June Featured Speaker:
Linda O. Johnston
MYSTERIES

(Bio by Linda O. Johnston)
Linda O. Johnston’s first published fiction appeared in Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine and won the Robert L. Fish Memorial Award for Best First Mystery Short Story of the year (1988). Since then, Linda has published more short stories, plus sixteen romance novels, including romantic suspense for Harlequin Intrigue, and paranormal romance for Harlequin Nocturne. She is also the author of the Kendra Ballantyne, Pet-Sitter cozy mystery series from Berkley Prime Crime and the upcoming spin-off Pet Rescue mystery series. Kendra and Linda are both lawyers who live in the Hollywood Hills with their tri-color Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, both named Lexie. However, unlike Kendra, Linda has never lost her law license temporarily and become a pet sitter, nor is Linda a murder magnet.

Linda is a member of Romance Writers of America, Mystery Writers of America, Thriller Writers of America and Sisters in Crime. She blogs with fellow cozy mystery writers on KillerHobbies.blogspot.com.

Linda will be speaking at the June meeting of the California Writers Club, San Fernando Valley Chapter, about cozy mysteries, including how to come up with a theme that people will love, how to murder people the cozy way, and how to have your amateur sleuths solve the crimes in a manner that readers will enjoy.

For more information, go to: http://lindaojohnston.com/
June Meeting-in-Review:  
**Gene Perret: Comedy Guru**  
*By Ethel Ann Pemberton*

Gene Perret, the Guru of Comedy Writing, entertained members and guests at the May 15th meeting with a parade of one-liners and positivity. He believes that if you want to be a T.V. writer, and if you keep writing scripts, you will be a T.V. writer. More advice: “You have to be positive or you won’t make it in the writing field.” Perret ought to know because he wrote for Bob Hope, Carol Burnett, Phyllis Diller, Tim Conway, and many other notable entertainers. He even traveled with Bob Hope on USO tours and comedy gigs, feeding him one-liners wherever they went. He said Hope was very discerning about the jokes he used. Although Hope had a staff of writers, on an Academy Award Show that he emceed, Hope used ten jokes out of the thirty Perret had submitted.

Perret said Hope always wanted current material. One day Perret mentioned to Hope that President Bush was going to give an award to Johnny Carson. Hope replied, “Give me jokes about Carson — NOW.” Perret related staying up all night, sitting in a bathtub, writing one-liners for Hope.

Perret said he’d also do personal work for Hope such as writing his son’s graduation speech. Gene said Hope was his idol and his favorite comedian — plus he paid well.

As for rejection, Perret said, “Don’t take it personally. It happens to every writer. Sometimes it occurs because a similar article had been recently published, perhaps the article just wasn’t needed, or perhaps the publisher just hates your guts — and occasionally—it’s just that.”

Perret also said that rejection can often be a blessing in disguise. In pursuit of a role on Welcome Back, Kotter, nineteen actors auditioned for one slot. Later, when an actress was needed for a sitcom, the producer remembered her from the audition. He called her back, and instead of getting hired for one performance, she ended up a ‘regular’ on a weekly sitcom.

In one instance, a publisher turned down a manuscript, saying he thought it was “nutty.” The manuscript, Conversations with God, later became Basic Story-Telling Guidelines

**I. Structure**

A. Who is the protagonist, and what does he/she want?  
B. What does he/she do to accomplish his/her goal, and who/what is the opposing force?  
C. What events occur that bring him/her to reaching or failing to reach his/her goal?

**II. Story**

Once upon a time something happens to someone, and he/she decides to pursue a goal. So he/she devises a plan of action. Even though there are forces trying to stop him/her, the protagonist moves forward because there is a lot at stake.

Just as things seem as bad as they can get, he/she learns an important lesson, OR when offered a prize he/she has striven so vigorously to win, the protagonist must decide whether or not to take it. And in making that decision, a need is fulfilled that had been created by something in his/her past, OR a goal is reached, or found to be unattainable, that the protagonist had been strenuously seeking.

