



# The Valley Scribe

## Next Meeting April 17, 12:30!



### April Featured Speaker: POET, Rick Lupert

Rick Lupert has been involved in the Los Angeles poetry community since 1990. He served for two years as a co-director of the Valley Contemporary Poets, a twenty-five-year-old non-profit organization which produces readings and publications out of the San Fernando Valley. His poetry has appeared in numerous magazines and literary journals, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *Chiron Review*, *Stirring*, *The Blue Jew Yorker*, *PoeticDiversity.org*, *Zuzu's Petals*, *Caffeine Magazine*, *Blue Satellite* and others. He edited *A Poet's Haggadah: Pass-over through the Eyes of Poets* anthology and is the author of 12 books: *Paris: It's The Cheese*, *I Am My Own Orange County*, *Mowing Fargo*, *I'm a Jew. Are You?*, *Stolen Mummies*, *I'd Like to Bake Your Goods*, *A Man With No Teeth Serves Us Breakfast*, *We Put Things in Our Mouths* (Ain't Got No Press), *Lizard King of the Laundromat*, *Brendan Constantine is My Kind of Town* (Inevitable Press), *Feeding Holy Cats* and *Up Liberty's Skirt* (Cassowary Press). He has hosted the long running Cobalt Café reading series in Canoga Park since 1994 and is regularly featured at venues throughout Southern California.

The author's three e-books are [To Hell With Rick Lupert](#) (Ain't Got No Press, May, 2006), [The Rick Lupert Fun Club](#) (Ain't Got No Press, May, 2007) and [On My Eventual Death](#) (Ain't Got No Press, May 2009) (Click on the titles to download them for free.)

Rick created and maintains the Poetry Super Highway (<http://PoetrySuperHighway.com/>), an online resource and publication for poets.

Currently, Rick works as the music teacher and graphic and web designer for Temple Ahavat Shalom in Northridge, CA and for anyone who would like to help pay his mortgage.

He lives in Van Nuys, California, with his wife Addie, son Jude, 3 cats, a lizard and 2 frogs. □

### MEMBER SHOWCASE

Your editor,  
actor, entertainer, composer, director, writer, poet, Ray Malus  
will speak on his  
favorite subject:



***Ray Malus.***

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The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

# The Valley Scribble



Vol. 27

April Fool

No. 851

## April Meeting Starts Promptly at 12:30! — Or Whenever People Get There.

**April Featured Speaker**  
**SARAH PALIN**  
**How To Dress A Moose**  
**“What’s not prime cuts is sausage, becha!”**



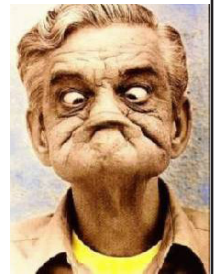
“Gosh darn, but dese’re some good eatin’!” That’s former Alaska Governor, Sarah Palin on the subject of Moose. “But ya gotta know how ta cut ‘em up an’ get ‘em in a freezer, or dey go bad real quick.”  
Palin will bring her special brand of home “eco-MOM-ics” to the San Fernando Valley, this month.  
“Baggin them guys is one thing,” she says, “but ‘baggie-ing’ ‘ems another,” she continues. “Oh golly gosh, ya shir dont want a lotta moose meat hangin’ aroun’ when the weather turns warm.”  
(See “Moose Meat” on pg. 45.)



Palin and Arab woman with the “catch of the day.”

### April Member Showcase:

***The Old Guy Who Sits In The Back And Falls Asleep During “Open Mike.”***



Many of you already know Maury. Those who have been fortunate enough to catch him between naps know he’s led a fascinating life.

Currently, a resident of the Simi Valley Home For The Bewildered, Maury has been a globe trotting “Jet Setter”, and is the author of 2 memoirs — *Who-The-Hell-Are-You-To-Ask-Me-That, Sonny?!* and *In My Day, People Had Manners!* — and the award-winning epic poem, *Go \_\_\_\_\_ Yourself!!*

This month, he will share some of his experiences with the rest of us. Come early, and be enchanted! □

### TO MARKET

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

**The Internal Revenue Service** is accepting submissions in the fiction and comedy genres. Submissions must be on Form-1040. Judging will be on the basis of creativity and plausibility. Winners will be notified within 7 years of submission, and will be awarded a 5-year “dream vacation” at the IRS’s, “White-Collar Resort” in San  
(Continued on pg. 36.)

### Thought For Today

“I” before “E”, except after “C”.  
—Albert Einstein.

### New Media: Is Stone Dead?

With the advent of, so-called “new media” (parchment, papyrus, et al.), the question arises, “Is publishing as we know it dead?”

Advocates of these new publishing opportunities crow that the traditional stranglehold of the rock quarry bloc (often called “stoners”) is at an end, while traditionalists whine, “Who wants literature you can fold?! In 2000 years, this stuff will have crumbled into dust.” The debate rages hot and vitriolic with no clear winner.  
(See “Stoners” on pg. 27.)



## March Meeting-in-Review:

JENNIFER HAYMORE

By Stephany Spencer

“It’s a wildfire out of control,” says last month’s Jennifer Haymore, author-editor and super CWC/SFV Guest Speaker. She was responding to one of the many questions the audience asked about E-book publishing. “The only thing we can be sure of today is digital publishing changes weekly and has surpassed anybody’s earlier predictions.”

It appears all anyone can be sure of now are the many myths about it that need to be debunked, such as: E-book publishers publish anything, and there’s no editing nor overhead.

