



# The Valley Scribe

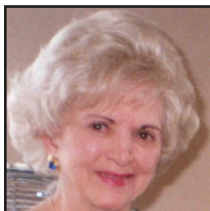
The Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch

Vol. 1

August 2009

No. 2

**NEXT meeting: August 15. September Meeting: September 26!**



## President's Message Ethel Ann Pemberton

*This summer I enjoyed a staycation (stay-at-home vacation), in case you didn't know that term, and I reflected on new words that were added in the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Wow! Over 100 new words indicate the changing trends in American society. John Morse, president and publisher of the Springfield-based dictionary publisher, said many of this year's new words are tied to changes in technology, increasing environmental awareness and aging baby boomers' concerns about their health and have thus become part of the general lexicon.*

*A new word that fascinated me is frenemy (someone who acts like a friend but is really an enemy). I watched vlogs (blogs that contain video material) and webisodes (TV shows that can be viewed at Websites). I also ordered in, read a lot, wrote a little, and took my cat for walks.*

*Although the term "sock puppet" has been around a while, I never heard of it until it tried to trick me into opening an attachment from a so-called friend. Then I found out exactly what sock puppet means (a false online identity used for deceptive purposes, made more popular recently with users using fake IDs on social networking sites).*

*After my relaxing staycation, I can honestly say:*

**WRITERS BEWARE, AND HONE UP ON YOUR ENGLISH,  
21ST CENTURY!**

## TWO STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL PUBLISHING

Patricia Fry

Saturday, August 15, 2009 2 p.m.

There's excitement in the air about our August 15th presenter, Patricia Fry. Her topic, "Two Steps to Successful Publishing," is one you won't want to miss! Patricia is a freelance writer, author, and editorial consultant. This talented author of 29 books is now busy working on number 30.

Her hallmark book is *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*. Another popular book she penned is *The Author's Repair Kit*. Her newest book, *Catscapades, Tales of Ordinary and Extraordinary Cats*, along with others, will be available for purchase at our August meeting.

Patricia is the new Executive Director of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network), a 13-year-old networking organization for anyone interested in publishing. She's been writing for publication for over 35 years, having supported herself by writing magazine articles. I don't know about you, but how many writers do you know of who can make that statement?

**COME, LISTEN, AND LEARN!  
BRING A GUEST!**

**OPEN MIKE WILL RETURN  
SEPTEMBER 26TH — 12:30**

(Please note date change to 4th Saturday for Sept. only.)

The first 6 members to sign up will be given 5 minutes of FAME.

If you read at the July meeting, you cannot read in September, unless there is available time and space.

Bring 2 copies of your material so the hearing-challenged may also enjoy your reading.

## MEMBER SHOWCASE AT 12:30 P.M. ON AUGUST 15th

**Featuring Betty Hechtman**

Come to hear Betty, who has a 6-book contract with Berkley Prime Crime, describe her writing journey. In addition to her books, Betty has had short stories published in *Woman's World* and other magazines of note.

One of the purposes of our branch is to support and applaud its members.

THE NEXT SUCCESS STORY JUST MAY BE YOURS!!!

## July in Review:

### Do It Smart with Thomas B. Sawyer

by Douglas William Douglas

I hate you! -- Good. I love you! -- Not so good. Conflict, not agreement, is key to entertaining your readers and the impetus to keep them turning the pages. Our July meeting's speaker, Tom Sawyer, illustrated this by quoting Hitchcock: “Drama is real life with the dull parts left out.” People may say they want to avoid conflict, but it's the characters who argue and who struggle to surmount obstacles that grab us.

So how do you, the writer, tap into this well-spring of inspiration? Get in touch with your emotions, “find the edges,” and don't feed them driver's license info. “After all, we all swallow stuff about our friends -- show these!” Make them unique; reveal their *bête noire* and the audience will stick with you like lint to Velcro.

Tom pointed out that there are no new plots. Writers must find a target market then tweak the project to make it special. Write a log line to capture your story's essence and it will give you a solid grasp on your concept.

Motivation can be a problem for some of us. To this, Tom says, “You can do it! Just do it smart.” And don't hesitate to market yourself. Network at conferences, start a website, “Grab people by the collar and say, ‘I wrote this great book!’” He calls it B.S.P., Blatant Self-Promotion.

