

THE WRITE STUFF

SEE YOU TUESDAY
AUGUST 12TH

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August Meeting Anthology Debut!

August

VCWC Members

Anthology Celebration

Welcome! New Members

Polly Bee
Ellen Reich
Virginia Hutchinson
Brad Bowen

Board Members Wanted!

See inside for de-
tails!

Note Our Meeting Time 7:00 PM

Borders
125 W. Thousand
Oaks Blvd,
Thousand Oaks

After two years in the making, our newest anthology is ready! Tuesday evening, August 12 at 7 p.m. at Borders Books in Thousand Oaks, will mark the debut of VCWC's newest publication: *Quintessence*. With such a curiously fascinating title, we're hoping your curiosity will motivate you to join us. Family and friends are welcome.

Many of the twenty-five *Quintessence* authors will read samples from their work, which include: prize-winning short stories, poems, creative non-fiction and little vignettes. At the end of the program, you can schmooze with the authors and have your copy – or better yet, copies - of *Quintessence* signed just for you. What an opportunity to meet and support your fellow members! What writing! What a celebration!

Quintessence defined—then and now:

What the heck does Quintessence mean? Some of you may know the answer while others prepare to sit in Rodin's "Thinker" position. First, it is helpful to break this noun in two: "quint" is translated from the Latin *quinta* or *quintus* meaning "five or fifth". When essence is added, the word soars into power. First used back in c.1430, it referred to the ether that Aristotle added to the four known elements (water, earth, fire, and air). Back then, *Quintessence* was an essential power to permeate *all* things.

Almost six hundred years have passed. Today, we might define quintessence as "the highest essence of your being." As authors, writing can be the highest essence of *our* being. It keeps us alive in many ways non-writers may not understand. Quintessence is indeed something we cannot live without and is a perfect title for this new anthology. So please celebrate *Quintessence* with us on August 12.

Book Availability and Cost

In order to have as much time for celebrating and book signings, we encourage you to **use the pre-debut purchase option form inside this newsletter**. Books for those who order pre-debut will be distributed immediately after the reading – ready for signing. We will also have books available for purchase at the meeting, but we prefer you order your books early, if possible. *Quintessence* is available for members at the discounted price of \$10 which includes tax. Non-members may purchase the book for \$12, including tax.

Your purchase of our latest anthology will support our club and promote the creation of the next anthology. Here's hoping that you'll be signing books at its debut!

From the Anthology Committee: We wish to thank VCWC member James Vernon, First Place winner of this year's poetry contest, for donating his prize money to the Anthology Project. Your generous gift is much appreciated.

Member Submission

The following is an excerpt from member Jim Vernon's memoir.

BOOMERANG

In the evenings we commonly sat around in the cook shack gabbing about the progress of the work or drifting off into accounts of situations we had encountered at other mining camps. Harry, a tough miner—my favorite among the miners when the talk drifted to dogs we had known—leaned back, cleared his throat, and his voice shifted into his narrative mode. His eyes seemed to be focused on some distant image.

He began: "I'm sure you've heard of Boomerang, haven't you? He's the most famous retriever in the state of Nevada. Everyone who gives a damn about dogs, and especially retrievers, the best of all dogs, should know about Boomerang. He set the standard for all retrievers."

That caught our attention. Harry continued in a deadly serious vein. "Boomerang wasn't much to look at. He had a head, ears and color like a springer spaniel but must have been about one-half mutt because his body had the shape and size of a larger short-haired dog with a long tail. But let me assure you, he was 150% pure retriever. As a puppy, he would retrieve anything you discarded, even cigarette butts. The hot ones he would spit on first."

That brought a rolling of eyes and expressions of disbelief to our faces. One of the miners said something like, "What does that have to do with being a great retriever?"

"A whole lot," Harry snapped. "It indicated his potential to rise to greatness. That was while he was still growing up." He droned on: "On the Fourth of July, our boss fired off a skyrocket from our mining camp that fell about a quarter mile away in the woods across the canyon. Boomerang, still only half grown, disappeared and was gone all night. Early the next morning he ambled into camp with the burned out skyrocket in his mouth."

"I thought you were talking about a hunting dog," sneered one man, "not a scavenger."

