

April 2017

California Writers Club

Sacramento Branch

WriteOn!

WriteNow!

Tears and cheers span a 55-year writing career

Contributed by

Shirley Parenteau

I was new to California in 1962 when I attended a CWC conference at Mills College and was invited to attend critique groups held monthly in Sacramento members' homes. The welcome, encouragement and advice I received there were invaluable. Later, Virginia (Gini) McCall invited me to join her smaller critique group of multi-published women who pulled no punches. At times, I left hiding tears until I was in my car headed home, but I learned more from those hard-hitting critiques than from any number of conferences.

The women in the group were writing romances, a genre just beginning to find an enormous readership in the 70s. Although I had sold several of my first eight children's books, I decided to try women's fiction and sold two novels to Ballantine Books and three to Harlequin Historical.

I had joined Romance Writers of America, Novelists Inc. and the Society of Childrens Book Writers

Recently we asked Shirley Parenteau, whom many of us met at the Holiday party last December, to write some of the highlights of her long career and 55-year membership in our branch. She had just received a letter forwarded from Candlewick Press by a little girl in North Pole, Alaska, who said that her book, *Dolls of Hope*, made her care more for people, "even if they are not dolls." As Shirley said, "What more could a writer ask?"



Shirley Parenteau

and Illustrators. By then, CWC seemed to be going through a period less vital to me. (In the past

few years, I'm delighted to see that has changed again with many exciting activities and speakers offered).

Children's books caught my interest again on a spring evening in 2002 when I stood on our front porch and listened to frogs in a nearby creek. A car drove by on the rainy street; the frogs stopped singing, then slowly began again. I heard a counting book and soon sent a manuscript to my then-agent at Curtis Brown in New York.

Bad news often means that something better is waiting its turn. A good dozen editors rejected *One Frog Sang*, explaining that their house couldn't support any more counting books. Then my agent contacted Candlewick Press, a new children's publisher in Massachusetts. *One Frog Sang* sold there and is still in print. A picture book, *Bears on Chairs*, followed with irresistible adorable illustrations by artist David Walker.

As I write this in February, 2017, I've just seen preliminary sketches for the seventh in what has be-

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Put these CWC event dates on your calendar for writing insights.

Zackheim explores memoir at April 15 luncheon

Victoria Zackheim will explore the key points that make your memoir sing, when she speaks Saturday, April 15, at Cattlemens Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd. in Rancho Cordova

She'll begin with the arc, continuity, showing and not telling...and so much more...and then she'll explore the introductory paragraph, that all-important, compelling element that grabs your reader and drives them into the story.

Victoria is the author of the novel *The Bone Weaver* and editor of six anthologies: *He Said What?*, *The Other Woman*, *For Keeps*, *The Face in the Mirror*, *Exit Laughing*, and *FAITH*. Her play, *The Other Woman*, based on her first anthology, was featured across the United States in 2015, with simul-



Victoria Zackheim

taneous readings at more than twenty theater venues. Her play *Entangled*, an adaptation of the memoir *Entangled: A Chronicle of Late Love*, was in development at Z Space in San Francisco. Victoria's first screenplay, *MAIDSTONE*, is now with director Peter Werner. Her screenplay *ROZZY* is based on Caroline Leavitt's novel *Meeting*

Rozzy Halfway.

Victoria is the story developer and writer of *Where Birds Never Sang: The Story of Ravensbruck and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camps*, aired nationwide by PBS. She teaches Personal Essay in the UCLA Extension Writers' Program and is also an instructor at writers' conferences.

Shirley's bear book sales have topped 550,000 in Japan

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come a series of books about sharing and other problems between four small teddy bears and their larger teddy bear friend. All the titles have sold translation rights to Iwasaki Shoten. When I had the good fortune to fly to Japan this past November and meet my publisher and his staff, they told me that together, my bear titles have sold more than 550,000 copies in Japan, a figure I still find hard to believe.