“Could be true in some areas,” she agrees, but says she turns down 95% of what she gets, that ALL writers need to be edited, and that often digital publishing companies have heavy over-head (many employees and corporate offices) and are here for the long haul.

She says she reads and revises the digital book right away when she finds one she likes; and buys the book if she loves it. She adds that other advantages of digital publishing are: They buy unique material, book length is not regulated, they pay quarterly or monthly, it’s more personalized and family oriented, it’s a faster process, does a greater amount of releases, there’s a more diversified readership, and a market out there who only wants to read e-books — and e-book author’s royalties are higher!

But also being a published author and working with New York publishers has some advantages: They pay in advance, you know what money you’ll make, and you can be quite sure the company won’t suddenly go out of business and take your copyright, book and all with them, leaving you no remuneration nor recourse.

So, to paraphrase Haymore, the bottom line: you must really research well who you go with if you choose to use digital publishing. But, the bottom line is digital publishing makes her a viable income. So she does both.

I was so interested in successful Jennifer Haymore’s work, writing and other information that I did what I know we all do when we want to know more about anyone: we Google them, then go to their website, and also read their Blog. I could



## Musings from the President

Ethel Ann Pemberton

**The plot**, in a dramatic or narrative work, is arranged to convey physical and verbal actions of particular characters. In essence, **plot** is a means by which characters exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities. Harry James has said, “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?”

Some plots are as old as Uncle John’s tie, and some are older. However, plot is one of the few aspects in all of art not subject to fashion. Originality doesn’t apply to plots themselves, but rather how they are presented. There are a great variety of plot forms, some of which are designed to achieve tragic events, such as forbidden love, revenge, rivalry, obsession, temptation, sacrifice, murder; others are designed to achieve the effects of romance, love, heroism, pursuit, escape, maturation, discovery, adventure, quest, comedy, underdog, and the list goes on.

The principal character in a work is called the protagonist, hero, or heroine. If that person is pitted against an important opponent, that character is called the antagonist. Hamlet is the protagonist and King Claudius the antagonist in Shakespeare’s play, and the relation between them is one of conflict. Many, but not all plots, involve a conflict. Thornton Wilder’s play, *Our Town* (1938), does not present a conflict but instead integrates the actions of various and unusual residents.

Often conflicts aren’t between characters. They can be generated within one’s self such as desiring a neighbor’s wife but suppressing one’s desire; it can be a struggle for self-esteem, to be loved, dealing with rejection, etc.

The plot must have unity of action if it is to be perceived as a complete and ordered structure of actions, directed toward the intended effect in which none of the component parts, or incidents, is unnecessary. Since all parts are interconnected, the removal of one component will cause all the components to become disjointed. Stringing together a series of episodes that happened to a single character, while presenting an interesting narrative, does not constitute a unified plot.

The order of a unified plot, Aristotle pointed out, is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle, and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something

*Haymore (cont'd from pg. 3)*

give you her website but then you would miss all the other listings you will find when you Google this amazing person!

So I leave off where you are now, probably keying in her name and coming up with the array of info about her on the Internet and having the hair-raising time of your day, as I did when I opened her beautiful web page! Mmmmm! Cheers, and hope to see you at next month's Guest Speaker's presentation. If it is as good as this last month's, I would not want to miss it! □

*Musings (cont'd from pg. 3)*

to follow; and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more; we are satisfied that the plot is complete.

A subplot is a second story that is complete and interesting in its own right, and when it is skillfully interwoven into the text, the subplot serves to broaden our perspective on the main plot and to enhance rather than diffuse the overall effect. □

## KUDOS KOLUMN

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](mailto:ericastux@aol.com). We are interested in everyone's successes.)

**ERICA STUX:** *Several of my published books will be available at the Festival of Books held on April 24 and 25 on the UCLA campus. Stop by Booth 668 to look them over or just to say "hello."*

**BETTY HECHTMAN:** *Betty reports that *A Stitch in Crime*, Berkley, was released February 2<sup>nd</sup>. It's the fourth book in her crochet mystery series. [www.bettyHechtman.com](http://www.bettyHechtman.com)*

**STEPHANIE SHARF:** *Kudos of a different kind go to our Hospitality Chair, STEPHANIE SHARF. She not only does a great job of purchasing and doling out munchies, but she's on our Board of Directors and fills in when members are absent. For the past four months, Stephanie has taken and recorded the minutes. She also does advertising for the club...and she works full-time. Did I forget to mention she still finds time to write?*

## TO MARKET, TO MARKET

by Ken Watts

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

**Wilshire Book Co.** publishes trade paperback originals and reprints. They accept multiple submissions and there's a 2-month response time. They publish 25 titles/year; 70% are from first time authors. 90% of titles are by unagented authors. Publication is 6-9 months after acceptance. Nonfiction: minimum of 30,000 words. Submit 3 sample chapters. Looking for psychology, personal success. These should be adult allegories that teach principles of psychological growth or offer guidance in living. Address: 9731 Variel Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311-4315. Phone: (818) 700-1522. Fax: (818) 700-1527. E-mail: [mpowers@mpowers.com](mailto:mpowers@mpowers.com). Website: [www.mpowers.com](http://www.mpowers.com). Contact: Rights Department.