"I'm coming to that," shot back Harry. "Be patient." He went on. "I'll never forget him. He was our faithful companion even while working, not just hunting like most inferior retrievers. On one job we were scratching out a road along a hillside. Our road encountered a ridge of rock. A narrow gap in the ridge looked like a blast of dynamite would let us break through. Our boss got a stick of dynamite, a detonator cap and a couple of feet of fuse. He warned everyone to stand back several hundred feet. He lit the fuse, tossed the dynamite into the gap and ran for cover. But not Boomerang. He dived after it, picked up the dynamite and swaggered toward us, the fuse hissing and spitting. We scattered like a covey of quail.

"Boomerang, finding no one to accept his treasure, jumped into the back of the pickup and sat holding the dynamite. As the fuse burned close to the dynamite, the boss picked up a stick, waved it and yelled, 'Boomerang! Boomerang! Fetch!' and threw it. Boomerang dropped the dynamite and dashed after the stick. The dynamite exploded. When the dust and fragments settled, the pickup looked like a war-casualty. We walked the couple of miles back to camp, but Boomerang wouldn't follow us.

"We returned the next day. Boomerang rested on his tattered rug in what remained of the truck bed. He had carried or dragged the scattered parts of the pickup—placed the headlights by the front bumper, the tools in the toolbox, the fenders next to the wheels, and the steering wheel in the cab. When we piled out of the truck, he got up from his bed, went to our boss, and placed in his hand the sagebrush stick and the burned fuse from the dynamite charge. He barked twice, his signal for something more to retrieve."

"Where's Boomerang now?" asked a wise guy.

"Oh, he's down on the Coast at Canine College."

Old Harry's eyes drifted around from man to man, challenging any one to doubt his story. When his eyes met mine I'm certain I saw a faint wink.

President's Message By Greg Elliot

This is a busy month for our club for many reasons. This month we kick off the 2008 short story contest (see details elsewhere in this newsletter, or on our website). August is also the month when we elect new officers. And before we can elect officers, we must have members who put their names in for nomination. Sadly, it rarely happens that a member comes up to me and asks to be nominated. Most of the time, I, like my predecessors, call members, or buttonhole them at meetings, and ask them to please consider serving.

I know we're all busy. I know we all have too much on our plates too much of the time. But in order to function, our club needs a board, and to fill those board positions we need volunteers.

This year, my fellow board members and I have begun the process of making committees for some of the board functions, so that no one member is stuck with so much to do that they never consider serving on the board again. Even the non-board positions, like the role of newsletter editor, can be constructed so that the work is given to more than one member. This does more than simply lighten the load by spreading the work around. It also gives direction to those of you who might be willing to serve, but don't feel confident enough to take on a board position just yet. If that's the case, consider joining a committee. Come to the board meetings, take on a task now and then, and see how the politics of the club occur. Next year, if you haven't run screaming from the county, you could then consider becoming a voting board member, and you would already know what you were in for.

I've made some good friends on the board this year, and strengthened other friendships. I can honestly say that I'm proud of many of the things we accomplished, and I like the direction we've mapped out for the next board. Now, we need volunteers who are willing to step into the roles of departing board members, and carry on the work that those members have begun.

My great thanks to the board members who are departing: Lisa Barreto, Cathryn Andresen, Lauren Soffer, Billy Martin, and to our Newsletter chair Kim Reed. My thanks, also, to those board members who are electing to stay for another term. They are going to need your support. More than that, they are going to need your involvement.

Please consider joining the board, or signing on for a committee. You can contact me and I'll be happy to discuss any of the open positions with you. E-mail me at MrkDurgent@aol.com, or call me at (818)991-0783.

I look forward to hearing from you, perhaps even before you hear from me.

VCWC Board Nominations Ongoing

Nominations for board positions are still open, as are appointments to club committees. For the board, the nominations to date are as follows:

President: Greg Elliot

First Vice President, Programs: Sheli Ellsworth

Second Vice President, Membership: Open

Publicity: Diane Crittenden

Treasurer: Pat Caloia

Recording Secretary: Open

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the August meeting prior to the vote being taken, provided that the member nominated is present and gives his or her consent to be nominated.

In addition, the club needs a new chair for the newsletter, and needs members who are willing to serve on the newsletter committee, the workshop committee, the short story contest committee, the poetry contest committee, any of the committees created to support the board positions, or any other ad-hoc committees which may be formed during the course of the year.

