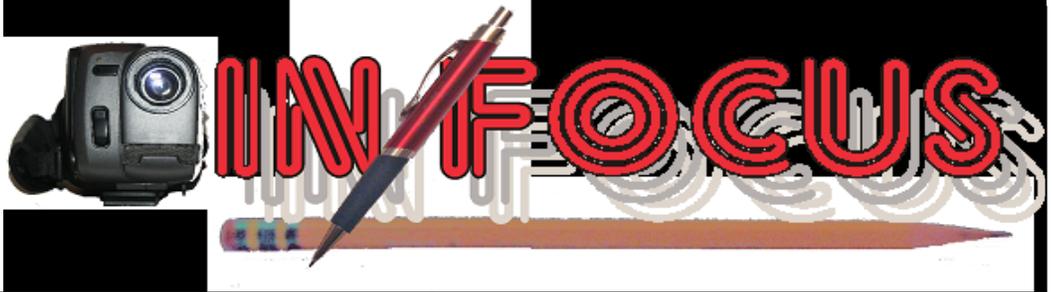




WEST VALLEY
BRANCH



VOLUME 3 ISSUE 6



“Everything but the Writing” Tina Glasner Gets Real

CWC/WV SUBMISSIONS FOR 2009
ANTHOLOGY: Title: **COLLAGE**



IN THIS
MARCH
ISSUE:

LUCK
LADS
LASSIES
LAMBS
LIONS
LORE
LAUGHS
LIQUIDS
LIVES
LEGENDS
And
LOVELY
LYRICS



Our CWC by-laws say our mission is “... to educate members in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.” This year we are lucky to have on our roster a member who reflects this mission so well that we invited her to be our March speaker.

Tina Glaser, a transfer from the South Bay branch, has twenty-four years of professional experience in the field of writing, editing, and art. Not only has she been published many times as a freelancer, she also has worked as editor on numerous works of nonfiction and fiction, and she does developmental editing, book production, graphic design, research, marketing, and “just plain coaching.”

Tina is also proficient in desktop layout. She has created logos, pen-and-ink portraits, and she has designed books, manuals, newsletters, brochures, and display ads. In the corporate world she worked as a technical writer/editor and production editor.

Regarding her plans for us, Tina says, “I thought it would be fun to speak about the many choices and tasks along the way besides the writing. Either the writer undertakes all of them, shortcuts on some of them, or hires them out. Perhaps the talk could be called ‘Everything but the Writing.’”

Besides sharing all this valuable experience, Tina will provide a two-page, take-home tip sheet. Come, enjoy her talk, and get a free handout.

The West Valley Branch of the California writers Club will publish an anthology of members' writing, available at the September 2009 meeting.

Guidelines

Categories:

Fiction and nonfiction, 2500 words maximum
Poetry, approximately 32 lines per poem
Manuscripts must be original and unpublished. Submissions previously *In Focus* will be accepted, however.

No required theme. Any theme is acceptable.
Five submissions maximum, same genres or combined.

Black and white illustrations may be included. No gray shading.

White 8 ½ x 11” paper, ¾ inch margins all around
Font: Size 12, Ariel, Times New Roman, Courier, New Courier

Submit a cover sheet for each submission with your name, address, phone, and email address, the title of your submission, and the word count ... line count for poetry submissions. Put page numbers at the bottom of each sheet except the cover sheet. Put the title at the upper right.

Submit by US Mail or in person to Lillian Rodich, 10030 Owensmouth #51, Chatsworth, CA 91311. Submit electronically to Lillian at lrodich@yahoo.com

No material returned. .

Deadline for submissions: April 1, 2009.

Copies may be pre-purchased, price to be determined by the total number ordered by the branch membership. Members will be notified before the printing if their material is accepted.

The anthology committee hopes that every member of our branch will be represented in the anthology.

Sail On!



Paul T. Owens "Power Point" Presentation in Feb. Meeting



Good writers are not born with pen in hand, ready to write the world's best novel. Writing must be learned, practiced and nurtured as avidly and seriously as any other perfected skill. In his February speech, Paul T. Owens emphasized the need for due diligence and a practical approach to keep a writing career afloat. The published author and freelance writer may not be a nine to five businessman, but he has developed the discipline and responsible work habits of a businessman.

Owens tried teaching but gravitated into a writing career when he asked the right questions, at the right time to the right people. His career spans from a position writing press releases for Peter Ueberroth of the Los Angeles Olympics to his present career writing articles for City of Hope and the Junior Blind of America. He has written and published sports books, and served as a consultant for movie and television. Over the years, Owens has always found another story and another client who needs a good listener/writer/interpreter.

His pointers for our CWC/WV audience took on the aura of a pep talk – for writers with a serious yen to see their work published.