**Reece Halsey North/Paris/New York.** This agency represents fiction and nonfiction; 30% of clients are new/unpublished. They say, "We are looking for a unique and heartfelt voice that conveys a universal truth." Nonfiction: biography, current affairs, history, language, popular culture, science, true crime, women's issues and studies. Fiction: contemporary, adventure, detective, ethnic, horror, literary, family, mystery, science, thriller, mainstream, women's fiction. Contact: Kimberly Cameron. Address: 98 Main St., #704, Tiburon, CA 94920. Fax: (415) 789-9177. E-mail: [info@reecehalseynorth.com](mailto:info@reecehalseynorth.com). Website: [www.reecehalseynorth.com](http://www.reecehalseynorth.com).

**Michael Larsen/Elizabeth Pomada, Literary Agency** is looking for fresh voices and new ideas. They consider fiction and nonfiction in a wide range of subjects. The do not want children's books, plays, short stories, screenplays, pornography, poetry or stories of abuse. Query with SASE. They respond in 8 weeks to pages or submissions. Actively seeking commercial, genre and literary fiction. Currently handles: nonfiction books (70%), novels (30%). They represent 100 clients. Forty to forty-five percent of clients are new/unpublished writers. Address: 1029 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94109-5023. Phone: (415) 673-0939 E-mail: [larsenpoma@aol.com](mailto:larsenpoma@aol.com). Website: [www.larsen-pomada.com](http://www.larsen-pomada.com).

**Careers & The Disabled** is 60% freelance written. It's published 6 times/yr with Fall, Winter, Spring,

**TO MARKET** (cont'd from page 4)

Summer and Expo editions. This magazine offers role-model profiles and career guidance articles geared toward disabled college students and professionals. It also promotes personal and professional growth. Byline given. Pays on publication. Accepts queries by mail, e-mail, fax, phone. Accepts previously published material. Accepts simultaneous submissions. Responds in 3 weeks to queries. Get a sample copy for 9x12 SAE w/5 first-class stamps. Guidelines free. Needs essays, general interest, how-to, interview, new product, opinion, personal experience. Buys 30 mss/yr. Length: 1,000-2,500 words. Pays 10 cents/word. They sometimes pay expenses of writers on assignment. Address: Equal Opportunity Publications, 445 Broad Hollow Rd., Suite 425, Melville, NY 11747. Phone: (631) 421-9421. Fax: (631) 421-0359. E-mail: [jschneider@eop.com](mailto:jschneider@eop.com). Website: [www.eop.com](http://www.eop.com).

*(Because writers come from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds, I wanted to include a group listings to reflect that fact. For those of you without computers & internet access, please use your library cards. Most if not all public libraries have public internet access.)*

**Afrique Newsmagazine** is a monthly tabloid covering African diaspora. It seeks to connect and empower people of African descent. Address: Afrique Publishing, Inc., 3525 W. Peterson Ave., Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60659. Phone: (773) 463-7200. Fax: (773) 463-7264. E-mail: [cli@afriquenewsmagazine.com](mailto:cli@afriquenewsmagazine.com). Website: [www.afriquenewsmagazine.com](http://www.afriquenewsmagazine.com).

**B'Nai B'Rith Magazine** is a quarterly magazine specializing in social, political, historical, religious, cultural, and 'lifestyle,' relating to Jewish communities in North America and Israel. Address: 2020 K. St. NW, Washington DC 20006. Phone: (202) 857-2701. E-mail: [bbm@bnaibrith.org](mailto:bbm@bnaibrith.org). Website: [www.bnaibrith.org](http://www.bnaibrith.org).

**International Examiner** is a biweekly journal of Asian-American news, politics, arts. Address: 622 S. Washington, Seattle WA 98104. Phone: (206) 624-3925. Fax: (206) 624-3046. E-mail: [editor@iexaminer.org](mailto:editor@iexaminer.org). Website: [www.iexaminer.org](http://www.iexaminer.org).

**Latina Magazine** is a monthly magazine covering Latina lifestyle covering the best of Latino fashion, beauty, culture, and food. Address: Latina Media Ventures, LLC, 1500 Broadway, Suite 700, NY, NY

10036. Phone: (212) 642-0200. E-mail: [editor@latina.com](mailto:editor@latina.com). Website: [www.latina.com](http://www.latina.com).

**Filipinas** is a monthly magazine focused on Filipino-American affairs. It's for Filipino immigrants and for American-born Filipinos. Address: Filipinas Publishing, Inc., GMB Bldg., 1580 Bryant St., Daly City, CA 94015. Phone: (650) 985-2530 Website: [www.filipinasmag.com](http://www.filipinasmag.com).

**German Life** is a bimonthly magazine covering the diversity of German-speaking culture in Europe and the US. Address: Zeitgeist Publishing, Inc., 1068 National Way, LaVale, MD 21502. Phone: (301) 729-6190. Fax: (301) 729-1720. E-mail: [mslider@germanlife.com](mailto:mslider@germanlife.com). Website: [www.germanlife.com](http://www.germanlife.com).

**Celticlife Magazine** chronicles the stories of Celtic people in North America. They feature Gaelic language articles, history, traditions, music and folklore of Celtic people. Address: Clansman Publishing, Ltd., 1454 Dresden Row, Suite 204, Halifax, NS B3J 3T5, Canada. Phone: (902) 425-5716. Fax: (902) 835-0080. E-mail: [editorial@celticlife.ca](mailto:editorial@celticlife.ca). Website: [www.celticlife.ca](http://www.celticlife.ca).

**Native Peoples Magazine** is a bimonthly magazine covering Native Americans. Its purpose is to offer a sensitive portrayal of the arts and lifeways of Native peoples of the Americas. Address: 5333 N. 7th. St., Suite C-224, Phoenix, AZ 85015. Phone: (602) 265-4855. Fax: (602) 265-3113. E-mail: [dgibson@nativepeoples.com](mailto:dgibson@nativepeoples.com). Website: [www.nativepeoples.com](http://www.nativepeoples.com).