For more information on board and committee positions, see the President's column.

Annual Election of Officers (2008-2009)

Our annual election of officers will take place before the Anthology program. President Greg Elliot will announce the slate, ask for nominations from the floor, and welcome the new board. Time has certainly flown for our board this last year and all thank you for your encouragement and support. As some of our directors "pass their torch", others will be given an opportunity to participate in the inner workings of our club.

Newsletter of the Ventura County Writers Club

Executive Board Meeting: First Monday of each month, 7 P.M. at DuPar's Restaurant, 75 W. Thousand Oaks Blvd., in Thousand Oaks. All members welcome.

Evening Meeting With Featured Speaker:

Second Tuesday of each month at Borders Books, 125 W. Thousand Oaks Blvd. Exit 101 at Moorpark Rd., go north To Thousand Oaks Blvd., left to Borders. Program begins at 7:00 P.M. Members receive a 20% discount on items purchased at Borders on night of meeting from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Meetings are open to public.

Writers Workshops: Specific interest groups meet one or more times a month to read and critique manuscripts and discuss the business of writing. Free to members.

Membership: If you'd like to become a member of VCWC, dues are \$45.00 the first year, with \$40.00 annual renewal. Call Cathryn Andresen for a membership package at (805) 491-3242.

Newsletter Contributions must be received before the 20th of the month to be considered for the next month's publication. **Please email us at venturacountywriters@yahoo.com** All contributions must be typewritten, single-spaced. Submissions to *The Write Stuff* are accepted for one-time publication. Contributing authors receive no compensation and retain all rights. Reprinting or other use of materials appearing in this newsletter is prohibited without express permission of the author. The mention of any business or service in this newsletter does not imply an endorsement by the Ventura County Writers Club.

The following members are kind enough to volunteer their talents to our fine organization:

- Greg Elliot - President
- Lisa Barreto -1st Vice President-Programs
- Cathryn Andresen - 2nd Vice President-Membership
- Billy Martin - Corresponding Secretary (Publicity)
- Pat Caloia- Treasurer
- Recording Secretary & Newsletter mailing: open
- Historian - position open
- Newsletter Editor—Kim Reed

Writing workshops are free to members and for members only. Call the numbers listed for more information on meeting times, etc. The phone numbers listed are in the 805 area code unless otherwise specified. **KEY:** Ago=Agoura; Cam=Camarillo; OAK=Oak View; OJ=Ojai; Oxn=Oxnard; Simi=Simi Valley; TO=Thousand Oaks; Ven=Ventura; WLW=Westlake Village. Please call leader for location where alternating meeting place indicated.

All Genres: WLW Claudette Young 3 rd Tues 1:00 pm Waiting list	495-8730	Novels/Short Stories: TO Peter Pohl 4th Thurs 7:00-10:00 pm Waiting List	491-2944	Poetry: Ven/Oxn/Cam Elnora McNaughton Joyce LaMers	485-5425 985-6336
All Genres: Cam Jim Vernon 2 nd Wed 1:00 pm Waiting List	388-1891	Novels/Short Stories: TO Terri Goodwell Flexible Times Please call	493-2717	Non-fiction Books & Articles: Ven Andrea Bircher 1 st & 3 rd Tues 6:30-9:30 pm Members Welcome	642-4220
All Genres: TO Theresa Schultz 4 th Tues 6:30-9:30 pm Opening—please call	492-6497	Novels: Ven Doug Spalding Every other Wed 12:00 pm Waiting List	658-6403	Fiction/Non-Fiction: Oxn Barbara Piszczek Sundays 1:30-4:30pm Please call	983-4028
Children's/Romance/Memoirs: Ven/Oxn/Port Hueneme Danielle Brown 1 st Tues 7:00-9:00 pm Members Welcome	648-4165	Novels: Cam/Somis/Mpk/TO/Simi Debbie Tash Friday 7:00pm	529-8108	Novels: Ven Elizabeth Liljedahl Every other Thurs. 2-4pm Waiting List	405-4022
Fiction/Creative Non-fiction TO Greg Elliot 3rd Tues Waiting List	(818)991-0783 11:30-4:00	Fiction: TO Allyson Barnes Third Thurs. Call for time	495-5862		

Ventura County Writers Club
P.O. Box 3373
Thousand Oaks, CA 91359

Deliver to: