Newsletter

The Writer's Block

By Sandra D. Simmer

Summer 2025

Dear Readers, summer was a season of change for me. Some events were fun and memorable and others took a toll on my emotional or physical health.

My milestone seventieth birthday was in early August but a second bout of Covid derailed birthday celebrations to later in the month. Thanks to family members and friends for their love and support, and for rescheduling activities to make me feel special all month. See pictures on page two of me now and me fifty years ago!

My former husband, Robert Simmer, father of my children and friend of 45 years, passed away in June after a long illness. To process the loss, I found joy in playful moments with my grandchildren, gained peace through heartfelt talks with my adult children, and sought solace in creative projects. See page four for my loss-related poem written for an Ekphrastic poetry event inspired by a beautiful painting by artist Terin Christensen.

To lift my spirits, I took afternoon art classes and created Monet inspired seaside paintings to decorate my bayside condo. I also reconnected with my critique group and participated in several writing group events detailed inside. See pages three and five.

I hope everyone enjoyed their own special moments with family and friends this summer. See inside this newsletter for art, poetry, and writing resources. Keep celebrating the creative spirit of life!

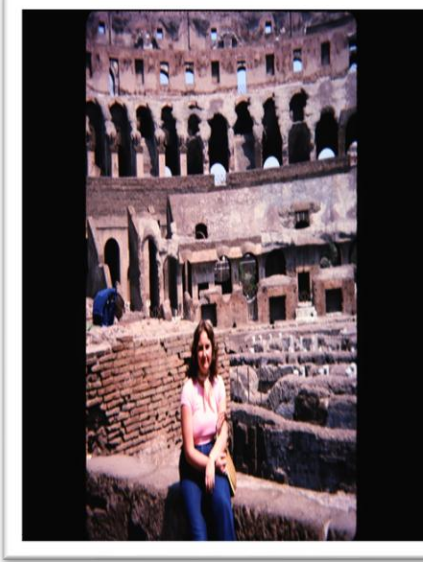
Sandra D. Simmer

www.sandradsimmer.com

Please visit my website for more information on my creative work

All rights reserved for this newsletter. All poetry and artwork cannot be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author/artists. © 2025

1955- 2025 Seventy Years Young!



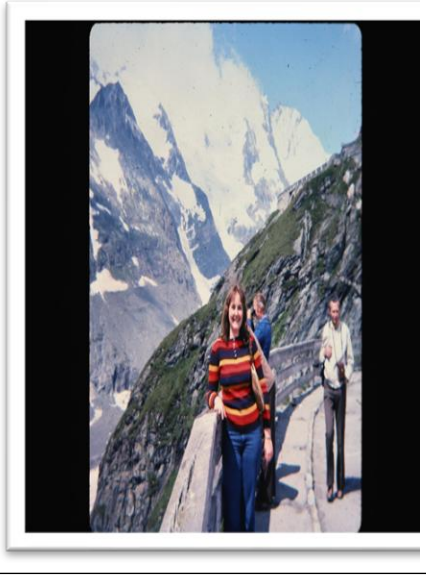


Photo of me taken on my birthday this year and photos of me at age 20 on a college sponsored European tour in 1975. On page five read about my adventure and how it inspired my writing fifty years later.

Welcome
Artist
Bartender

Forever More

The sun crept slowly across the sky,

A beautiful sunset for a last goodbye.

It guided me to an unknown place

Somewhere between time and space,

One foot planted firmly on the ground

The other hesitant to turn around.

What waits ahead at the open door?

Will I be lost forever more?

I see the figures just out of reach

Do they have something left to teach?

Then through the mist I see a hand.

Come with us, we understand.

We're here to help you find the way,

To a realm so close, yet far away.

They wait in silence calm and bright,

Encourage me towards the light.

Your home on Earth is now no more

Seek eternal life beyond the door.

I move to meet them at a pace

To find solace in their warm embrace.

There's nothing left for me to dread

A new life waits for me instead.

Poet: Sandra D, Simmer

Artwork: *Evermore* by Artist Terin Christensen

Benicia Poet Laureate Katrina Monroe sponsored an Ekphrastic poetry event in conjunction with the Benicia Arts Gallery. Poets visited the gallery to select a painting that inspired them to write. Then poets and artists gathered at the gallery for a reception and reading of the completed poems while viewing the related pieces of art.

I was deeply moved by Terin's painting and was delighted to meet her at the reception to share the experience. Her painting and my poem are included here.

For information: contact https://benicialiteraryarts.org

Still on My Mind

The summer of 1975 I joined a tour sponsored by the University of Illinois that brought together college students from throughout the USA to tour Europe by bus on a cultural learning excursion. We had a whirlwind tour of 13 countries in 55 days and visited not only famous capitols but also explored countries under communist rule at that time. See photos on page three.

My 20th birthday was spent crossing the Berlin Wall on a special Visa to visit dignitaries in East Berlin. It was an amazing experience to go behind the "iron curtain" a decade before the civil wars and revolutions that led to the collapse of the USSR. We learned what life was like for the average person living and working under communist rule. The images of the oppressed populations have stayed with me throughout my life.

This year, on the fiftieth anniversary of my trip, I wrote a short story memoir *The Peach Fuzz* about my experiences in communist Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. It was published by the Northern California Publishers and Authors (NCPA) organization in their Beautiful World short story anthology.

I joined the California Writer's Club – Mt. Diablo chapter this summer and I'm inspired by the other members' creative pursuits. Now that I've been in multiple anthologies, I intend to publish collections of my fictionalized memoirs and short stories in the near future. Stay tuned for coming attractions!

For more information on my creative activities or to purchase a copy of Beautiful World please contact me at sandradsimmer@gmail.com

Thank you everyone for reading my newsletter. You are welcome to forward it to other interested readers, writers, poets, and artists. To subscribe visit my website www.sandradsimmer.com

Use the Link below to view my You-Tube interview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF76qBHT8kk

Best wishes to all!

Sandra D. Simmer

sandradsimmer@gmail.com

Finding the Perfect Story

Finding a story idea can be challenging. Memoirs are the easiest as they are based on life experiences. But what if you took a setting from your life and used the details as the background for a story you imagined? I wrote my NCPA published fictional short story *Cancun Conversations* using a past vacation location to provide a colorful setting for an otherwise ordinary family reconciliation story.

Look in the next issue for more imagination igniters.