

# THE WRITE STUFF

SEE YOU TUESDAY  
JULY 8TH

## UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

**Our July Speaker**  
**Dallas Woodburn**

August

VCWC Members

Anthology Cele-  
bration

Welcome!  
New Members

Stuart Chalfant  
Jerrold Cherry  
Kent Detweiler  
Edye Schultz  
Tim Tipton

Note our new  
email address:

venturacountywrit-  
ers@yahoo.com

Note our new mail-  
ing address:

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

Note Our  
Meeting Time  
7:00 PM

Borders  
125 W. Thousand  
Oaks Blvd,  
Thousand Oaks



### Dallas Woodburn

Dallas Nicole Woodburn will be a senior this fall at the University of Southern California, majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in Entrepreneurship. She hopes to make a career as a writer and also start a publishing company with the special aim of giving young and emerging writers their "big breaks." Dallas was ten years old when she self-published her first collection of short stories, There's A Huge Pimple On My Nose, which was given a rave review in the Los Angeles Times: "If you simply want to enjoy some remarkable writing, it's hard to find a book more satisfying than Dallas Woodburn's." Her second collection, 3 a.m., is available on Amazon.com and was featured on the nationally syndicated PBS book talk show "Between the Lines." Dallas recently signed a contract with the New York literary agency Foundry Literary + Media to represent her first novel "The Identity Theft of Dani Norhall," which was a semi-finalist in the national Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.

Dallas's publication credits include the nationally-released books So, You Wanna Be a Writer?, Good Friends Come Along Once in a Lifetime, and four Chicken Soup for the Soul anthologies. She has also published articles in a variety of national magazines including *Family Circle*, *The Writer*, *Writer's Digest*, *CO-ED*, *Justine*, *Listen*, *Encounter*, and *Writing*. For her work as a biweekly opinion columnist for her school newspaper, The Daily Trojan, she was recently awarded the prestigious Jim Murray Memorial Foundation Scholar award. In addition, Dallas was awarded a silver medal for short story writing in the *Scholastic Art and Writing Awards*, and won first place in both *Byline Magazine's* Short Story Contest and the *Let's Write* Literary Contest. She has been a featured guest speaker at both the Jack London Writers Conference in San Jose and the Cal Lutheran Writers Conference in Thousand Oaks. In addition, the Santa Barbara Book Fair held a "Dallas Woodburn Day" in her honor.

In 2000, Dallas founded a non-profit organization called "Write On!" to encourage kids to discover joy, confidence, and a means of self-expression and connection with others through reading and writing. Her website, [www.zest.net/writeon](http://www.zest.net/writeon), features essay contests, reading lists, writing prompts, author interviews, and more. For her initiative, selflessness, and enthusiastic volunteerism, Dallas has been honored with the national Jackie Kennedy-Onassis/Jefferson Award and the Congressional Award Gold Medal. She was also named *CosmoGIRL!* magazine's "Girl of the Month" and her "Write On!" foundation has been featured in *Girls' Life* and *Writing* magazines.

Born three months prematurely, weighing a mere two pounds, six ounces, Dallas considers each day a blessing and tries to – to paraphrase basketball coach John Wooden – "make each day her masterpiece."

"Something special this way comes"!

Our July meeting will begin with the 2008 Poetry Contest awards. The winning poems will be presented by their authors. A winning time to be had by all!"

## First Car

By  
Sheli Ellsworth

My daughter just turned fifteen. She can't wait to drive. More important, she can't wait for us to buy her a Lexus. My husband and I have something much more practical in mind. In fact, we already own her first car. There is a 1992 Saturn with 230k miles on the odometer parked in our driveway right now with her name all over it. (It is written in invisible ink so she can't actually see it.) She has assured me that no self-respecting teenager would be caught dead in this car. I have assured her that if she wears her seatbelt and obeys the traffic laws, this should not be a problem.

We are old school. Things like cars and houses should be earned, not gifts from an unrelenting god. This seems to fly in face of everything she has seen at high school. We are antiquated, senile and out of touch with reality, she says.

The Saturn is having an intermittent power problem. We have to push-start it every third day. My daughter is embarrassed and humiliated by this process. We are still in the diagnosis process of finding the glitch. She is in the process of calling CPS and reporting me for neglect. I can't wait until a social worker arrives accusing me of insensitivity to my child's need for speed.

My first car was a 1973 Ford Pinto. It had been involved in an accident and had two dented front fenders and a driver's door that could not be opened. I borrowed \$350 for the rolling oven with black interior and no a/c. I was glad to have transportation. It was about seven miles to my J-O-B and I had walked on several occasions. Eventually, I saved up enough money to have the dents repaired and the car repainted. I installed carpet over the factory vinyl and had the windows tinted.

