



Writers
of the

PURPLE SAGE

Newsletter of the Ridge Writers

East Sierra Branch, California Writers Club

December 2015

COME TO OUR HOLIDAY PARTY!

Here's a scene from last year's holiday party to remind you of the fun we're going to have!

Photo by Liz



Thursday, Dec. 3

6 p.m. (half hour earlier than usual to give us more time)

Heritage Village Clubhouse (turn east onto Heritage Drive from Norma Street and go past the hotel to the smaller building directly in front of you)

Bring a dinner dish to share and please show up a little before six to aid preparations. And bring a short entertaining piece written by you (and no longer than 5-7 minutes).

This is the one meeting of the year that is only for members and their significant others.

P.S. from Liz: PLEASE bring me a copy for the Purple Sage.

Mark Your Calendar . . .

Holiday Party

Dec. 3, 6 p.m.

Heritage Village Clubhouse

During this potluck and opportunity for sharing our readings, we will start half an hour earlier than usual so as to have time for the goodies, both mental and culinary. Please bring food and a 5-7-minute piece you wrote!

Chautona Havig

Jan. 7, 2016, 6:30 p.m.
Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church

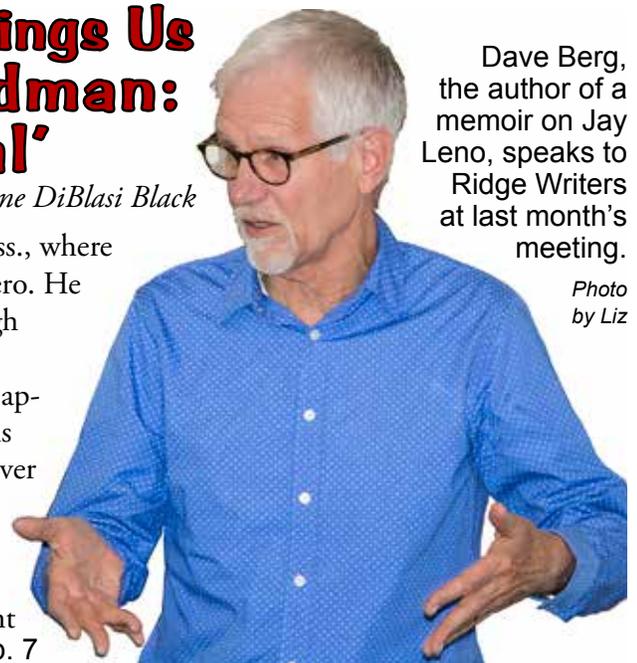
Start the new year out right with a talk from a writer of "Christian fiction without apology or pretense."

Dave Berg Brings Us 'Dennis Rodman: The Musical'

by Julianne DiBlasi Black

I grew up in Andover Mass., where Jay Leno was a hometown hero. He graduated from Andover High School — my old stomping grounds — and makes guest appearances in its halls when his schedule allows. While Andover has produced a few other big names, Leno was a certainly a family favorite, as he frequented my father's restaurant

See p. 7



Dave Berg, the author of a memoir on Jay Leno, speaks to Ridge Writers at last month's meeting.

Photo by Liz

Sharing Is Much More Than Caring



Daniel Stallings, Anthony Becker, and Gary Hareland are among the Ridge Writers meeting at Beanster's in May 2011 to introduce our book, *Planet Mojave*, to the public.

Photo by Liz

To Gary. Thank you for everything.

The approach of the holiday season and the passing of one of our long-standing members has put me in a contemplative mood. We are more than just writers. We are storytellers. All of us have the gift to spin a story whether it be a true account or imaginative fiction. It's not bound by paper and pen. Our stories and the ways we can relate them are as unlimited as the expanse of the universe.

This is the time of year we celebrate sharing and giving and spending time with those we love. And whether

you're a seasoned author or just starting out, I'd like to ask everyone at Ridge Writers to share a story this season and give the gift of your imagination to your loved ones.

Our individual time of this planet can seem very brief and fragile. The passing of our dear friend and past president, Gary Hareland, reminded me very much of when my grandmother passed away around the holidays several years ago. Both were lively, creative, wonderful people who helped bring people together to share in a common art. My grandmother was painter who held classes in her home. Gary led Ridge Writers for so many years.

