



California Writers Club – SFV

“Serving the writers of Greater Los Angeles”

THE SCRIBE

- established since 1983 -

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September 2007

INSIDE

- Wordplay
- Word Mechanic
- Fast Forward
- The Wordsmith
- The Viewpoint
- Something About Writing
- A Message from Our Sponsors

WORD PLAY

An Open House for California Writers

Come join the fun and the kick-off of our new season of events & adventure with this Networking Extravaganza.

We'll play games, enjoy some tasty snacks, guzzle some coffee – and schmooze with the coolest people in town – writers! ☺

WHO: CWC-SFV

Serving Greater Los Angeles writers

WHEN: Saturday, September 8, 1:00-3:30pm

WHERE: Encino Community Center
4935 Balboa Boulevard

DIRECTIONS: This is our new home – and a worthy venue, at that! Lights, camera & action amigos: we're just north of Ventura Blvd and adjoining the east end of Encino Park. And yes, **there's plenty of Free Parking.**

Meet our talented members & guests! Make new friends! Network with the ones who will get you published!

We'll even have an Open Mike to show-off your best work. You'll have the opportunity to get involved with a critique group that's suited just to you. Get a first-hand overview of our upcoming events and programs. Help launch our renewed commitment to writing, writers and the lives we lead.

Please plan to join us, and bring a friend!
Best of all it's free!

RSVP: Email us before September 3rd with how many will attend: cwcsfv@gmail.com

¹ It really is free – but because we are truly non-profit, we won't turn away your contributions. ☺

CWC-SFV TEAM

Executive Board:

Scott A. Sonders, President ¹
Matthew Schliesman, VP ²
Debra Zednik, Secretary
James Ganatta, Treasurer

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Cheryl Hector, Hospitality Chair
Larry Fazio, Events Manager
Richard Deets, Critique Meister
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Olivia Mohler, Outreach
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Mike Austin, Development
Betty Goldstein, Editorial
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¹ Scott Sonders, VP of the Central Board

² Matt Schliesman, Emcee of Open Mike

THE WORD MECHANIC

RAMBLINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By: **Scott Alixander Sonders, Ph.D.**

One of our many lovely SFV members invited me to discuss some California Writers Club business. While enjoying the ambience of a Studio City bistro, a 30ish Casanova-type encroached on our tête-à-tête and pushed his up market business card toward the hand of our SFV doyenne. On the flip side of the card he'd scrawled, "I'll do anything you want for \$300."

Now our notable wordsmith had once been a legal eagle. She looked at the lothario for a moment and replied, "Well, since you've put it in writing and I've got a witness that would make your offer into a contract, right?"

He hesitated a moment then said simply, "Yes Ma'am."

Adroitly, our "Ma'am" pulled three crisp Benjamin's from her purse, pushed them toward his waiting hand and said, "Okay honey, you've got a deal. – Now go and paint my house."

In humor is truth. And this, also being an allegory, cautions those who use our language to use it well and carefully. Whatever you intend, your audience might read or hear something very different. And that's one of the things we'll be doing in the new season at California Writers: sharing the secrets of write-stuff writers, passionate publishers, critical gurus, and those who've-been-there-and-done-that. And while getting the dish on the how's and why's of our literary craft, hopefully we'll make some new friends and have a little fun.

In fact, I expect to have "fun, fun, fun until the (Sheriff) takes my T-Bird away." {Oops, wrong turn in the time portal, space ranger. So back to the present...} Another Club colleague, even more cynical, asked me, "Why would you undertake such a lonely-at-the-top obligation as President."

MY REPLY: "I believe that CWC serves a higher public function and should therefore survive and thrive. SFV asked for my help. And I gave my word that I would try." And those words led to my new...

{Mission Statement – on the next page →}

MISSION STATEMENT: CWC-SFV

CWC is about discovery and transformation, about giving voice to those who've been silenced. Our members discover how to improve their writing skills, to advance communication, and to become more actualized. Our goal is to transform into a community that is truly listened to, not simply heard. Our hope is to transform from simple agreement to genuine understanding. We strive to transform from isolation to kinship.