Listening to Owens, I had this mental image:



- ◆ Listen well
- ◆ Take notes
- ◆ Ask questions
- ◆ Think of a new angle
- ◆ Look for the right moment
- ◆ Pitch your idea convincingly
- ◆ Do your research
- ◆ Follow through
- ◆ Market effectively
- ◆ Network and recycle ideas



Owens loves his freelance career. "I work for myself, and write about things I am interested in. I am always listening to what people say and looking for another story." So...stock up on portable notebooks, pens and no. 2 pencils. Listen to yourself, your friends, relatives, acquaintances, the people talking at the next table, or at your gym, club or dog park. Anywhere people gather and gab is an opportunity to find another idea for a story. Paul T. Owens guarantees sudden inspiration!

- Kathy Highcove

Opportunity Knocks



Many new writers think publication is a matter of luck. Experienced writers know that a large ingredient of the recipe for success is not luck, but work. If writers do not produce a manuscript, they cannot publish one. To that end, a professional writer will critique, edit, proof read a submission, then follow up with query letters and emails to publishers.

Let's suppose you've found a publisher. What's next in this recipe for writing success? Find an agent and stir in your platform, which is what YOU are willing to do to market your work, if accepted by a publisher.

We all know a recipe is ruined without all the ingredients. Of course, a little pinch of luck doesn't hurt – like being at the right place at the right time with a well written manuscript when an agent strolls by – but it still boils down to work ... hard work. When your manuscript is ready, try one of these markets.

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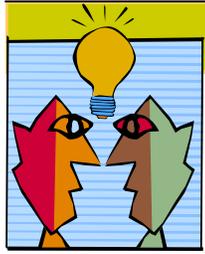
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- Lenora Smalley



Make Sense!!

- Ray Malus



We experience life through our senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, and through emotional reaction: joy, fear, pleasure, anger, revulsion, love, et. al. For me, the aim of writing is to evoke these emotions. But how can this be done, if reaction is tied to sense stimulus? The answer is simple: through the use of imagery.

As writers, we are all aware of this. The reader reads an image, and experiences the same reaction as if s/he had experienced the event. (Note: 's/he' is my concession to the 'P.C.' police's insistence on "he or she". Feel free to use it, or ridicule it. I find it convenient.) This reaction to imagery can be as strong - or stronger - than the reaction to a real event - depending on the choice and vividness of the image - and involve any sense. Once reading is fluent, it doesn't seem to matter much whether the brain gets the images through the senses, or through reading about them. They enter and are processed in much the same way.

Most fledgling writers focus on sight images, describing events visually:

"The dog walked into the room."

This sentence describes the event, but the reaction is limited. As writers mature, they start to include other sense images:

"The clacking of dog claws on the hardwood floor pricked my attention. The dog ambled into the room. He moseyed insolently over to me, and snuffled his snout into my lap. His warm nose belied the pungent odor of wet fur which rose from him. I reached down and let my fingers dig through his dank coat, feeling his warm body within. The world was better."

Not only does this description involve more of the senses, but the adjectives and verbs cue the desired emotional responses. A dog could be a pet, or a guard animal. But vicious pit bulls don't 'amble' or 'mosey'; they 'stalk' and 'prowl'. Pets 'amble'.

A pitfall here is to write vividly, but not verbosely. We've all heard, "A picture is worth a thousand words." But it's also true that "The right word is worth a thousand pictures."

**Write
vividly,
but not
verbosely**

Look back over literary styles! Our collective attention span is shrinking. Everything is getting shorter: books, chapters, stories, sentences, words. Writing needs to be distilled, concentrated.

So how to strike a good balance between 'tepid' writing, and 'arduous' writing. The answer has to do with the senses again. If I were to ask you which sense is most important in reading, you would probably answer 'sight'. But most paragraphs are about as visually interesting as bricks in a wall. I think that 'hearing' is the real key.

As we read, our 'mind's ear' acts as a gatekeeper. If it is comfortable with what we're reading, it passes it on to the mind with no comment. But let it be jarred, and the process stops, until it is comfortable.

Remember: One of the best keys to successful writing is reading your work aloud. If you can't read it at open mikes, read it to yourself - but aloud. You'll discover 'ungraceful' passages, unfocussed images, weak plot points. You'll be amazed at what you think you wrote - but didn't, and what you did write - but didn't mean to.





A Lucky Survivor Shares His Memories and Mail

Most authors write for the royalties that result from their efforts. Some write for the pleasure of writing or to teach others. But a few, like myself, write to record for history a part of one's life that had world significance. For this reason, I wrote *Bridges to Victory – Story of the 1306 Engineers in WWII*, *Builders at War – An Anthology of the 1306 Engineers in WWII*, and *Genie du Monde – Military Engineers of the World*. The following are excerpts from letters written to me by some of the veteran families and friends who read these books:

“Your last book about the exploits of the 1306 Engineers during WWII was thoroughly entertaining and interesting.”
Kevin Riley, E Co. Hampton, GA

“Your book is truly remarkable. After the first few pages, I could not put it down and finished reading the same day it arrived. It gave me the feeling I was right there with you every step of the War. Anyone who had a relative that served with the 1306 and read this book should be as grateful to you as I am.” Abe Rahhal, brother of Louis Rahhal., B Co., New Port Richey, FL

“The book *Bridges to Victory* is a personal and poignant account of the daily operations of the Corps. Schwartz's views are true to form in verbiage, humor, and hardship. The account is coordinated with drawings from Schwartz and by all measures; the reader is drawn into the surrounding scenes and camaraderie of the Corps.” Tammy Swisher, Swisher Publications, Greeley, CO

“I have my copy of your anthology among some of my most cherished possessions and I feel that everyone is indebted to you for writing this. You have done an excellent job. I can assure you that Major Hudson would be very proud of it. I now wish that he had shared even more of these experiences with me. I relived those years (1943-1945) all over again and those happy years following his return.” Margaret Hudson, wife of Maj. W. M. Hudson, S-3, Spartanburg SC

It was so nice of you to send Dad a copy of your book. He read it from cover to cover and kept saying, “I remember that, or I remember this.” We enjoyed watching his reactions to things you mentioned as he recalled them. He read the book in its entirety, saying it brought back lots of memories, especially the bridge across the Rhine River. As he was discussing the book with us, he'd always have a story of his own to go along with what you had written. Patti William, daughter of TSgt Angelo Legueri, F Co., Penquilly, MN

Max: I cried. Thank you so much. For writing the book and making all that not just you and Daddy did what every man who ever served did to make this country proud and safe. I am proud that my father served in the 1306 and I wish there were more information about this group of great men, I am a teacher and hopefully through people like Max Schwartz the children of today's world can realize what the men and women of the past went through to help win victory in WWII. Patty Wilson, daughter of Albert Lockhard, B Co., Pine Bluff, AR

Conclusion
In addition to these flattering excerpts, I have received dozens of photos, CDs, clippings, and other documents from families of the 1306 Engineers memorializing the experiences of their loving husbands, fathers, grandfathers, and brothers. I collected these treasures and published *Builders at War – An Anthology of the 1306 Engineers in WWII*.

I wonder why I keep writing about this four-year period of my life in WWII. I rarely write about the following sixty productive years when I was involved with major engineering projects of buildings, refineries, factories and mining. These have faded from my mind while I continue to write about my experiences in World War II.

- Max Schwartz



Editor's note: Several more letters were contained in this document, but cannot be reprinted in just one issue of this newsletter. However, the letters published convey to our Infocus readers the many ways Max Schwartz has enriched and honored the memory of his fellow troops. His books are valued by countless families and all historians of WWII. In addition, Schwartz' unique look at engineering in wartime makes for very interesting reading.

How I Became An African

- William E. Hitchins



My mother was third generation Northern Irish. I learned from her that if you have an Irish mother, you are Irish. Her father died when she was eight but she always remembered him telling her to never say she was Irish; she must always say she was *Northern Irish* or an Orangeman. That word was adopted because her ancestors supported King William III of Orange as king of Great Britain.



She would never wear green on St. Patrick's Day nor display a shamrock, the little three-leafed clover that, according to a dubious legend, St. Patrick used to explain the Holy Trinity to the heathen Irish, showing that it was one plant but had three parts.

As for me, my maternal grandmother, who lived in a house called Shamrock Bungalow, decided to teach me to read at the age of three, and there my trouble began. One day she told me to go and tell my father I could read. My father gave me a newspaper to read the caption of a photograph of a tank.

He was so excited. He yelled for my mother to hear for herself.

After some discussion later, they decided that if I could read I should go to school, but at the age of three I was too young for the regular schools. They found a schoolteacher who ran a one-room school with children from my age up to about ten or eleven. "Miss Johnson" seemed very ancient and terrifying. A stern disciplinarian, she sat on a raised platform on what could easily pass for a throne. She was a Roman Catholic who taught catechism to the Catholic children.

My mother drilled into me that I was not to take catechism. On my first day, Miss Johnson asked me what my religion was.

"I don't know," I said, "but I'm not to take catechism." Maybe that was my religion, "Not to Take Catechism."

She told me when I got home to ask my father.

I made my first mistake by asking my mother instead of my father because, like so many Irish of either flavor, she confused her religion with her politics.

"You are really an Orangeman," she lectured me, "but don't tell them that. They won't know what that is so tell them you are an Anglican."

Well, I was three and a half. What was that word? Angli- what? Now Orangeman was something I could relate to and remember.

The next day at school I proudly informed Miss Johnson that I was "an Orangeman."

The entire room burst into laughter but the teacher quieted them down, glaring at them sternly.

"Children, there *is* such a thing as an Orangeman," she explained. "They are people who settled by the Orange River in Africa."

And that's how I became an African.



Young William dressed for Carnival in Trinidad, wearing a Mom-made, hand sewn costume.



What's the difference between a shamrock and the four leaf clover? Hitchins explains the what, why and wherefore.

A shamrock has only THREE leaves. The origin as an Irish symbol supposedly comes from Saint Patrick. When he was preaching in Ireland, the natives could not understand the concept that God was three in one (the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost). He plucked a shamrock from the ground and showed that it had THREE leaves but was only one plant.

