



The Newsletter Of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe

Vol. 2

January 2010

No. 5

Next Meeting January 16, 12:30!



SPEAKER: DAN POYNTER

**SELF-PUBLISHING GURU & CERTIFIED
SPEAKING PROFESSIONAL
WILL PRESENT A 2-HOUR SEMINAR
BEGINNING PROMPTLY AT 1:00 p.m.**

DAN POYNTER is an author of 120+ books;

he's been a publisher since 1969; he's a certified speaking professional; he's an evangelist for books, an advocate for publishers, and the godfather to thousands of successfully-published books. His seminars have been featured on CNN, his books have been pictured in *The Wall Street Journal*, and his story has been told in *US News & World Report*.

The first hour of Poynter's presentation will be devoted to Introverts and Book Promotion. He will share a number of effective, proven ways to publicize books without going out in public. You will feel a kinship when Poynter reveals that he's an introvert. When he speaks about book promotion for introverts, he's an expert.

The second hour of Poynter's presentation will discuss Opportunities in Publishing—Past, Present, and Future. Where is book publishing going and how did we get here? The large publishers are downsizing, the brick and mortar stores are closing, and readers are embracing eBooks. These and other changes are affecting literary agents, wholesalers, distributors, reviewers, printers, truckers and everyone in the book trade. The winners will be the authors and smaller publishers.

Our San Fernando Valley Branch is indeed fortunate to have Dan Poynter share his knowledge of writing, publishing, marketing, promoting, and his overall professional skills as a leading authority on book publishing. His mission is to see that people do not die with a book still inside them.

You won't want to miss learning from this guru of publishing who has strategically used his books to build a publishing empire and make him a sought-after speaker!

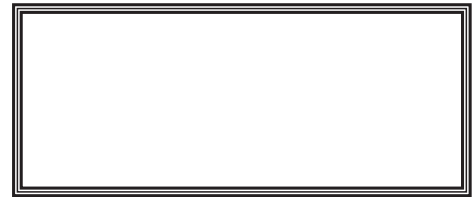
**BRING PEN AND NOTE PAD WITH YOU
AND PLEASE BE PROMPT!**

(Poynter's books will be sold after the presentation.)

— Ethel Ann Pemberton

IMPORTANT!

**OUR SHORT BUSINESS
MEETING WILL BEGIN
PROMPTLY AT 12:30 P.M.
ON JANUARY 16, 2010
FOLLOWED BY OUR
SPEAKER**



In this Issue

Feature

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ADULT

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December Meeting-in-Review:

by Darina Watts

The December meeting was held under the snowflakes on the 19th. The festive atmosphere was enhanced by the smell of the “goodies” waiting for us.

Our Member Showcase Speaker was Judy Presnall, who wears a couple of hats in the club—one as Treasurer and one as a Proof Reader for the newsletter. Judy inspired us all by describing the slow and difficult road from sending in your creations, receiving numerous rejections over the years, but eventually persevering and finding your “niche.”

Judy has written many nonfiction children’s books about animals, from *Animals that Glow* to *Police Dogs* and *Canine Companions*. She does all her own research, which took her to Alaska, a Dude Ranch, Alcatraz, a ride with a handsome police officer and his K-9 companion, Mount Rushmore, and many other places. Another interesting book she wrote is *Artificial Organs*. Her twenty-three books are educational, and can be found in public libraries.

Judy advised us to continue writing, ask for help when doing research, enter writing contests, take classes, join critique groups, attend writing seminars, and keep learning your craft.

After a brief meeting, we turned our attention to the refreshment table laid out with food and drinks. Just to name a few, Yolanda Fintor brought delicious home-made cookies, recipes for which are found in her *Hungarian Cookbook*, and Pirhia Goldstein baked a yummy coffee cake. We also had punch made delicious with ice cream.

We then turned our attention to the other tables, those laden with goodies for our brain. Members displaying and selling books were: Edward Ash, Tom Barnes, Yolanda Fintor, Howard Goldstein, Duke Howard, Ethel Ann Pemberton, Judy Presnall, Thomas C. Prosser, Lenora Smalley, Erika Stux, and Carol Wood. Ray Malus displayed and sold DVDs of his screen plays.

This group of talented professionals is an inspiration to us all. □



Musings from the President

Ethel Ann Pemberton

All openings need a zinger effect. If the zinger is missing in your opening paragraphs, you need to start over. The five modes used in creating fiction and presenting information are: **1) dialogue, 2) description, 3) action, 4) a character’s thoughts, or 5) exposition.** Some writers prefer a particular mode and use it extensively in their works.