The bears have also sold translation rights to publishers in Germany, Finland (for four languages), Thailand for an English/Thai version and to a publisher

in Taiwan who will soon publish a version in Complex Chinese packaged with a Chinese/English audio and a pamphlet of the text in English.

My oldest granddaughter, whose mother is Japanese, inspired me to research a Japanese Girl's Day celebration. Online research led to the discovery of a little known 1926 event when American children sent more than 12,000 dolls to children in Japan, hoping to create friendship. The Japanese children sent back 58 three-meter tall kimono-clad dolls with small lamps, tea sets and other accessories.

After publication by Candlewick

Press, Iwasaki Shoten bought translation rights to *Ship of Dolls* and *Dolls of Hope*. *Dolls of War* will follow soon, set after the bombing of Pearl Harbor when the exchanged dolls became symbols of the enemy. I hope to do a fourth book set in the 70s when the surviving dolls in both countries were gradually rediscovered.

First I'm finishing *Samurai Girl* based on another little known bit of history. In 1869 at the end of the Shogun era, 22 Samurai left Japan to establish a short-lived silk and tea raising colony near Coloma, California. As usual, I've fallen in love with the characters and their struggles.

President's Message: Active engagement averts failure

Contributed by

By Kimberly A. Edwards

CWC Branch President

Recently in *Poets & Writers*, novelist Kevin Wilson wrote that there's no such thing as failure unless we quit. As long as we keep trying, we have not failed.

I cannot count the many times I personally have felt like a failure. Story not right. No one wants it. Rejected without a reason. Editors elusive. When I feel defeated, I just do something else for a while and recast my view of "failure." Never will I stop writing.

If you are trying to improve and make inroads in your publishing path, consider joining a critique group, asking for help, dropping by Open Mic (or better yet, offering to lead one at another Dimple location in addition to Citrus Heights and Roseville), attending Stories on Stage, and/or going wherever writers gather. You'll find friends who understand you like nobody else.

You might also consider joining us at some of our upcoming lun-



cheon meetings. I'm excited about speakers Victoria Zackheim (April) and David Kudler (May), neither of whom have presented to our club before. Victoria is hailed as an expert in memoir. David, who is both publisher and writer, sits on a treasure chest of tips on the "hero's journey" – advice on how to improve our stories, both fiction and nonfiction.

And please consider attending the June meeting, where we will practice our pitches ("Perfect Pitch") in real time in front of agents from two literary agencies. How cool is that?

Coming in November, Mark Coker CEO of Smashwords, will present the Future of Publishing. Mark is a visionary, and that's why all the top business publications quote him. Whether or not you write books, you'll want to hear where publishing is headed and the forces that are changing our reading, writing, publishing, marketing, and buying culture.

To get an even greater edge, consider attending the special seminar May 7 featuring Stuart Horwitz, the book architect. After reading his book, I was intrigued by his unique way of looking at successful stories. When I met Stuart recently, I saw that he was as genuine as his book.

We have to keep trying and viewing every experience as an opportunity. We will not have failed. As novelist Wilson says in *Poets & Writers*, not everything we write is going to be good, anyway. Often it's not. Still we try, and that's a good thing. "That's all I want out of my artistic life," says Wilson. "To fail better than the last time."

Leadership: Submit your name or nominations for officers by April 15

This year's chair is Nominating Committee Chair is Daniel Babka, author of *No More Illusions*. Thank you, Daniel, for stepping up! The branch encourages wide participation.

If you are interested in running for an office, check the Policies and Procedures for responsibilities of officers. Then please talk with Daniel. Anyone interested in running or office will need to

submit their name to Daniel by April 15. Email Daniel at danielrb7711@gmail.com or call (916) 300-8723.

Elected positions are president, first vice president/programs, second vice president/membership, secretary, and treasurer.

