



California Writers Club – SFV

*“Serving the writers of Greater Los Angeles”*

# THE SCRIBE

*- established since 1983 -*

Vol. XXI, No. 3

November 2007

## ***PAINTING WITH BROAD STROKES***

**GET READY TO EXPLORE YOUR SENSES**

**November 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 P.M.**

*by Scott Alixander Sonders*

California Writers will bring the best artists from the SFV Art Club to share an extraordinary escapade called “**EKPHRASIS**” - where one art form inspires another.

This event is about the intersection of art and writing. Visual language and evocative imagery create a “painting” for your reader. Now it will do the same for the painters & artists!

First, members of the Art Club will bring us a selection of their works and will hear from us our on-the-spot written interpretations. And they will, in turn, select some of your own writings to visualize and transform into a painting -- also on-the-spot. Bring something short & sweet!



We'll have easels, paints, pencils, and paper everywhere. Be prepared to be inspired. At the beginning of our meet-up, we'll give the Art Club samples of our writings. Then, they'll choose those that inspire them to paint or sketch. At the same time, there will be several finished paintings displayed around the room for the writers to view – and our literary geniuses will choose something that inspires a paragraph or a poem.

We'll have proof that “a picture is worth a thousand words” and as Rod Stewart said, “Every picture tells a story, don't it?!” 😊

## **THE WORD MECHANIC**

### **Ramblings from your President**

*by Scott Alixander Sonders, Ph.D.*

Our booth at the Taste of Encino street faire (October 14<sup>th</sup>) was a huge hit. Despite the forecast for rain and a horrific pile-up on the #5 Freeway, so many strollers crowded our workspace that we midway ran out of the more than 200 info flyers I'd printed up.



*Bruce Zacuto & friend read great literature*

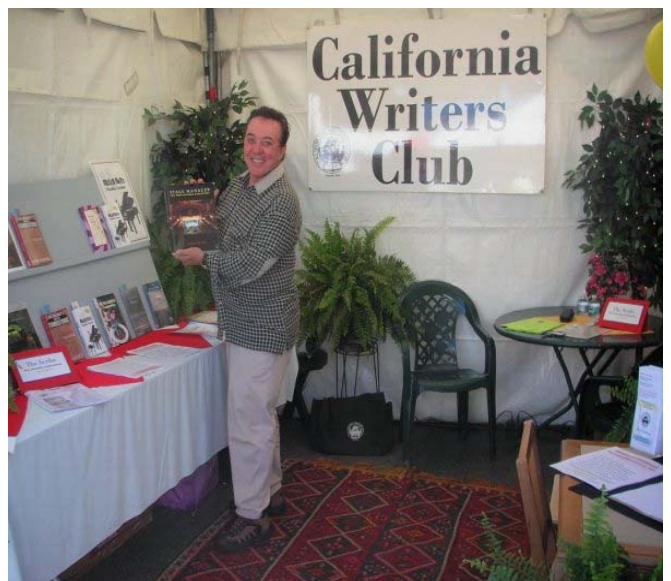
The best applause came from a self-confessed Encino millionaire who'd visited the Faire before. About our presentation, he said it was the most engaging and esthetic he'd seen! Well, that high praise goes directly to our own Larry Fazio for his stupendous work & creativity in making it all happen.

I almost had a cardiac arrest just watching him and Bruce Zacuto heroically build everything up – and then tear it all down.

I even had a chance to pitch our group to the Mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa. I planted a Vulcan mind probe on the poor guy and wouldn't release it until he pledged his support.

Of course, while I was doing that, Stephany Spencer was doing what she does best -- reeling in hordes of new members.

One of those, with a name too famous to embarrass, told me this story: "Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. →



*Larry Fazio, set designer extraordinaire*

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This made him (wait for the rim shot) – A super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis."

And if that doesn't elicit a groan, here's a parable on why it's important to hone your writerly craft: I once asked my workshop to punctuate these words: "woman without her man is nothing" From the men I got: "Woman, without her man, is nothing." And from the women I got: "Woman! Without her, man is nothing." ☺

## CWC-SFV Team

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**Scott Sonders**, State Representative, and V.P. of the CWC-Central Board  
**Lenora Smalley**, SFV Spokesperson  
**Bruce Zacuto**, Sergeant-at-Arms  
**Leila Morris**, Editorial  
**Megan Masten**, Outreach

## REWIND

### CANDID WRITING

by Danielle Ste. Just

Have you ever wanted to sit down with a WGA-nominated screenwriter over a cup of coffee and chat about the industry? That's exactly what happened at Saturday's California Writers meeting.