While most of us write instinctively, if any traditional elements are missing or weak, the story won’t work as well. For example, if the obstacles are too easy to overcome, or there isn’t a lot at risk for the hero/heroine, the reader won’t care about the outcome.

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**Personal Message From the President**

As many of you already know, I’ve moved to Georgia where the humidity is high and one sweats without even putting pen to paper. So, I’ll have obstacles to overcome. The greatest one I can think of is that of not seeing you or networking with you on a regular basis.

It has been my pleasure to meet you, know you, and serve you this past year as president and program chair. I believe the strength of the San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club lies in its diversity of members. You are a dynamic and talented group of writers that will always have a place in my heart. Don’t be surprised to find yourselves in my novels, appropriately disguised, of course.

I hope to see you at the June 19th meeting to wish you a personal goodbye and much luck in your writing endeavors.

—Ethel Ann Pemberton
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!)  


Zoetrope Short Story is an annual contest for unpublished short stories. Prize: 1st place: $1,000, 2nd place: $500, 3rd place: $250, plus 7 honorable mentions. Entry fee: $15. Guidelines for SASE, by e-mail, on website, or in publication. Deadline: October 1. Entries MUST be unpublished. Word length: 5,000 words max. Open to any writer. “Please mark envelope clearly ‘short fiction contest.’” Winners will be notified by phone or e-mail December 1. Results announced December 1. A list of winners will be posted on website and published in the spring issue. The winning story will be published on the website as a special supplement to the spring issue. Address: Zoetrope: All-Story, 916 Kearny St., San Francisco, CA 94133. Phone: (415) 788-7500. Fax: (415) 989-7910. E-mail: contests@all-story.com. Website: www.all-story.com. Contact: Krista Halverson, managing editor.  

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**Perret** (cont’d from pg. 2)

a best seller. Perret repeated, “Don’t take rejection seriously — it’s only business.”

He quoted Goldwyn as once saying, “It’s only an educated fling — a guess. When we hire someone, we sometimes can be wrong.”

“Rejection is painful,” Perret said. “Give yourself a moment of self-pity, have a nice lunch, and start working again.”

Perret related an incident about a gentleman who had written a manuscript and said he wanted a $200,000 advance for it. But everyone he contacted refused to even read it.

Danny Simon, Neil Simon’s brother boasted, “I believe I’m the best writer in the world.” A friend replied, “You’re not even the best writer in the family.”

Perret told us that writers, especially comedy writers, cannot have writer’s block. “Write bad, but write.” Further advice: “Your love for your craft will make you write better and better.”

In response to a question about the shelf-life of a joke, Perret said: “After told, it’s gone. Comedians don’t really want jokes. They want someone to provide jokes.” He further emphasized, “A comedy writer needs a fresh outlook on everything. Get creative with now or the future — forget about the past.”

Not only did the comedy-writing guru Perret give his captive audience laughter, but he provided a wealth of information about turning rejection into positivity.  

**ELECTIONS — 2010**

Elections for our new Board will take place at our June meeting (June 19th). The Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of officers:

President: Stephanie Sharf
Vice President/Membership: Lenora Smalley (current Membership Chair)
Treasurer: Judy Presnall (current Treasurer)
Secretary: Ken Watts

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor.

Please be there and make your wishes known. Remember: YOU are the Branch!  

**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.

When writing, let nothing happen deliberately.
When re-writing, let nothing happen accidentally.
As you read this, we are about to go on summer hiatus. Lots more time to write! (That is how you intend to spend your time, isn’t it?) Perhaps it’s not my place, but I’d like to issue a few challenges to you.

First. Go over your writing, and look for clichés. Clichés are traps. There’s no rule that says you can’t be the second person to express something in the same way. But read your material, and if a phrase sounds familiar, ask yourself, “Did I just take the easy way out? Would a little more thought have found a better way of saying that?” If not, fine! But it’s very easy to let habit take over, and just plug in a shop-worn phrase or image. If so, fix it!

Second. You poets. One of your tools is economy. Another is vividness. Are there extra words? Are there non-specific images, slushy general adjectives, miscellany that doesn’t add anything but word count? Cut it! Don’t just take up space; fill it!