Our membership is diverse. Some are screenwriters, poets, essayists, journalists, and writers across genre. Some are professionals, some are students. Many of our members once sacrificed their artistic dreams to help support their families, to become mothers and wives and teach English to our children. All of our members, developing or advanced, share the spirit of artistic adventure.

Learning to write well is a great catharsis. It's better than confession and cheaper than psychoanalysis. And California Writers Club reaches out to all who revere the written word. Our meetings provide a protective umbrella for the emulation and growth of authorial talent. We provide skilled professional speakers, an opportunity to safely critique our writerly works, and the occasion to make new friends, to socialize and to network in a literary setting. CWC welcomes you to share in the fun, the adventure and the transformation. □ □ □

FAST FORWARD →

Coming in October: "The Writer's Studio: One-on-One w. David Titcher"

We'll face the heat with...

"**SCREENWRITING AS A MARTIAL ART.**" So, what do these names have in common: Jackie Chan of "Shanghai Noon" + "Rush Hour," Alyssa Milano of "Who's The Boss" + "Charmed" + "Melrose Place," Robert Culp, Punky Brewster, Jon Cryer, Lynn Redgrave, Tony Danza, Judith Light, Noah Wyle of "ER," Bob Newhart, Jane Curtin, Olympia Dukakis, Malcolm McDowell, and Larry Levinson of "The Poseidon Adventure?" – You're so smart, you guessed it from our eponymous title, they've all worked with David N. Titcher.

In November: "Painting With Broad Strokes: A Picture is Worth 100 Words"

Don't miss the fun and magic of watching your words transform into a beautiful painting! This will be a hands-on and exciting. Submit your best 100 words now. Email for details.

December: "Sharlene Martin Speaks Out!"

"**Considerate Literary Management...** for the 21st Century" is the Martin Agency guideline. Tune in to find a local agent with big-time connections. Maybe you'll be her next star.

Start gearing up for next year.

We'll present some of the finest names in Publishing, Writing, Poetry, News & Entertainment Media. Be there or be square! ◇◇◇

THE WORDSMITH

The Whipping Woman

By Ellaraine Lockie

The woman I hire to daughter my mother
makes bi-weekly visits to the dementia ward
Lies down beside the near-still waters

Accepts the mouth kisses wet with drool
From where gravelly words
dribble down washed-out gullies

Like a whipping boy she bears the brunt
of each face-to-face flagellation
that my rawhide flesh refuses

And for twenty dollars an hour I purchase
like the composition of a professional mourner
Substitution for services I can't supply. □ □

First published in Schuylkill Valley Journal of the Arts, Ellaraine Lockie, is an outside contributor from Sunnyvale, CA. She writes poetry, nonfiction, and essays. Ms. Lockie was on a poetry fellowship in Kenya, in a poetry residence with Centrum in Port Townsend, WA, and won the 2007 Elizabeth Curry prize from SLAB at the University of Slippery Rock.

THE VIEWPOINT

Five-Foot-One and Shrinking

By George Hirai

Many frustrations in my life have been the result of being vertically challenged. At five-foot-three, my brother was the tallest in our family. He towered over our four-foot-eight mother. I fully stretched to five-foot-one in my senior year of high school, but that wasn't enough.

My height, or rather lack of it, was a detriment in sports. When we played pickup games, such as football or basketball, I was always chosen last.



The captain with the last pick would sigh,
“Oh, I guess I'm stuck with George.”

Dating problems arose at Belmont High School where I experienced my first major trauma. I had the temerity to ask gorgeous, green-eyed Carmelita Esmeralda to the senior prom. She twirled her big, teased hair, snapped her gum, looked me up and down, and coolly said, “No.” I was devastated. I suspect she rejected me because of our seven-inch height difference.

I don't like partner dancing because I can never depend on finding a woman my height or shorter. Shrimps like me look silly in a dancing embrace with a tall woman, gliding around the ballroom, face-to-bosom. The “Twist” liberated me because it started the wonderful trend of gyrating and twirling apart where height doesn't matter. For me, it continues to be old time rock ‘n’ roll.

I qualified for the draft because I barely reached the five-foot minimum. My U.S. Army fatigue pants had to be taken up six inches. Trying to keep up with long-legged marchers was agonizing.