Ernest Hemingway relied heavily on the use of **dialogue**. In his short story, *The Sea Change*, he begins:

“All right,” said the man. “What about it?”

“No,” said the girl, “I can’t.”

“You mean you won’t.”

“I can’t,” said the girl. “That’s all that I mean.”

“You mean that you won’t.”

“All right,” said the girl. “You have it your own way.”

Is this the most effective way to begin this story? If we start it in the character’s thoughts, she might reflect: I don’t know why he’s arguing with me about something that doesn’t matter. Not nearly as effective, is it?

John Steinbeck, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, begins with a **description** of the barren countryside. “To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. In the last part of May the sky grew pale and the clouds that had hung in high puffs for so long in the spring were dissipated. The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet....”

Steinbeck won a Pulitzer prize for this novel, so the beginning he chose obviously worked.

Often romance authors begin with a **description** of the characters’ appearance, clothes, homes, etc.

In *The Open Boat*, by Stephen Crane, he starts out with **dire action**. “None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like

EDITORIAL

Charlie Gordon?

The question is from the movie, *Charlie* (adapted from the novella, *Flowers For Algernon*, by Daniel Keyes). It is asked by Charlie Gordon, himself.

Charlie has lived most of his life mentally impaired — functionally a child — with a recorded I.Q. of 68. Now, a miraculous operation has given him a brilliant intellect. At symposium, Charlie asks the assembled medical experts the question: “Charlie Gordon?”

In the manner of great teachers, Charlie already knows the answer: “Charlie Gordon... is a fella... who will soon be... what he was.”

It’s a gut-wrenching moment. Charlie Gordon has discovered that the effects of the operation are temporary. He will soon return to his original capabilities.

Less than a year ago, our Branch was suspended from CWC. We were, basically, non-functional and non-existent — the equivalent of Charlie Gordon. A group of energetic, generous people formed a committee and got us reinstated. Many of them became our current Board. It was, in its own way, miraculous.

But our Board ‘retires’ in June. Some are exhausted, some need to get back to their careers, some just feel the membership needs to take ownership of their own Branch.

So, I must ask the question: “San Fernando Valley Chapter?”

Tragically, the answer is much the same as Charlie’s: “CWC-SFV ... is a Branch... that will soon be... what it was.”

We have good attendance at meetings. We have (in my opinion) some of the finest writers in CWC. We have congenial personalities.

The problem is that too few members are coming forward to do active work. Too few are “getting involved.” Chair positions go unfilled, members do not ‘sit in’ on Board meetings, no one is being prepared for leadership roles.

Yes, it’s great fun to show up every month, hear provocative Open Mikes, socialize and have a *nosh*, watch a presentation by an expert speaker.

But we’re like children who believe in Santa Claus, trusting that the presents will just magically appear on Christmas morning, waiting to be torn open.

It’s time to wake up!

The Branch runs by a lot of effort — effort that, if it’s successful, is invisible. Moreover, there are administrative and leadership functions that never stop. We have relationships and responsibilities to the State Organization. If all this doesn’t get done on a continuing basis, we die.

I know many of you will respond, “When the time comes, I’ll do my part.” The fact is, one doesn’t just assume Office. It takes familiarity and experience. “The time” is now!

There is also the matter of membership involvement. It is not my place to do a ‘postmortem’ on what caused the previous upheaval in our Branch. But I will assert that a vigilant membership would have forestalled it. Any single person or small group can make well meant, but misguided, decisions that negatively impact a group. But an involved membership insures that the benefit of the whole is being judiciously considered.

We have an election coming up in 6 months. Ideally, we don’t elect ‘people’ — we elect the visions that people champion. Without these visions, the group just drifts, goal-less and stagnant. We need your ideas, and we need you to be willing to work to ‘actualize’ them.

You may ask why I’m not following my own advice. I am! I am not a candidate for office, simply because I feel I am more valuable as a ‘worker bee.’ But, believe me, I am involved. You need to be, too.

This is not an appeal. I (personally) am not asking anything of you. It is simply a warning — and a question: “San Fernando Valley Branch?” □

Something to Ponder: “I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.”

— Frank Lloyd Wright

Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: 'Gawd! That was a narrow clip.' As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea."

Action stories often open in the middle of a fight, a war, or a catastrophic event.

Joyce Carol Oates in *Them*, uses **character's thoughts** as her mode of presenting information to begin her novel.