David Titcher, whose works include "*The Librarian: Quest for the Spear*," "*Around the World in 80 Days*," and "*The Curse of King Tut's Tomb*," graciously allowed Scott Sonders to interview him in a segment titled, "Screenwriting as a Martial Art: A Writer's Studio One-On-One."

David was candid, generous with personal anecdotes and described his penchant for sleeping all day and writing all night. His first job was to deliver drugs for a local Encino pharmacy. As a Valley boy, he "filters everything through Encino," which makes writing gritty urban pieces a bit of a challenge. He has come to realize there is a constant theme in his writing: "intelligence is cool."

His advice for screenwriters was just as illuminating. He exhorts screenwriters to submit more than one project. David is working on 51 projects right now!

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He also admitted to the reality of *ageism* in Hollywood and confessed he would not reveal his true age in a pitch meeting.

Some of the industry details he shared included the formidable number of screenplays submitted each year. He estimates that 100,000 are written each year in Los Angeles alone. Also, there is the dwindling number of pages in an acceptable script. Today, studios want a feature script in at 100 to 110 pages. The secret that's not really a secret is that the writer maintains zero control over the script once it leaves his or her hands.

## Member Showcase

The Member Showcase segment, featuring Wayne Levine, also held candid moments. Wayne shared his love of writing and love of life with us.

For several years, as he immersed himself in his family and career, he had an inkling that something was missing. One day, he sat down and wrote, "Forgiveness for Forgotten Dreams," which is found in his first eponymous poetry collection.

With that one poem, he realized what had been missing. Now Wayne leaps up out of bed in the morning to begin his day writing. He revealed some of his writing process with us, including a Mimosa tree he can see from his house, which inspires his work.

Wayne also shared two other poems with us, "Chance and Circumstance" and "No Way Back." He has published two books of poetry, the second titled, "*Myths & Artists*," with a third scheduled for publication very soon.

## David Titcher Quotes

"Unlike directors or actors, writers can sit at home and write a great script – and nobody will care how old they are."

- **On the writer's role in movie production:** "A director told me 'on the set, (he was) the general.' And I said, "You may be a general, but the writer is God."
- **On his vision of a story changing from the page to the screen:** "I've basically been horrified every time I've seen something of mine on the screen."
- **On the failings of *Around the World in 80 Days*:** "My revenge is that it cost the studio a \$100 million. But that didn't help my career."
- **On the writing process:** "I've never written anything that was easy. The first draft is always torture."

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CWC members began our meeting with the Open Mike segment. Mike Cahill, Richard Deets, Danielle Ste. Just, and Matt Schliesman shared their poetry, while Elaine Shevin read a riveting passage from her novel, "Winds of Time."

The day was full of writers sharing of themselves, which is an easy task in such a supportive atmosphere. We said goodbye until next month, when we will once again come together as a community of writers. 😊

## NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

**WHO:** California Writers - SFV  
Serving greater Los Angeles

**WHEN:** Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
**TIME:** 1:00-3:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Encino Community Center  
4935 Balboa Boulevard

**DIRECTIONS:** This is our second meeting in new home – and a worthy venue, at that! We're just north of Ventura Blvd and adjoining the east end of Encino Park. Plenty of free Parking.

## FAST FORWARD

*b: Stephany Spencer*

### Coming in December

*Crazy Queries* with **Sharlene Martin**, local big-time literary agent, and owner of Martin Literary Management.

She says, "*Crazy Queries*" is sure to be the best advice you'll ever get on what NOT to do with your writing career!" Along with other solid advice, she will stress the importance of a pre-query game plan, and then outline the essential elements of effective queries. Her expertise and "*considerate literary management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*" has landed many of her writers on the best sellers list, plus such shows as Oprah.

### Coming in January

Actor, writer, public speaker and editor, **Anthony Flacco**, on *crime writing*.