Ford recalled the Pinto because it was known to burst into flames upon rear end collisions. I never had the modification done because I couldn't be without it for the two days it would need to be at the dealership. I continued to drive it. It took me to work, to college, to my softball games, to job interviews and more than one bar. Two years later I sold it for \$750. Since then, I have worn out two Mercedes and put some serious mileage on a Dodge Ram.

The Saturn gets about 25 mpg and I do not have to carry comprehensive insurance on it. The other day someone backed into me a knocked the paint off a quarter size piece in the front end. Their insurance paid me \$1300, cha-ching.

I think the recently painted Saturn is a perfectly respectable car for someone who has never made a single car or insurance payment. I think that it beats walking. I think that cars should be earned and sweated over like anything worthwhile. I think of the push start as exercise and parking on a slope as good planning. My daughter thinks I am crazy. I love the Saturn. I do not feel guilty about driving it when gas is \$4.35 a gallon. But then again, it's no Pinto.

*Sheli joined the writer's club after placing in last year's short story contest. She has an MA in Psychology from West Texas A&M, and claims never to have written anything her English teachers liked.*

## President's Message By Greg Elliot

Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.

*C.S. Lewis*

A classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness.

*Edith Wharton*

The man who writes about himself and his own time is the only man who writes about all people and all time.

*George Bernard Shaw*

So what is it, exactly, that these three iconic writers are trying to tell us? Two things, it seems, two sides of the same coin. Don't try to try to write for everyone. Instead, write for yourself. Tell your story, in your own way. In doing so, that very act, that personal-ness, as it were, is what will make your story fresh, what will make it resonate with your readers, what will make it original.

When you write, try, as much as humanly possible, not to worry about what your agent will think, what your friends will think, what your mother will think. Write what you are moved to write before your internal critic gets the best of you. Write as if you didn't care what your agent, or friends, or your mother would think. That's how you make your writing original.

I sometimes wonder if listening to that critic is what writer's block is. Do we stare at the blank page because we don't know what to write next, or because we can't get past that internal voice that tells us that what we want to put down isn't good enough? To take this idea one step further: do we sometimes avoid writing altogether because of that internal critic? Do we get caught up in the job, or the house, or the kids, or the gardening because we're afraid of what the internal critic will have to say when we sit down to write?

Don't let your inner critic bully you. Write. Get your story down. Swing for the fences. After all, a writer writes. Try it. See what happens. Who knows? You may even come up with the next classic.

## Ventura College Offering Writers Workshops

Writers, are you looking for something to do this summer? Ventura College is offering an interesting selection of Writers Workshops for Summer 2008. For more information, check out their website at:

<http://www.communityed.venturacollege.edu/>

## Anthology Update

Don't miss out on a good time - mark your calendar now! The club's August 12th general meeting at Borders will be a celebration of the debut of the new club anthology. Our member-contributors will read short excerpts of their pieces and be available to sign books. More information soon...

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 - 2<sup>nd</sup> 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: WLV**

Claudette Young 495-8730  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 1:00 pm  
Waiting list

**Novels/Short Stories: TO**  
Peter Pohl 491-2944  
4th Thurs 7:00-10:00 pm  
Waiting List

**Poetry: Ven/Oxn/Cam**

Elnora McNaughton 485-5425  
Joyce LaMers 985-6336

**All Genres: Cam**

Jim Vernon 388-1891  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wed 1:00 pm  
Waiting List

**Novels/Short Stories: TO** 493-2717  
Terri Goodwell  
Flexible Times  
Please call

**Non-fiction Books & Articles: Ven**

Andrea Bircher 642-4220  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 6:30-9:30 pm  
Members Welcome

**All Genres: TO**

Theresa Schultz 492-6497  
4<sup>th</sup> Tues 6:30-9:30 pm  
Opening—please call

**Novels: Ven**  
Doug Spalding 658-6403  
Every other Wed 12:00 pm  
Waiting List

**Fiction/Non-Fiction: Oxn**

Barbara Piszczek 983-4028  
Sundays 1:30-4:30pm  
Please call

**Children's/Romance/Memoirs:**

**Ven/Oxn/Port Hueneme**  
Danielle Brown 648-4165  
1<sup>st</sup> Tues 7:00-9:00 pm  
Members Welcome

**Novels: Cam/Somis/Mpk/TO/Simi**  
Debbie Tash 529-8108  
Friday 7:00pm

**Novels: Ven**

Elizabeth Liljedahl 405-4022  
Every other Thurs. 2-4pm  
Waiting List

**Fiction/Creative Non-fiction TO**

Greg Elliot (818)991-0783  
3rd Tues 11:30-4:00  
Waiting List

**Fiction: TO**  
Allyson Barnes 495-5862  
Third Thurs. Call for time

Ventura County Writers Club  
P.O. Box 3373

Deliver to:

««First Name» «Last Name»  
«Address»  
«City», «State» «Zip Code»