

- Membership Renewal Time is NOW!
- New Faces Join IBWALA Board of Directors
- Tips to Jumpstart the Year (and your career)

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# Black Expressions

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## President's Message

The rains of January slowed me down. Way down. There was something about being holed up, nice and cozy at home, and having to think. Forcefully. Deliberately. Just like the deluge pounding on the roof.

**Newly elected president Wayne French shares his vision of the organization's future**

It was precisely at this time that Linda Hughes, longtime doyen of IBWALA, wrote me about considering a run for president of the chapter. A year ago I would have run in sheer terror from such a proposal. But there was something about a rare Southern California monsoon that got me in the mood to accept.

My vision for IBWA is to preserve and strengthen that which it has already established. A community of artists. An extended village of creative souls strewn across the far flung expanse of the region.

Gone are the days when we held geographically to a core area of a few streets and avenues in South Central L.A. With homes within a few blocks of each other. Mere miles, if not

walking distance. Nowadays it isn't at all uncommon for a member to drive 30 or more miles one way to a meeting as more and more of us live in newly settled counties and bedroom communities out in the hinterlands.

My goal is to bring us artists together like never before. Swell the ranks of IBWA by bringing disciplines together often foreign to the other. Bring the seasoned artist to share mentoring communion with the novice. The youth with the elder. Poet with sculptor. Dancer with screenwriter. Journalist with the fiction writer. The techno geek with the painter who gets splitting headaches from just being in a room with a keyboard and monitor.

In this weaving act of association I plan to build a needed social and commercial infrastructure for our creative community. So that we need not seek approval or sanction from outside our village.

Imagine a talented youth making a fine living without leaving the 'hood. Wherever that 'hood may be. And imagine that 'hood being invaded by others desperately looking to mine that home-grown talent. If you can see that .... You can share my vision.

Blame that on the rain.



## Children Are The Future

**BOD sees students and youth as next frontier for IBWALA**

In a bold move to revitalize the group, IBWALA incumbents and new additions to the board of directors revisited the organization's mission during its working board retreat Nov. 18.

Citing the need to encourage and sustain growth, garner vital funds earmarked for "at-risk" inner city youth, and continue the legacy of motivating, educating and inspiring young black children and youth to become writers and artists, language was added to the mission statement to focus on future efforts on behalf of the organization to achieve those goals. The original language remains largely unchanged as the BOD pledged to continue to provide informational workshops and seminars designed to increase knowledge, skills and opportunities for its members and the community and to continue to "...**make sure our writers and artists are published, read, seen, and heard.**"

### Mission Statement

*International Black Writers & Artists Los Angeles (IBWALA) is a network of authors, publishers, artists and community members including readers and arts enthusiasts dedicated to making sure our writers and artists are published, read, seen and heard. We provide workshops, seminars and conferences designed to improve skills, promote literacy, increase knowledge and enhance career opportunities, with an emphasis on mentoring youth and students. We offer scholarships to emerging writers and artists. We keep members informed through our quarterly newsletter and Web site.*

Library continued from page 4

The following books explore writing technique and how to put together a well-crafted story:

The First Five Pages: A Writer's Guide to Staying out the Rejection Pile by Noah Lukeman. From a literary agent, a to-the-point guide to making your fiction shine in the first five pages.

Writing the Breakout Novel & Workbook by Donald Maass. Defines crucial elements of breakout fiction and how to write a novel that will generate interest and have potential to hit the best sellers list.

Free Within Ourselves: Fiction Lessons for Black Authors by Jewell Parker Rhodes. A guide to improving technique, finding voice, and staying culturally authentic for people who write for and about black people.

And if you've reached the point of publication, these books are great to add to your library:

How To Get Happily Published: A Complete and Candid Guide by Judith Appelbaum. From submission to contracts to publicity, this book covers what authors can expect during the publication process.

Guide to Literary Agents 2005 by Kathryn S. Brogan. If you're finished with your novel, and it's been proofed for grammar, edited for story cohesion, and workshopped by writer peers for feedback,

you're ready to search for a literary agent to represent your work. This guide shares thousands of reputable agents and their specialties.

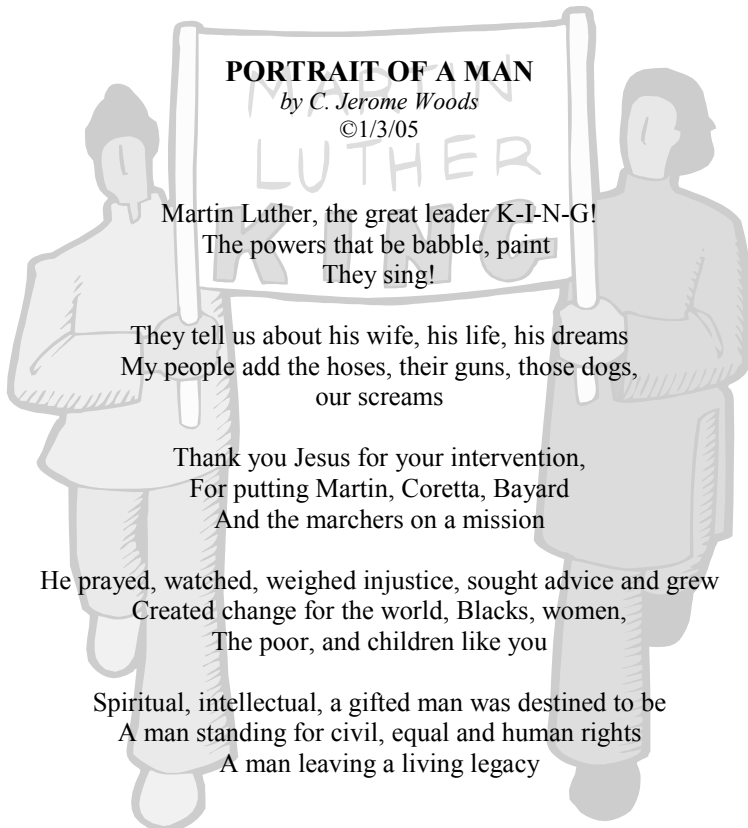
Publicize Your Book! by Jacqueline Deval. Learn how to promote your book by a former director of publicity for several publishing houses.

If you can get your hand on Terry McMillan's article, "Publicizing Your Commercially Published Novel," Guide to Literary Agents 2005 by Kathryn S. Brogan from the January/February 1988 issue of *Poets & Writers*, this might help if you've got a finished project and starting to think about marketing with your publisher.

If you can get your hands on short stories by Alice Munro, J. California Cooper, and Lorrie Moore, these might help expand your view and scope of fiction, writing technique, and putting together a great and meaningful story.

All of these books have been helpful to me, and I hope will be for you as you pursue your writing goals for the New Year!

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## IBWALA Meeting Schedules

### MANUSCRIPT WORKSHOP

Every third Saturday of the month, IBWALA hosts a manuscript workshop at San Raphael Library, 1240 Nithsdale Road, Pasadena, CA, (626)744-7270, 1pm-4pm.

Meeting dates through June are:

Jan. 15

Feb. 19

Mar. 19

Apr. 16

May 21

Jun. 18

Watch for an LA Workshop

To be announced soon!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The BOD meets *quarterly* on the second Saturday of the month, location to be announced. Meeting dates through the end of the year are:

Jan. 8

Apr. 8

Jul. 9

Oct. 8

Meetings of the board of directors are open to members. Call or email for further information.

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