"One warm evening in August 1937 a girl in love stood before a mirror. Her name was Loretta. It was her reflection in the mirror she loved, and out of this dreamy, pleasing love there arose a sense of excitement that was restless and blind—which way would it move, what would happen? Her name was Loretta; she was pleased with that name too, though Loretta Botsford pleased her less. Her last name dragged down on her, it had no melody. She stood squinting into the plastic-rimmed mirror on her bureau, trying to get the best of the light, seeing inside her rather high-colored, healthy, ordinary prettiness a hint of something daring and dangerous. Looking into the mirror was like looking into the future; everything was there, waiting...."

In *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Scott opens with **exposition**: "As long ago as 1860 it was the proper thing to be born at home. At present, so I am told, the high gods of medicine have decreed that the first cries of the young shall be uttered upon the anesthetic air of a hospital, preferably a fashionable one. So young Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button were fifty years ahead of style when they decided, one day in the summer of 1860, that their first baby should be born in a hospital. Whether this anachronism had any bearing upon the astonishing history I am about to set down will never be known.

"I shall tell you what occurred, and let you judge for yourself."

Benjamin's wife tells his story, making it exposition from a spouse's viewpoint.

Cinderella and other Once Upon a Time stories begin with **exposition**, and readers will accept them so long as they do not delay the actual start of the story too long and if the story is written engagingly enough.

If your opening leaves you with an uneasy feeling, try writing several short openings to the same story, using different modes to present information, until you find the right one—the one with the zinger effect. □

TO MARKET, TO MARKET by Ken Watts

(As always, please check the websites for more information before submissions. When you see "ms." or "mss." this means manuscript and manuscripts respectively. Best wishes and good luck to all!)

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Colony Theatre Co. needs full length (90-120 minutes) with a cast of 4-12. They're especially interested in small casts of 4 or fewer. No musicals or experimental works. They're looking for works of theatrical imagination and emotional resonance on universal themes. Produces 6 plays/year. Negotiated rights. Pays royalty for each performance. Submit query and synopsis. Contact: Michael David Wadler, literary manager Address: 555 N. Third Street, Burbank, CA 91502. Phone: (818) 558-7000. Fax: (818) 558-7110. E-Mail: colonytheatre@colonytheatre.org. Web site: www.colonytheatre.org.

Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum needs socially relevant plays, musicals; all full-length. Cast size of 4-10 people. They state: "We are a large outdoor theatre--small intimate works could be difficult." Produces 4 classical and 1 new play if selected/year. Responds in 6 months. Pays 6% royalty or \$150 per show. Send synopsis, sample dialogue and tape if musical. Contact: Ellen Geer, artistic director. Address: P. O. Box 1222, Topanga, CA 90290. Phone: (310) 455-2322. Fax: (310) 455-3724. Web site: www.theatricum.com.

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(TO MARKET cont'd from page 4)

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Check Out Our New Look!

We have a stunning new face on the World Wide Web!

Want to feel extra proud to be a member of

The San Fernando Valley Branch?

Take a gander at our new Web Site!

CWC-SFV.ORG

**has been completely revamped,
and it's sensational!**

**It's high-tech, elegant,
and packed with information.**

**... and we have a new look that would make a
Beverly Hills Cosmetic Surgeon preen.**

**Our new site gives an exciting new face to
the most dynamic Branch in CWC.**

**We expect the site to grow and expand,
and be a model for other branches.**

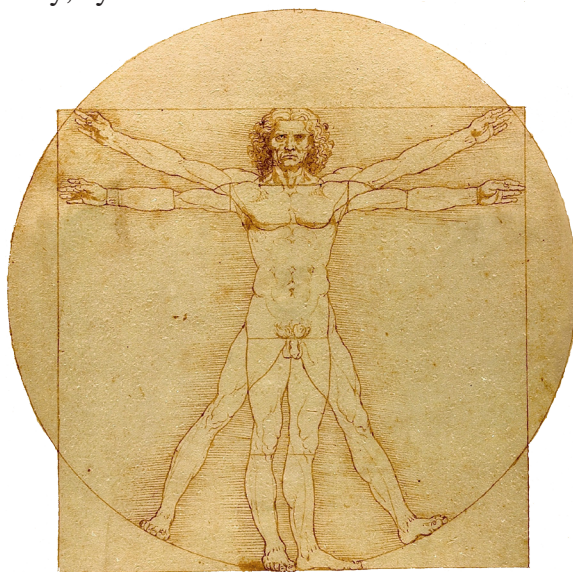
Huge thanks to our Webmaster, Glenn Wood.