Scoff ye not, for Mr. Sawyer knows of what he speaks: Head Writer/Showrunner of TV's *Murder, She Wrote*, Tom has written over 100 other TV episodes and pilots, a website and manuals on the craft of writing, an opera libretto, and two novels, the latest of which, *No Place to Run*, was just published by Sterling and Ross. He is also in demand as a conference speaker, and teaches online at Writers University.

## KUDOS COLUMN

by Erica Stux

*(If any member has good news to share, such as getting an agent, selling a book, script, essay, or even getting a personalized rejection letter, contact me at: ericastux@aol.com. We are interested in everyone's successes.)*

Since its publication in 2001, Yolanda Fintor's book *Hungarian Cookbook, Old World Recipes for New World Cooks* has been selling so consistently that the publisher asked Yolanda to write two more categories of recipes, and issued an expanded version of the hardcover book in 2003. Ongoing sales warranted a 2009 publication in paperback form. Hippocrene Books Inc. originally planned to do the book via a print-on-demand option, but the volume of pre-sale orders were high enough to do a short print run with a regular printer. The book is available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Occasionally, someone is foolish enough to ask me, “What advice do you have for writers?”

I usually answer, “Always tell the truth, and always write as if your reader were someone you wanted to seduce.”

Since I know you're more interested in the second part, we'll leave that for next month, and deal with “Always tell the truth.”

What does that mean? Well, for nonfiction writers, it's fairly simple. Check and verify! Get your facts straight! Research! Take notes! Do your homework!

But in the context of fiction, what is “TRUTH”?

Well, first, your work must be believable — no matter how fanciful, it must have an internal logic that can't be violated. It must be reasonable\* (One of “those words.”) If there's a reason people can levitate, fine — as long as we know, and accept, the reason.

Bear in mind here that your potential audience is diversified. It has different levels of acceptance. For example, the general public loves the show, “House.” The broad exception is physicians — who tend to resent the utter medical nonsense on which the plot often hangs. So be it! It hasn't hurt the ratings; most people don't know the difference. And you can still delight in the characters.

Which brings us to a more important point: What you write MUST reflect human behavior, and nature, as we understand it. No piece of writing is going to be moving or effective, if the people don't act like people. Heroes can be good but we need to know why they're good. Villains may be bad, but what warped them? Characters' actions must stem from believable motivations.

At the same time, characters and events must be interesting. Most of us have a limited interest in people just like us, doing what we do, the way we do it, for the same reasons we do it. (Yeah, there are exceptions. They are called “Narcissists.”) This means one (or more) of those things must be different. That's why it's called “fiction.”

As writers, our understanding of the “Human Condition” needs to be as deep and complex as possible. The exploration of it must be endless — one insight leading to another in an infinite chain.

How do we accomplish this? Imagination, of course. But a vivid imagination is not enough. Imagination must be exercised — given tools.

To be a good writer, is to learn as much as possible about human behavior and motivation. Constantly observe people! Ask yourself *why* they do the things they do!

Read as much as you can! Learn what other writers can tell you about people! And read the good stuff!

Probably most important, keep examining yourself! Peer deeply into the person you are. Do not be afraid. The odds that God put the Universe's center of either good or evil inside you are miniscule. Try to understand yourself fully. We are all complex cocktails of good and bad. Accept and savor every flavor you find — then dump it onto some character you create.

OK. Nuf said. Next time, that “seduction” thing.

\* I invite you to muse on these words. Lots of meanings.

## It Could Be Verse

### **Midnight Visitors**

by Cara Alson

*I never worried about dust  
bunnies before that June,  
when I discovered the power  
of a savage summer moon.*

*The moon was full and gold  
that sultry, magical night.  
My bedroom shade let in  
a single shaft of light.*

*The light tiptoed across the floor  
slipping under my bed.  
As it sought its tender prey  
I felt a shiver of dread.*

*Cautiously I followed the beam  
to an innocent bit of fluff.  
I stroked a floppy ear -  
it seemed a harmless puff.*

*Then I felt a sudden movement,  
a razor-sharp tooth drew blood.  
I jerked my hand from danger,  
spilling a dark red flood.*

*So watch out for dust bunnies,  
you'll regret getting close -  
they seem sweet and cute  
but that's an innocent pose.*

### **?WHAT IS IT?**

It's free, but it's priceless.  
You can't own it, but you can use it.  
You can't keep it, but you can spend it.  
Once you've lost it, you can never get it  
back.

WHAT IS IT?

Time.

### **Graffiti on the Toilet**

by Cara Alson

Who had so much free time  
she carved her love's initials  
on the welcoming  
horseshoe seat?

Was the door full up —  
or were the initials  
of a former amour  
already posted  
with her sacred vow  
of eternal devotion?

Does she think it romantic  
to etch her love's ID where an  
unending parade of bottoms  
will rest if, only for a brief  
moment in time?

Fleshy, skinny, wrinkled,  
sagging, freckled and firm  
these are the behinds  
that move through the  
sterile-white doors.

I hesitate. I hover.  
The other stalls are in use.  
Will "E.L." feel some pressure  
from the ether as I sit my own  
gluteus-quite-maximus  
gently over his initials?

Forgive me, "E.L."  
"T.F." you should be ashamed.

### **Regret**

Ray Malus

*Within the furtive corners of the night,  
The phosphorescence of what might have been  
Illuminates the past with icy light,  
Delineating what was once unseen.*

*My soul is scathed by promises un-guessed,  
And opportunities serenely shunned.  
I wrest from restless hours, restive rest,  
With woe for lovers wooed, but never one'd.*

*I cringe in shame for shameful things I've said,  
And crimson blush for countless past mistakes,  
I grieve the hungers that I might have fed,  
And lie in mourning 'till the morning breaks.*

*Then rise to light, my shroud of sorrow shorn,  
With hope that, like the new day, is new born.*

## Jest Desserts

### *Collection of Actual Analogies and Metaphors collected by English Teachers across the USA*

Found in high school essays:

1. From the attic came an unearthly howl. The whole scene had an eerie, surreal quality, like when you're on vacation in another city and Jeopardy comes on at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m.
2. Her hair glistened in the rain like a nose hair after a sneeze.
3. The hailstones leaped from the pavement, just like maggots when you fry them in hot grease.
4. Long separated by cruel fate, the star-crossed lovers raced across the grassy field toward each other like two freight trains, one having left Cleveland at 6:36 p.m. traveling at 55 mph, the other from Topeka at 4:10 p.m. at a speed of 35 mph.
5. They lived in a typical suburban neighborhood with picket fences that resembled Nancy Kerrigan's teeth.
6. John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met.
7. He fell for her like his heart was a mob informant, and she was the East River.
8. Even in his last years, Granddad had a mind like a steel trap, only one that had been left out so long, it had rusted shut.

A retired man who volunteered to entertain patients went to a local hospital, taking a book of essays he'd written with him. When he finished reading several to the older gentleman, he said, "I hope you get better."

The elderly gentleman replied, "I hope *you* get better."

### TO MARKET, TO MARKET

by Ken Watts

I've been given the honor of writing this column for two months. It's my hope that we will all benefit from these sources. I will try to list sources that pay before and/or after publication. Hopefully, we will be able to make enough money to pay for paper and postage.

**Martin Literary Management** is looking for nonfiction books. They accept children's books, fiction, screenplays, or poetry. Submissions: Query via email with MS Word only. No attachments on queries; place letter in body of email. Responds in 1 week to queries. Responds in 3-4 weeks to manuscripts. Returns materials only with SASE. Charges author for postage and copying if not sent electronically. Contact: Sharlene Martin at: sharlene@martinliterarymanagement.com Web site: www.MartinLiteraryManagement.com Office: 17328 Ventura Blvd., Suite 138, Encino, CA 91316

**B.J. Robbins Literary Agency.** Ms. B. J. Robbins represents nonfiction books, novels, and fiction in: detective, ethnic, literary, mainstream, mystery, sports, and thriller. Submissions: Query with SASE. Submit outline/proposal, and 3 sample chapters with SASE. Ms. Robbins accepts email queries (no attachments). Responds in 2-6 weeks to queries. Responds in 6-8 weeks to manuscripts. Charges author for postage and photocopying (only after sale of manuscript). E-mail: robbinsliterary@aol.com Office: 5130 Bellaire Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91607-2908

**Commentary** is a monthly magazine. Publishes manuscripts an average of 2 months after acceptance. Buys all rights. Queries accepted by mail. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by SASE. (continued on page 7)

### CONTEST CORNER GHOST STORIES WANTED ARE YOU UP TO THIS GHOULISH CHALLENGE?

Through Gretchen and Roxanne Rix, contest coordinators, The Friends of the Dr. Eugene Clark Library in Lockhart, Texas, invite you to SCARE THE DICKENS OUT OF THEM with its 2009 ghost story contest fundraiser. They want ghost stories featuring a character from a Charles Dickens novel or story set in December around a December holiday; 4,000 words or less. All publication rights remain with the author. Contest is open to published and unpublished writers alike. All genres accepted so long as they follow the above guidelines.