If you think you might consider running for office in the future but would like to get your feet wet first, you can volunteer for a commit-

tee, a task, a special event, social media and technology, communications, meeting set up and take down, coordinating speakers and helping members at book shows.

Another way to get involved is to attend board meetings, held after most luncheon meetings on the third Saturday of each month at Cattlemens Restaurant. This is your club and your service is appreciated!

Gini Grossenbacher recognized as Jack London awardee

Our vice president/membership, Gini Grossenbacher, author of the novel *Madam of My Heart*, has been overwhelmingly selected by the board of directors to receive the 2017 Jack London Award.

The 2015 awardee was Steve Liddick, author of *Old Heroes*.

Awarded every two years, the Jack London recognition honors a branch volunteer showing sustained contributions to the branch above-and-beyond normal responsibilities.

Several years ago, Gini learned the role of the membership chair from vice president. Marilyn Smith-Murphy, who was stepping down after many years in the position. Gini learned the job over many months with Marilyn as a mentor.

After serving for a few years, Gini “retired” from membership service due to personal reasons. However, she came out of “retirement” last spring to run for office and help

the branch out. Thank you, Gini, for your commitment to the branch and the kindness and patience you bring to every interaction with members.



Founded 1909

Sacramento Branch California Writers Club

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Elk Grove, CA 95758

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Kimberly A. Edwards

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Ted Witt

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Character development



“He wants us to chat so he can pick up a few snippets of romantic dialog.”

A preposition is a terrible thing to end a sentence with

Contributed By

Dierdre Wolownick

Did your English teacher ever explain why you shouldn't end a sentence with a preposition? (We're writers; I'll assume you know what a preposition is.) Here's a well-kept secret: it's not a 100-percent rule. But it is a rule, so like any rule, you're welcome to break it *only* if you understand why and how to do so.

That rule is 100 percent valid in Romance languages (those that come from Latin). It's impossibly clumsy to end a sentence in French, Italian, etc., with a preposition. It sounds ridiculously unfinished and un-native-speaker-like. But in English, the rule is only a remnant, a vestige of the Latin model of English. For centuries, teachers and grammarians explained English according to the rules of the most important language it came from, Latin. This works, to a point. Many Latin constructions apply to English. But many don't.

Besides Latin, English also has a lot of Germanic languages in it, as well as Greek, Chinese, Polish, Tagalog — just about any language you can name (and probably some you can't!). In German, it's fine, even necessary, to end phrases and sentences with prepositions. And many of those same constructs exist in English. (The more you learn about foreign languages, the easier English gets.)

English has evolved a lot, especially since the creation of the internet. Latin rules worked fine

when we all spoke proper British English. But those days are gone. Grammar moves on.

Being practical is always acceptable in English. Practicality has made English the planetary language. English adapts. It easily molds itself around new forms and concepts. And if ending a sentence with a preposition makes it sound better or less formal or easier, that's just fine.

But here's the all-important caveat: There are times when it is *definitely wrong* to end with a preposition, like in the all-too-common construction, "Where are you at?" or "I don't know where it's at," and others. Ever heard anyone say that? (There's a lot of unacceptable, sub-standard usage in the media and on the web.) Do you know why it's 100 percent wrong?

What's the meaning of the word *where*? (Hint: it's a compound word.) Many of the *WH*-words are compounds; they already contain the preposition in them.

Where = *in* which place, *at* which place

Whence = *from* which place

Whither = *to* which place

Why = *for* what reason

So if you use it wrong, here's how it stacks up:

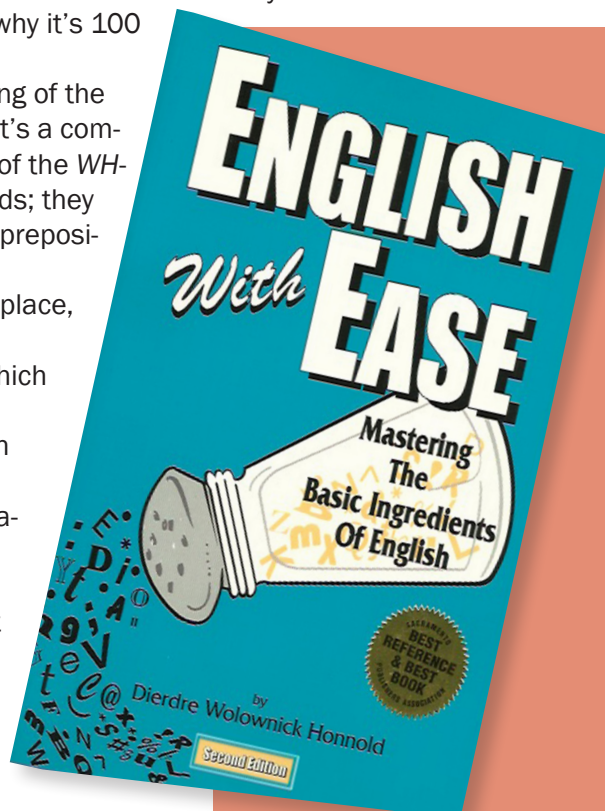
Where is it at? = At which place is it at? (Better: *Where*

is it?)

Where are you at? = At which place are you at? (Better: *Where are you*?)

English is easy, but it comes from many different sources, so the more you know about those languages, the easier English gets.

Many grammar books are not worth the purchase price, because they give rules but don't explain why those rules exist. For example, most spelling rules are completely unnecessary if you know my simple formula (in the next article). Rules are fine, but hard to remember; reasons are far better. Once you're armed with that logical information, you'll be surprised how sensible English really is.



Links, resources and ideas to help you generate book reviews

Contributed by

Stephanie Chandler

Authority Publishing

Book reviews are essential because they help potential readers make a purchase decision.

Sending out review copies for potential review is something all authors should include in their marketing plans. The more people who know about your book, the better the chance of building word of mouth buzz. Plan to send out 50 to 500 review copies of your book in both print and digital formats.

Below is a comprehensive list of book review sources, including both free and paid options.

A note on paid options: We do not advocate paid services that promise to churn out X number of manufactured reviews based on how much money you spend with them. However, we have included a listing of reputable services that offer quality reviews.

Free Book Review Options

Amazon Reviewers – Reviews on Amazon are hugely important to the success of a book. Potential buyers look to reviews to help make a decision to buy, and Amazon's algorithms factor in the number of reviews a book has generated. The more reviews a book receives, the better the likelihood of that book showing up higher in Amazon search results.

Each Amazon book reviewer has a public profile. Many include email addresses and website information (many top reviewers are also bloggers—for even greater exposure).

These reviewers want to be contacted and offered free review copies! Look for reviewers of competing titles. Send them an email and ask if they would like to receive a review copy of your book.

Industry Bloggers – Seek out bloggers who cover topics of interest to your target audience or industry. See if they conduct book reviews, publish book excerpts or interview authors. Google searches should help you compile a list of bloggers to contact.

Book Review Bloggers – Bloggers have tremendous influence with readers when it comes to reviewing and recommending books. See the following directories to find bloggers who review books in your genre. Also try searching Google for <genre> + “book review.”

<http://bookbloggerlist.com/>

<http://www.theindieview.com/indie-reviewers/>

<http://www.blognation.com/blogs/book-reviews>

Major Media Bloggers – All of the major magazines and newspapers now host blogs (from the *New York Times* to *Cat Fancy Magazine*). Many of those blog posts are written by unpaid contributors. Seek out freelance contributors who cover topics related to your target audience and offer up a review copy.

Email Subscribers – Periodically send a note to your mailing list subscribers gently reminding them that book reviews help sell books and that you'd greatly appreciate it if they would post a review for your book.