They shared their skills and their stories with the people around them, keeping the creative flame and even their memory alive.

For new writers, I can understand how intimidating it can be to share your ideas or your writing with others. However, if you are passionate about the tale you're telling, that passion will infuse every word you impart. Think of the way you can touch the hearts of your parents, siblings, cousins, best friends, co-workers, anyone you meet through the stories you tell. Think of the legacy you can leave. We all have gifts, and we storytellers should share them with the world.

See p. 7

Ridge Writers Leaders

President — Daniel Stallings

Vice President — Julianne Black

Secretary — Donna McCrohan

Rosenthal

Treasurer — C. R. Rowenson



Historian — Maryann Butterfield

Membership — C. R. Rowenson

Newsletter — Liz Babcock

lizbab@fastmail.com

Programs & Publicity — Donna

McCrohan Rosenthal

State Rep — Donna McCrohan

Rosenthal

Youth Coordinator — Daniel

Stallings

Webmaster — Julianne Black



To reach any of these leaders (except Liz), use ridgewriters@yahoo.com

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RidgeWriters and our website at CWC-ridgewriters.org

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- The author's name and original publication credit must be printed with the text.
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Contact the editor by mail at P.O. Box 484, Ridgecrest CA 93556, or by e-mail at lizbab@fastmail.fm.

SPECIAL NOTICE: Photographs for publicity and newsletter uses are taken at all Ridge Writers events. By entering the venue, members and guests are granting permission that their likenesses may be used for publicity purposes.

CONDOLENCES TO LOLA—

This is not a good season for Ridge Writers and our loved ones. Our Fontana member, Lola De Maci, shown with her husband, Bernard, during an earlier holiday party, sent word that Bernard passed away on Nov. 1 at the age of 81. He was a former Navy chief and was buried in Fontana Nov. 10 with full military honors and a 21-gun salute. 'Bernard had a glorious send-off Tuesday to his new home in Heaven,' Lola wrote later. "The Navy did a good job of



saluting him -- and me. The gun salute and presentation of the American flag were quite emotional for me. Plenty of tears. Seeing my children in grief didn't help." I'm sure all Ridge Writers join me in extending our sympathy to Lola on the loss of her life partner. We will miss him!

— Liz Babcock

Our Jack London Award Winners

We're proud of the Ridge Writers who have won the Jack London Award, the highest recognition each branch of CWC can give the year's most outstanding member. Here are their names and the years they won:

Maryann Butterfield	1997
Casey Wilson	1998
Rlee Peters	1999
Judy Dutcher	2000
Curt Danhauser	2001
Judy Martin	2002
Donna McCrohan Rosenthal	2003
Holly Dworken Cooley	2004
Liz Babcock	2005
Allison Aubin	2007
Steve Wersan	2009*
Margaret Luebs	2013
Daniel Stallings	2015

*With a special Charmian London Award to Fran Wersan

◆◆◆ Announcements ◆◆◆

The 2016 Next-Generation Indie Book Awards offer recognition and prizes to indie book authors and publishers who have released their books with 2014, 2015, or 2016 copyright dates.

More than 70 categories and more than 70 monetary prizes (more than \$10,000 in all) are available.

The deadline for the 2016 awards program is **Feb. 12, 2016**. See all the details at www.indiebookawards.com.



Patrick McQueen, in collaboration with **South Bay Writers** is has issued a challenge that sounds like a whole lot of fun — **the “Dollar Bill Challenge.”**

“Imagine collaborating with fellow authors to tell the story of a one-dollar bill,” he said. “The only stipulation is to somehow include this dollar bill in your story.”

“With enough submissions, I would love to edit selected short stories for an anthology that reads as a linear narrative about this dollar bill and them any lives it has touched.”

Want to enter? The deadline is **March 31, 2016**, and prompts are available at southbaywriters.com/wordpress/writing-prompts/.

“Our long-term goal is to collect submissions to formulate an anthology. The fulfillment of this long-term goal depends

entirely on how popular our prompts become among California Writers Club members. We want anthology submissions to fit the prompts in order to publish an anthology as a single narrative compiled from multiple sources,” McQueen said.

Send queries or submissions to prompts@southbaywriters.com. Submissions should be formatted and edited as if they were being sent to an agent. Write in your preferred genre, with MS Word the preferred format. Times New Roman 12-point font preferred, and the word count should be 1,000 to 2,500.



