshops** – Since 2010, Steve Liddick, Kimberly A. Edwards, Robert E. Cooper, and I were part of the committee to bring valuable programs for our members and other writers.

**Writers Network** – Leadership of this popular breakfast meeting transitioned to Bob Quinlan and was critical to its continuation (formerly Nonfiction Network founded by Grace Ertel more than 30 years ago).

**Holiday Social** – I started this most recent annual tradition in December 2008 at Romano's Macaroni Grill in Folsom. Every year since, the festive gathering has grown with more attendees.

**Community Literary Events** – These events are important to our club, writers and community. I was pleased to have played a part in each, especially the Northern California Storybook & Literature Festival where I assisted in publicizing the event.

My sincere appreciation and thanks to everyone during these past four years. I look forward to finding more opportunities to spotlight our club and members while we encourage others to write their stories.

Wishing everyone continued success with your writing!



**Patria Diaz Pettingell**

12-25-1923 to 4-25-2011

We are very sorry to report that longtime CWC Sacramento Branch member Patria Pettingell passed away April 25. She leaves behind her husband, Charles, also a longtime Sacramento Branch member, and former branch treasurer, and two daughters, Karolyn and Alma. Patria published her first novel, *Island Fury*, in 2005. To read Patria's obituary and sign her guest book, visit [www.legacy.com](http://www.legacy.com).



## Where to Send Member News

Send news of your sales, awards, contest wins, etc. directly to the newsletter editor. **Please indicate that you are a CWC member. If you use e-mail, please note in the subject that it is for CWC.**

Julie Bauer  
7173 Stanford Oak Dr.,  
Sacramento, CA 95842  
joolieb@aol.com

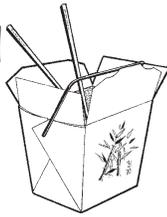
*Please proofread. We are not responsible for errors, misspellings or inaccuracies.*

### Send all Address Changes, e-mail or mail to:

Ken Umbach, CWC  
P.O. Box 1157  
Citrus Heights, CA 95611-1157  
ken@umbachconsulting.com

### How do you want your newsletter?

If you wish to change how you receive your newsletters (e-mailed PDF document or snail mail), contact Julie Bauer, joolieb@aol.com; (916) 344-5778.



## June Luncheon

Luau Garden  
Arden Way

The Club's next luncheon meeting will be Saturday, June 18, 11:00 a.m. at Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento, 95815. It is located between Kohl's and Petco, across from Arden Fair.

Non-members are welcome. To make reservations, call or contact Julie Bauer at (916) 344-5778; joolieb@aol.com prior to the meeting. Or just drop in. There's always room for more!

Cost to attend: **Members \$12.00; Non-members \$14.00.**

Pay in the meeting room or you may pay ahead. Make checks payable to: California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch and mail to CWC, Sacramento, P.O. Box 1157, Citrus Heights, CA 95611. Money over the restaurant's meal price is used to cover Club expenses and speakers' fees. Mail checks to the post office box address at least a week prior.



## Member News

Cheryl Stapp's new blog devoted to California history is now live. See it at [www.CherylAnneStapp.com](http://www.CherylAnneStapp.com). Comments welcome.

**Brenda Bowen's** first poetry collection has been accepted by Folded Word Press with a publication date of mid-2012.

**Denise Lee Branco** won a 2011 silver medal in the 2011 Living Now Book Awards (animals/pets/livestock category) for *Horse at the Corner Post: Our Divine Journey*. Visit: [www.independentpublishers.com](http://www.independentpublishers.com).

**Save the date for the CWC Annual Picnic to be held July 30, 2011, at Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland. Details will be posted on the website.**

**California Writers Club  
Sacramento Branch  
[www.CWCSacramentoWriters.org](http://www.CWCSacramentoWriters.org)**

#### Officers

**Margie Yee Webb, President**  
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**Cheryl Stapp, VP & Programs**  
chermail1@yahoo.com  
**Nancy Ware, Secretary**  
**Robert E. Cooper, Treasurer**

#### Board of Directors

Denise Branco  
Kimberly Edwards  
Steve Liddick  
Susan M. Osborn  
Bob Quinlan  
Marsha Robinson  
Ken Umbach

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E-mail correspondence should include CWC in the subject line.

The next deadline for submissions is **August 10 for the September issue.**

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Subscription rate is \$15 a year.



**California Writers Club  
Sacramento Branch  
P.O. Box 1157  
Citrus Heights, CA 95611-1157**

Membership Dues due June 30

# The Next Table

*by Louise Munro Foley*



When the maitre d' seated them at the table next to mine, I knew.

The man was dying. Handsome in an angular, imperfect way, he wore death's color—the yellow/pearl hybrid you see in funeral parlors and wax museums. I had seen it on my brother in the hospital.

This stranger could have disguised it better, I thought, with a trace of non-malevolent but real annoyance. Looking at death makes me uncomfortable. The tan suede jacket and ivory turtleneck accented his sallow skin, and I reached up unconsciously to finger my own neckline, to relieve the choked-up sensation I was experiencing.

