



California Writers Club – SFV

“Serving the writers of Greater Los Angeles”

THE SCRIBE

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LOVE IN THE TIME OF FEBRUARY: Identical Twin Inherits Writing Gene

By: Stephany Spencer

Identical twin and award winning editor Kitty Dill is not sure whether her love of words came from watching her mother crank out newsletters for the PTA – or whether it's prompted by her fascination with how people live their lives. But she is certain that being a journalist is her favorite career. Kitty is one of the stars at the *Ventura County Star*.



At our next CWC performance, Kitty will bring her love of words and treat us to a pithy list of Media dos & don'ts. Members and guests will share in the information garnered from her award winning career as a news editor and reporter.

Indeed, the multi-talented Kitty has crafted just about every communication tool, from flyer and sell sheets, to strategic plans and news releases.

She's also written and produced several videos, and has been the public relations director for 3M and Clairol.

Kitty has a bachelor's degree in Journalism, and graduate degrees in Education and Counseling. Among her awards are the Spirit of Networking Award from the Professional Women's Network, and an Excellence in the Arts Award from the City of Thousand Oaks' Arts Commission.

Yet with this multi-faceted career, journalism remains her first love. So with this in mind, bring your questions and comments, and your own love of words. If anyone is prepared to indulge you, it's Kitty Dill. ♦♦

Our next CWC meeting will be:

**February 9th, 2008
1-3:30 p.m.**

**4935 Balboa Boulevard
Encino, California 91316**

THE WORD MECHANIC

RAMBLINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

BY: SCOTT ALIXANDER SONNERS, PH.D.

I've made as many mistakes as anyone. But this reveals little without the following statement: I've learned something from every casualty. And, hopefully, others might gain from what I've lost.

Many mistakes were in writing. And since life imitates art, what we learn from either applies to the other. Some things we should all try to ascertain for both writing and life are when to avoid stereotypes and when they are effectively needed. You don't want your audience distracted by too many differing aspects of characterization.

Just for the heck of it, here are just a few of the many things you cinema buffs may have noticed:

- **At least one of a pair of identical twins** is born evil [and I know because I am one; but I won't tell you which – hah].
- **Should you decide to defuse a bomb**, don't worry which wire to cut. You will always choose the right one.
- **Computer displays always say:** "Enter Password Now." And this will be deciphered just moments before a horrific deadline.
- **Even if you're heavily outnumbered** in a martial arts battle, your enemies will attack one by one, prancing menacingly until you've knocked out their predecessors.
- **When you turn out the light to go to bed**, everything in your bedroom will still be clearly visible, just slightly bluish.
- **Gorgeous blondes often become** celebrated experts on nuclear bombs, viral medicine and espionage by age 24.
- **Rather than a quick bullet, sociopaths** often kill their nemeses with man-eating sharks or with devices using pulleys, fuses, gasses, or lasers, allowing the hero much needed time to escape.
- **Most beds have special L-shaped sheets** that reach the armpits of a woman but only to waist of the man lying beside her.
- **Also, any woman who sleeps naked** will get out of bed only while modestly wrapping the top sheet around her.
- **Moreover, all men sleep in their boxers**, leaving their manly chests exposed.
- **It's easy for anyone to land a plane**, provided there is someone in the control tower to *talk them down*.