Entry fee is \$20.00.

Three prizes will be awarded:

**First prize \$500.00 and a trophy.**

**Second prize \$250.00.**

**Third prize \$150.00.**

Deadline: October 1, 2009.

The ghost story contest is in conjunction with the annual "A Dickens Christmas in Lockhart" which is held the first weekend in December in Lockhart, TX. Complete rules are at [www.clarklibraryfriends.org](http://www.clarklibraryfriends.org)



# The Bulletin Board

**MEETINGS ...**  
**WILL BE HELD AT 12:30 P.M. ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH EXCEPT FOR SEPTEMBER (WHICH WILL BE HELD ON THE 4TH SATURDAY)**  
**AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE FIELDS EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**Hannibal Hall**  
**7136 Winnetka Avenue, Winnetka – South of Sherman Way**  
**(Directions & Map on last page)**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**  
**August 15, 2009**  
**September 26, 2009**  
**(This meeting date has been changed because Rosh Hashanah falls on the 3rd Saturday of Sept.)**  
**October 17, 2009**  
**Speakers and other meetings TBA in future newsletters.**

**REMINDER: MEMBERSHIP DUES**  
**AFTER SEPTEMBER 30, 2009 DUES ARE DELINQUENT, AND THE NEW FEE WILL BE \$65.**  
**Save yourself some money and send in your check and application NOW.**  
**(See address on pg.6)**

For further information check out our website: [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org)

## HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

If you are a member and want to get published, submit your prose and poetry to [humorist@verizon.net](mailto:humorist@verizon.net) type "Submissions" in the subject line. If forwarding by regular mail, send to Lenora Smalley 6545 Franrivers Ave. West Hills, CA 91307-2814.

- Guidelines**
- 400 words or less
  - 800 words or less
  - Limited to 30 lines

Articles/Essays  
 Short Stories  
 Poetry  
 Submit your writings within ten days after the monthly open Meetings. The Editor (or President) has license to accept or reject any work submitted based on available space or editing problems.  
 All submissions must include an email address or a phone number.  
 Writings will not be returned and may be included in future issues.

## NEWSLETTER MAILINGS

Members will receive copies of the Newsletter via email. Those members not having email will receive printed copies by U.S. postal service. Cara Alson 818/764-0807 is the contact for sending USPS copies. Courtesy copies will be mailed to potential members for three months. If you like the Newsletter, the speakers, and what our branch has to offer, don't waste another minute. **JOIN!**



Membership Application

**CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB-SFV**

Membership Term

The current membership year is July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

Fees

**\$45 Renewing Members**

**\$65 New Members**

*(The extra \$20 is a one-time processing fee)*

**\$20 Dual Membership** dues, if joining another branch of the California Writers Club, such as West Valley, Long Beach, etc.

*(Payable to the second branch — in addition to the \$45 dues paid to the primary Branch.)*

**\$475 Lifetime Membership** dues for this Centennial Year only. *(Normally \$675)*

Make your checks payable to “California Writers Club-SFV”

Return checks and applications to:

California Writers Club-SFV  
 c/o Lenora Smalley  
 6545 Franrivers Avenue  
 West Hills, CA 91307

Your Contact Info

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list areas of interest, such as fiction/nonfiction/novel/short story/articles

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS**  
**7136 WINNETKA AVE**  
**CANOGA PARK, CA 91306**