The Wright Word — by Ray

Vitruvian Man

You've seen it. It's a drawing, in ink, of a naked man — inscribed within a circle and a square. It was created, mid-fifteenth century, by Leonardo DaVinci. As an adult, I learned that it is a study in the proportions of the human body. But when I first encountered it, as a child, it meant something very different to me. It symbolized isolation. Actually, it still does.

Look at it! Here is the human being in his prime: a sensing, feeling, sentient creature — arguably, the peak of creation. He stands tall and stretches out his arms and reaches...



less than one-and-a-half times his own height.

True, his senses of hearing and vision carry a bit further, but in this enormous universe, does that really make a difference?

And what can he touch? Only the things that lie within that circle. And within that circle is only... him.

Now, imagine another person — also isolated in his space — adjacent to the first. They stretch their fingers as far as they can and their tips just graze where the circles abut. They can see, hear, sense one another, but never really touch one another. And separating, they can experience different parts of the universe, but each will have his own unique set of experiences.

It's a stark and startling metaphor for the human condition. And it leaves one feeling desperately empty.

And here is where we come to the need for "Art."

By some miracle, the artist manages to shatter that isolation. Through his painting, sculpture, music, dance, WORDS, the artist manages to communicate human experience and feeling. He exposes worlds the individual has not experienced — from vantage points he has never held. Most important, he shares emotions — not merely by describing his own, but by provoking them in his audience. He is proof that we are not alone.

When viewed against the metaphor of the Vitruvian Man, this seems impossible. And yet this is what we, as artists, do. It's a sacred calling. No piece of writing can fail to communicate a viewpoint,

an opinion, a perspective: perception and prejudice. Any piece of writing, no matter how seemingly 'dry,' contains a bit of the writer. It is proof that there are others like us, and that our greatest commonality is, paradoxically, our individual uniqueness.

As artists, we peer through that, sometimes opaque, wall that surrounds us. We strain to hear, to smell, taste what's out there. Then, we record it — filtered through the person we are — and somehow manage to communicate it.

In return, we open ourselves to others' experiences. In doing so, we infinitely extend our grasp, to encompass a world of limitless possibility — rather than the one within our tiny reach. □

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.)

BETTY HECHTMAN, a member of our branch, and the first speaker of our Membership Showcase series, got a top pick—a 4-1/2 star review from *Romantic Times* for her cozy mystery—*A Stitch in Crime*. Betty has three other books published by Berkley in her crochet mystery series:

Hooked on Murder

By Hook or By Crook

Dead Men Don't Crochet

Her first publication was *Blue Schwartz and Nefertiti's Necklace*, a mystery with recipes, and since then she has moved on with crochet mysteries—quite a novel approach to a novel.

Betty's novels can be purchased at any bookstore. Please check them out. Our writers need our support!!!!

It Could Be Verse

A Ride in the Country with My Dad

Edward Louis Braun

On a bright morning in May
As I was heading out to play,
My dad said, "How'd you like
A ride to the country today?"
In no time at all
I dropped my bat and ball
And hopped into our flivver.

As we bounced beneath
A boundless sky,
We rode past fields alive
With greenery and flowers,
Pear and apple trees
Bursting into bloom.

The air was sweet and fair,
The world was fresh and new,
The sky was an endless blue,
Beauty was everywhere.

I was happily unaware
Of any worry or care,
Just happy to be there
Having fun with my dad.

Every now and then
A rambunctious breeze
Stirred flowering trees,
Caressed white blossoms
Trying to kiss the sky
And evoked an extra quiver
From the bouncing flivver,
Bringing laughter and fun
And happy camaraderie
To my dad and me.

MARYLAND WINTER

Lillian Rodich

The sky's disarray of clouds
sends snow flurries scurrying
in their own direction
as crystals glaze naked branches
and a dusting of white
equalizes asphalt roads
and worn porch clapboards.
I do not know cold intimately,
only briefly in Maryland's landscape,
the icy layer between my sleeves
and bare skin
like an insistent stranger
to my senses,
while silence drifts
with flakes of snow
along deserted streets.

New Year's Day

Lenora Smalley

As I clean confetti from last night's
party,
take down lights from a drooping tree,
the smell of ham and yams cooking,
coins hidden in the black eyed peas
to bring good luck to the one who finds
them,
I think about what New Year's means.

It's a colorful, left-over holiday gift
labeled "Do Not Open 'Til January 1st",
a white snowfall covering the past,
a date to remember for letters and
checks,
a first blank page in a brand new jour-
nal,
a resolve to write as each day turns,
a new dance step,
a new song to sing,
a flame relit to burn all year,
a chance to start over,
a slate wiped clean,
a wave that breaks and washes the
shore
waiting for footprints to mark the
sand.
and new sand castles to be built again.