Catapult, a new literary website launched in September, is reportedly designed to help with all the steps it takes for writers to turn their works into published books. See the details at catapult.com.

Another site that's fun to check out is **Electric Literature** (electricliterature.com), which attracts three million unique visitors a year. The site aims to build a literary community among small publishers, writers, and readers in an evolving digital landscape.

Among the categories featured on the site is something called “Okey-Panky,” a weekly online magazine of short, darkly comic, ironic, and experimental fiction, essays, poetry, and graphic narrative.

“We're Silly Putty, except when we're Serious Putty,” according to J. Robert Lennon, Editor in Chief.

31 FACTS ABOUT MEMBER 31 – JULIE BRADFORD

by Julie Bradford

Thank you, Julie, for introducing yourself in the Purple Sage! Anyone else want to do likewise? — ed.

1. Age: 45, but can pass for 44 with smoke and mirrors.

2. Married for 22 years to John. We recently learned that our bank had John listed in their database as a “psychic” for the Department of Defense. He’s a physicist.

3. I have a son, Matthew, age 17. He’s a Junior at BHS, a tennis player, and the child who shares my love for all things spooky and sci-fi.

4. I have a daughter, Laura, age 10. She’s a 5th-grader at Las Flores, a manga artist, and the child who shares my love for all things furry and adorable.

5. I recently traveled to Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Luxembourg. Came back poor yet enriched.

6. I have no long-term memory available because it is filled with useless ’80s trivia.

7. My 12th great-grandfather is Myles Standish from the *Mayflower*.

8. I would love to live in New England, preferably the coastline of Maine.

9. I spent a day playing Atari with Heather O’Rourke, the little girl who played Carol Anne in “Poltergeist.”

10. Graduated from BHS, got an AA from Cerro Coso, and made it as far as Senior at San Diego State University, then stopped to get married and start a family. I know. Don’t broach the subject with my mom!

11. While at Cerro Coso, I was the co-creator of two publications: *The Cerro Coso Voice*, which was the college’s version of *The Daily Independent*, and *Metamorphoses*, a literary magazine. *The Cerro Coso Voice* is no longer in production; however, *Metamorphoses* is still being produced 25 years later. Makes me proud.

12. My first job was at age 17, working as a receptionist for Vaughn Realty over summer break.

13. I was a passenger in a high-impact car accident at age 18. The seatbelt saved my life.

14. Pet Peeves: Fingerprints on windows and teeth scraping against silverware. Grrr.

15. I’m an INFP according to Myers-Briggs. (That’s



Member 31 and the Psychic

Photo courtesy of Julie

why I sat in the back of the room, Daniel!)

16. Born in San Diego and moved to Ridgecrest at the age of nine.

17. I come from a proud military family. My father served three tours in Vietnam, and my brother was a Green Beret.

18. I had severe asthma from age 2 to puberty that resulted in 11 hospitalizations and scar tissue on my lungs. It was a childhood spent in oxygen tents, with inhalers, pills, and epinephrine shots. I couldn’t play sports and was encouraged not to laugh because it would trigger my lungs.

19. Started writing in earnest at age 11 when my 6th-grade teacher took me aside, told me I had talent, and encouraged me to write. It just takes one person to believe in you, right?

20. I started with poetry then moved on to fiction, only to realize that what I tend to write most is humorous, non-fiction short stories.

21. Movies: “The Fifth Element,” “Galaxy Quest,” “The Matrix,” “The Terminator,” “Aliens,” “Fight Club,” “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” “Pride and Prejudice.”

22. TV Shows: “American Horror Story,” “The Leftovers,” “Homeland,” “Gotham,” “Game of Thrones,” “Outlander,” “The Walking Dead,” “Master Chef,” “Project Runway,” “The Simpsons.”

MEMORIES OF GARY HARELAND



Frederick Gary Hareland, our friend Gary, died Nov. 9, 2015, at the age of 68. He had an adventurous life, much of which he shared with us — and with the world of mariners and other adventurers — through his prolific writing in numerous magazines, in the *News Review*, and in our own newsletter.

He loved and was proud of his wife, Thelma, and of his family, members of which we were happy to meet over the years.