- William E. Hitchins

A Bus Ride in Rome — Summer 1965 *They needed luck reaching their hotel ...*



It was a hot, sunny day in Rome, Italy. The time was approximately eleven o'clock in the morning and the two of us were standing with others in a small bus station platform wondering how to return to our hotel from the location that we were at. My husband knew a few words in Italian, so he asked where we could purchase bus tickets, and which bus to get on. Through many attempts of English, Italian, many body gestures and actual friendly help, we were able to buy the correct tickets and stand in line of the correct bus number waiting for it to pull over to the platform where we stood with others to board it. Once the driver opened the door of the bus there was a rush of a disorderly mob descending into it, including us. We were literally pushed to the far end of the bus, near the exit door. We were standing with others all jammed together very tightly, holding on to the rings that hung from the ceiling of the bus.

There was an Italian young girl dressed in peasant clothes who had a garland of garlic around her neck. She stood on the step of the exit door and when she saw us she started talking in Italian. Out of courtesy we just nodded our heads but the next event was quick and unexpected.

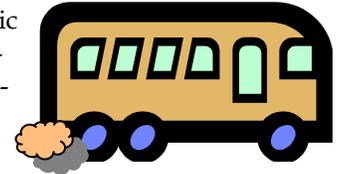
The bus stopped the exit door opened and she grabbed my husband and started pulling him out the door with her. People started yelling to the bus driver to leave the exit door open while I and some people around me pulled my husband back inside the bus. It was translated to us in broken English afterwards that the girl "fancied" my husband (for whatever reason she had) and wanted to befriend him.

We all had a good laugh afterwards. The bus continued its ride for a while longer, and then all of a sudden the driver stopped the bus in the middle of a street, took his money box and without saying a word just left us all stranded in the middle of that street. We looked around and saw that the passengers simply got off the bus and walked away.

Again we asked what was the reason for this unusual action and one person was kind enough to stop long enough to explain to us that the driver's union started a bus strike at twelve noon and it would last for four hours. We ended up taking a taxi to the hotel. At four o'clock we noticed that the buses resumed their rides, as if such a stoppage action was an ordinary thing to do.

So this was how we got to know the local people and their daily life.

- Marganit Lish



Marganit Lish finds a new definition for *mazal* in the CWC/WV

I looked up in the Hebrew-English dictionary the meaning of the word "luck". It had a printing of fifteen (15) translations of the word from English to Hebrew. In Hebrew "luck" is translated as MAZAL. The word Mazal has been integrated into the English language. The following are some examples:

- ◆ When people participate in happy celebrations such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, etc. they greet each other with "Mazal-Tov" - meaning good luck.
- ◆ When an unsuspected event occurs and the results are positive, such as gambling or winning a game, one would say "I had mazal" - I was lucky.
- ◆ In the business world among diamond dealers, when a sales transaction is completed, they complete it by saying: "have mazal" - have luck.

Some people believe in luck, others do not. Luck is a state of feeling-an emotion and therefore can be felt differently by each individual. I feel very lucky that I discovered the writer's group because I have been fortunate to meet, hear, and learn about the creativities of many creative people in my community. These new experiences also kindled within me the urge and urgency to write — a skill that was dormant inside me for a long time. I also realized that I consider myself to be a recorder of life's events rather than being an essayist, or a poet, or a novelist. Yet I feel extremely lucky to have discovered this side.

Thank you, CWC/WV community

- Marganit Lish





march madness

- Leslie O'Kaplan



Every Saturday night, I go to the Basketball game followed by a dance at the Broadwood Hotel in downtown Philadelphia. The season begins from October through the mad month of March. I'm about eighteen years old and dancing is my first love. I'm not what you call an ardent sports fan. The Harlem Globetrotters are playing against the South Philadelphia Hebrew Association known as the Spas. Just picture the big black giants against little short Jewish guys.

It's St. Patrick's day, so I search through my wardrobe and find the only green dress that I own. As far as I'm concerned, everybody is Irish on St. Patrick's day. So I'm all dressed up for dancing and even my eyes have a touch of green eye shadow to match my dress for this Irish holiday.

Much to my pleasure, the basket ball game is like watching a graceful comic ballet. A short guy named Red Klotz dribbles right under the wide open legs of a seven foot Globetrotter. It's very funny and entertaining. The Globetrotters and the Spas perform frequently by popular demand.

The game ends, the dance commences and most of us who know each other are dancing our feet off to the rhythm of the big band on the same wooden basketball floor.