**Skipping Stones** strives to promote multicultural awareness, international understanding, nature appreciation, and social responsibility. They like authors to include their own experiences, or base their articles on their personal immersion experiences in a culture or country. Address: P.O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403-0939. Phone: (541) 342-4956. E-mail: [editor@skippingstones.org](mailto:editor@skippingstones.org). Website: [www.skippingstones.org](http://www.skippingstones.org). □

### **Something To Ponder**

“Commitment leads to action. Action brings your dream closer.”

- Marcia Wieder

## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH

*The San Fernando Valley Branch is one of eighteen branches throughout California, organized and operating under the auspices of The California Writers Club. We are a non-profit professional organization whose goal is to provide a friendly and inclusive environment for members to meet and network; to provide professional speakers who will aid in writing, publishing, and marketing members' endeavors; and other writing-related opportunities that will further members' writing enjoyment and careers.*

### Nominating Committee — 2010

We are pleased to announce that the following members have agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee for our next slate of Officers:

[Yolanda Fintor](#)  
[Duke Howard](#)  
[Ray Malus](#)  
[Ethel Ann Pemberton](#)  
[Judy Presnall](#)  
[Lenora Smalley](#)

### Special Year-end Half-Price Clearance Sale

**Act Now!**

For the remainder of the year, membership fee has been reduced From \$65 to **\$42.50.**

Why wait to get Full Membership Benefits!?

### OPEN DISCUSSION SUMMARY

At our March meeting, ideas were solicited from the membership concerning future Branch activities. Chairs were pulled into a circle, and a microphone was passed among members to discuss what they would like their Board of Directors to do to meet their needs as writers and to facilitate their writing goals.

A list of suggestions follows:

- Start critique groups.
- A possible mentoring program.
- More information and/or speakers focusing on copyright laws, techniques of writing, quality of writing.
- How to get work published, and/or workshops related to those topics.
- More open mic availability and longer reading times.
- More presentations by editors/publishers/literary agents.
- Make links available in the newsletter for jobs as writers, critique groups, line chat, etc.

The President mentioned the **Writers Market** as a source for article placement, word count, and writers' payments. Other marketing sources can be found on the internet and in Ken Watts' column in **The Valley Scribe**, "To Market, To Market."

The Board appreciates the feedback from members and will take their suggestions under consideration.

--Board of Directors



## The Wright Word – by Ray

### Why Do Writers Have Bigger Balls Than Accountants?

Many poetic forms (Sonnet, Haiku, Tanka) rely on a “turn,” a point when the piece makes an abrupt “shift in direction” — usually a summary of, or contradiction to, what preceded it. This is a required part of the form, and its skillful execution is a measure of the writer’s ability.

Recently, I was discussing “Sonnets” with a fellow poet. I observed that my predilection was for “Elizabethan” Sonnets. The reason (beside the fact that they’re tad easier) is the “turn” occurs almost at the end of the poem. (In the “Italian” Sonnet — the other well-known form — the “turn” comes very near the middle.) So, surprisingly, the Sonnet shares a structure with a less-appreciated literary form, the Joke.

Well, it’s April, the “fool-ish” month. Let’s look at jokes.

Why is it that things which were so funny when they happened fall flat in the telling? We’ve all had the experience of recounting something riotous, only to be rewarded with blank stares. It’s embarrassing in social interactions. It’s catastrophic in writing. Why does it happen?

Most verbal humor (not all, most) is in the form of a joke. Some jokes work; some do not. Why?

The answer is in one well-known word: “timing.” “Timing” is closely related to “form” or “structure.” But what is “timing?”

The essayist, William Haslitt wrote, “Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be.”

A joke involves two different stories: the one the person thinks you’re telling, and the one you actually are. When the two finally clash, it’s funny. The comedy lies in the *contrast* between the two conflicting realities. It lasts as long as the audience

*can conceptualize both of them simultaneously.*

The trick is to (like “nitro” and “glycerin”) keep the ingredients separate until the last minute, and then slam them together, explosively.

A joke has a form. It consists of two parts: the “setup,” and the “punch-line.”

The setup establishes the “first story” — what the audience *thinks* the joke is about. The punch-line reveals the “second story” — joke’s actual point.

The setup establishes expectations. It provides a reasonable framework for humor. Notice, I said “reasonable.” A setup that stretches credibility — that reveals itself as artifice — simply won’t work. The setup must never show itself to be one. It must be accepted at face value.

The punch-line must be exactly that: a quick, sharp “jab” that changes the perception suddenly.

Imagine a house of cards. The setup erects the house. The punch-line is the card that, when removed, causes the house to fall. The “funniness” is proportional to the size of the crash — the height of the house, and the suddenness of the collapse. Nobody is interested in the fall of a one-story house of cards. And, certainly, no one will react with glee to its being arduously dismantled.

In life, we experience things very quickly. Events are comprehended as flashes — totalities.

In reading, the pace is slower — serialized. An event is dissected into its components, and presented sequentially. So successful comedy is stringent. The setup must present a vivid, real, reasonable picture — without losing the reader’s interest with too much detail. The punch-line must change the perception suddenly.

A successful raconteur develops a sense of when his audience will have grasped the setup, and a knack for “pulling the rug out.”

Oh yes.

Why Do Writers Have Bigger Balls Than Accountants?

