



California Writers Club - SFV

Serving Greater Los Angeles

THE SCRIBE

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Writer of Who-done-its

Full of Wit and Sly Humor

By George Hirai



Dennis Palumbo will kick off our new season on this September 13th as featured speaker for our CWC.

He's not only a Hollywood screenwriter of *My Favorite Year*,

and *Welcome Back Kotter*, but he's also a licensed psychotherapist who specializes in helping new and established screenwriters, directors, and novelists address creative issues. He conducts workshops throughout the country on creativity and career.

Dennis Palumbo writes witty and amusing stories about TV and film, including crime novels. His latest *From Crime to Crime* has gained rave reviews:

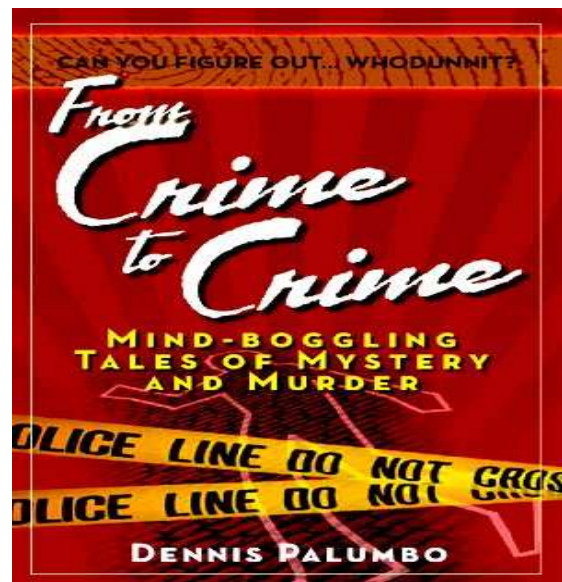
"A combination of clever deduction and sly humor." -- April Smith, author, *North of Montana*.

"A touch of Neil Simon." -- Dick Lochte, author, *Croaked and Sleeping Dog*.

I recommend you retrieve *The Male Therapist* by downloading the January 2008 *Scribe* from the CWC-SVC website. You'll appreciate his views of changing authority figures in film and TV.

As a psychotherapist and experienced screenwriter/journalist/novelist, Palumbo empathizes with writers and helps them with psychological blocks. In one discussion on "writer's interruptus" (when unforeseen events take writers away from their writing) Palumbo states, "Writers figure things out best by writing, not by ruminating or doing more research."

I am looking forward Dennis Palumbo providing sage advice for new and experienced writers, which I know will engender lively discussion. □



The Word Mechanic

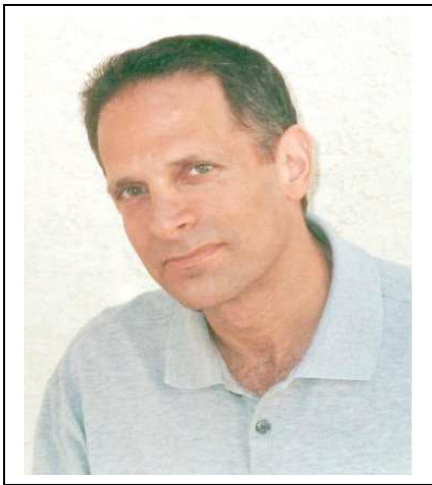
RAMBLINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Is It Fact, Fiction or Truth?

By Scott Alixander Sonders

My work is purely autobiographical... It is about my self and my surroundings. I work from people that interest me and that I care about. There is a distinction between fact and truth. Truth has an element of revelation about it. If something is true, it does more than strike one

***as merely being so.” --
Lucian Freud***



Some imagine the difference between “non-fiction” and “fiction” is that one is true and one is not.

However, Lucien Freud, the painter, understood that the hope of good fiction is to *reveal* and expose the truth, to bring it alive, to record it in the soul of posterity. And the onus of good non-fiction is to meaningfully and truthfully record that which is observed as “fact” in an entertaining fashion. Both should both be truthful; they simply create in a different way.