Third. You storytellers. Are you soggy with adverbs? Do a word-search for “ly” words. Could that adverb be eliminated by using a more specific verb? Do it! Are your adjectives flaccid? When you wrote “red,” did you mean “crimson?” Change it!

Fourth. Question your narrator. Do we trust him? Do we like him? Does he make us want to listen? Remember: he’s your surrogate.

Fifth. Writing dialogue? Do all your people sound the same? Why? Do you really know who they are? If not, study them! Read your dialogue aloud. Do people actually talk that way? If you overheard it from the next room, would you believe it? Or would it sound like badly acted soap opera. Re-write!

Sixth. Do a “Sense Inventory.” How many of the senses are you appealing to? Sight? (Of course!) Smell? Taste? Hearing? Touch? Inner sense (“He could feel his heart pounding.”)? Is it enough? Too much?

Seventh. Check your plot development! Does it follow reasonably? Now, ask yourself, “If my reader’s house starts to burn down, will my book be one of the things he takes with him when he escapes — just because he has to know what happens next?” No? Do something about it!

Eighth: Characters. Love, hate, fear, whatever! Will your readers care? No? Flesh them out!

Most important: Why are you writing? As “Writers” (capital ‘W’) we are Artists. I know. It sounds “stuffy” and “pretentious.” It is not. We are trying to illuminate the human experience and expose our commonality. That’s the purpose of “Art.” If your target audience is only the people who already know and love you, you are “writing,” but you’re not “Writing.”

Each of us is unique — and that very uniqueness is the commonality that makes us the same. Find something that needs to be said — that will resonate with others of our race. Something bare, naked, and true — that’s never been said before, or never been said in the way you want to say it. Then write it! Clearly! Vividly! (Well, sometimes adverbs are useful!) Make us see it! Make us feel it! Make us know it! Convince each of us that we are not alone — and you will no longer be alone.

And isn’t that why you write?

Let me know how it goes. See ya in the Fall.

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. We are interested in everyone’s successes.)

Linda Ballou is announcing the publication of her new book, Lost Angel Walkabout—One Traveler’s Tales, a “spirited collection of travel narratives.” Available at Amazon.com. Signed copy with free shipping at author’s site www.LindaBallouAuthor.com

To say that poetry is “just prose broken into small lines,” is utter stupidity. A 1040 form put through a wood-chipper is not “poetry” any more than excrement rolled into tiny balls is “medicine.”
Playing the Game of Life
Edward Louis Braun

Though Nature’s delights
And those we create
Continued to sustain me
At times my mind became
A whirling carousel
Of confusion from
Discovery of many
Illusions and delusions,

Discovering that each of us
Is a scene of empty space
Where trillions of cells
Dance happily together
Until the music stops,

Wondering where and how
In our inner galaxy of cells
Our benevolent and brutal
Qualities arise.

Troubled by the depth
Of my unknowing,
The insoluble mystery
Of our birth and form,
Perplexed about
Our purpose,
Knowing the certainty
Of our plight and end,
I wondered how to play
This bewildering game.

Though there wasn’t
A sudden epiphany
I gradually came to see
Much of what life offered me:
I could enjoy contemplating
So many of life’s mysteries,
Follow my passion and
Cultivate what I do best,
Be caring and kind,
Present a friendly face,
Enjoy Nature, fun and play,
Have one to love each day,
Be persistent in pursuit
Of education, justice, truth.
KALEIDOSCOPE OF AMERICA
Helen Katzman

Couples young and old
Well dressed, or shabby
Walking hand in hand
Chatting, smiling

Couples young and old
Walking side by side
Eyes dull
Expressionless
Void to the outside world

Girls jauntily moving hips
Lacy tops slung off shoulder
Jeans hanging below navel
Eyes darting from window to window
And
Boys eying the girls
With jeans below hips
Swaggering, knowing

Woman, walking, walking,
Expression of
Loneliness, sadness
Cell phone glued to ear
Oblivious to surroundings
Have they been molested?
Divorced?