Midwest Book Review – A wonderful organization that supports indie authors, Midwest Book Review has been around for many years and reviews printed books for free.

<http://midwestbookreview.com/>

Smaller Publications – Don't overlook trade association newsletters and magazines, plus smaller magazines and even hometown newspapers.

Your Website – Create a Review Copy Request form on your website. Ask visitors to provide you with details, including website link and size of audience, in order to qualify to receive a complimentary review copy.

Contest on Your Site – Consider using Rafflecopter, a simple program that you can plugin to your site to host a book give-away contest—it's free! Gently ask (and remind) contest winners to post reviews after reading.

<https://www.rafflecopter.com/>

Online Groups – Announce that you are interested in sending out review copies to groups that reach your target audience. You can find all kinds of groups via:

<http://www.facebookgroups.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/directory/groups/>

Yahoo: <http://books.yahoo.com/>

Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/group>

BookRix: <http://www.bookrix.com/community/groups.html#MSGid1351853226.32>

Book Clubs – Offering your book to book clubs for free can be a great way to generate reviews and buzz

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Promotions, giveaways and your own website lead to reviews

for your books. Search for book clubs by genre online and via Meetup.com. Also try: From Left to Write and the Book Club Reading List.

<http://meetup.com/>

www.fromlefttowrite.com/information-for-publishers-and-authors/

<http://bookclubreading.com/submit-your-book/>

Goodreads Giveaways – More than 40,000 people enter to win books from the Goodreads Give-away program each day.

<https://www.goodreads.com/giveaway/new>

Authors can offer up books for free to this program and specify the number of days the promotion will run (they recommend 30 days). An average of 825 people enter to win these promotions, and Goodreads selects the winners at the end, sending authors a CSV file with addresses. When mailing copies of books to winners, be sure to insert a note requesting that the recipient write a review if they enjoy the book.

Other Giveaway Sites

The LibraryThing organizes an early reviewer program for publishers, matching members of its community with relevant books. Books find their way to readers who are the most likely to interest them.

<https://www.librarything.com/forpublishers/er.php>

BookLikes also matches readers to relevant reader interest for its giveaway program or an author can ask a reader a question to determining a winner.

<http://booklikes.com/>

Noise Trade – This site allows you to list your ebook as a free give-away for any length of time you choose. In exchange, readers provide their email addresses, which you can download for follow-up. They can also provide a “tip” for authors, resulting in small fees potentially earned for books listed on the site.

Noise Trade: <http://noisetrade.com/>

Social Media – Invite your audience to become book reviewers. You can share a link to your “Review Copy Request” form on your website or conduct a contest to give away several review copies. You can also start early and build a waiting list for reviewers well before you book is published.

Giveaways at Events – Whenever you donate copies of your book for raffle prizes or gifts, include a note

asking the recipient to review.

Peers, Clients, Family, Friends – While you want to be careful asking family and friends to write reviews because you don’t want all of your reviews to appear biased, it certainly doesn’t hurt to ask the people you know to read your book and share an honest review.

Review Communities – There are numerous communities where writers can share their work and get feedback. This is a great way to build some interest and create fans before your book is published: Wattpad, WeBook, WidBook.

Wattpad: <https://www.wattpad.com/>

WeBook: <http://webook.com/>

Widbook: <http://www.widbook.com/>

Book Life – Hosted by Publishers Weekly, submit your book for free for review consideration

www.booklife.com

Readers Who Contact You – As an author, you should expect that your readers will periodically contact you, either via email or social media, to let you know they enjoyed your book. When this happens, always reply with gracious appreciation and suggest that the reader could help you by posting reviews online.

Paid Book Review Options

NetGalley – For a modest fee, you can list your book in the directory and make it available for their 300k + reviewers to choose from.

<https://s2.netgalley.com/>

Kirkus – An established and reputable company, Kirkus provides professional reviews for a modest fee.

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/>

Foreword Magazine – Reputable reviews for indie authors via Foreword.