They sell more tickets. :-=

### BOARD MEETINGS

Our SFV Branch holds its Board Meetings every month after the Speaker’s Presentation. Members are not permitted to speak or participate, but are encouraged to audit and observe these meetings.


 LILLIAN RODICH


 April Poetry Supplement

**GRAY MOOD**

what can I say  
 this day of overcast and gray  
 of mist clinging to branches and covering  
 my eyelids

worn wooden clapboards  
 of my childhood ...  
 dirty snow  
 tossed cavalierly  
 on my porch  
 and washed into rain puddles  
 later prayers  
 turning gray drops into pearls

clouds curtaining the sun  
 and silvered nonetheless  
 the soft rumble  
 part of the wind  
 and driven rain  
 heard somewhere behind  
 an ominous wall of gray

what can I say  
 this day of overcast and gray  
 of mist clinging to branches and covering  
 my eyelids

**Lights and Darks**

lights and darks  
 reflecting leaves  
 like sun-lit coins

black fades  
 into pewter  
 into a monochromatic  
 mystery

rustling  
 whispers somewhere  
 voices within foliage  
 shadows without form

tree twigs  
 dressed in flimsy black  
 lace  
 brushing a silver sky

branches  
 snaking like graceful  
 dancers  
 behind a curtain of leaves  
 in a moonlit spotlight

a hidden forest  
 ebony trunks  
 enjoying solitude  
 waiting for a paintbrush



## EDWARD LOUIS BRAUN

### Our Wild, Weird World

Our world is a wild  
And weird place.  
Just think of it!

A myriad of life forms  
Roaming, reproducing,  
In sunlight, moonlight  
And darkness.

Insects on the ground  
And in the air.  
Birds flying,  
Fish and mammals  
In endless journeys  
Through rivers and seas,  
Reptiles slithering,  
Carnivores devouring,  
Herbivores trembling  
And cowering,  
All constantly busy  
Moving and munching,  
Biting and crunching.

Microbes and viruses  
Everywhere,  
Infesting and killing,  
Fungi attacking  
The weak and dying.

Our sophisticated brain  
And evolving machines  
Are not able to explain  
Why all of this goes on.

In our search to understand  
We invent many non-  
answers:

“We are here to appreciate,  
Validate and serve God,”  
Say those of religious faith.  
But why would the creator of  
All there is need to be  
served,  
Appreciated and validated?

“We are here to explore,  
Understand and marvel  
At the magnificent universe,”  
Say seekers of knowledge.  
For what purpose, say I?

“The meaning of life is found in  
love,”

Say weary seekers of meaning,  
Still unaware “meaning” is a  
myth.

And, though love can be a  
happy find,  
It may never come your way  
Or, if it does, may be elusive  
As a disappearing morning  
mist,  
A beautiful butterfly that flies  
away

But you still have the choice  
To rejoice in life’s mysteries,  
And the pleasures of each day.

### What Can You Count On Anymore?

My physics professor said:  
“Though everything changes  
The laws of physics do not.”

The force of gravity  
Is always the same.  
An object striking another  
Will rebound with a force  
Determined by  
The hardness of each.  
Time moves in a constant flow.

Well I’m here to tell  
Things have gone to hell.  
As I grow older  
Gravity gets bolder,  
Pulling pills, peanuts,  
Pens and pastries  
Out of my hand,  
To land on the floor.

And that’s not all.  
When you hurl a Kleenex  
Into a trash bag  
Filled with soft tissues,  
It should come to rest.

Not so.  
Miraculously, it bounces  
Off other soft tissues,  
Flies out of the bag  
And falls on the floor,  
As if it were a rubber ball  
Bouncing off a hard wall.

There’s more that’s eerie  
To make you really leery:  
Time is supposed to go  
In a linear flow  
But I’ve noticed it’s not so.  
And I’m getting sore  
At how it’s accelerating  
More and more.

Were Einstein and Feynman  
Aware of these anomalies,  
But preoccupied  
With unified field theories?  
Or did they know but  
Didn’t want to alarm us?

Now I’m not here to fuss  
But my birthday’s  
Soon due,  
And I can tell you  
That’s quite a blow,  
Since the last one  
Was a lot less  
Than a year ago.

**“A Cruel Blessing”***A Ballad*

*In olden days, the ancient Land  
Of Ararat became  
The birthplace of a first-born son—  
So beautiful, but lame.*

*The lameness was inside of him,  
A sleeping fiend, unseen,  
That would attack and seize him  
fast  
Once he became a teen.*

*But now, the babe lay peacefully  
Against his mother’s breast,  
And drank her nectar, white and  
rich,  
And safely took his rest.*

*They double blessed and named the  
boy  
Vartan and Victory.  
Then sprinkled him with holy oil  
To seal his destiny.*

*A close-knit tribe, his kin instilled  
Within their growing child,  
A pride of place, and heritage,  
A name kept undefiled.*

*The father taught Vartan to war,  
Retaliate, defend,  
And laid in Victory the love  
Of truth, and God and friend.*

*The mother gave him nourishment  
To make him strong of limb.  
Likewise, the food for soul and  
mind  
She gently forced within.*

*Then on their son they placed this  
grave  
Responsibility,  
“The future of this clan does rest  
On your integrity.”*

*Relentlessly the clock of months  
Ticked thirteen times around.  
Vartan approached his manhood  
proud,  
A prince as yet uncrowned.*

*But on his honored day there struck  
A death - so fresh, so raw.  
The gruesome end of one most dear  
Was what young Vartan saw.*