We discover many things literary at California Writers. It's a wordsmith adventure. I've watched the past exciting year melt away into our hot summer hiatus. And I'm anticipating the sunrise of a new writerly voyage this autumn. We have a packed schedule of special speakers and featured members. I'm aiming at creating a full year's worth of min-conferences, presenting two experts every month. We'll have famous writers and poets, publishers and agents, artists and musicians – and everyone who intersects the written word.

Some of us suffer from “writer's block” and/or a fear of speaking publicly. This year we'll also confront and exorcise some of those demons. We will try to look at *fear* differently, as that which leads to *excitement*. Both of these release the same chemicals in the body! The experience of fear is the experience of an unknown. The unknown can either close you off or bring you alive with elation. Every fear within you provides the opportunity for excitement. And it is your perception, it is your enjoyment of the journey that shifts fear from something incapacitating to something creative and alive.

Together, we are in the process of re-creating our writer's coalition into something artistic and alive. As Freud said, you are “the people who interest me” and who “I care about.” Because of that, I invite you all to step up to the plate and join team CWC in our fictional and non-fictional plan for success. ♦♦



THE WORDSMITH

Weapons of Mass Destruction

(My Mastectomy)

By Dori Marler

It isn't what you may think.
It's not a smooth open space
since the land mines were removed.
No, it's not like that at all.
What is left of the landscape
after they've dug out
all those lethal bombs,
those killer missiles,
is twisted, scarred,
misshapen little bumps.
Craters where they don't belong.
Where there was beauty,
a gently sloping knoll,
sweetly rising mountains
with fragrant valleys,
now is a battle field,
disfigured forever.
Has the enemy surrendered?
It's a question that will remain
a mystery for many years.
Meanwhile reconstruction is useless
A futile attempt to restore
those melon hills.
It is suggested that
where the damage is too deep,
an artificial prop
may be the answer.
Like the scenery of a play
to be rolled out, slipped into place
for a special performance
then rolled back into storage
like the sets on a stage.
When I first saw the wreckage of it,
I wanted to turn away,
but now I see it in a new light.
I now see only life in those scars.
A medal of honor for the survivor. □

CWC-SFV

Serving Greater Los Angeles™

It's Time to Renew Your Pledge

California Writers Club is supported entirely by volunteers and the charitable generosity of its members. **And it's time to renew your membership.** Here's just some of what we've accomplished this year:

Our membership has more than doubled to 106. Another 115 members visit from our Meetup website.

Our new home accommodates 200.

We have 2 Open Mics every month in literary venues.

Our members are getting important name recognition. And we've already gotten commitments for another full year of special events and entertaining and educational speakers (possibly including our Mayor).

We've transformed our Website and received great critical reviews.

We've given our members 14 literary events in only 10 months.

We've fully transformed THE SCRIBE into a modestly "literary journal.

This year, we'll publish an all-new and stellar literary Anthology. We're hoping you're name will be part of this CWC Member exclusive.

That's why **we need your help more than ever!** We know that you care about the literary health of our community. So please extend your kindness to help us out with our financial goals – making our Club the best ever. Help us together to choose **SUCCESS.** -- *Scott Alixander Sonders, President*

Reverie

By Dori Marler

I never slept in the forest,
Nor swam naked in a mountain stream
I never had a diamond ring
Nor a wedding dress
I never visited the pyramids
Nor knew a Pharaoh
I never drank Perrier Jouet
Nor dined in Paris at Arpege
I never took Ballet classes
Nor wrote a novel
I never learned to play chess
Nor mastered calculus
But I have nursed my babies and kissed
their silken eyelids as they slept
I have planted pansies
And baked apple pies.
I have played hop scotch
And dyed Easter eggs
I have dreamed of Heroes
And made daisy chains with my grand
daughter
I have seen the Liberty Bell
And cried at La Boheme
I have listened to wise women
And made foolish mistakes
I have loved the wrong men
And left them
I have been afraid of changes
And made them anyway
I am only a single life
But I have known many lives
I have walked with giants
Of character and grace
I have lain in the river
Of their generosity
I have witnessed the elegance
Of their humility
I have been bowed
By courage and strength
Of Mothers and Sons
Of Fathers and Daughters
And I am exalted by their light. ▣

THE VIEWPOINT

Me and Grandpa Louie

By Larry Fazio

As a child, I don't remember Grandpa Louie being memorable or endearing. Whenever we entered his house, my mother would instruct, "Go give grandpa a kiss. "I obeyed and did it only out of respect and duty.