<https://www.forewordreviews.com/>

Author Buzz – Get book announcements out to libraries, bloggers, book clubs

<http://www.authorbuzz.com/>

Bargain Booksy – If your ebook is priced for sale between \$.99 to \$4.99, you can purchase an email promotion to members.

<https://www.bargainbooksy.com/sell-more-books/>

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THE BOOK ARCHITECT TO DELIVER ALL-DAY TRAINING

Improve your fiction, memoir, and creative non-fiction with in-depth instruction

Some narratives feel as if they are coming together with an emotional payoff while others do not.

What makes the noticeable difference?

It starts with the underlying architecture of the book.

That's why we are pleased to feature Stuart Horwitz, the Book Architect, in an extended presentation Sunday, May 7, in the Sacramento area. Join us for a six-hour training to help you look differently at your writing. As mentor to writers both who outline and who write by the seat-of-the-pants,

Stuart will cover:

- Key ingredients of a scene and how they and a "series" can move your story forward
- How to separate your work into scenes and use this disassembly to diagnose what's going wrong with your manuscript
- What "plotting" means, and why there isn't one narrative arc but several
- How to make sure your book has one "theme"

He will address that the age-old battle between the outliners and the seat-of-the-panters – those who meticulously script vs. those who plot solely by feel.

Stuart Horwitz is a ghostwriter, editor, and founder of Book Architecture, whose clients have reached fiction and nonfiction bestseller lists and have appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, Today,

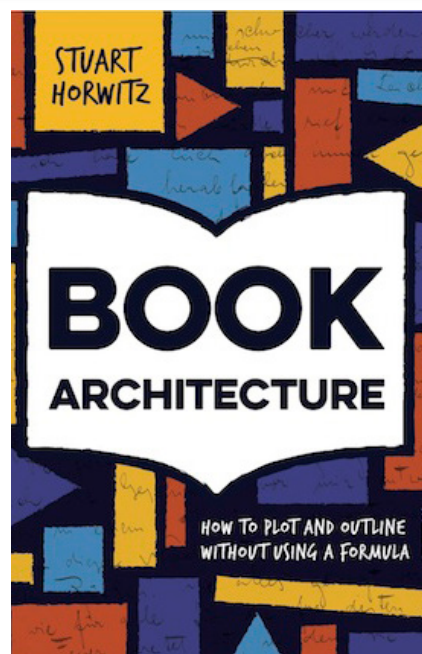
In person...

Stuart Horwitz

and the Tonight Show. The concept came out of 15 years helping writers go from first to final draft with a complex narrative. Writers have become authors, transforming a messy manuscript into a polished book and signing with top literary agencies, landing book deals at coveted publishing houses.

Since 2013, Stuart has toured North America addressing writers' struggles. His folio of appearances includes the Writer's Digest Conference in NYC, Tucson Festival of Books, San Francisco Writers Conference, Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Conference and San Miguel Writers Conference.

Stuart holds degrees in literary aesthetics from New York Univer-



sity and East Asian studies from Harvard University.

Event Time & Location

Sunday, May 7, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Cattlemens Restaurant, Rancho Cordova

Registration Instructions

- Payment: Submit name and check to:
CWC, Box 581746, Elk Grove, CA 95758
- \$55 for members, and \$65 non members
- Cash or check can be paid at monthly IHOP or Cattlemens meetings.
- Deadline: Wednesday, May 3, 2017

April 2017, California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch

Katrina Sawa: You are writers; re-purpose your content

No excuse for not having vibrant content on an author-branded website

Authors can often make more money on the back end of sales, than through direct book markets such as Amazon, according to Katrina Sawa, the “jumpstart biz coach.”

She spoke at the club’s March third-Saturday meeting.

She addressed the topic “Jumpstart Your Book Platform & Visibility for More Sales & Fans,” and, boy, did she give us a jumpstart!