*Then deep within the boy-man’s  
frame  
An aura and a flash  
Preceded tremors, shakes and quakes,  
A weakness, then a crash.*

*Like frozen forms the family  
Around the crumpled lad  
Took in with shock and fright the  
sight,  
And wailed, “Our son is mad!”*

*They mourned the loss of hopes and  
dreams,  
(As well, the one so dear),  
And wake became a vigil grim;  
A sick bed and a bier.*

*Vartan lay still as death that night;  
The other’s corpse quite close.  
At dawn they lowered bones below,  
But Victory arose!*

*A celebration wild with joy  
Then met the rising son.  
They dared to hope that only once  
The dreadful foe had won.*

*Forgotten soon the grievous curse  
As manly, Vartan grew.  
A wanton woman caught his eye,  
Then taught him all she knew.*

*But in the rush of ecstasy  
The pleasures turned to pains.  
He screamed, convulsed, then  
toppled down  
Amidst a dozen stains.*

*In shame they found the fallen oak  
And slowly hauled him home.  
Beside the hearth, he warmed and  
woke  
With kin, but all alone.*

**JACKIE HOUCHIN**

*A disciplined and structured life  
He thought would bring release.  
Vartan desired glory bright,  
But Victory sought peace.*

*So in the frozen, northern wastes  
A soldier he became.  
And hardship burned the dross  
from him;  
A cruel and thorough flame.*

*But still, in light-less days he fell  
A victim to his plight.  
And so there came to dwell in him  
A darkness more than night.*

*A disciplined and structured life—  
This time, a different kind;  
In solitude and quietness  
Release he’d surely find.*

*So to the Church went Victory.  
He knelt, and prayed and read.  
Now sixty months of sanity  
Have eased his tortured head.*

*A Holy Man, a Prophet true  
Is what he’s meant to be.  
For holy oil had marked him thus,  
And sealed his destiny.*

*Now from the monastery, he  
Speaks out the Truth he’s learned,  
And prays forgiveness from his kin  
For hopes and dreams he’s spurned.*

*For from Vartan no seed will flow  
To populate the clan,  
And to defend the name and place  
There’s no one who will stand.*

*But, praise! The sleeping fiend has  
fled—  
It dared not seize a priest!  
So God and Church held Vartan in...  
And Victory released.*



## RAY MALUS

### ROCKS

*Nestled against the church,  
It sprawled, a careless mosaic  
Of native Ice Age boulders  
And well-composted humus.  
Grouting the hummocks of granite,  
Grew ivy, and flowers in season.  
Now, huddles of velvet pansies,  
Now, garnishes of dead leaves,  
Now, nodding committees of lilies,  
Now, white ostrich boas of snow.  
My mother called it a 'Rock Garden.'*

*I thought, "Rocks grow here?"*

*Further on down the hillside,  
Lay the neglected graveyard,  
Fenced with a low wall of stones  
Painted with lichen and moss.  
With ranks of well-slept-in beds  
Enfolding the dear departed,  
Lying in scattered parade,  
Like disarrayed army cots,  
Each with its own marble pillow  
Standing immobile and stubborn  
Deep-rooted in the topsoil.*

*I thought "Rocks grow here."*

*Imposing, organic, and ancient,  
The church stood, topping the hillock,  
Gothic and gray and eternal,  
A dwarf cathedral of fieldstone  
Growing up out of the bedrock,  
A flinty petrified bone spur.  
Imprisoned within its facade  
Were stained glass bouquets of its  
own.  
And as we entered in silence  
Its cool and monastic darkness,  
And tip-toed across the slate flooring,*

*I thought, "Rocks grow here."*

*Faithfully, every Sunday,  
We sat at the back of the nave,  
Breathing the scent of the candles,  
Piously kneeling to pray,  
Listening to the sermons,  
Of Patriarchs strong in the Faith.  
Hearing the exhortations  
Echoing down the gallery  
To walk in the steps of the martyrs,  
And march with the Christian Soldiers.  
To harden against temptation.*

*I thought, "Rocks grow here!"*

*Looking back over the decades  
To a childhood when innocence  
reigned,  
And I hadn't yet learned we were  
"poor",  
And a dollar embarrassedly dropped  
In the passing collection plate  
Was my family's sacrifice,  
I finally understand  
Why we always remained outside  
That Saintly community,  
And how, when we left that church,  
Nobody ever asked why.*

*Indeed, "Rocks grow here."*

### Feast

**A** woman is the dwelling place of fire,  
Whose fearsome fevered flush no flood  
can tame.

*While man's a wanderer with wan desire,  
A pale Prometheus in quest of flame.*

*She guards the burning plasma of creation.  
He hungers for the heat she holds within.  
She opens with a honeyed invitation,  
And with a liquid sigh, invites him in.*

*She lays herself, a banquet overflowing,  
All spread in pristine linen edged with lace,  
With fertile scents of earth and harvests growing,  
And blushing fruits that thirst for his embrace.*

*Her silken-cushion loins burn to enfold him.  
Her breasts, like orphans, ache for his caress.  
She parts her satin thighs that yearn to hold him,  
And welcomes him with eager acquiesce.*

*He falls on her, with frenzied desperation,  
And he, who by possession is obsessed,  
Invading her, with wanton penetration,  
Becomes, in truth, the one who is possessed.*

*Then, like a glutton prematurely sated,  
He tumbles from the table, fully spent;  
And she remains, her fire unabated,  
A banquet laid for guest who came and went.*