Gary's memorial service was on Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Inyokern Baptist Church, and the place was packed with loving friends and admirers.

Although Gary was an informal sort of guy, often wearing Hawaii shirts to officiate at our meetings, he could be properly "presidential" when the occasion called for it, such as a presentation on the Burroughs High School stage (above) to Emma Austin, a promising young writer. At right, in a more frequent sighting of Gary, he shows off a magazine article he wrote and a bottle of "Leninade," a tongue-in-cheek gift from Donna McCrohan Rosenthal.

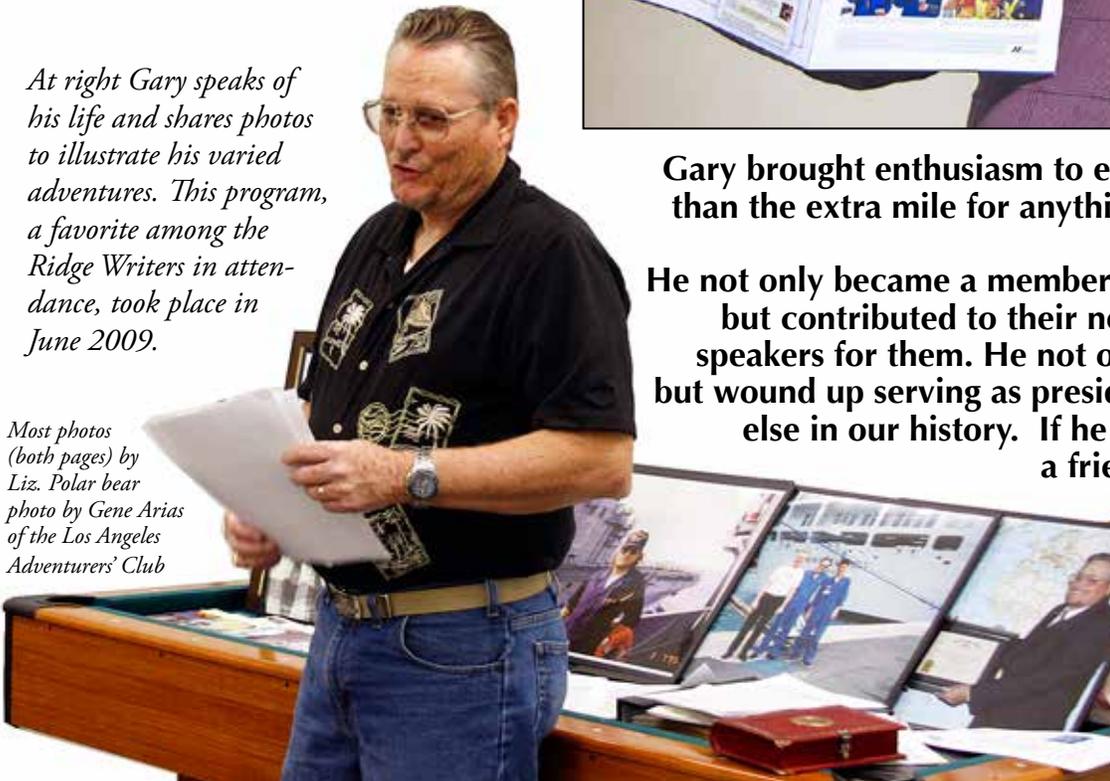


At right Gary speaks of his life and shares photos to illustrate his varied adventures. This program, a favorite among the Ridge Writers in attendance, took place in June 2009.

Gary brought enthusiasm to everything and went more than the extra mile for anything he wanted to support.

He not only became a member of the Adventurers' Club but contributed to their newsletter and helped find speakers for them. He not only joined Ridge Writers, but wound up serving as president longer than anybody else in our history. If he was your friend, you had a friend indeed, through thick and thin.

Most photos (both pages) by Liz. Polar bear photo by Gene Arias of the Los Angeles Adventurers' Club



He was one of the great ones, and we, and I, will miss him.