I can't wait to get started.

My Mood Depends On You

Edward Louis Braun

I can be serious
Or happily delirious.
I can be a clown
With a frown
Or a smile
On my face.

My moods
Are changeable
And rearrangeable.
Depending on
Where you place me,
If you love me
Or erase me
From your heart.

Let me steal away
Each frown from you,
Make you the star
Of my everyday play,
Fill your day
With kisses and feeling,
Softness and reeling
Romantic play.

And while every day
May not be the 4th of July,
With colors of rockets
Painting the sky,
Our love will be
An exciting, fulfilling
Adventure for two,
Exploring the wonders
All around us
And our own
Boundless depths.

It Could Be More Verse

WHISPERS

Can you hear me?
for my strength is gone
and all
that my meager breath
can manage
are whispers
that beseech you
to visit me
to sit for a while
next to me,
so near that
I may feel your warmth.

I cannot cry out
in a whisper
and sobs are painful.
If you turn
slightly
you will be able
to hear the soft sounds
I utter.
If you listen to me
you will know me
for these few minutes
and I will not
be lonely.....

Lillian Rodich



WINTER'S REFLECTIONS

stillness mirrored
in stark images
painting an icy pool

dark mountains fade
into snow brushed summits
there veiled in uncertain clouds

glistening ice peaks
emerge from shadowed pools
and reach upward
with naked arms
toward a lone eagle
a giant bird
focused in flight
supported by subtle currents
in the silver landscape

— Lillian Rodich

What Makes It Worthwhile

Edward Louis Braun

Within my mind
A myriad of mysteries
Clamors for solutions,
Together with songs
Waiting to be sung,
Visions to be formed,
Truths to be divined.

I pass each day
Seldom with time
To take bearings
On my course, though
My final destination
Is known too well.

Along the way a carnival
Of nights and days,
Games of chance,
Games of skill,
Crazy mirrors and
False notes distorting
The orchestration
Of each day.

But happily there's also
The exhilaration
Of a summer day,
White clouds embellishing
Endless blue skies,
Brilliant sunsets,
The awesome mystery
Of the star saturated sky,
The beautiful creations
Of Nature and men.

To crown it all,
If Fortune smiles,
Sweet love may come
With bright eyes
Soft sweet lips
A happy smile,
Congenial mind
And a good heart.

The Branch Remembers

The following members passed away during 2009

Elaine Shevin was a bright light in my darkened room. She was terminally happy and I'm sure she is having fun with her boyfriend, Marty in the heavens. Her tag line "Patience, passion, perseverance" were not just words to her, she passed them on to her four children and 10 grandchildren and one little great grandchild. She was an award-winning swimmer in her youth and was approached by Hollywood to be in the movies. Her mother wouldn't allow it. Elaine told me "I could have been ESTHER Williams!" Instead she raised four children and became a teacher and a volunteer and, in retirement, an award-winning dancer — despite a hip replacement gone bad. Her one leg was shorter than the other. At her funeral her son remarked that she went on to win awards for her dancing in London wearing the special shoes he had designed for her. I was her editor and publisher and friend. I thought I was being paid to help her but instead I have found I was paid to take Elaine's life lessons. I didn't get enough time with her. I'm still learning how to maintain that kind of cheerful in the face of adversity. This Thanksgiving I am thankful that she allowed me to be a part of her life. If I'm lucky and anything she shared sank in, I will get to see her and laugh with her again by and by. Tell THEM I'll be humming her favorite song, "Blue Skies."

— Carol Wood

*We lost a great lady when **Ruth Chrisman Collier** died last May. She was a longtime member of CWC/SFV. In her younger days, Ruth taught school and during her later years she had several children's nonfiction books published. Ruth, Judy Presnall, and I were part of a critique group that met every two weeks until a few years ago. Ruth never lost her passion for writing and continued submitting her work until the day she entered the hospital for the last time. She has left a legacy of wonderful, educational books for children to enjoy.*

— Yolanda Fintor

Marty Evans was a writer that Elaine Shevin met at a meeting and consequently they were thunderstruck with teenage love. Marty wrote poetry about Elaine and treated her sweetly. I don't know much about his life. I know he has at least one daughter who I met, a very bright and wonderful woman. And he has one grandson. I remember Marty carefully choosing a watch for him. I know he was in the war, I know he worked hard all his life and I know he was a kind man. I'm glad he is relieved from pain which he did suffer with, but I will miss him hugging Elaine right in front of me and the world. I am sure he is hugging her right now.