Women in pedal pushers tight over bottom
Or skirts so short and tight
Legs barely move
Parading the halls of the malls

Women dressed for business
High heels sounding with each stride
As if to show their importance
In the business world

Woman dressed to represent their cultures
Indian, African, Hindu
Appearing comfortable in their new homeland
This is America!

Sustenance
Ray Malus

You feed my eye with lovely form and face,
With glowing smiles and gently doubtful brow,
And sassy hips that sway with fluid grace
Like ocean waves with treasures to endow.

You feed my ear with soft impassioned sighs
That crush into my shoulder in the night,
With whispered talk and murmured lullabies,
And rolling laughs that burble with delight.

You feed my breath with womanly perfume,
Of heady ginger blooms and jasmine sprays.
And underneath the smells of earth and womb,
And dusky secret scents where mystery lays.

You feed my mouth with tastes of velvet skin
With honey lips, and tang of salted sweat,
On ripened breasts that pulse with fire within
And dewy thighs with sweetened nectar wet.

You feed my touch with hair like flowing silk,
And molded flesh lasciviously lush;
And satin textured body soft as milk,
That warms my palms and loins with heated flush.

You feed my heart with numberless delights,
Sustaining me in vast uncounted ways.
My nourishment in yet imagined nights
My sustenance for yet uncounted days.
Why
Howard Goldstein

“That’s fine for you. You’re well known. But, it’s different for me. What I do isn’t important,” the young woman standing in the audience at the art seminar said, at the Question and Answer session.

“Really?” the speaker inquired, “What is it that you do?”

In a very quiet voice, she answered, “I design and paste up classified ads for the Times.”

The speaker smiled, and began to do some math. “Okay, let’s suppose you paste up only ten ads a day for three hundred days a year. That’s a total of three thousand ads. Would that be a fair figure?”

The woman nodded, and the speaker continued. “And in a city of many millions we’ll assume the circulation of the paper is perhaps a few million each day. But we will be conservative and only count one million. Multiply that by 3000 ads and that’s a lot of newspapers. But, of course, only a fraction of a newspaper’s classified section is read by people looking for jobs. So let’s take an arbitrary figure of 300 people a day who read the classifieds looking for jobs. If only thirty of those read your ads each day we’re back to three thousand people in the year reading your ads, looking for work. Do you think that might be a fair figure?”

“I guess so.” The attendee replied.

“Okay. Now, of those three-thousand people, do you imagine one or two might actually get work from those ads?”

“Yes, it’s possible.”

“Actually, it is more than possible,” the speaker assured her, “It is very likely. And if only one person got a job in the entire year from your efforts, it could change his or her life, feed a family, or launch a career. Would you consider that important?”

“Of course,” the young woman admitted, with a smile. I thought so, too.

At each Expo, once again the nooks and crannies of exhibit floor and presentation rooms will be filled with little programs, introductory products and fledgling services. As with the countless other daily competitors for my time, interest and money, I am inclined to just pass by or drop their literature in the trash basket. Except that sometimes I remember that seminar, and the value of what may seem to be the least important item deserving of my attention. So, I pause, and ask a question, or simply listen.

It’s amazing, what wonders I’ve discovered.

Demonstrators for games or products I will never need have taught me lessons that save me hours of work. Programs designed for purposes outside of my discipline contain tools, plug-ins, filters and methods that can make my work leapfrog that of others in my field.

Everywhere, people want to give us information or tools, want to be of purpose in this world, just as you and I. While it seems everyone is striving for the wherewithal to exist, the truth is otherwise. Everyone is looking to justify their existence, hoping someone will listen, care, and take or buy what they offer. The whole world is simply a humongous buffet!

Each of us does so many seemingly unimportant things every day without extending their comprehensive meaning into the larger world. It is easy to lose our bearings in the complexity of business and society. From a one-inch classified ad to a two-page full color spread, billboard, campaign, logo, product name or piece of copy—everything that contributes to an exchange or communication—contributes to the lives of countless others to infinite and unknowable effect.