- **Once applied, make-up never rubs off**, even while scuba diving. It will also remain intact after 40 days on a desert island.
- **Should you wish to pass** as a foreign military officer, you won't need to speak the native language. Talking in English with a German accent will be just as convincing.
- **Similarly, many military officers**, from Russia, China or Nigeria, still prefer to speak to each other in English.
- **All French love stories end badly.**
- **A man will show no pain** while taking a ferocious beating, but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.
- **Handguns can be fired** inside of a closed vehicle without any passenger having their eardrums shattered.
- **If staying in a haunted house**, women should always investigate strange noises in their most revealing underwear.
- **Even on a straight road, drivers must turn** the steering wheel vigorously from left to right, every few moments.
- **As such, a driver can easily navigate** heavy traffic, even with their face turned toward the passenger most of the time.
- **A detective can only solve a case** after he's suspended from duty.
- **Good cops are often gunned down** three days before retirement.
- **All cops are given personality tests** to ensure they are deliberately assigned a partner who is their total opposite.
- **The average medical doctor can dive** from a concrete dam (hello "Fugitive," hitting the river's surface 150 feet below (note: Velocity=33'/sec/sec), without enduring a scratch or bruise or breaking a single bone.
- **Joe Average, when shot with a .45 slug**, does not die quickly or suffer much blood loss. Instead, he's able to continue fighting or running a long distance.
- **And my fave:** Beautiful women, when confronted with runaway beasts, trains or demons, will likely fall down and scream helplessly, prompting a 175 pound guy to scoop her into his arms and cart her 125 pound body, often for many miles.

And with that my dear friends, remember: it's never a mistake to join me at the non- stereotypical California Writers. ◇◇

REWIND

January Monthly Meeting

By: Kelly Jungersmith



An afternoon of beautiful poetry and hysterical prose about tax-tabulating cats is always enticing. But when the meeting includes an informative and interesting guest speaker like Ashley Grayson, even the cold California winter can't keep me away.

Mr. Grayson explained many of the ways that writers were being short changed, such as bookstores taking too huge of a chunk of money made from the sale of a book. And this helped me understand why dumpster-diving dinners will now be included on my list of great nights out.

But just as we were about to fling ourselves over a cliff, lemming-style, Mr. Grayson assured us that all was not lost. He was optimistic about the future of publishing and insisted that despite the evil ways of some bookstores, we can get published.

And he had proof. The books he presented ranged in subject from vampire talk show hosts to yoga-loving cats, all of which lifted spirits and made us believe that publishing was again within our reach. Mr. Grayson was also very excited about his "Can Do" list. This is a way to advertise things that you can and will do for money or other rewards, lewd acts excluded. These acts are then made available to the public. Carolyn Grayson joined Ashley to add comments about their literary agency.

That Saturday afternoon of fun and information requires many thanks to those pivotal to its success: Our President, Scott Sonders, who ensures that these meetings happen every month; Venita Louise, our superb Membership Chair; and our masterful Sergeant-at-Arms, Bruce Zacuto, without who our speaker would have been faced with a chaotic hall. Also many thanks to our editor, George Hirai, for quietly correcting all of my errors and not threatening to poke my eye out with a stick if I ever submit anything to the *Scribe* again. And for those who get grouchy when hungry, the lovely Olivia Mohler ensured that our empty-stomached fury was avoided.

I was unable to partake in the delicious cake brought by Mary Black, but the moaning from the crowd was a clear indication that I was missing out on something heavenly.

Finally, I am particularly thankful to whoever made the yummy brownies. As soon as I saw them, I sharpened my elbows to better bulldoze any who might get in my way. My Super Bowl tactics landed me a trophy, and only minor injuries were sustained. ◇◇

FAST FORWARD

Coming in March - Linda O. Johnston:

Attorney and Romance Writer

She's a practicing attorney armed with a double barrel shotgun: a B.A. in Journalism and a Doctorate in Law. The amazing "Linda O" juggles her busy schedule to write in the afternoons and teach in the evenings. We've long awaited the info she'll share on the legalese involved in writing. Special Bonus: bring your questions about writing PR, mystery and romance.