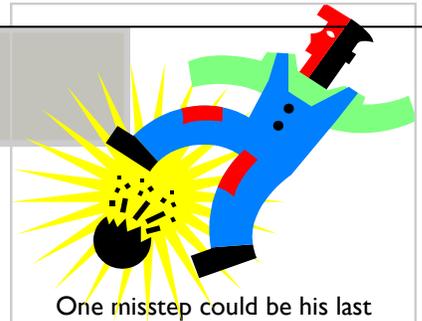
All danced out, a group of us decide to go to an Irish pub called the House of Murphy. We sit around a piano bar, drink green whiskey and sing all of the Irish songs that most of us know, starting with *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*. We aren't concerned about the howling wind, or the bramble bushes rolling down the street, typical for the season. We leave the pub... happy, as Irish whiskey can make one feel. Basketball as I experience it, along with St. Patrick's Day and the winds, are all a part of March Madness. Since those wonderful days, many moons ago, every March I will pull on my only green sweater, go to an Irish pub, drink some green whiskey, sing all the Irish songs I can remember, reminisce about the Harlem Globetrotters, and remember my old gang as we serenaded each other after dancing our feet off.

AND THAT'S WHAT I CALL MARCH MADNESS!

Lucky Max relates a life changing event...

Thinking I would have credit for working on the Pan American Highway in Costa Rica as a surveyor in 1942, I enlisted into the Army Corps of Engineers. Unfortunately, the interviewing officer classified me as "unskilled" and assigned me to a line company along with semi-skilled, semi-literate dogfaces.

Three months later, while walking down the Army Base street while singing a Costa Rican song, a sergeant ahead of me suddenly turned around. "Max," Sgt Peterman shouted. "I haven't seen you since we left Costa Rica six months ago. What unit are you in?"



Max Schwartz displays cover of his book: *Genie Du Monde: Military Engineers of the World*

"I'm in the 1306 Engineers, C Company, Third Platoon," I muttered, sadly. "Hey, I'm in the 1306, too," Pete added as we separated, "I'm in Operation Section." I sadly continued to my barracks, thinking of my bad luck.

A month later, while in England preparing for the Normandy Invasion, my Company Commander suddenly called me. "Schwartz, you're being transferred to Operations. Someone there, asked for you. Can you believe, I thought, this lucky break happened because I sang a Costa Rican song.

It was 1944 in France, while on an engineering reconnaissance assignment, I said, "Rex, can you stop the jeep. I got to take a leak." He stopped and I slid off the seat and climbed down a nearby ditch. As I stood there relieving myself in the weeds, I spotted small wooden boxes on both sides. That's strange, I thought. That doesn't look right. Then it struck me. Oh my God, they're German Schoe mines!. I was trained to recognize this type of anti-personnel mine in England . I froze. My bladder shut off. I gingerly climbed backwards out of the ditch, and returned to the jeep. "Feel any better?" asked Rex. "Yeah," I gasped, "Let's get the hell out of here." To this day, I remember that lucky break every time I urinate on the ground.



Our Poets Applaud the Beauty of Spring

March Morning

In the morning on the second of March
trees think a zephyr breeze has come to play,
but soon decide this wind is serious.

It rumbles down the chimney,
whistles 'round corners, shakes the house,
makes the hummingbird feeder gyrate and sway,

slams the unlatched side-yard gate,
snatches lemons off the tree,
throws them to the ground with stuttering thuds,
blows buckets and garbage cans into the street.

Trees flail their arms to ward off the attacker,
some with damaged head or splintered fingers
hurl leaves and twigs all around.

If the old saying is true,
March comes in like a lion, goes out like a lamb,
I can't wait for the wooly sheep to saunter in
on silent feet.

Lenora Smalley



WINTER SUNSET

the sky sprinkled
with white fluffy clouds
the sun dipping towards the horizon
leaving a path
of variegated colors...
red , orange
and a touch of yellow
reflected through
a fading sun...
magically the eternal
sun sets
only to rise again
to illuminate
the dawn

Helen Katzman



Cloud Paintings

Cloud shadows
cooling mountain slopes
in August.

Clouds piled like snow
covering aspens
on the Rockies' rim.

Rain air redolent
with damp earth smells
and the balm of moisture
lingering in heat

Nimbus clouds,
gray parachutes drifting
down over the Springs
and slowly lifted
by wind currents.

Cumulus clouds billowing
into a zoo of shapes,
constantly transforming
the sky's landscape.

Sun burning
through gray masses,
smoke radiating
into an endless sky,
smudging its perfection.

Blue paint, white paint , gray paint,
great blobs,
trails of feather wisps,
brush strokes in arcs,
one upon the other.

Lillian Rodich



I'M A LUCKY ME

I smile for awhile.

I hum for awhile.

That's part of my life style.

Then I walk around feeling

"Lucky me. I'm a lucky me."

I am pleased.

I am blessed.

**I'm staying in touch
with the peace within me.**

"Lucky me. I'm a lucky me."

Norman Molesko





Getting to know Geri Jabara, a true Gemini.

Geri Jabara hails from New England, the only girl in a family of three brothers. At around ten years old she started keeping a makeshift diary, writing on the backs of her father's old check stubs. It was one way to keep her writing secret from her snoopy brothers. Later she moved to Los Angeles and soon became a wife and mother.