— Carol Wood

*A tribute to **Cleone Balsam**, former member, who found true peace on 9/18/09*

*You were a fresh flower -
a budding talent in our garden of writers
Always smiling, always gentle
in concert with the surrounding beauty
An inspiration to the Muses*

*You wrote of sunshine and of sorrow
creating with soul as well as with heart
You saw the best in everyone
and touched all in a special way
Love dwelt in your eyes*

*You were a unique flower -
Everyone saw the best in you
You were the best
Your spirit will live on in the blossoms
of springtime*

— Ethel Ann Pemberton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

Great issue this month!

All-of-a-sudden, POETS came out from hibernation! Keep it up!

As we end the year, we thought it appropriate to remember those members who have passed away. If we omitted someone, we sincerely apologize.

Once again, we've found use for our "Adult or Curious" section.

We have also included a cautionary editorial (pg. 3).

Please read it, and take it to heart.

A sincere thank-you to all contributors.

— The Staff of The Valley Scribe



MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATION

If you haven't been qualified as an Active or Associate member of CWC-SFV as yet, please request an application from Lenora Smalley, Accreditation Committee Chair, and she will provide you with one to complete. This information will be in the Roster, so get busy and get your membership status confirmed.

... and don't forget to return your form.

We Are Pleased To Announce

That **Stephanie Sharf** has joined our Board Of Directors.

OPEN MIKE

Due to Dan Poynter's 2-hour Writing Seminar, Open Mike will not be featured at January's meeting.

Open Mike will return on March 20th.

A Big Thank You

To **Duke Howard** for helping with the Christmas set-up

and to all the exhibitors and folks who helped decorate.

THANK YOU

Earn a Thank You — Volunteer!

Give a Thank You — Tell us someone's who's helped!

FREE BEER!!

Setting up for meetings is a large task. If you can help, Please come at 11:30.

You'll get to hob-nob with friends, help the Club and, earn our eternal gratitude.

(OK. We lied about the beer.)

Will the Real Mrs. Harms Please Stand?

by Yolanda Fintor

(This is an excerpt from Fintor's memoir — unpublished.)

You could tell Mrs. Harms loved teaching, especially art. Our fourth grade classroom had the brightest bulletin boards and the best craft projects in the whole school. She wore long, colorful skirts with blouses that were as loose as her hair when she didn't have it pulled back with combs. She was so full of energy, she seemed to fly from one desk to another helping each of us with our work. There were days I could almost picture her kicking off her shoes and dancing around the room, hair and skirt flowing behind her.

One time after Mom met her, she called her a Bohemian. I wasn't sure what that meant until Mom explained it was one step above a gypsy which, I guess was not a compliment. We had gypsy families living in our neighborhood and the only good thing anyone ever said about them was that they could play the violin beautifully.

Mrs. Harms wore no makeup and spoke with a strong, melodic voice. On rainy days, instead of showing movies, she entertained us with slides of her travels with her husband. When Mom found out her husband was a doctor, her opinion of Mrs. Harms went up a quite a few notches.

I liked Mrs. Harms because compared to her faculty counterparts who favored the grays or blacks of approaching storm clouds, she was my radiant rainbow. I even liked her after she made me stand in the corner for talking. While I was embarrassed (because I usually didn't get into trouble), I secretly hoped this would release me from the Miss Goody-Two-Shoes label my sisters and even my best friend put on me.

Open House at school was always a big event. Almost all parents came, dressed in their finer clothes. Fathers even got haircuts and mothers were spruced up to look their Sunday best. I made sure my mother wore her good dress and not her every day cotton one. Children, too, needed to shine so we all looked like we were ready for church.

My big surprise came when I walked into the classroom with my parents ready to introduce them, as Mrs. Harms had instructed us. Standing at the desk was this beautiful woman with perfect makeup, hair done up fancy, wearing a tailored suit and high heels. Even her nails were polished! I had to look closely to realize that this stunning lady was my teacher looking like a movie star!

Mom noticed my mouth hanging open but said nothing. After I pulled myself together and got my tongue working again, I managed to introduce Mrs. Harms, who told me to take my parents to my desk where my outstanding papers were in neat folders.

"What do you think of her now, Mom?" I whispered as she and Dad looked over my work.

"I think that lady up front there is her twin," she answered. "I think the real Mrs. Harms is at home grading papers."

When I gave her a questioning look, she smiled and winked at me. Then I knew she was teasing. But it wasn't until years later, when I had the maturity to understand, that she was telling me we all have many facets to our lives and personalities; that we can't pigeon-hole people or judge them too soon. We both learned a life lesson.