On Sundays and holidays the house was bursting with my aunts, uncles, and cousins. Sooner or later, someone would say, "Pop! Tell us about the time when you and Mamma first came to America."

"Oh, *God-danm-it-to-hell*", Grandpa would say in his broken English. "Don't make me remember that!" However, it took no more coaxing than that to get him started. "It was nineteen and twenty-seven! I came first and stayed with my brother, your Uncle Enrico. Two years I worked and saved so your Mamma, God rest her soul, could come. Finally, in September of nineteen and twenty-nine, I wrote to her. Next month I got a letter back saying she would come just before Christmas. By then it was too late. The Goddamn banks closed! I stood in line two days. By time I got to the window, they said there was no more money. It took me two more years to save, but this time I did not put it in no banks!" Smiles and looks were exchanged between my aunts and uncles because they all knew Grandpa had money hidden away, but no one knew where.

Every spring Grandpa Louie could be found in his backyard digging on his hands and knees to plant his tomatoes and peppers. He took meticulous care in digging holes large and deep for the young tender plants. "It's for the fertilizing," he would explain. "You gotta dig deep so when the roots get big they will have food way down there."

{“Grandpa Louie” – continued}

On one spring afternoon, when I was about twelve, I was playing hide and go find with my cousins. Grandpa was in his garden and I quietly slipped into the shed. I was shocked at what I saw. From out of the ground he took an old rusted box. Slowly, he opened the lid and took out a roll of money. He counted a good amount, tucked it into his pants, (yes, into his most private place) and then put the box back into the ground. Grandpa looked up with a start. Our eyes met. His eyes darted from side to side to see if anybody else had seen him with the money. Then he raised a soiled finger to his lips and whispered, “Ssssh! A secret.”

I felt terrible embarrassment to have caught him in such a private act and a great burden to know his secret. I backed away and then ran from the garden.

Grandpa Louie and I never spoke of that moment and I dared not tell anyone. There came a day, however, when his arthritis had settled deeper into his joints and he could no longer plant his tomatoes and peppers. It was then he took me aside and made me executor to his hidden estate.

“Because you know my secret, you must help me – and learn to do the planting.”

“What!” I said. “O-o-h No-o-o! Planting is for people from the old country.”

“Be thankful for the people from the old country. If we did not come here, you would be in Italy right now on your hands and knees, planting every day.”

Playing every trump card in the deck, he assured me he had only a few more years to live. I caved in and learned. The family was terribly impressed that I would do Grandpa’s planting.

Grandpa lived to be 93. On his 90th birthday, I presented him his old chest. I’d sanded it and painted it a metallic gold. The family was baffled that I should give such a gift. Grandpa Louie looked confused. When he opened the box and saw it was empty, terror filled his eyes. Slyly, however, his expression changed and he smiled. “This is the best! When I was a boy in Italy, I had one just like this.”

Later, he pulled me aside. I expected he would and before he could speak, I presented him with a bank passbook for a savings account. “The banks are safe now, Grandpa. No more digging.”

He took the passbook, opened it, and I saw his and my name listed. He then turned the page and I saw the total. “Good. Now you keep it.” I stepped back, raising my hands in refusal. “Damn-it-to-hell! You do what I tell you! But, you mustn’t tell anyone. Take this money and make something of yourself. I did not have that opportunity. It was my job to come to this country. It was your father’s job to make a good life for you, and now it is your job to do better.”

I took the bankbook. We did not speak of it again. For the three years Grandpa Louie had left, he never asked for a penny and yet always, he had money to give for birthdays and holidays. Knowing Grandpa, he had another stash hidden away, perhaps under the mattress, maybe in a sock, or more than likely in his pants, hidden in *you know where*.

