



California Writers Club – SFV

“Serving the writers of Greater Los Angeles”

THE SCRIBE

- established since 1983 -

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May 2008

COMING TO CWC - MAY 10 THE RIGHT TO WRITE: Kate Gale of Red Hen Press



Our guest presenter, on May 10, will be Kate Gale: poet, novelist, college professor and founder of Red Hen Publishing. This iconic, non-profit organization publishes poetry, literary fiction and non-fiction.

A distinguished academic, Dr. Gale holds a PhD in English from Claremont Graduate University.

Kate Gale is a dynamic and riveting speaker, who is totally natural, accessible and honest about her self, her family and her fascinating personal background. She immediately connects closely with her audience as she shares her own unique poetry--writing that is fresh and poignant with uncommon subjects that reach right to the heart.

Red Hen has published “The Misread City: New Literary Los Angeles,” a collection of essays and articles about Los Angeles,” “Poetry in the Classroom: How to Invite Students into the Process of Poetry as a Discipline, A Creative Art Form and a Scholarly Pursuit” – and other works of poetry and non-fiction.

Come to the May meeting where Dr. Kate Gale will share her thoughtful views, unique writing skills and the wisdom and knowledge accumulated in the course of her impressive education and experience.

-- George Hirai and Diane Rowe

MAY MEETING

WHO: California Writers Club,
“Serving Greater Los Angeles”

WHEN: Saturday, May 10, 2008
1:30-4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Encino Community Center
4935 Balboa Boulevard - Encino

DIRECTIONS: We’re just north of Ventura Boulevard and adjoining the east end of Encino Park. Plenty of Free Parking.

THE WORD MECHANIC

RAMBLINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

“INTENTIONAL MALAPROPISMS”

By: Scott Alixander Sonders



I always get a tickle from malapropisms, intended or not. Here're some from the *Washington Post*. They asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one

letter, then supply a new definition. Here are some of the innovative winners...

1. **Intaxication:** Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
2. **Reintarnation:** Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
3. **Bozone:** The substance surrounding stupid people. that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The Bozone layer shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
4. **Cashtration:** The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
5. **Giraffiti:** Vandalism spray-painted up high.
6. **Sarchasm:** The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
7. **Inoculatte:** To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
8. **Hipatitis:** Terminal coolness.
9. **Osteopornosis:** A *degenerate* disease.
10. **Karmageddon:** It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's a serious bummer.
11. **Decafalon:** The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things which are good for you.

12. **Glibido:** All talk and no action.

13. **Dopeler Effect:** The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

14. **Arachnoleptic Fit:** The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.

15. **Beelzebug:** Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

16. **Caterpallor:** The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

17. **Ignoranus:** A person who's both stupid and a you-know-what.

I hope you enjoyed these as much as I know you'll enjoy our May 10th *Über* event. See you there. ♦♦

CWC-SFV TEAM

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Debra Zednik, Critiques Advisor
Megan Masten, Outreach
Elizabeth Jaimes, Hospitality

¹ also: Editor of the Scribe

² also: VP of the CWC-Central Board

REWIND

Our April Monthly Meeting

By Glen Olson

The beauty of spring swept through Encino, energizing our members and providing a backdrop for a truly memorable meeting. Mike Austin reminded us that there are now two open mic venues, hosted by the club, to showcase our poetic and writing masterpieces. The format of the monthly meeting has therefore changed. Open Mic readings at the club will be discontinued and the time used to showcase an individual member.



Speaking of showcase, Mike regaled us with a personal excellence. Competing at an amateur auto race, he entered that mental "flow state," allowing him to reach far beyond his usual skill level and win against much better drivers. As writers, poets and performers, we all recognize the experience where excellence "flows." Our own president, Scott Sonders, wryly admitted he also had competed in the race – but came in dead last.

We had two special presenters, each with her own powerful story. New member Sasha Faynor, www.sashafaynor.com memoir writer/standup comedian, coming to us all the way from Long Beach, and Singer/songwriter/poet, Kevyn Lettau, www.kevynlettau.com, Valley resident, who grew up in Berlin.

Sasha talked about her journey away from mental illness toward health and maturity, how it resulted in her book "Sex with Strangers," and indirectly, her current career as a comedian. She found that talking about her condition with authentic feeling created strong connections with people and humor enriched everyone's life. The connection she created with this crowd was profound.

Kevyn began her presentation with a beautiful song on a stage filled with lush greenery, roses, candles on tables and sprays of tiny lights. This conducive setting was created by our talented Events Manager, Larry Fazio. As a special touch, Larry quietly set the stage in mime whiteface, hat and gloves.

Kevyn talked about childhood in Germany, years of voice training and her life as a professional singer, who'd started by turning her own poetry into lyrics. She'd focused on her craft so strongly that she'd "never walked into a bank until after her marriage broke up." She also struggled with mental illness – and reached out and thanked Sasha Faynor for setting the tone of authenticity for this meeting.