The Bulletin Board

MEETINGS
ARE HELD AT 12:30 P.M.
ON THE 3RD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Hannibal Hall
7136 Winnetka Avenue, Winnetka – South of Sherman Way
(Directions & Map on last page)

UPCOMING MEMBER SHOWCASES
 February 20, 2010 – Tom Barnes
 April 17, 2010 – Ray Malus

UPCOMING MEETINGS
 January 16, 2010 – Dan Poynter
 February 20, 2010 – Burt Prelutsky (No, this time, for real!)
 March 20, 2010 – Jennifer Haymore
 April 17, 2010 - TBA- but it's Poetry Month- count on a Poet!

GUEST DONATIONS

Non-members attending meetings, are asked to pay a \$5 (tax deductible) donation.
 New membership is immediate upon application at door.
 For more information, contact Lenora Smalley, Membership Chair, at the meeting entrance or email membership@cwc-sfv.org.

NEWSLETTER MAILINGS:
NEWSLETTERS ARE EMAILED TO MEMBERS.
 Members not having email will receive B&W copies by USPS.
 Cara Alson (818) 764-0807 is the contact for sending USPS copies.
 Courtesy copies will be mailed for three months to non-members and/or guests who request same.
 Copies can be downloaded from the Website: <http://www.cwc-sfv.org>

SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit writing contributions to *The Valley Scribe*. This is your newsletter, and you should be part of it.
 Submit your prose and poetry to humorist@verizon.net
 It will then be proofed and sent to the Editor.
 Type "Submissions" in the subject line.
 If submitting a hard copy, please bring it to the meeting and hand it to the Editor, Ray Malus, or to the President.

Articles/Essays
 Short Stories
 Poetry

Submit your writings within ten days after the monthly Open Meetings.
 - 400 words or less
 - 800 words or less
 - Limited to 30 lines

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.

HELP!
OUR TREASURY IS SHRINKING!
ANY IDEAS FOR FUND RAISERS?



**ROSTER INFORMATION
CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB - SFV**

PRINT THE REQUIRED INFORMATION CLEARLY

NAME:(Last) _____ (First) _____ (Init.) _____

RESIDENCE ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ ST. _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NO: (____) ____-____ Alternate: (____) ____-____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____@_____

WRITING GENRES*: _____

*Please limit your writing genres to three (3)

Genres generally used:

Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Novels,
Scripts, Plays, Children's Books

STATUS: (Check only one.) ACTIVE: ____ ASSOCIATE: ____

PLEASE EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL THE COMPLETED FORM BY 1-16-2010 TO

Ethel Ann Pemberton

37126 Village 37

Camarillo, CA 93012

humorist@verizon.net

Rosters are anticipated to be ready by early 2010.

PLEASE NOTE:

Only dues-paying members will receive a copy of the Roster.
Each member will be requested to sign for his/her copy in order
to keep the Rosters private to members only.

If your Roster Information is not received by January 16, it will be assumed you do not
wish to be listed in the California Writers Club-SFV Roster for 2010.

The Fine Print

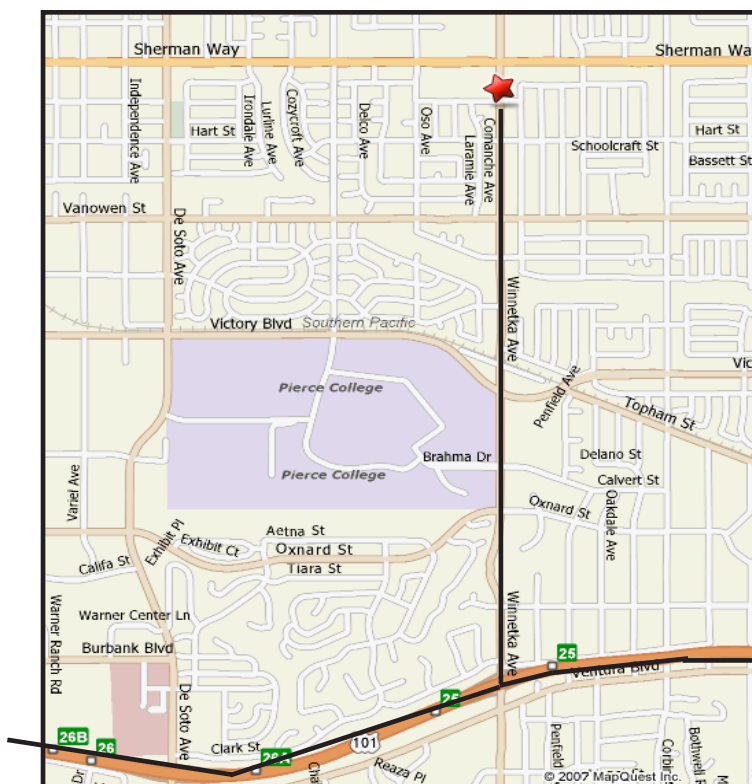
ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS **7136 WINNETKA AVE** **CANOGA PARK, CA 91306**

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.