I developed a taste for well-tailored suits when I entered the “coat-and-tie” corporate world. I'd shop where they carried extra-small suits, which fit me perfectly.

{continued}

Alas, the sizes with less material cost 30% more than the off-the-rack sizes. Many times I suffered the indignity of shopping for clothes in the boys' department.

I have been frustrated in my attempts to rise in management. One day, I was able to shift the blame for my lack of success to factors other than skill or connections. *Time Magazine* reported that tall men gained most promotions, especially to the executive level. Those over six feet seem to have a more commanding presence.

In spite of my diminutive stature, my height concerns subsided over the years. I came to terms with this life-long problem. It never led me to therapy. But just when I thought my angst was over, I came across a Kaiser Hospital newsletter item, which noted that we all shrink a few inches when we enter our sunset years. □□

SOMETHING ABOUT WRITING

Defining Poetry is Like Grasping at the Wind by Richard Deets

Defining poetry is like grasping at the wind. Even the child knows that caught wind is not wind at all. Definitions of poetry seem to raise more questions than consensus as we can witness in three contrasting viewpoints in current poetry circles. The Traditionalist would argue that a poem is an expression of a vision of emotive value, presented in a form that is intelligible as well as pleasurable to others.

A poem, to the Modernist, is an autonomous object that may or may not represent the real world, created in language made distinctive by its complex web of references. The Postmodernist looks on poems as collages of self-contained idioms that are intriguing; yet, refer to nothing beyond the idioms themselves.

While poetry, as an act of discovery, is incredibly diverse and shirks definitions and labels, poetry, for poets other than the postmodernist, is an art form. Like other art forms, a well-written poem represents something of the human condition in a contemporary world, in vague apprehension. Furthermore, poetry expresses or evokes emotion or fresh ideas, pleases us by its form, and stands on its own as an autonomous and self-defining entity. A good poem, unlike an amateur's work, transcends mere words. The poem, as an intangible, emerges out of its own unique form, created in the style, preoccupations and shared beliefs common to its period.

Writing that fails to explore the nature and topography of the human condition or is completely understood and easily paraphrased is not a poem, but simply versified or emotional prose. The argument is not that good poetry needs to be overly challenging or that amateurs write in antiquated forms, it is that, unlike good poetry or "great poetry", amateur poetry finds its conceptions too quickly.

While we debate about what our society generally accepts as "great poetry", such poetry sets itself apart by its complexity and sophistication. "Great poetry" generally captures images vividly in an original, fresh manner, while weaving together an intricate combination of elements like theme tension, complex emotion, and profound reflective thought.

Poetry rewards a lot of reading and reflective thought. All writers, of all forms, recognize that the study of poetry teaches the possibilities of words, their music, rhythm, sound, the intensity and compression of language as well as an appreciation of a wide range of work.

{continued}

If we really want to know what poetry is, we will read it. Read it slowly, read it carefully as we will pay attention to every detail.

Read it aloud; then, read it again. Through study, each of us will develop our unique definition of poetry and enjoy having our writing evaluated by fellow poets. □□

FILM REVIEW

1408: All Style and No Gore

By Leila Morris

1408 is one of the rare horror movies that does not disappoint. Adapted from a Stephen King short story, 1408 follows Mike Enslin (John Cusack) who makes a living writing about haunted places. Must be nice. Despite raking in a lot of money on his haunted house books, Mike Enslin is convinced that paranormal sightings are a bunch of hogwash. So, you know he's going to get it.

Most hotels are dying for Mike Enslin to write a review of their ghostly goings on. That's except for the Dolphin Hotel. Convincingly creepy hotel manager (Samuel Jackson) tries in vain to keep Mike Enslin away from the infamous room 1408. Just about anyone who has ever stayed there has committed suicide. The staff is tired of cleaning up the mess. At first, it was hard to believe that no one could stop themselves from suicide after staying in 1408. I put up with that hotel room in Arizona with a concave bed and fingernail clippings. But, by the end, I understood completely. Swedish director Mikael Hafstrom pulls us into Mike Enslin's unrelenting nightmare.

In this terrible dream, we don't know what is real or imagined, past or present, and all our regrets and failings are laid bare.