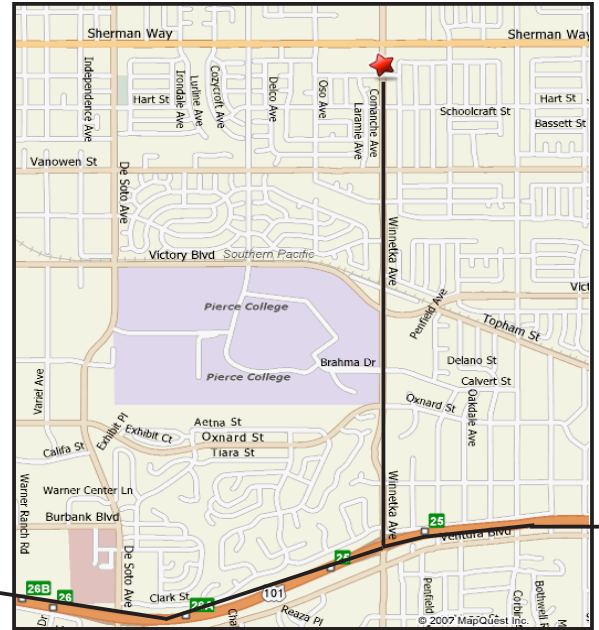
From San Fernando Valley

Take 101 Fwy to Valley. Exit Winnetka. Go North (From Hollywood, turn Right. From Ventura, turn left) past Vanowen (almost to Sherman Way). Church is on East side (Right side) 1 Bl. before Sherman Way.

From Simi

Take 118 Fwy to Valley. Exit DeSoto. Go South to Sherman Way. Turn East to Winnetka. Turn South 1. block. Church is on East side (left side) 1 Bl. after Sherman Way.

Walk into the campus. Hannibal Hall is at North end.



(To Market - cont'd from pg. 4)

They need nonfiction essays, and opinion pieces. Buys 4 manuscripts/year. Length: 2,000-8,000 words. Pays: \$400-1,200. Web site: [www.commentarymagazine.com](http://www.commentarymagazine.com) Office: 165 E. 56th Street, New York, NY 10022

**The Sun**, a monthly magazine, is 90% freelance written. It is open to all kinds of writing, though they favor work of a personal nature. It pays \$300-3,000 for 7,000 (max) word nonfiction manuscript. Pays \$300-2,000 for fiction and \$100-500 for poetry (free verse, 6 poems max, no rhyme). No queries, except for interviews. Mail: The Sun Publishing Co., 107 N. Robertson St., Chapel Hill, NC 27516. Web site: [www.thesunmagazine.org](http://www.thesunmagazine.org)

**Kaleidoscope** is looking for nonfiction articles related to disability. Needs book excerpts, essays, humor, interview, personal experience, book reviews. Contact: Mildred Shiplett at [mshiplett@udsakron.org](mailto:mshiplett@udsakron.org) Mail: 701 S. Main St., Akron, OH 44311-1019. Web site: [www.udsakron.org/kaleidoscope.htm](http://www.udsakron.org/kaleidoscope.htm) They are eager to work with new/unpublished writers.

**Parade** is a weekly magazine for a general interest audience. It's 95% freelance written. Pays very competitive amount. Writers with specific expertise in the proposed topic increase their chances of breaking in. Send a well-researched, well-written 1-page proposal and enclose SASE. Don't submit completed manuscripts. Mail: 711 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017-4014. Website: [www.parade.com](http://www.parade.com)

**Chicken Soup For The Soul** is 95% freelance written. They buy 1,000 manuscripts/year, 300-1,200 words. Pays \$200. Send complete manuscript. Query by mail, email, or fax. Guidelines available online. Has 8-12 publications/year featuring inspirational, heartwarming, uplifting short stories. Mail: P.O. Box 30880, Santa Barbara, CA 93130. Web site: [www.chickensoup.com](http://www.chickensoup.com) E-mail: [webmaster@chickensoupforthesoul.com](mailto:webmaster@chickensoupforthesoul.com)

**Senior Living** is 100% freelance written. It covers active

50+ living. Queries accepted by email. A sample copy is available online. Guidelines available. They buy 150 manuscripts/year. Length: 500-1,200 words. Pays \$35-150 for assigned articles and unsolicited articles. Mail: 153, 1581-H Hillside Ave. Victoria, BC V8T 2C1 Canada. E-mail: [office@seniorlivingmag.com](mailto:office@seniorlivingmag.com) Web site: [www.seniorlivingmag.com](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com)

Something To Ponder: "Imagination is more important than knowledge." - Albert Einstein

**California Writers Club**  
**San Fernando Valley Branch**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD & BOARD MEMBERS**

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The Valley Scribe  
 The Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley  
 Branch of the California Writers Club

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