Katrina was a fun, energetic speaker with tons of great ideas about how to maximize our websites, social media presence and profiles.

She encouraged many of us to figure out what other business models could go along with our books so we could potentially make a lot more money from being an author.

A few of her key points included:

- We may want to become a speaker to share our message with the world; it’s an easier way to get in front of a lot more people – in person and online
- Having different business models or things to sell can enhance our book purchases and keep fans, followers and customers in our funnel longer
- Website are our most important marketing tool; authors should skimp on building it, not try to build it themselves (or it will look like it)
- Repurpose your content. Include some of the book that



you’re writing into blog posts, social media posts, or images with fun phrases to generate interest and drive more people back to your website

- Don’t expect your visibility on Facebook to sell your book or to be “your website;” use social media and Facebook as a marketing “tool” only to get people from there to your website

She challenged the audience with some propping questions:

- Are you frustrated with the lack of sales for your book (online or traditional) and can’t figure out how to turn that around?
- Do you have a book or book idea but can’t figure out how to make money with it or how else to turn it into a business?
- Are you constantly trying to get your book noticed, but nothing

is working?

- Are you working way too hard, getting burned out or wish you had more time for yourself or your family?

If you missed the presentation or want to follow up on her advice, you may want to check out Katrina’s website at:

www.JumpstartYourMarketing.com

She points to a variety of resources, offers free audio content, and publishes training videos.

For those of us who were in the room, she even gave us all a free audio training that she normally sells entitled: Secrets to Success with Your Website.

To reach out to Katrina, find her online or call her at (916) 872-4000.

She’s a local resource with proven availability.

Calendar at a Glance

Friday, April 7, 9 a.m.

IHOP, Rancho Cordova

First-Friday Networking

Marlena Uhrik

Author

"10 Decisions You'll Have to Make When Publishing and Marketing Your Work"

Saturday, April 15, 11 a.m.

Cattlemens, Rancho Cordova

Victoria Zackheim

"Make Your Memoir Sing"

Friday, May 5, 9 a.m.

IHOP, Rancho Cordova

First-Friday Networking

Andrew Benzie

Publisher and Designer

"Cover Design & Other Secrets of a Great Self-published Book"

Sunday May 7, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Special All-Day Event

Stuart Horwitz

"From first to final draft: Improving your fiction, memoir, and creative non-fiction"

Saturday, May 20, 11 a.m.

Cattlemens, Rancho Cordova

David Kudler

Publisher

"The Enduring Hero's Journey"

10 important decisions unveiled at Friday, April 7, networking meeting

Dr. Marlena Uhrik's most unique book, *In Grandpa's Hands*, was written, sketched, and laid out to honor her father for the important role he played in her family.

Her experience taught brought her to 10 important decision points, which she will share Friday, April 7, at the IHOP networking meeting, 2216 Sunrise Blvd, Rancho Cordova. The meeting starts at 9 a.m.

Her exquisite and unusual book won the Mom's Choice Award. Marlena has also published *Guidebook for Family Day Care Providers* (McGraw Hill), used as a textbook in community colleges. Another book, *My Family Matters to Me* became an Amazon best-seller.

A prominent children's advocate, Marlena has received



Marlena Uhrik

national and international recognition for the work she has done improving the lives of children and families. She is a recipient of the United States Presidential Award for Service.

Policies and procedures have been revised

Our branch is governed by Policies and Procedures within which officers and board members operate to carry out necessary functions for the club. Every few years the board reviews and refreshes the Policies and Procedures. Recently, modifications were made to strengthen safeguards for the club and encourage openness and more participation. Some of the additions include requiring board approvals for appointments, enhancing financial provisions, modifying responsibilities of officers, and adding sections on standards and conflict resolution. Please check out the Policies and Procedures posted under the website tab "About CWC," then "Governing Documents" at:

www.CWCSacramentoWriters.org.



You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club.

— Jack London