As with Stephen King's *The Shining*, the hotel is where the living track in the footsteps of the dead. Swedish director, Mikael Hafstrom, directed the 2005 thriller, "Derailed."

Cast: John Cusack, Samuel L. Jackson, Mary McCormack

Director: Mikael Hafstrom

Running time: 1 hour, 40 minutes

Industry rating: PG-13

A writer died and was given the option of going to heaven or hell.

First she descended into the fiery pits and saw row upon row of writers chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they were repeatedly whipped with thorny lashes.

"Oh my," said the writer. "I'd better see heaven right now."

Moments later, she ascended into heaven and she saw rows of writers, chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they, too, were whipped with thorny lashes.

"Wait a minute," said the writer. "This is just as bad as hell!"

"Oh no, it's not," replied an unseen voice. "Here, your work gets published."



BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- ✓ Enjoy high-profile industry professionals as guest speakers
 - ✓ Participate in ongoing literary & writing critique groups
 - ✓ Enjoy preferred access to "Open Mike" forums
 - ✓ Make new friends & professional contacts at our dessert Socials
 - ✓ Garner free publication credits in our Newsletter...*(non-members pay a \$15 "submission & reading" fee)*
 - ✓ Show off your talent on our professionally designed website
 - ✓ Become published in our annual "Scribe Literary Anthology."
 - ✓ Gain a captive audience, featured in our "Member Showcase"
 - ✓ Be part of a tradition. We are the oldest writers club in America
 - ✓ Enjoy a free subscription to our SCRIBE newsletter
- ✓ Consider advertising yourself, business or loved-one in our Scribe
 - ✓ Attend up to THREE FREE meetings w/ your paid membership
 - ✓ Bring up to SIX Guests FREE in every year of membership
 - ✓ Receive half-off admission to all "Special Events" & "Workshops"
 - ✓ This is a potential value of more than \$100.00 for only \$45.00
 - ✓ Live, love, learn, write – and then be write on!

Added Benefits – for Volunteers

- ✓ In addition to all the above benefits of General Membership...
- ✓ Our Volunteers enjoy **free entry** to all "regular" meetings
- ✓ **Entry Fees** *(unless otherwise noted or for "Special Events"):*
 - ✓ \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.
- ✓ **Annual Membership:** \$45/yearly *(plus a one time, first year only administration fee of \$20)*



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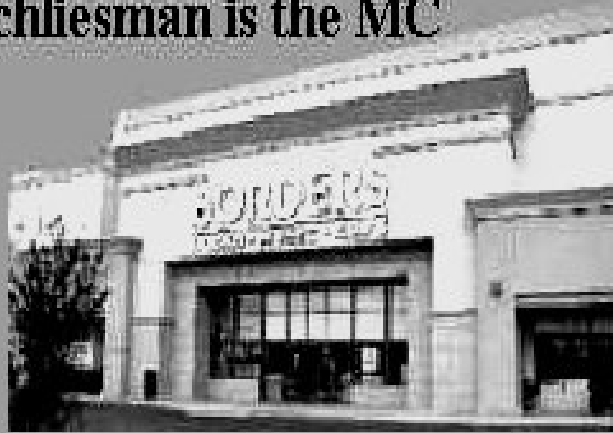


CWC-SFV Meeting Place:
"The Community Center"
4935 Balboa Blvd
Encino, CA 91316

The California Writers Club was founded at Berkley in 1909 by Jack London and a few of his friends who met together to inspire each other, critique their works in progress and enjoy the company of fellow writers. Ina Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate, was their librarian and mentor. She encouraged and directed them.

Since its incorporation in 1913 as a non-profit educational corporation, CWC has grown from the first branch at Berkeley to over fourteen branches throughout California with a membership of nearly fourteen hundred. It hasn't changed much over the years as far as its original purpose. The club exists to encourage writers, especially beginner writers, to provide a place for them to meet, to share, and to grow in their ability to write. We also provide help for beginners to become more aware of life in the world of writing. We inform our members about readings, conferences and workshops and help them to increase their skills and network with other writers.

**Open Mike at Border Books
Every Third Thursday of the Month!
Matt Schliesman is the MC**



6510 Canoga Park Avenue, 2nd Floor

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