Whenever I find myself despairing of purpose, questioning my own reason for existence, I dedicate a moment of gratitude to that anonymous young woman for her question. For the speaker at the seminar that day was none other than myself. I’ve grown to understand that the answer I gave, while hoping it would lend greater purpose to her life, was as much hers as my own. Who among us has not asked it?

And the answer? I prefer to think it came as a blessing from somewhere outside myself, as an explanation for a seemingly unanswerable and eternal question. Why am I here?

And if the shoe fits, you’re welcome.
**Full Frontal**

By Douglas William Douglas

“You sure I won’t be disturbing your mom, Ann?” Bjorn Kelsen asked as he pried open the scuffed, faded gray canvas-covered guitar case Lynn Heathbriar had pulled from behind a stack of umbrellas and musty old luggage in the hall closet. “No -- she’s probably going over the court briefs for tomorrow. You couldn’t break her concentration with a wrecking ball.”

After closing the curtains on the arched bay window, Ann sat on the couch next to Bjorn while he tuned. There was no mistaking Ann was Lynn’s daughter, with the same swept hairstyle down to her shoulder, but darker blonde and without the streaks of gray. Her dark eyes were larger and lips more voluptuous, giving her a gentler, less business-like appearance. But add thirty pounds plus thirty years and they could be twins.

The thick walls, beamed ceilings, heavy antique Spanish furniture and Mexican throw rugs over dark hardwood floors of this mission-style home in Hancock Park put Bjorn in the mood for something classical. Fortunately, the guitar was one of those vintage Yamaha ‘Red-label’ acoustics that had been so popular with folkies in the 1970s. Though badly out of tune, once corrected it sounded like plucked velvet. He played “Les Adieux” by Sor, a piece he’d learned during his first year at Juilliard. Because of his swollen, injured hand he had to slow the tempo, making the piece more romantic.

Alone with Bjorn for once, Ann made no pretense of checking him out: the blond highlights in Bjorn’s trendily disarrayed chestnut hair, his emerald green eyes and slim physique all belied his thirty years. Mesmerized, Ann’s yearning eyes gazed at Bjorn’s fingers caressing the guitar strings. There was a contented hush as the final chord faded.

“That was wonderful, Bjorn. Will you play some more?” she asked, touching his knee.

“My hand still hurts a little,” he said, lifting his left hand and turning it side-to-side like a Rose Parade Queen’s wave. “Maybe tomorrow?”

“I’d really like that.” She took Bjorn’s right hand in hers and led him down the hall to the guest room.

“Sleep tight,” Bjorn stretched out, giving Bjorn a peck on his cheek. “See you tomorrow.”

“Gute Nacht, Fraulein Ann.”

The next morning after stepping out of the shower, Bjorn was lathering his face when a shadow in the mirror clued him that the door behind had opened. He turned to face his intruder, full frontal.

“ Aren’t you a little young to see a man naked?” he asked.

“I’m twenty-two; that’s plenty old.” Ann puckered the corners of her mouth to imply this was pretty routine for her.

“I thought you were just a freshman at USC.”

“I took a few years off after high school. Went to Europe and stuff.”

“What if your mom sees you in here?” Bjorn pulled a towel from the rack, dabbing a drop of water from his hip before wrapping it around his waist.

“She left for work an hour ago.”

With a short burst of air through his nostrils, Bjorn turned and resumed shaving.


“What’s that again?”

“The tattoo on your shoulder -- ‘B.K.’ is you, so who’s ‘A.S.’?”

“A friend. Now, can I have a little privacy here?” He finished the left side of his face, rinsed the Schick disposable and started again at the right sideburn.

“That’s kind of ugly to have a tattoo of a real heart instead of the valentine kind.”

“Yeah, well, like you say, I guess that means it’s real, doesn’t it?” He continued shaving, but when the door closed he straightened his arms and leaned on the sink, hanging his head. There was a lot of symbolism in that tattoo. Sometimes love is ugly, especially when it’s genuine. There actually had been a valentine heart tattoo there once -- the fake kind, with different initials next to his. He’d had them laser-expunged, then changed designs to cover the scar -- all for his ‘A.S.’ Bjorn wondered if his lover had done the same, or was someone else’s name still engraved inside his beating heart. Albert, Albert, Albert -- I never miss you until I think I might not own you anymore. Where are you, Albert Spiegel?
The Rising of Sweet Pea
Duke Howard

Sweet Pea rose from his grave. His hair was the color of corn silk, his eyes blue as the sky above and his face as green as the meadow below. He was lean and thin as a fence, and his faded blue bib-overalls hung there blowing in the hot summer breeze. He stood looking at his world.