Coming in April - Kevyn Lettau:

A True Princess of Cabaret Jazz



She's divine; she's sublime; without her it's a crime. So, come be enthralled by the mellifluous riffs of Kevyn Lettau, internationally known jazz singer. She's the voice behind Philippine Airlines and a recently sold-out gig at

LaVaLee in Studio City. Kevyn is the intersection of music and the poetic written word. Be prepared to fall in love as Kevyn shares the inner place that sparks her poetry – and then performs the final result. Come be enchanted by the lilting voice of the Divine Miss Kevyn. ◇◇

THE VIEWPOINT

Excerpt from “Untitled”

By: Farah Zeb

There were so many things she wanted to tell him. Laying there exhausted from their first time making love, she thought about all that had led up to this moment. As she reveled in the bliss, a great sense of sadness flooded over her. She couldn't help but feel that all the pleasure pulsing through her body in this moment could only be followed by a permanent sadness, triggered by a perpetual desire to feel this way again.

She imagined her distant future with him; her old and aging mind always harking back to this one immaculate moment in time when all was perfect between them, when love blinded them from truly seeing each other. She wanted to experience this unsullied joy as her future forever and always.

Right now she lies beside a man who had no annoying habits, no irritating lack, nothing about him was flawed. Why must this change? Why does the beauty of this moment have to fade away into a dull reality of dirty dishes and forgotten anniversaries? Why must all love eventually be tarnished by the mundane?

As they lie there naked in darkness, she felt him staring at her. She felt him admiring her silhouette against the city lights barely illuminating the room. What was he thinking? Was he also afraid like she was? Was he also terrified to tell her the truth about how he felt?

She was afraid of being hurt, afraid he may not feel the same way. She was terrified that the love he may have for her, may one day diminish or disappear completely. All her previous relationships were ones in which she knew she would be the one ending it. She was always in control and therefore, never really in love. How had she guarded herself from love all her life? She had waited for the right man to be worthy of her and now she wasn't sure if she was worthy of him.

What a strange game life plays on us, she thought. I am terrified of the man lying next to me simply because I am able to love him too much and he is able to leave with that love. She turned to look at him, he was staring at her just like she had envisioned. She could make out a slight glimmer reflected in his eyes by the fading glow of the city night, but other than that, he was darkness.

“Do you want some water?” he asked as he climbed out of bed.

“Sure.”

That simple question made her heart sink. Couldn't he have said anything else? Something besides such a biological concern? Here I am in the midst of my utter most fears and deepest feelings and he's concerned about my dehydration level. She let out a slight laugh at the realization of how harsh she was being. He's being a gentleman and I am chastising him for it. Why do I always feel the need to live in a novel, where romanticism prevails and no one ever has to go to the bathroom?

He came back into the room carrying two bottles of water. “Here you go, baby.” As he handed her the water, he slipped back into bed and cuddled up to her. “What are you thinking about right now?”

She contemplated telling him the truth about the eternal dialogue in her head. But was it too early? Would he run away at such intensity of emotion already forming within her? “I'm thinking... I'm happy.”

“Good.” With that, he kissed her neck and got out of bed. “Come on. Let's go.” He started to dress.

“Go where?”

“For a walk.”

She felt the moment was left unfinished; nothing substantial had been said, nothing had been decided. And now he had torn away from the intimacy of the moment. He had forced whatever was opening up within her to close again.

“Let me put on some clothes.” ◇◇



Our Crew: George Hirai, Olivia Mohler, Bruce Zacuto

Pretty Rights

By: Robin Reed

They no longer want to be called “zombies,” announced David Blander, new president of the NAADP (National Association for the Advancement of Dead People).

In an impassioned speech, Blander said that the hordes of walking corpses that have been roaming the streets of America for several years now, killing everyone they can catch and devouring their flesh, want to be called “Pretty.”

“I am issuing a call for Pretty rights,” Blander said. “For a day when Pretty people can surround a living person and strip his carcass down to the bone without anyone judging them unfairly.

“I am here to tell the living that Pretty people have a God given right to snatch your ear right off your head and chew it like Juicy Fruit Gum,” Blander thundered to an appreciative convention crowd. Blander was recently elected to the top post of the NAADP when the previous president, Tom Jenner, was shot through the head by a police officer.