His movements were slow and deliberate and his expressive brown eyes were soft and vulnerable. I figured he was close to my age, about forty, too young to die. I was grateful when the sommelier approached with their wine and briefly interrupted my ghoulish surveillance.

In ritual, the man raised the goblet, sniffed its contents leisurely, sipped and passed blessing. Thus sanctioned, the black-coated server poured hers, added to his, and left to tend others, while my couple somberly and silently toasted each other. He acted with disconcerting confidence for one whose lifeline was a fraying cord. Sham, perhaps. Cover-up for her sake. Be brave at all costs.

Her rosy cheeks, like a child's on a winter's day, underscored blue eyes with permanent laugh lines at the corners. Even in stillness, her face exuded appealing warmth.

I couldn't help but notice his wide gold wedding band. Did they have children? Life insurance? Was there enough money? Was there enough time? How long would it be? My brother had had six months to prepare. Not enough. Not even for an attorney. Who was this man? Engineer? Dentist? Accountant? Expensive clothes. Expensive restaurant.

As a tourist in San Francisco in search of a good seafood dinner, I had simply lucked out by coming here. Not them. They knew the maitre d' and wait staff. They were regulars.

Another thought as I watched them. What would I do if I knew I was dying? Well, strictly defined, anyone who is living is also dying. I amended my question. What would I do if I knew I was terminally ill? Would I continue patronizing my favorite places?

Would I remain a 'regular'? Would I follow the same lifestyle or avoid it? Denial. Good questions. No good answers.

He was speaking to her earnestly now, their shoulders touching, faces just inches from each other.

She smiled at him, grazed his hand with hers, her diamonds sparkling against his pallid skin. A depressing but fascinating contrast.

She was blonde, slim without being slight, and elegantly dressed in a low cut, long sleeve silk blouse, its white background garishly splashed with crimson and hot pink roses. Her breasts, round and firm in the snug scoop-neck style, rose and fell as she nurtured his companionship. Her soft laugh blended with his husky chuckle.

What were they laughing at? She knew he was dying, too. I could tell by the way she whispered in his ear and linked her fingers through his as they sipped their wine. Her curled fingers showed white knuckles, straining to hold what was slipping away.

She was good for him, I decided, mentally nodding my approval.

They finished their meal and he called for their check. I watched them leave—this handsome couple. He, with death's pallor, guided her gently through the maze of linen-draped tables. She looked over her shoulder at him once, and smiled. A private sharing. Her long red skirt flared out around her shapely ankles as she moved.

I was staring at my untouched poached salmon when the server came to see if it was unsatisfactory.

"No," I replied. "No, I was distracted." And in a rush to learn more, and unwilling to let these strangers go, I gestured towards their vacant table. "A handsome couple." My voice cracked.

He studied me, unsure of my interest, then relaxed slightly.

"Yes," he said, with a trace of accent. "They come for four years now. Every Thursday night."

Unconsciously, I looked at my watch as if to verify that it was Thursday, and then back up at the waiter. His soft eyes were flooding with tears.

"She is dying," he murmured. "They have given her six months to live."

I could tell he was dying.

# **Akira's Flashlight**

*by Frances Kakugawa*



He was dying for the second time, but it was different this time.

His frail body lay between two clean sheets and a lamp lighted the room filled with murmured laughter. His right hand, mapped with blue veins from years of labor, was held in two warm hands. Around him, a familiar fragrance brought comfort as it had the past forty years.

He was five years old the first time. The room was dark except for the dim light from a kerosene lamp. His frail body was curled on a mattress covered with sheets that were thin and frayed from the washing board. He had lain in bed for over a week and heard faint voices outside his door. He didn't know what was happening. He only knew he was tired, and his coughing kept him up throughout the night. His mother's tired face and father's stern look hovered over his between consciousness.

The doctor's weather-beaten hand pressing into his body told him nothing, except that he was in pain. He didn't understand the sob torn out of his mother when the doctor quietly shook his head. His father left the room, taking the lamp with him.

He rested in the dark knowing there was fear lurking in the room. And that was all he knew. Then he heard his father's voice. He had entered the room again, and sat on a chair that squeaked like hinges that needed the oil can.

"Akira-chan, I will get you a present. What do you want?" For a moment Akira thought he had misheard his father. His father's voice was filled with tenderness. His father had never called him "Akira-chan." It was always a harsh "Akira!" Presents? He had never received one except for an orange one Christmas morning.

His eyes met his father's and he stuttered, "A- a-a- flashlight." His father stood up and left the room. When Akira awoke during the night, the moonlight through the curtainless window showed an object near his bed. He reached out and held a flashlight. A flashlight.

He flicked it on and delighted over the beam of light. He pointed it at the ceiling from his bed. He moved the beam from one side of the room to the other, and like magic, he seemed to hold the entire room together in that one sweeping movement. Even the ceiling didn't seem so far away. He turned the switch to "off" and then "on" again, feeling he had total control over the darkness. The shadows that had teased and threatened him no longer existed. He pulled the old blanket over his head and held the flashlight high in his little tent and night was gone. Dragons and monsters disappeared and his heart soared like the tail of a kite in the blue sky.