That money took me through college, first in our family to get a higher education. Despite the accumulated riches I have today, there lays a patch of soil in the southern most part of my backyard where I plant green bell peppers and sun-ripened plum tomatoes.

Thanks, Grandpa Louie. It sure was a roundabout way of us coming together. □

MR. NATURAL RECEIVES A VISITOR

By Mike Austin

As I fiddled with its batteries and puzzled over why my digital voice recorder wasn't working, I walked from my garage, through my dining and living areas, toward my upstairs. From 40 feet, I noticed what could be a brown heap resembling bootlaces lying on the floor. Maybe from my dog's playtime? Grinning a little about our impish, 12 lb. Terrier-Chihuahua mix, I walked toward it to see what it was.



For my perspective when I first realized what she was, do you think I was surprised? I'd been up for around three hours; the house had been closed for the night with the AC on. The only door open was to the garage, 50 feet from where she sat. We regarded each other.

She waited patiently for me while I walked past her, upstairs, and got my camera. Then I walked past her again as she remained immobile and I snapped four flash shots. Still, unmoving and composed. When I nudged her gently with a paper plate into a deep, glass casserole dish so my son could later see her, she accepted suggestions easily.

As a kid I hosted all sorta wildling visitors, from snakes and field mice to a barn owl and kestrel. I've had the pleasure to hold Mojave Green sidewinders, reticulated pythons, red racer snakes, and crayfish.

I kept mallard ducks, doves, miniature poodles, moths, butterflies, beetles, wasps, honeybees, garden spiders, Black Widows, Alligator Lizards, Western Fence Lizards, a western grebe, horned toads, frogs, a Blue-Lined Skink, a guinea pig and tropical fish. Except for the domesticated animals, they all visited a while and then I'd release 'em.

But, this is my first tarantula visitor. I get the feeling it's a girl. But I'm so surprised at the moment I couldn't say for sure. She's very gentle, but of course I wouldn't put my hands near her fangs. I later released her into the ivy near our dry creekbed.

A good shaman friend wrote this about my furry, fanged visitor:

"This is so wild! I also had a tarantula in my bedroom two weeks ago. He was crawling out of my closet... so beautiful and a wonderful listener. I told him he went in the wrong door, saying, 'Let me open the door for you.' He hesitated to go out, but did.

Tarantulas mean transformation through heightened psychism and feelings. Trust what you feel, not what you see, Mike. Your gut feeling/intuition is right on. Congrats! This is reaffirming my visitation; I've got to trust my feelings on some situations now. Thanks for that, Mike.

I look forward to meeting you in person. It may be a long lunch; schedule for that. Take care. Hugs, Jen."

So, when I apply my intuition to what I've accepted into my life in this moment, there's clearly something more to my new two-legged friend, RJ, and his solicitation for help on his documentary about colony collapse disorder among bees. And the spectacular feelings of kinship I feel with my new friend Richard www.CondraDonn.com about his creative ideas are actually leading to wildly fruitful conclusions. Indeed, all my warm, new friends from clan Dohrmann at CEO Space will be with me for the rest of my life, and beyond into Forever. ☐

FEATURED MEMBER:

Linda Ballou

This month's featured member is the accomplished Linda Ballou. Linda is a travel writer, published author, and nature photographer. Linda Ballou has written for *The Los Angeles Times* and a dozen other travel specialty publications. She has hiked, biked, kayaked, and has ridden horses and mules through pristine country. She's a seasoned world travel writer with a care for all things Nature. Linda has been there, done that, and lived to write about – over and over again! □



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Essays about writing, 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, approximately 250 words. Poetry reviews. Not to exceed 150 words.

Occasionally, on an as needed basis, we may extend word limits 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 (cwcsfv@gmail.com), as MS Word “attachments” - not as a text message. □

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

The editors are soliciting creative works for the October 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 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.

The submission deadline for the October issue of the *Scribe* is 9-15-08. Email your submissions to George Hirai, our *Scribe* Editor, as Word.doc attachments. Email: cwcsfv@gmail.com

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The **3rd Thursday** of every month

Sign-ups begin at 6:45PM

For info or advance sign-ups, email: rrdeets@socal.rr.com

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