“It’s the only way to kill them zombies,” Officer Toliver said. “A shotgun blast through the old brain bucket puts them down every time.”

The shooting was caught on videotape and caused an uproar in the Pretty community. A mob surrounded police headquarters chanting, “We’re in the City! We are Pretty! Get used to it!”

Blander came out of the coffin in January of last year. Since then he has been a tireless crusader for Pretty rights. “I think I was a latent Pretty even before the incident,” he told Paula Zahn in a TV interview. “I had a few minor pretty experiences when I was a teenager. One time I bit the nose off of my girlfriend. It was just a bit of harmless experimentation.” Blander then proceeded to eat Zahn’s left arm. He pronounced it to be delicious.

A debate rages in the scientific community over the issue of what causes Prettiness. “It’s a virus, transmitted through the bite,” says Doctor Philo Feenerman of the Institute of Dead Studies.

“Nonsense,” says Dr. Jeb Greeb, of the Psychiatric Association of America. “It’s a chosen lifestyle, and it can be overcome with therapy. All that is needed is to convert their insatiable hunger for living flesh into a need for disco dancing.” Dr. Greeb holds Disco Nights for his patients every Tuesday night at the Club Dead. The message of the NAADP convention will resonate throughout our society.

Pretty people will gain more rights in employment, housing, and even the controversial movement towards allowing Pretty marriage.

David Blander’s speech, however, was cut short when his lower jaw fell onto the floor. The NAADP has not announced whether the now jawless Blander will remain their spokesman. ◇◇

ABOUT WRITING

Member Bonus: Free Critiques

In an effort to assist beginning and aspiring authors, Vintage Romance Publishing will be offering a free detailed critique of a one-page query letter, once every six months. The queries should be submitted during the following time periods only, and any query submitted within these guidelines will be reviewed: March 1-31st – September 1-30th. Please note in the subject line: Sample Query for Critique. The query letters will only be reviewed during the above-referenced dates. Please allow up to two weeks after the end of the month for completion of all critiques.

Dawn Carrington, Editor-in-Chief
Vintage Romance Publishing – www.vrpublishing.com

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¹ also: Editor of the Scribe

² also: VP of the CWC-Central Board

WORDSMITH

Proof of Effort

By: Regina Apigo

The envelope addressed to me is written with my handwriting. Ugh. I dislike seeing my handwriting when I open my mailbox. I included those handwritten SASE envelopes in packets I sent to literary agents. These return envelopes overwhelmingly contain polite rejection letters, declining representation for my novel. Boo. No fun.

Instead of indulging in pity parties, I ought to remember and follow my own advice.

“What matters,” I always tell my daughter, “is that you try hard. Effort is the only thing you control.”

My daughter does put that logic into action. Naomi was in kindergarten when she wanted to learn how to do monkey bars in the school playground.

The first time she fell off after only the first rung, her arm muscles unaccustomed to the strain. She tried again. Her tiny legs flailed wildly in the air. She panted and let out a little scream before falling. For the first few days after school, she was relentless in her effort, but never made it past half of the 12 rungs. One afternoon she noticed, she had a watery pocket.

“What’s that?” she asked me, pointing to one of her soft palms.

“A blister,” I said. “Means you’re trying.”

Within weeks, she came home with calluses that replaced the blister.

“See,” I said, “your hands are getting nice and tough. Good for climbing across the bars.”

A few days later Naomi said she was sad. A mean boy was pulling her off the monkey bars by yanking her legs. I told her to report him to the adult playground monitor. I also rehearsed with her, how she was to firmly announce to the boy bully, “Get away from me.”

It worked.

One day, a couple months later, Naomi said after school, “Mommy, watch me.”

I was so proud as she skipped bars and swung easily across to the end.

More importantly, I was proud of how my daughter failed, I estimate, at least several hundred times, before she succeeded. Yet during that time, she never once proclaimed, “I’ll never make it to the end. I’m no good at this. I’m not a good person. I’m a failure.”