*And so he leaves with really nothing tasted,  
Of all the riches that she would provide;  
And she, bewildered at the bounty wasted,  
Will, in the future, guard her gifts inside.*

*So sad indeed are offerings untaken  
And opportunities unknown and missed,  
And hidden fires no one will awaken,  
Or liquid lips that, want-full, wait — un-kissed.*





## HELEN KATZMAN

### **AFFECTION**

*Affection comes in a vessel  
Not of china, crystal or earthenware  
Affection is within the vessel of the soul  
Warmth, friendship, understanding  
And devotion dwells within  
It nourishes the soul  
Is the vital spark of life!  
Wonderful gift*



### **When the Moon Moves In Spring**

**The full moon softens in spring-  
a silver powder puff that smooths  
the face of sky to buff and dull the shine  
of winter moonlight.**

**I have often thought winter moonlight  
casts weird shadows in splinter designs  
and reveals a surreal world  
reflecting a radiance of shining steel  
as if there is no need for sunshine**

**until the warmth of spring  
moves the moon farther south  
and a longer day changes  
the appearance of frigidness.**

**It thaws, it breathes, it quickens  
the heart with new possibilities  
and the whole earth listens  
to the melodies of song birds  
flushed from the south in spring**

## LENORA SMALLEY



# GIL ROSCOE

## New Music

I rode this country  
once again.  
Listened to the  
football conversations  
in the restaurants,  
moaned the plastic bags  
hanging onto  
the prairie fences  
and collected  
little shampoo bottles  
from the motels.  
Before I left  
I found a  
hundred dollar bill  
in my mother's dresser  
and used it for  
new music.  
I played tag  
with the trucks  
as we rolled  
up and down  
the Tennessee hills.  
I drank coffee  
that was special good  
and bloody awful.  
My mother's ashes  
rode in the back seat.  
One last tour  
before I drop  
her off at the  
Grand Canyon.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

If you've gotten this far, you've no doubt figured out that our second page was an April Fools joke. (No? Aw, that's just sad!)

It's April! National Poetry Month! (Who comes up with these things?! And when is "National Take Your Editor To Hawaii Month?!") We have a HUGE poetry supplement, PLEASE, for your own enjoyment, read these! Some are amazing, and nourishment for the soul.

In addition, news, announcements and our usual wonderful columnists! Sincere thanks to all.

— The Staff of The Valley Scribe



### THE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

PICK UP A COPY OF OUR STUNNING NEW MEMBERSHIP ROSTER, AT THE SIGN-IN TABLE. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SIGN FOR A COPY.

### Critique Group — Members Invited

Polite, but quite serious, threesome of heretofore unpublished fiction writers seeks additional participants in near two-year-old critique group meeting approximately once a month on Saturdays. Current members: Doug Douglas, Liz Cooke, and Scott Gitlen. If you have an interest, please e-mail your writing sample to: [esemgee@yahoo.com](mailto:esemgee@yahoo.com).

### WEB-BASED CRITIQUE GROUP

Interested in forming an e-mail-based critique group for poetry and short fiction? Contact [Ray Malus](#) for details.

### OPEN MIKE

#### Returns, Next Month

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

If you plan to read, please bring an extra copy of your piece for our hearing-impaired members. (If you read at the March meeting, you cannot read in May — unless there is available time.)

### BECOME A MEMBER

Display newly-published books/flyers/business cards/post-cards regarding your own writing endeavors and/or writer-related activities.

- Participate in Member-Showcase Presentations.
- Read at Open Mikes.
- Publish in 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.

### THANK YOU

Earn a Thank You — Volunteer!

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

### A Big Thank You

To *Duke Howard* for helping with the March set-up.



# Out And About

## ***L.A. Times Festival of Books***

By Stephanie Sharf

Are you planning to attend the annual L.A. Times Book Festival on Saturday and Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> on the UCLA campus? This is a can't-miss-it event for much of the Southern California book world. General admission is free, however, tickets are required for the indoor panels and speakers. Tickets will be available for a nominal fee at Ticketmaster.com starting Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at noon. For more information, go to <http://events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks>.

To volunteer to work a two-hour shift at the CWC booth, send an e-mail to Cyndy Largenticha at [cyndycat1234@aol.com](mailto:cyndycat1234@aol.com).

Be sure to stop by the CWC booth and say "Hi." I'll be there between 2:00 and 4:00 pm on Saturday!

## **LIFE MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT**

*In honor of the Centennial of  
California Writers Club,  
Life Membership  
is being offered at a discounted price.*

*The regular cost of life membership is  
\$675.*

***The centennial rate is  
\$599.***

*Life memberships are an option for  
existing Active Status members only.  
Offer will expire on June 30, 2010.*

## ***Past SFV Speaker, Stathos Orphanos, Exhibit at Oceanside Museum Of Art***

Honor: Marine Portraits by Stathis Orphanos  
March 27 – May 2, 2010 OMA Groves Gallery

Glimpse inside the private lives of young Marines in our upcoming exhibition Honor: Marine Portraits by Stathis Orphanos. Restricted access to Camp Pendleton was granted by the Pentagon for this rare photography exhibition that gave Orphanos the opportunity to photograph major base activity including Marine training camp and the intimate living quarters on base. These never-before-seen images depict intimate portraits of hundreds of San Diego Marines. With great respect, Orphanos captures the rituals of Marine life and honors these young men in the prime of their life.

# The Bulletin Board

**MEETINGS**  
 ARE HELD AT 12:30 P.M.  
 ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> 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 MEETINGS**  
 May 15, 2010 – Gene Perrett!