Throughout her presentation the audience was privileged to hear many different styles of song, beautifully rendered. One member pointed out that her lyrics constituted a major poetic talent and I, well, I do not believe I have ever heard a more beautifully rendered torch song.

The day that began the fall

By Radomir Luza

And she sat in chair on 42nd
floor of her office building
And wept and when that was
not enough
She wept some more and
when that weeping had
ended
Her shirt collar was wet and
salty

And there were no subways
and the line to get on a ferry
was sixty-one blocks long

And the theatres
Were dark and the restaurants
were closed
Yet somehow she found a
PATH train to get
Her over the river back to New
Jersey

And then it began
The diabetes, the sleep apnea
the congestive heart failure

The arguments until two in the
morning and the swordfish hole
in our hearts that we may
never get over and the
distance in our eyes we are
only bridging now

Ghosts of the Chumash

By Leonora Smalley

Off the freeway at San Ysidro
we wind north
up narrow roads
lined with low coastal scrub oaks
reaching out with spider leg arms.

I hear whispers from the hillside,
*"Trespassers, trespassers.
We were here first."*

I think they are ghosts
of the native Chumash,
who survived for centuries
on bread
made from meal
ground from the acorns
of oaks like these.

Our car snakes upward
through concrete gates
to an empty space close
to a white, totem-like statue
of the Virgin at Casa Maria.
We are here to network and learn.

We leave when it turns completely night,
no houses or light anywhere.
Our headlights split
black obsidian rock,
black, menacing energy,
surrounds
and chases us
all the way down
to the 101.

VIEWPOINT

A Memoir - Who Is the Mother?

By Yolanda Fintor

I became the accidental tourist by default. Months before, twenty-year-old daughter announced she had saved enough money for a European trip she planned to take with a friend. It was to be a six-week, backpacking trek through Europe by train. When her friend backed out and Dawn said she was going anyway, hyperventilated. She listened to my objections to her traveling alone, and when I finished ranting, she invited me to go along.

Knowing she would go without me, and in spite of my fear of flying, I reluctantly agreed. Had I known of the anxiety attacks that would follow me throughout Europe, I might have refused.

The first attack hit when we landed at Heathrow Airport in London. "Where are we going to stay? How will we get there?"

Dawn took charge. "Sit down here, Mom. I'll go to the tourist kiosk and get us booked for a bed and breakfast." She returned after a few minutes by which time I had composed myself and hoped I presented a motherly demeanor. "We're going to Earl's Court, about fifteen minutes away by tube. I have a map that tells me which subway train to take," she assured me in a placating tone.

We spent three days sightseeing London, then took a train to Dover where we took the ferry to Belgium. Getting off the ferry was a bit like being in a Laurel and Hardy movie. As the crowd milled toward exit doors leading to the stairs, Dawn and I lost track of each other. I became disoriented and walked down one flight further than I should have. It was difficult to maintain an aura of dignity while exiting with cars, trucks and motor homes. I emerged from the bowels of the ferry dragging two suitcases and coughing from the exhaust fumes.

Our travels took us to Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary and France. The panic attacks subsided as I learned to relax,

but at the end of four weeks, I was ready to return home. Dawn wanted to stay another two weeks and by this time I was comfortable with the idea of her traveling alone. Well, it was time to cut the umbilical cord. I would have to make it home on my own. We said goodbye in Paris and went our separate ways. My next act was either a sign of extreme self-confidence or marked stupidity.

My train was just pulling out when I arrived at the station. I did not want to wait another 2 ½ hours for the next one, so I threw my bags on the last coach as I ran alongside the moving train. Luckily, a conductor leaned out, grabbed my hand and pulled me aboard. (Didn't I see this in a movie)?

I arrived home safely, feeling like a seasoned tourist ready to take on new challenges. Soon after Dawn returned, I overheard her tell a friend, "Mom was a good sport but she'll never become a world traveler."

Hungh! If she only could have seen me in Paris!



VOLUNTEER...

As our new PUBLICITY CHAIR
To our Writers Club - SFV Board
"Serving Greater Los Angeles"
Make new friends.
Help a great cause.

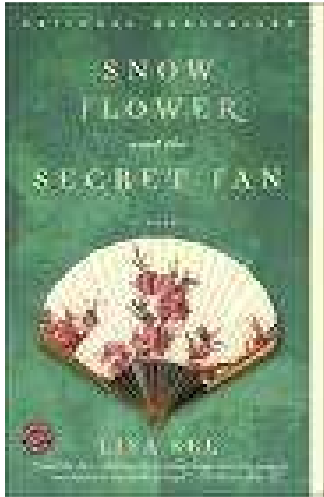
Inquire to: Scott Sonders
cwcsfv@gmail.com

REVIEWS

Lisa See's "The Secret Fan"