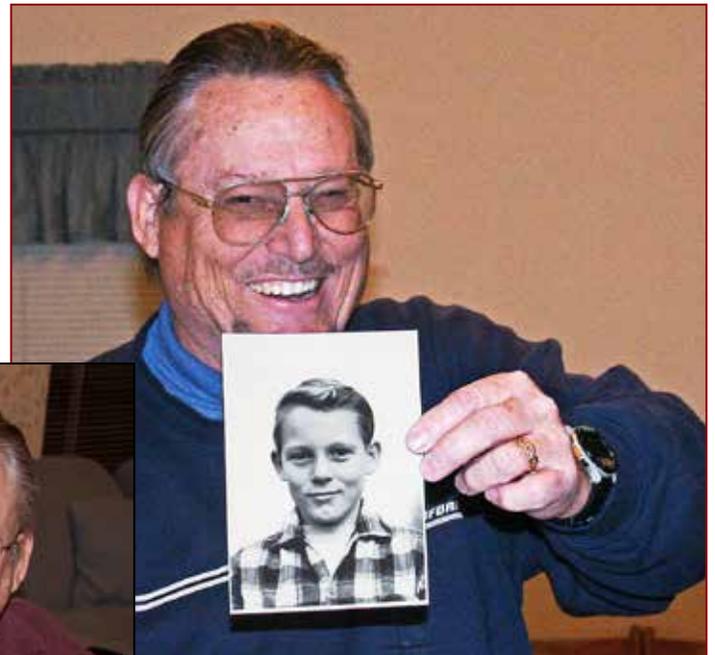
— Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

MORE MEMORIES OF GARY

Gary poses with Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, Liz Babcock, and the famed polar bear in the entryway to the Los Angeles Adventurers' Club. Gary invited Liz to speak and Donna to sell Liz' books. A great memory!



At right, Gary makes a point about the importance of writing skills during a presentation at a Burroughs High School Awards Ceremony. One of the many traits we loved about Gary was his optimistic outlook, especially about the writing talent in our community.



In one of my favorite photos of Gary (above), he shows off a picture of himself as a boy.



At right Thelma and Gary enjoy last year's Ridge Writers holiday party. Gary had large appetites, and many of his friends have commented that eating was one of the passions of his life. It's fitting, then, to end this photo essay with him enjoying two favorites — food and, most importantly, Thelma.

Dave Berg Brings Us

—From p. 1

when he was in town.

Fast forward 20 years and the width of North America to Ridgecrest and welcome Dave Berg, Leno's long-time producer on "The Tonight Show," to the Nov. 5 Ridge Writers' meeting.

Berg, a casual and open kind of guy, recapped some of his favorite show-biz stories and lessons learned in his years writing and producing behind the camera. From rejection to celebration and back again, Berg was as insightful as he was captivating, dropping memorable quotes as potent as Leno's on-air stingers.

"Make it work. Wherever you are, whatever you have. Make it work."

Between the tales of industry inner workings, we also got a glimpse of the level of dedication it takes to be a big name on nighttime television. Although being in the right place at the right time certainly play a part, Berg also illuminated the steadfast obsesiveness that goes into working your way to the top and the sheer amount of focus it takes to stay there.



Mary Berg projects the visuals for her husband's talk.

I've heard before that a common attribute of most successful people is that they limit their daily choices so they won't be distracted when it comes to their work.

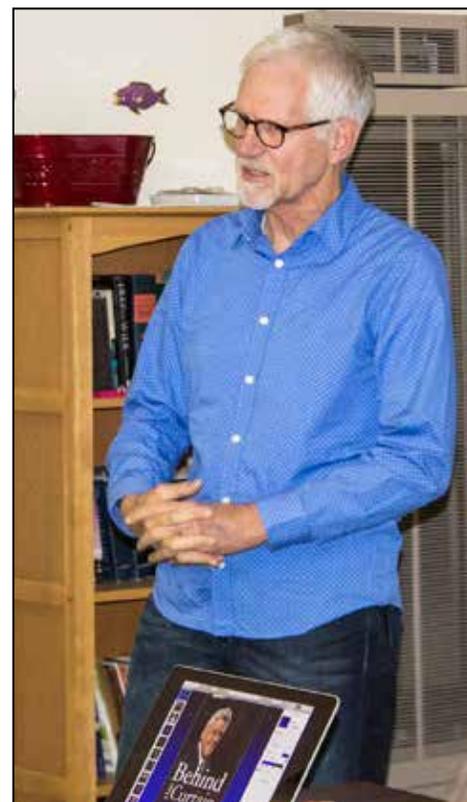
Berg's illustrations of Leno eating and wearing the same thing every day came as no surprise to me. However, the vastness of his car collection was certainly a jaw-dropper.