“Howdy Sky,”

Then he looked at the valley with its meadows, corn fields and river.

“Howdy Valley, Sweet Pea Walker es the name. I’m comin’ at ya from Eternal Rest, my new home.

“I can see it’s gonna be anotha beautiful summer morning down en Wendy Cove Valley, not too hot an’ not too cold. Up here, I can jes about smell the freshness of the early mornin’ dew, an’ I can jes about see dat Ol Daddy Sun creepin’ up tu the top of Snake Mountain. Any moment now, it’s gonna ta break loose an’ come roarin’ over the top. One, two, three. It’s up; it’s over.

“Never tire of watchin’ it light up the valley. It seems like I’ve been here fer eternity, but I jes got here. I came here unexpectedly. I didn’t ask tu come, an’ I certainly wasn’t plannin’ on comin’, but here I be.

“See dere’s a curve down dere, an’ I came tu know that curve, an’ I came tu know it fer the last time. I knew it before, but not as well as I got tu know it that night.

“There was a light fog, a slick on the road an’ a deer en the headlights. Of course none of dis woulda happened if I haven’t been drinkin’. I was ovea en Goshen playin’ a gig at my Uncle Blind Dawg Walker’s place. I was feelin’ so good that I stayed ovea an’ had a few. Well, I made it outta of Dawg’s an’ all the way tu top of the grade when it happened.

“I saw dat deer. He was en the road. Now, wha-hell was a deer doin’ up here? The deer crossin’ was down below, but here he was lookin’ en my headlights wid dose big brown eyes.

“Well, I grabbed on that steerin’ wheel an’ pulled it tu ta right. Wrong side, ta bank was on the left, ta deer en the middle an dat slick on the right. I hit dat slick an’ went slidin’ off ento space. On the way down, looked ento the mirra an’ I could swear that deer was wavin’ bye, bye. Down, down I went. Hit dat bottom, went up en flames.

“Noothin’ much left of me, but a pile of ashes. That’s all dey found when dey scraped me up an’ put me en a box. Deys brought it up here, an’ here I be restin’ under one of dese slabs fer the rest of eternity.”

“The Perilous Pizza”
By Jackie Houchin

My mouth watered, as I remembered the large slice of leftover pizza in the fridge. Sitting behind the wheel of my SUV, I visualized the thin crust, the gooey cheese, the spicy sausage and curling slices of pepperoni, the onions, olives, green peppers and mushrooms - my “reward” for a too long day at work. I deserved it. I craved it.

Why is this traffic so slow?
I thought about Jack; imagined him opening the fridge, noticing my foil-covered triangle of meat and cheese. I clenched the wheel and willed him to ignore the pizza and eat his salad. What had his doctor said? “Your LDL is dangerously high, Mr. Spratt. You must take care.” I pounded the wheel with my fist.

Will this light never change?
Suddenly alert, I sensed Jack lifting the foil; sniffing the sausage; licking his lips.

Don’t do it! Eat your salad! Remember your cholesterol! Remember your heart!

The microwave beeped. I stepped on the gas; ran the light.

The pizza came out. I swerved and heard a crash behind me.

If he’s eaten it, I’ll kill him!
But the pizza already had.
Smokin’
Ray Malus

For those who don’t know, I am the Junior Warden of an Episcopal Church. Basically, that just means I have the most keys. It also means that I try to be available and friendly to the people who use the church.

Our church shares the facility with several other congregations. One of them is a large Maronite Church.

Maronites are an ancient, orthodox denomination that traces its origin to Biblical Lebanon. As a culture, they straddle the gulf between their Aramaic history and the American present. They are interesting folks.