By Elaine Shevin

I knew nothing about 17th. Century feudal China until a friend gave me a novel to listen to on a disc called, *Sunflower and the Secret Fan*, by Lisa See. What a



tremendously rich learning experience! What beautiful writing! The author writes a historical fiction story based on a great deal of research regarding all the experiences endured by an 80

year old woman who now sits quietly in her chambers and talks of her life. I came to know a vastly different cultural view as opposed to my own as the protagonist prospective of life changes. I did know the mothers bound their daughter's feet, but I didn't understand the full meaning behind it or the tremendous agony the girls underwent having their toes broken and rebound again and again or the importance it had to choosing her husband. When she first visited her mother-in-law's home, the woman never looked at her face. She studied her feet before accepting her as a daughter-in-law. The mothering-in-law would become the dominating influence in the girl's life when she married the woman's son and moved into her home. Her own parents treated her as a temporary visitor to be tolerated until they could marry her off. Her one responsibility was to marry in order to raise sons. If she did not, concubines were brought into the home for this purpose. The one outlet was the women's chamber

where only women were allowed. There they drank tea, did needlework, sang songs and told stories about their miserable lives. They invented a language called *Mu-Shu* which they kept hidden from men for 1,000 years.

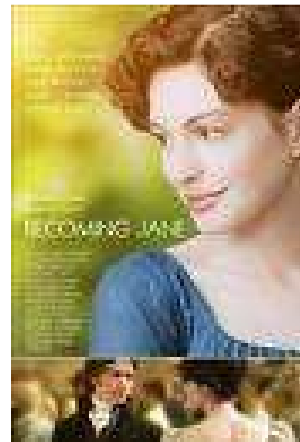
This is a poignant story which is written in the first tense which tells of the writer and her best friend, Snowflower, writing to each other about the joys and tragedies of their lives on the folds of their secret fan.

Review- 282 words

Becoming Jane Austen: A Non-Review

By Leila Morris

Knowing my obsession with Jane Austen books, my husband said, "Hey, there's a movie about Jane Austen coming out."



I'm sure that he intended it for a mom's time to herself outing and not something that he would have to watch. I told him that I do not intend to see that movie -- ever! Just thinking about it makes me

mad. The movie is a based on a torrid love affair that Jane supposedly had with a "roguish and decidedly non-aristocratic Tom Lefroy."

The filmmakers put together a few thin threads of what the little is known about Jane Austen and weaved them into a Harlequin fantasy. I feel protective of Jane Austen, like a family member who wants to make sure that the papers get her story straight. I don't need to go inventing stories about her. In fact, I like a little mystery. Her genius is enough.

Her stories are not just literature. They provide an intimate look at life in 19th century England when women had to scheme and struggle to find their place. You won't find that in the history textbooks.

What is known about Austen is that she was born on in 1775 in Hampshire England to a large family – the daughter of a reverend. Interestingly in “Pride and Prejudice,” she paints the clergy character as a hypocritical social climber. Was she talking about her father? Who know? I wouldn't make a movie about it.

She completed her first novel, “Love and Friendship” at just 14 and died at just 41. “Persuasion” and “Northanger Abbey” were published after her death and a final novel was left incomplete. I mourn her death. I mourn that unfinished work and others that would have followed. I think about the exquisite irony of her life: she'd written so often about love, but died single.

I think about Dianne Warren -- one of the most prolific songwriters ever to work in the music industry. My songwriter friend refers to her as being “in line with the dark forces.” In an interview, someone asked Diane how she could write about love so fervently since she says she has never been in love with anyone. She explained that her writing is her true love. I imagine that that's what Jane Austen would say. But I wouldn't make a movie about it.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The editors are soliciting creative works for the June issue of our literary journal, *THE SCRIBE*. Submit your essays about writing, memoirs, short stories, film/book/stage reviews, humor pieces, and excerpts from longer works. See revised guidelines below where we've increased the word limits for your creative work.

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.

Email your submissions to George Hirai, our Scribe Editor, as Word.doc attachments. Our next submission deadline is May 19, 2008. Email: cwcsv@gmail.com

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- **Articles about writing, essays, memoirs, excerpts from fiction/non-fiction and general features.** Not to exceed 700 words.
- **Reviews of fiction, non-fiction, essays and film.** Not to exceed 400 words.
- **Poetry:** Not to exceed 35 lines or 250 words. Poetry reviews not to exceed 150 words.
- **We may extend word limits** occasionally, on an as needed basis, listed above.
- The Editorial Committee determines articles to be published in *Scribe*.
- **There is no charge to members** for Scribe submittals. There is a \$15 “reading fee” for non-member submittals.
- **All submittals are to be e-mailed** to Scribe Editor, George Hirai (cwcsv@gmail.com), as MS Word “attachments” - not as a text message.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

My heart was opened and filled with love and encouragement as I left the event Saturday! Thank you so very much, it was a great experience for me!

-- Many Blessings, *Kevyn Lettau*

GET YOUR 15-MINUTES OF FAME: NOW x2 OPEN MICS!

**1 – Barnes & Noble in Encino, Sign-ups begin at 6:45PM
The second Friday of every month – 16461 Ventura Blvd.
For info or advance sign-ups, email: cwcsfv@gmail.com**

**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**

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