*He says, "True crime" is all about getting the story rights: choices of action and character are secondary. "Crime fiction" is all about getting the story right: choices of genre and style are secondary. His one-hour seminar goes straight to the how and why of it. Come and enjoy! 😊*

**WORDSMITH**

**THE PERIL OF THOUGHTS**

*by Danielle Ste. Just*

Childhood Notwithstanding  
I am willing but not  
able to suspend  
my belief.  
Days of wine and roses  
are magical enough,  
who needs the complication  
of night:  
swapping fluids  
followed by stories exchanged  
while propped up against  
sweaty pillows.

II  
Crème de la Crème

Is the casket large enough  
to hold *all* the grief  
you caused me?  
Can I pack it tightly  
around your stiff  
body, where it will nibble  
at your  
confidence, for once,  
instead of mine?  
*NOT GOOD ENOUGH, NOT GOOD  
ENOUGH,  
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.*

III  
Cupcakes Are Soft Enough  
to eat with dentures, luckily,  
for when I am old  
I want a pleasant  
roundness about me.

**LADIES OF THE AFTERNOON**

*by M. J. Cahill*

Oh, dregly pranter  
Winsome banter  
Droning, droning dreadly on

Boorish babble  
Drooling drabble  
Crack o' doom and bust the dawn

Yacky, yacky  
Stabby backy  
Not belong so making fun

Flying fur  
Yet so demure  
More.

\* \* \* \* \*

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

We are soliciting items for the December Scribe. Submit your articles about writing, memoirs, essays, short stories, and excerpts from fiction/non-fiction (limited to 500 words) as well as poetry and 300-word film, stage, and fiction/non-fiction reviews.

Submissions are to be sent to editor, George Hirai, Scribe Editor, as WORD attachments (only) to:

[cwcsfv@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsfv@gmail.com)

**Submittal deadline: November 16**

## MEMBER SHOWCASE

### Venita Louise

I grew up in a dysfunctional family. Actually, it was a broken home, but we stayed together out of habit. I assigned myself a very important job within the family -- to keep everyone laughing, sort of like the skills of a rodeo clown. And I was good at it.

It took some time for me to discover my true creativity. I started out rendering pet portraits for the almost rich and famous. I eventually quit the sketching biz because my human clients demanded that I paint their noses smaller and give them more hair, as though I was a cosmetic surgeon.

The love of my life now is writing. But the ghost of the rodeo clown never left me and materializes on its own volition, infusing my stories with humor.

As a writer, I can be myself, accountable to no one. How many people are lucky enough to have found that? 😊

## APPLAUSE

### Venita Louise announces:

- **Just Released:** "Dead on the Money," trade paperback by Vintage Romance Publishing.

- **Still Available:** "Mixed Nuts," trade paperback by Vintage Romance Publishing Online: "In the Rough" in electronic format by Loose Id Publications
- **Coming soon:** "In Mysterious Ways" in electronic format by Forbidden Publications

**Erica Stux** - is a local writer with numerous publications. "Who, Me? Paranoid?" is her 7th published book (not counting 3 chapbooks of poetry). The other books include collective biographies of women in the arts and women scientists, 2 other biographies for young people, one novel, and a memoir of a co-author titled, "Sequins and Sorrow."

An excerpt from "Who, Me? Paranoid?" is included in the current issue of the online magazine [www.clevermag.com](http://www.clevermag.com). It's an account of the ups and downs of a whale-watching cruise, titled "Whales and Wails."

**Michele Wallerstein**, a new CWC-SFV member, works as a screenplay and novel consultant. She was formerly a literary agent in Hollywood for over 25 years. Ms. Wallerstein published an in-depth piece, "The Who, What, When, Where, Why & How of Networking." Club members can find the informative article on [www.Storylink.com](http://www.Storylink.com) and [Developmentmenthell.net](http://Developmentmenthell.net). Please check out her web site at: [www.novelconsultant.com](http://www.novelconsultant.com)

**GET YOUR 15-MINUTES OF FAME...**

**NOW x3 - OPEN MICS!**

- 1 - Our regular monthly meet at Encino Community Center
- 2 - Borders Books in Canoga Park, Sign-ups begin at 6:45PM  
The third Thursday of every month - 6510 Canoga Avenue  
For info or advance sign-ups, email: [rrdeets@socal.rr.com](mailto:rrdeets@socal.rr.com)
- 3 - Barnes & Noble in Encino, Sign-ups begin at 6:45PM  
The second Friday of every month - 16461 Ventura Boulevard  
For info or advance sign-ups, email: [cwcsfv@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsfv@gmail.com)

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