The publisher of a weekly newspaper in the airport area provided the first opportunity to do some creative writing - a social column with a byline. It was all about people, their children, little league sports and sprinkled with humor.

Next came writing an employee newsletter for a division of the nation's 3rd largest electronic distributor. That was a challenge. It involved monthly visits to interview the company president to find out what was new, explain workers' benefits, highlight an outstanding individual and finish up with a newsy section about various employees. That job included covering a weekend conference for everyone in Palm Springs. This meant taking all the photos and, making sure the dialogue was censored before being put into print - the hardest part.

Geri is a true Gemini and enjoys writing in two styles - fiction and non-fiction. Currently an active member of one of the CWC/WV critique groups that meets on Saturday mornings, Geri's work usually includes essays and short stories.

Her business writing takes place at Pepperdine University where she communicates daily with international students and partner universities around the world.

Oh, yes. She's 100% Italian, loves to dance and eat spaghetti and meatballs and New England fried clams - the latter is an obsession. She practically danced into our CWC/WV because she lives in the neighborhood and we hope she's here to stay awhile.

Lillian's life: Interlaced with family, friends and hobbies

Lillian Dorothy Rodich was born in Detroit Michigan on January 7, 1928 to William Isenberg and Ida Isenberg and was the second of two children. When Lillian was two, she moved to California with her parents and her older brother Lionel. At the age of ten, Lillian discovered the arts of ballet and writing, passions she would return to later in life. After Lillian graduated from high school at the age of seventeen, she attended UCLA and received her BS in Psychology at the age of 20. After doing some graduate work at UC Berkeley from 1949 to 1950, Lillian studied at California State University, Northridge where she attained her teaching credential.

In 1951, Lillian married Seymour Rodich and started her family. Lillian and Seymour had three children: David, now 56, Carol, now 54, and Gail, now 51. After her children were older, Lillian taught at Morningside Elementary for twenty six years before retiring in 1993. After Lillian retired, she rediscovered her love of writing when she joined a story writing class. Since then, Lillian has written family history books and several books of poetry.

When asked what her claim to fame is, Lillian replied, "My claim to fame is something published in Seventeen [magazine] when I was very young." Lillian has also been published in several other publications over the years. Lillian believes her greatest accomplishment to date is her "family, with whom I am blessed." Teaching and dance, however, have never left Lillian's blood. Lillian continues to explore her creative writing and familial roots while teaching a creative writing group, crafts and Scottish Set dancing. Lillian is also the CWC West Valley historian and critique group coordinator. Aside from teaching, her love of crafts, jewelry making and folk dancing, Lillian spends her time with her loving family and close friends.

- Samantha Berley



Editor's note: Writers often take "short cuts" and TELL the details, rather than SHOW the verbal picture using apt modifiers. Dave Wetterberg advises his writing classes and our CWC members to SHOW not simply TELL the reader. In the following example Dave shows what he's been trying to tell us. Read both versions: TELL and SHOW.

Which piece gives the most complete mental image of the scene and characters?

TELLING IT

She was a pretty little teenage girl: a loner, quiet, well-behaved, polite when called on. During a discussion the teacher could hardly hear her if he called on her to recite in class.. He had a tendency to overlook her in two ways, one because she sat in the second seat in the second row and his eyes went over her head like a bridge; and two because she kept herself hidden by means of her unobtrusiveness among her more energetic classmates who twisted and shuffled papers at every insignificant turn in the class activities. Never would she raise her hand in response to one of the teachers Socratic questions. This would call too much attention to her. But she was smart and attentive. And she wore braces on her teeth.

SHOWING IT

Tell/Show Details

Name Valerie

Pretty soft skin, green eyes, flesh tone-red lipstick

Little thin, not too thin;

Teenage jeans that fit right

Loner contrasts with other girls

Quiet, looked down most of the time, metal braces, never volunteers

Well-behaved prompt, never a whisper to a classmate

Polite could hear a slight "thank you" when etc.

Soft-spoken Could hardly hear when she spoke etc



Always on time, Valerie walked in the classroom door like a quiet lady, settled in her seat and sat unobtrusively for the remainder of the period. When Mr. Overton passed homework papers back, she said, or rather whispered, a soft "thank you." Her friend Ida sat beside her, but Valerie never acknowledged Ida once class began. If Ida whispered to her, Valerie waved her away with a frown. Valerie never raised her hand in class in response to the back-and-forth discussions the teacher liked each day. But neither did anyone else.

"Class, what does Frost seem to be saying about barriers between people in this poem? Come on, class. Someone must have an idea. How about you, Alex? ...Jeannie?" The two often replied with shrugs and giggles. But when, in spite of her unraised hand, he pointed to Valerie, which was unusual because she sat "up front" and he had a tendency to look over her head like a bridge, he always received an intelligent, attentive response. Valerie? How about you? What? Speak up a little Valerie? That's right. That's good, Valerie. Right on."