She never stayed on her butt after falling onto the rubbery mat. She never allowed the obstacles of blisters or the mean boy to stop her from doing what made her excited.

Here’s what I want to remember. She tried hard; she had fun and assumed she would succeed even as she failed.

Here’s what I want to do. I want to give myself the freedom to fail, the freedom to take risks, the freedom to have fun and to remember that effort is all I control in life.

So maybe the next time I see an envelope in the mailbox with my handwriting, I’ll smile and gaze upon it as proof of effort. ◇◇

APPLAUSE

Poet, book critic and former *Los Angeles Times* Assistant Book Editor, **Georgia Jones-Davis**, reveals her “Confessions of a Book Review Groupie” in the new issue of *The Los Angeles Review*, and just published by the Red Hen Press. Georgia describes some of her adventures and misadventures, encounters with the famous and not-so-famous, and her “sentimental education,” across her twenty years as a book review editor. Georgia has assessed books for many publications including: *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *New York Newsday*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Georgia first published poetry while a student at UCLA. And after her journalism career, she has now returned to the writing and performance of poetry. ◇◇

Jack London Award Winner: Cara Alson

If ever one deserved the recognition denoted by the JLA, it's Cara Alson. Her history with and commitment to CWC is strong. She first came to the SFV when JoEd Griffith was President. And that's one of life's little coincidences because JoEd first got involved with California Writers as a student from a writing workshop of Scott Sonders.



Cara Alson with JLA from Scott Sonders

When I attended my first meeting, I felt at home. It was my first experience in a community of writers who were welcoming and available – and willing to mentor a relatively new wordsmith. Encouraged by all, the people of CWC made me feel *possible* as a writer. It was *possible* for me to grow. It was *possible* for me to brave the scary world of contest entries and submissions for publication. And it has been *possible* for me to repay what I've received, in a small way, by offering the same friendship to new writers that cross my path."

Cara has served on three of our Conferences, been both Hospitality and Programs Chair. Some of her awards and publications include: ByLine, Writer's Digest, Art Villa, Israel Today, Pulse, the Jewish Times, and even our own Daily News.

As one can see from her potpourri of publication credits, CWC-SFV truly serves the writing community of greater Los Angeles, reaching out and giving voice to those who find a home with us. The Jack London Award is for who has served CWC the most tirelessly. So kudos to our Cara! ♦♦

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The editors are soliciting for the March issue of our literary journal, THE SCRIBE. Submit your essays about writing, memoirs, short stories, film and book and stage reviews, humor pieces, and excerpts from longer works. The limit is 500 words. We also want your poems but please limit these to +/- 35 lines. Email your submissions to George Hirai, our Scribe Editor, as Word.doc attachments. Our next submission deadline is February 19, 2008. Email: cwcsfv@gmail.com

Photos: If your work is published in THE SCRIBE, then we'd like you to send portrait or candid shots of yourself, to accompany your work. We find photos of members enhance the newsletter and increase your name recognition. ♦♦



POET'S CORNER

Winter Haiku

By: Richard Deets

The winter solstice
Dresses trees in bridal gowns,
Lace falls in snowflakes.



Baudelaire

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

WHO: CWC-SFV - Serving Greater Los Angeles writers

WHEN: Saturday, February 9th, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

WHERE: Encino Community Center - 4935 Balboa Boulevard

GET YOUR 15-MINUTES OF FAME – NOW **x3 OPEN MICS!**

- 1 –** At our regular monthly meeting at the Encino Community Center.
- 2 –** At Borders Books in Canoga Park. Sign-ups begin at 6:45 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month – 6510 Canoga Avenue
For more info please email: rrdeets@socal.rr.com
- 3 –** At Barnes & Noble in Encino. Sign-ups begin at 8:00 p.m. – this Feb 8th only! on the second Friday of every month – 16461 Ventura Boulevard
For more info please email: cwcsfv@gmail.com

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