"Akira!" jolted him out of his tent. His father was standing next to his bed. "Turn the flashlight out. Go to sleep." Obediently, Akira turned off his flashlight and put it on the bed stand.

The following night, his flashlight became a lighthouse, breaking the darkness. He quickly switched it off when he heard the door open. He knew it was his father; he could smell him in the dark and expected to hear "Akira!" Instead he felt a warm hand on his forehead and a pat on his shoulders twice. Akira pretended to be asleep. Long after his father had quietly closed his bedroom door, Akira could still feel his father's warm hand. He was no longer afraid. The night no longer held mysteries.

That was eighty-three years ago. His father's gift to a dying boy was stored somewhere in his childhood memories.

Today he lay in bed with no shadows playing in the dark. There was no need for a flashlight. He had lived bringing those he loved close to him. The light had dimmed at times, as it would in eighty-three years, but he had managed to keep the glow. He knew the batteries from his own heart were growing weaker. He felt one with the ceiling, the walls, and the soft breeze that blew in through the curtains. Akira felt at peace, listening to the muffled voices around him.

He returned the caresses from the hands that held his. He rubbed his thumb against them and for a split second, he thought he was turning a flashlight on and off.

# A Serendipitous Visit

by Tanya Grove



Isabel hovered over the cast iron pot that had produced concoctions for generations. Although she should have known the recipe by heart, she squinted at the yellowed index card. She sighed—the last ingredient had to be fresh, and it was the hardest to get.

Bam, bam, bam!

Who could that be? She wasn't expecting anyone. Most people passed by without stopping. She sometimes overheard kids on her front porch daring each other to knock, but when they saw her at the window, they usually fled, squealing "Witch!"

Isabel trundled over to receive her surprise visitor.

The moment the heavy wooden door squeaked open, a boy with glasses and a clipboard began to speak: "Hi, my name is Malcolm and I go to Sleepy Hollow Middle School. I'm here to offer you unbelievably good bargains on some of today's most popular magazines. Do you watch TV? Because I can guarantee you the very best price on *TV Guide*."

Isabel couldn't believe her luck. This was just what she needed.

"Actually, young man, I don't own a television set, but do come in and warm yourself by the woodstove."

"Why yes, ma'am, thank you."

She closed the door behind him, locked it, and dropped the key in her apron pocket in one smooth motion as she led him over to the bubbling pot atop the woodstove.

"I smell something good—I bet you're a cook. Well, you're in luck, ma'am, because I have not one, but three cooking magazines to choose from. There's *Bon Appetit*, *Cook's Illustrated*, and *Cooking Light*, which is for people trying to lose weight."

Here he patted his own protruding tummy with a knowing nod, but after a brief scan of her thin frame, he added, "But I doubt you need to worry about that, ma'am."

"I don't need any cooking magazines. I have all the recipes I'll ever need. In fact I have a prize-winning recipe for boysenberry jam," she said holding the index card up, careful to have the recipe facing her.

"Prize-winning?"

"Yes, it wins the blue ribbon every year at the county fair," she added proudly.

"Every year? You must have lots of blue ribbons then," he said, casually searching the dark cobwebbed walls.

"And top jam wins \$25 in cash. Of course if I were interested in money..."

"And who isn't?" asked Malcolm with a chuckle.

"I've had offers—from restaurants, cookbook writers, even big names in the food industry..."

Malcolm's eyebrows raised just a fraction.

"But I would never sell my recipe," she declared, clutching the index card to her chest. "And no one would ever guess the secret ingredient that makes it so..." she paused, "...so intensely boysenberry."

It occurred to her that this boy had been sent here for a purpose—it was serendipity.



“Perhaps you’d be interested in one of our *other* fine magazines. You see, for every magazine subscription, I earn a point toward prizes. But I’m aiming for 50 points, the grand prize, and the title of Junior Sales Champion of King County.”

He stood there, clipboard in hand, looking at her with such . . . what was it? An *innocence*, she thought, nodding.

“Is that your prize-winning jam there?” Malcolm asked, eyeing the bubbling pot.

There was an undeniable twinkle in the old woman’s eyes as she said,

“Yes, and it’s *almost* done.”

\* \* \* \* \*

In the food section of the *Sleepy Hollow Gazette* was a piece about the county fair Jam-off. Above the article was a photo of a bespectacled, grinning thirteen-year-old boy with a bandage on his arm holding a jar of his winning boysenberry jam. The caption read: “Middle-school student Malcolm Crane, youngest winner in the history of the Jam-off.”

According to the judges, there was quite an upset this year. One judge commented, “Isabel Cook has won that contest every year for the last 40 years. Nobody knew her recipe—she kept it top secret. But she passed away just before the contest, so I guess that recipe will go with her to the grave.”

In a different part of the newspaper was this item: Isabel Cook, 93, was found dead on the floor of her home Thursday night, cause of death unknown.

“Probably a heart attack or a stroke,” surmised Sheriff Grant.

But it made no mention of the torn bit of index card clenched in her fist or the trace of blood beneath her fingernails.