She wore Abercrombie and Fitch jeans each day like the other girls, but she wore them in good taste, not "shoehorned" into them like Isabelle Drummy or Connie Martinez, two of the loud cheerleader types at the back of the room who practically sat in the lap of Oscar Winnington, the all-city running back for the football team.

Valerie's eyes were light-green, and shined like crystal when she looked up, but mostly they looked down at her book or down on her homework paper or just down at her empty desk top. Her skin was soft and white, her lips thin and lipsticked slightly redder than flesh tone. Valerie didn't smile much, but on a rare occasion when she did, she covered her mouth with a hand so her teeth didn't show the metal braces that covered them.

Andy was enthralled.



Six tall sleek horses paced nervously at the starting gate. An alarm shrilled, and then they were off. Joey hung his elbows over the railing, new ticket clutched in one sweaty hand. Angel Made galloped by, third from the lead.

"C'mon Angel Made!" Joey's yell was lost in a cacophony of shrieks and cheers. When the horses turned the first far corner of the oval, heads swiveled left and all stared fixedly at the giant images on the HDTV screen.

"Just one time, Lord, a win," Joey prayed. Angel Made took the lead briefly, teased his hopes, and then tired at five furlongs. The crowd's eyes moved from the projection to the live action coming down the track. The uproar grew. Angel Made faded back to fifth as the winners pounded toward the finish line.

"Blasted nag!"

Joey's torn ticket stub fluttered to the ground as he walked slowly back to Miranda on the outdoor terrace. He stared wordlessly over her head at the glittering ocean waves on the horizon, and tracked the progress of a small sailboat tacking against the wind. His wife gave him a wan smile and put down her glass of Chardonnay.

"Lost again? That makes two hundred you've dropped this afternoon. Not your lucky day, sweetheart."

She leaned back in her chair and lifted her face to the warm July sunshine of Del Mar, and her smile widened. She loved Bing Crosby's track. Where the turf meets the surf, she thought, and where the clueless go home cashless.

A recorded bugle sounded as the next group of horses and seated jockeys paraded into the lower paddock. Joey straightened, grabbed his program and rushed between the small tables. He joined an excited crowd of brightly garbed patrons who leaned over the balcony. All peered down at the circling fifth race contenders, and jotted quick notes on their programs.

Joey returned with a flushed face and new favorite.

"One horse has a white star on its forehead. It's a sign. I'm putting ten on Tyrana to win in the fifth. Odds four-to-one." Joey grabbed his program and ran back through the bar toward the track.

Miranda dialed Jessica on her cell phone, "Greetings partner. Of course he hasn't won. Joey believes in hunches. Still got the live connection with Del Mar TVG on your lap top? Our research suggested a Place bet in the fifth race. Ready? Make our bet. Super. So far we've made \$5,000. We'll give our hubbies a surprise trip to Tahiti this winter. Post time, bye."

Miranda watched the TV screen over the bar. A moist breeze blew in from the Pacific and rustled cocktail napkins on the small tables.

The fifth race lined up at the starting gate. Joey held tightly to his Tyrana ticket.

They were off.



"Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted but getting what you have, which once you have got it you may be smart enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known."

- Garrison Keillor

CWC Celebrates Centennial at the Los Angeles Festival of Books



From the CWC: State Board

What better way celebrate your 100th birthday than a book bash with 140,000 guests? It takes place April 25 and 26 at the nation's largest book event, the 14th annual Los Angeles Times Festival of Books at UCLA.

This year our exhibit booth will feature the new California Writers Club centennial logo, along with promotion of California Writers Week, a map of branch locations, display of our educational mission, a montage display of our members' book covers, and more.

The cover display promises to exceed last year's record of 200-plus covers representing all 17 California Writers Clubs.

Once again, book covers from all branches are welcome. If you submitted a cover in previous years then you need not send a duplicate as the display is cumulative. Here are the guidelines: Send a cover of your book or books (two maximum), or a glossy photocopy of the front cover (same size as the original, not an enlargement), and send packed flat (not rolled) to Allene Symons, 2373 N. Flower St., Santa Ana, CA 92706. Be sure it arrives by April 10. In an accompanying note, indicate the name of your branch. These covers will not be returned. If you have questions, send to asymons@earthlink.net and mention CWC in the e-mail subject line. Sorry, but we cannot accept cover graphics in a digital format.

Our booth, number 619, is located in a prime location with good foot traffic near UCLA's shady Dickson Plaza with its venerable trees, some as old as CWC. Members who plan to attend are urged to volunteer for a two-hour shift at our booth, where we will distribute a brochure listing all CWC branches with contact information. You will meet other CWC members, interact with the public, and be amazed at how quickly time flies. To volunteer please contact Cyndy Largenticha at cyndycat1234@aol.com

The Festival--with more than 450 authors, 100 panels, 300 exhibitors, six outdoor stages and two children's areas--takes place on Saturday from 10 to 6 and Sunday from 10 to 5. The event is free though parking is \$9 per day. Author events are free but require advance ticketing except for outdoor venues. Tickets become available at noon on Sunday, April 19, at both Ticketmaster outlets and Ticketmaster.com at \$0.75 fee per ticket.