The Valley Scribe

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

is published monthly.

We solicit submissions from members.
(See Bulletin Board: SUBMISSIONS)

Editor

[Ray Malus](#)

Staff

Proof Readers Judy Presnall, Ethel Ann Pemberton
Columnists Ethel Ann Pemberton,
Ken Watts, Erica Stux, Ray Malus

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California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch

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Website: www.cw-csfv.org

CAUTION***For The Adult or Curious.***

We recognize that our membership has a broad spectrum of sensibilities. However, we also believe that a "Writers' Publication" should allow as much latitude in content as possible. If you are neither "adult" nor curious, simply skip this section.

CAUTION**CRYBABY**by [Ray Malus](#)

"MOMMYMOMMYPLEASELETMEOUTILLNEVERDOITAGAINI PROMISEPLEASEPLEASE"

The words tumble-gushed out of him, splashing like hard-flung tears against the closed door, dropping hot and soggy into congealed pools of sticky misery on the cold linoleum in front of where he lay.

"IPROMISEIPROMISEILLNEVERDOITAGAINPLEASEPLEASE PLEASEMOMMYIPROMISE PLEASE"

do what? he couldn't remember.

The tears flooded, cascaded hot and stinging down his cheeks again, filling the back of his throat with sick-sweet stickiness, his nose running down his upper lip. He scrubbed his face in his palms, hard, leaving viscous black smears where his hands left dust — picked up from the floor.

it didn't matter what

"IPROMISEI'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN. Never never i promise please please mommy"

Exhausted, he laid his head down on the cool linoleum, rubbing his forehead back and forth over it.

it didn't matter. it didn't matter. didn't

Slowly his sobs cooled.

how long had he been here?

No answer.

forever?

no. he could remember, earlier, being with her, basking in the joy of her company.

warm. loved. close.

happy what happened?

He couldn't remember.

"You spoiled it," She said.

what? What? WHAT?

The tears started to burst through again. He fought them back, choking, sputtering on them, finally swallowing them.

Painfully he got up, walked to the dresser. The mirror.

A small boy. Swollen eyes. Ugly smears of dusty tear-mud. He ran his fingers through the tousled hair, digging his fingertips into his scalp, feeling the shivers all over. He turned back to the door.

maybe She was over it. maybe She loved him again. maybe he was Hers again.

it wasn't locked. he could just open it, and walk out to Her.

"i'm sorry mommy. please love me."

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CAUTION

(CRYBABY cont'd from pg. 15)

"It's alright. I forgive you. Come here."

her warm lap, and soft apron smelling of cooking dinner.

he could... no that would make her angry again pleasedontbeangrymommypleasepleaseplease

The dammed-up tears threatened to explode again. He fought fought FOUGHT

quietly, he walked to the door.

"mommy? mommy?"

"Mommy"

not too loud. maybe she was still mad.

maybe she was sleeping.

maybe she was

gone.

OH GOD OH GOD OHGOD NONONONO please GOD DONT MAKE HER HAVE LEFT

"MOMMYMOMMYMOMMYMOMMY PLEASEPLEASEIMSORRYDONTBEMAD"

The tears came ripping, tearing, slashing out

"MOMMYMOMMYPLEASEIPROMISEILLBEGOODPLEASE PLEASE" the sobs choking him,
his breaths gasps now, "PLEASEMAA-MAA-MAAH-MYPLEASEPLEASEMAA-MY MAAAHMMEE
MAAAAAAAAAAAHMEEEEEEEE"

"what's new Ernie?"

"same old shit."

"yeah. you still in night school?"

"yeah. i take my broker's license next week."

"boy, wish i was gonna do something else. this fuckin' job is the pits."

"yeah. soon as i get it, i'm gonna turn my back on this shit-hole and never look back. fuckin' place gives
me the willies."

"they're all fuckin' crazy, I tell ya. you're lucky you're leavin'."

"for sure. take this idiot here ...,"

a gesture to the locked door behind them –

"...asshole's fifty-seven; and all he can do is cry like a fuckin' baby." □