Last Sunday, I arrived at church early. On the Church Calendar, it was Ascension Sunday. This is evidently a big deal for Maronites. The parking lot was completely filled with carnival stalls, as was the patio.

I was walking across the grounds greeting Lebanese folk who were setting up for the day’s festivities, when — over in the corner of the patio, next to our small chapel — I spied a colorful awning. Under it were at least 15 hookahs — Turkish water-pipes. I walked over. A teen-aged couple was arranging the hookahs. The exotic pipes were all about 4-feet tall, and the water reservoirs were iridescent colors: crimson, blue, yellow. They looked brand new with the morning sun glinting off them.

“Wow!” I said. “Are those hookahs?”

The boy-half of the team smiled at me broadly, and said in slightly contused English, “Yes. You know hookahs? …”

Now, look. I’m not perfect. I’m a writer and an actor, and I have more characters inside me than a New York Subway train at rush-hour. So maybe it was the fact that just thirty-six hours before — I’d been performing Country songs at our church barbeque in the very same patio, or maybe it was just plain cussedness, but at that moment, one of my personae, a “good-ol’-boy” named “R. J.” chose to assert himself.

“… Yes. You know hookas?!”

“Why certainly, Son. Why, I’ve been aroun’ quite a few in my time.”

The Lebanese guy smiled shyly, “Where you know hookahs?”

“Hell, Son. I was in Haight-Ashbury in the 70s. I saw more hookers than you’ve ever seen!” R. J. was cookin’.

The boy caught one of my little jokes — but only one. “We don’ smoke no funny stuff,” he grinned, “only tobacco.”
ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

This is our final issue of the year. As we prepare for the Summer vacation, I’d like to express my gratitude to all the people that made this year’s issues possible: my colleagues, Ethel Ann and Judy; our regular columnists, Ken and Erica; and all of you, the members, who have been so willing and eloquent in your submissions. Have a great Summer. Write, write, write!
Right?

— Ray

IMPORTANT!

DUE TO THE YOM KIPPUR HOLIDAY,
SEPTEMBER’S MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 11TH!
SAME BAT-TIME, SAME BAT-CHANNEL!

STAY ACTIVE OVER THE SUMMER!

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.

WEB-BASED CRITIQUE GROUP
Interested in forming an e-mail-based critique group for poetry and short fiction? Contact Ray Malus for details.

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 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.)
A Glorious Tradition Returns

At the dawn of the Twentieth Century, Jack London and his literary pals often gathered at the home of Joaquin Miller in the Oakland hills for picnics and conversation. In 1909, these informal outdoor literary salons—“a blanket and a basket of chow”—evolved into the California Writers Club. For many years, CWC honored its heritage by maintaining the tradition of an annual picnic at Joaquin Miller Park. On July 10, 2010, you are invited to join your fellow CWC members as we revive the tradition of food and fellowship in the majestic setting of Joaquin Miller Park.

Gentle-to-ambitious walks in Writers Memorial Grove • Potluck • See Joaquin Miller’s home • Visit Woodminster Amphitheater and The Cascades

Saturday, July 10, 2010 2:00–5:00 p.m.

The Fire Circle at Joaquin Miller Park, 3594 Sanborn Drive, Oakland

Admission is free; reservations are requested. Contact your Central Board representative.

East of Eden Writers Conference

September 24 to 26, 2010 -------- Salinas, California

southbaywriters.com/EastofEden2010

Out And About

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.
The Bulletin Board

MEETINGS... ARE HELD AT 12:30 P.M. 
ON THE 3rd SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH 
(September — June)

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

We will be taking summer hiatus.
Check the September Valley Scribe (due out next September) 
for next year’s exciting events!

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 cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com.
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: 400 words or less
- Short Stories: 800 words or less
- Poetry: Limited to 30 lines

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.

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.

Guest donations and/or others who request same.
Copies can be downloaded from the Website:

Go to TOC
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, be aware that nominations will also be accepted from the floor prior to the elections. \( \text{See page 4.} \)

**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 name tags made up; maintains and dispenses them to members at general 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.
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.