For further information, including driving directions, map, ticketing and program updates, see www.latimes.com/festivalofbooks.

Since the goal is to promote California Writers Club at this world-class venue, we will distribute the brochure with contact information for all branches, including websites and meeting locales. Our limited space does not allow displays from individual branches, and we do not sell books at the festival nor promote the work or services of individual members apart from the combined book cover display.

Last year, when Festival weekend turned out to be unusually warm, we were lucky to have a booth in one of the coolest spots on the UCLA campus. We anticipate another lucky year in every way, especially with our message of 100 years of California Writers Club history. So if you love books (and who among us doesn't?), the Festival of Books is book central, and an excellent way to celebrate our centennial.



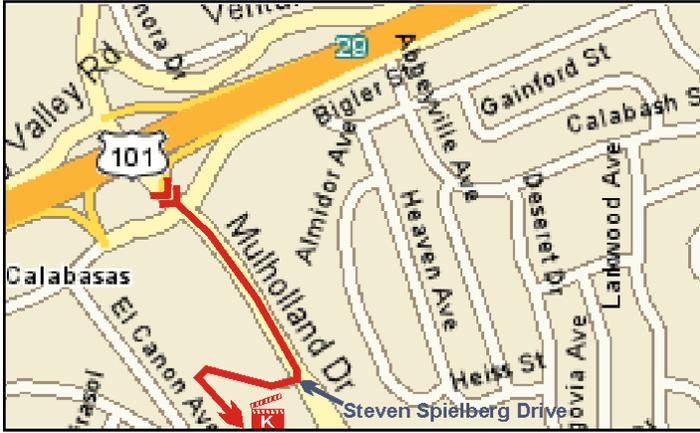
Scrabble Stumpers and Crossword Puzzle Components

trochee (n.) "a foot of two syllables, a long followed by a short in quantitative meter, or a stressed followed by an unstressed in accentual meter."

pyrrhic (adj. /n.) "-adj. 1. consisting of two short or unaccented syllables. 2. composed of or pertaining to pyrrhic's. -n. 3. Also called **dibrach**. a pyrrhic foot."

propitious (adj.) "1. presenting favorable conditions; favorable; *propitious weather*. 2. indicative of favor; auspicious: *propitious omens*. 3. favorably inclined; disposed to bestow favors or forgive: *propitio*

- researched and contributed by Samantha Berley



From the 101 Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive. Travel south on Mulholland and turn right at Steven Spielberg Drive. Then turn left and follow the route to the large parking lot on the left for Villa Katzenberg. If you are stopped by the MPTF Security, tell the official that you are attending a CWC meeting.

MEETINGS

The California Writers Club meets the first Saturday of the month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

Villa Katzenberg
23388 Mulholland

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, March 7th, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

MAILING ADDRESS

c/o Dave Wetterberg, 23809 Friar Street
Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

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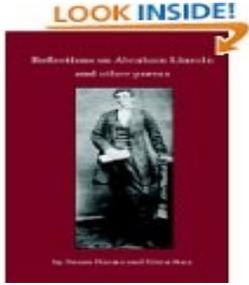
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Samantha Berley and Geri Jabara

AnthologyLillian Rodich,
Helen Katzman, William E. Hitchins,
Leslie Kaplan

Submission Guidelines for InFocus

1. Submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.
2. Keep prose short, between 200 and 300 words. Contact editor if work is longer.
3. Poems also should be short, approximately three to four stanzas.
4. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any work submitted. Space might be limited and the omission based on editing difficulties.
5. Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.

TO BE NOTED: A MEMBER'S PUBLICATIONS



Erica Stux informs us:

An article of mine titled "A Festival of Trees" is online at www.readthespirit.com/explore. There's also a plug for my book of humor "Who, Me? Paranoid?"

To commemorate the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, a friend and I have co-authored a book of poetry titled "Reflections on Abraham Lincoln". Besides the title poem and a long one on Mrs. Lincoln, poems in the collection deal with impressions gained during travels, and observations of the natural world. The 50-page book is available from Amazon.com for \$9.95

Surf the Net and check out the latest publications from Erica Stux. InFocus Editor

APRIL APPROACHES — LET'S BE LIGHTHEARTED!

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything." William Shakespeare

It's been a tough year for Americans in many ways—a hard fought election, the shocks to finance and the national economy, calls for reform and renewal in every corner of the nation. That's the all too real world.

Let's take a recess from reality and have some fun in the next issue of InFocus. Please submit some light-hearted anecdotes, humorous verse and limericks and tales of amusing irony and experiences. Or perhaps, since the beautiful California spring has almost sprung, send some pleasant thoughts about the gentle season. (Some material previously submitted will be evaluated for the issue.)



I'll be waiting to read your spring submissions. Cheers, Kathy Highcove, InFocus Editor



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Woodland Hills, CA 91367