Berg's ability to promote a serious message of hard work punctuated with humor made for a greatly successful meeting, a truly healthy balance

of inspiration and entertainment.

Should Berg actually write the farcical play "Dennis Rodman: The Musical" he jokingly aspired to make, I will certainly go.

Until then, I purchased his book *Behind the Curtain: An Insider's View of Jay Leno's Tonight Show* which Berg graciously dedicated to my father. Though my father's restaurant is many years gone, a reminder of one of his favorite barstool patrons at Christmastime will make a perfect gift.



As Dave Berg speaks, an image of his book is on the laptop in front of him.
Photos by Liz

Sharing — From p. 2

Anyone who knew Gary knew how much he loved to tell stories and anecdotes even without his pen. He loved to share. He was enthusiastic about all of us as writers, as people.

He was a big support for me when I considered the very scary job of Ridge Writer president, but I am honored that I get to follow him.

This season — and for the rest of the years that follow — I'd like all of us to take a cue from our past president. Gather your nearest and dearest and tell them a story, sharing that gift that makes you amazing and unique.

Sharing is so much more than showing them you care. You can leave behind a legacy, a special memory for others to cherish, and maybe even inspire them to share their own gifts. Don't be afraid. Relish the adventure.

Just like Gary.



Attentive crowd includes loyal Ridge Writers, as well as many new faces.

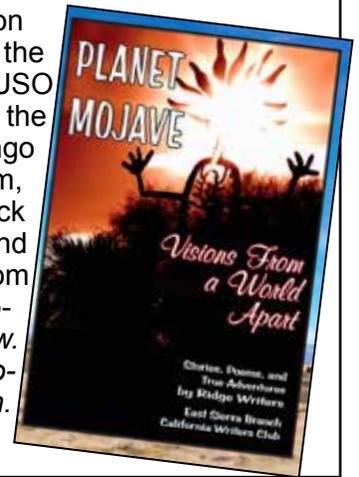
31 FACTS ABOUT MEMBER 31 _____ From p. 4

23. Music: '80s, Top 40, and Hip Hop if it has a mad beat, yo.
24. Books: Science fiction, fiction, paranormal, memoirs.
25. The Weird Storytelling Challenge was the first writing contest I've entered. Ever. I didn't tell anyone about it until it was over. I was afraid I would chicken out! In fact, I sat in the Historic USO parking lot for awhile, debating whether or not to go inside.
26. If you can't reach me at home, try looking at Starbucks or Jo-Ann.
27. Nickname: "Toyota Julie" because I unleashed my inner berserker on the Toyota Service Department one day. They deserved it.
28. I've had five sinus surgeries. Allergies, ugh. I'm always sniffing. (It's another reason why I sat in the back of the room, Daniel!)
29. Current Obsession: Lays Limón Chips. I can quit any time. I only eat them socially. Okay, I might need help.
30. I won my 5th-grade spelling bee with the word "examine."
31. Being Ridge Writers Member #31 makes me think of Baskin-Robbins' 31 Flavors. So if you forget my name, you can always call me "Flavah." Or "Toyota." I'll respond to either one.

The East Sierra Branch (Ridge Writers) is the California Writers Club branch serving the eastern part of Kern County. Over the mountains on the west side of the county is our Bakersfield-based sister branch, Writers of Kern.

To contribute your poem, essay, story, or other writings to the SoCal Writers Showcase, send your content to submissions@socalwritersshowcase.com. All contributors must be CWC South members.

Our book *Planet Mojave: Visions From a World Apart* is available at Jawbone Canyon Station, the Historic USO Building, the Maturango Museum, Red Rock Books and online from our website, www.planetmojave.com.



Inside...

Page 1:

Our Holiday Party
Report on Nov. Meeting by
Julianne DiBlasi Black

Page 2:

President's Column by Daniel
Stallings
Ridge Writers Leaders

Page 3:

Condolences to Lola
Jack London Award Winners
Announcements

Page 4:

"31 Facts About Member 31" by
Julie Bradford

Page 5:

Memories of Gary Hareland

Page 6:

More Memories

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