**UPCOMING MEMBER SHOWCASES**  
 April 17, 2010 – Ray Malus

**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>

**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](mailto:membership@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](mailto: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.

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.

**Get Member Benefits  
 1/2 Price!  
 (See announcement,  
 page 6.)**

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL TAKE PLACE IN JUNE FOR THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

Below is a list of offices that will be open and available for the 2010-2012 years.  
If you, or someone you know, fits the qualifications and would like to volunteer for an office, please  
contact a member of the Nominating Committee. ....

Please note: Nominations will also be accepted from the floor prior to the elections.

**President** – Sets a professional and congenial tone for the club.

Prepares agendas and presides over meetings of the Executive Board, Board of Directors, and general membership. The President shall, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, direct the affairs of the club in accordance with the Bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order. Also appoints members of the Board of Directors.

Qualifications. Outgoing demeanor, good organizational skills, open mind, positive attitude, accountability.

**Vice-President** – Assists the President and assumes the duties of President in his or her absence. Usually assumes the duties of Membership Chair.

Qualifications. Outgoing demeanor, ability to interact easily with members, reliable, organized.

**Secretary** – Prepares and records Minutes for all Board meetings, handles incoming and outgoing correspondence, and maintains administrative files for the branch.

Qualifications. Good writing skills, accountability, and the ability to summarize information.

**Treasurer** – Keeps proper books of account and reports the financial status of the branch at each Board of Directors' Meeting. Duties include: receiving and depositing all funds and paying bills as authorized by the Executive Board; co-sign all checks; and prepares all quarterly financial reports as required by the Central Board of the California Writers Club.

Qualifications. Honesty, some bookkeeping knowledge, organizational skills, accountability.

*The following chairpersons are appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. Their duties and qualifications follow.*

**Program Chair** – Secures speakers for the monthly meetings and confirms engagements prior to the meetings; writes up a speaker column for the monthly newsletters; introduces the speaker(s) at the meetings; purchases a gift and presents same after the presentation; follows up with a thank-you letter or email.

Qualifications. Outgoing demeanor, reliable, organizational skills, ability to interact with people easily, accountability.

**Membership Chair** (Usually the Vice-President assumes this position) – Invites guests at meetings to become active members; receives, validates, and processes membership applications; provides copies of member information to all officers and the Newsletter Editor; has member nametags made up; maintains and dispenses them to members at board meetings; submits quarterly membership reports and year-end reports to the Central Board.

Qualifications. Enthusiasm, accountability, ability to interact with people easily and tactfully, good record-keeping skills, desire to help others.

**Hospitality Chair** – Welcomes guests; purchases food, refreshments, paper goods, and condiments as necessary for the monthly meetings; arranges them on a table; oversees cleanup, and seeks out other members to help with hospitality and cleanup. Turns in receipts for supplies to Treasurer for payment.

Qualifications: Enthusiasm, accountability, ability to interact with people easily, desire to help others.

**Newsletter Editor** – Researches and writes articles as needed for ten newsletter issues; prepares layout and design; sets tone of newsletter; seeks and accepts submissions; has newsletter proofread by president and one other member before e-mailing final copy; e-mails final copy to members, editors and presidents of other branches.

Qualifications. Enthusiasm, accountability, good writing skills.



The Fine Print

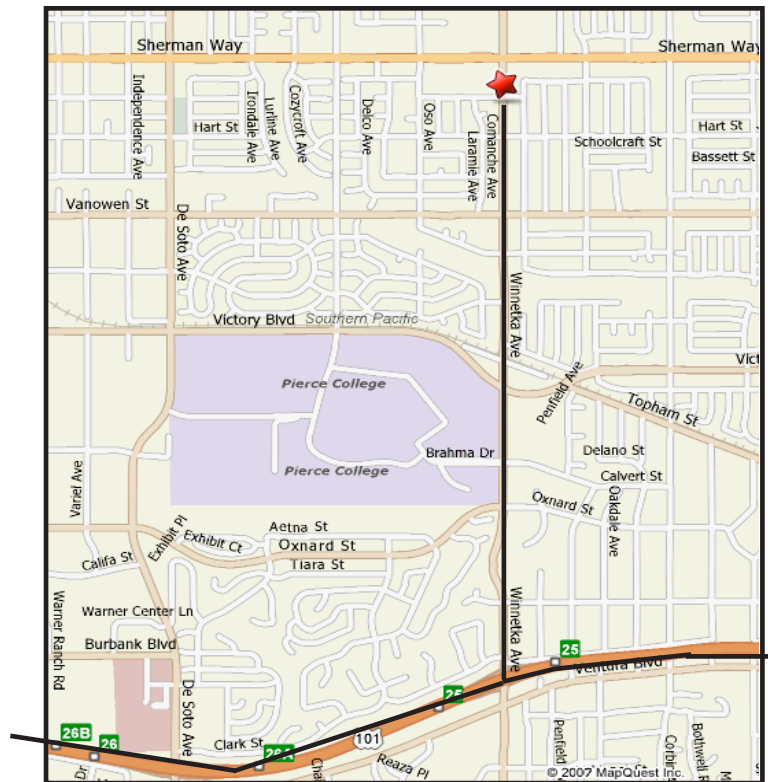
**ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS**  
**7136 WINNETKA AVE**  
**CANOGA PARK, CA 91306**

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  
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 Ken Watts, Erica Stux, Ray Malus  
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**California Writers Club**  
 San Fernando Valley Branch



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