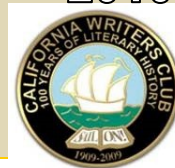


IN FOCUS

SEPTEMBER
2010



Newsletter of the California Writers Club/West Valley

We begin our fifth year in the Katzenberg Room on September 4th.

Our speakers this year will be poets, freelance writers, photographers, playwrights and authors.

Join us!

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west valley whimsicals

1. JULY



It was a peaceful summer. Dave finally found time to read a good book and...relax.

Suddenly, he heard:



Captain Dave!
Get Ready!!

2. AUGUST



Huh? Gotta get moving!

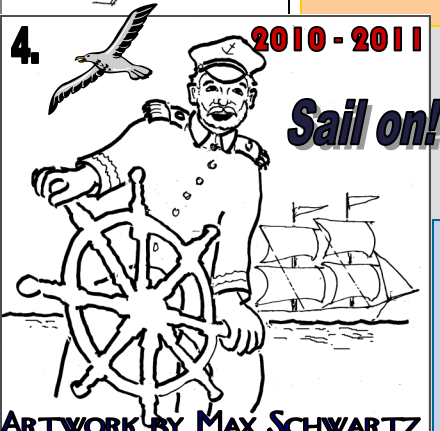
SEPTEMBER

3.



Ready,
J.L.

He's checked the charts, readied the sails, manned the decks and got our ship in shape for the next voyage.



2010 - 2011

Sail on!

ARTWORK BY MAX SCHWARTZ

And so the good ship CWC/WV sets sail for another year of adventures in the Katzenberg Room. Captain Dave is on the bridge...so...

All hands on deck!

text by K. Hightove

FEATURED SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER



Patricia Fry

Patricia Fry wears many hats. She began her writing career as a freelancer. Her articles have appeared in over 300 publications such as *Writer's Digest*, *Mature Outlook*, *Cat Fancy*, *The Toastmaster*, *Entrepreneur*, *Executive Update*, *Your Health*.

When she became a full time

writer, her books reflected an eclectic mix of subjects - from grandparenting and local history to youth mentoring and writers' guides.

Among the 11 writing-related books she has authored, she considers *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book* her hallmark title.

Fry is Executive Director of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) which she helped form in 1996. Currently she writes a monthly *SPAWN Market Update* for the SPAWN website.

Our September speaker writes for and publishes seminars throughout the United States. She also teaches on-line classes on four topics: "How to Write a Successful Book Proposal," "How to Establish a Career as a Freelance Article Writer," "How to successfully Self-publish Your book," and "Book Promotion Workshop."

Come hear this multi-faceted (or multi-hatted) writer. Her topic: Patricia Fry's Top Ten Book Promotion Tips.

- Yolanda Fintor

Executive Board

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Vice-president/Membership ... Sheila Moss

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Members-at-Large ... Bill Hitchins and

Karen Gorback

CWC State RepKaren Gorback

Submission Guidelines

1. Try to submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.
2. Poems should be of moderate length. I edit to keep stanzas in the original form submitted.
3. Prose up to 400 words fills about a half page. Longer pieces need most or all of a page. It's helpful to the editors if your prose submission is edited down to below 1000 words. Use Spell-check before submission. Check for tense uniformity.
4. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any work submitted. Space might be limited and the omission based on editing difficulties.
5. Be advised that the editor may need to make minor changes in text to reduce a document's size or correct grammatical or spelling errors.
6. Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.

President's Message

Welcome to our fifth year as the California Writers Club West Valley branch. I hope you enjoyed your summer. Our Board of Directors has been busy planning the 2010 – 2011 year.

We already have some good speakers lined up, like September's freelance writer Patricia Fry, whom you can read about on page 1 in this issue. And we might enter the blogosphere shortly! Three Board members are exploring the possibilities as we speak. And I have in mind a writing contest sometime during the year. News from the top: Our new Central Board president is Robert Garfinkle of the Fremont Area Writers branch. In my dealings with Bob, he has been friendly, intelligent, and easy to deal with. He replaces Ridge Writers' Casey Wilson, freelance writer and photographer, who spoke to us last September about interviewing techniques.

I hope you didn't miss the August 8 issue of *Newsweek*. Called "the book issue," it was devoted to self-publishing, memoir writing, comic books, biography, and a thirty-seven title "What You Need to Read" list. Quite a goldmine. It would be worth the effort to do some backtracking to secure an issue.

The Board and I welcome your suggestions on how to make our meetings meaningful and enjoyable. One suggestion under consideration is to have more member-involved activities in place of the speaker phase. What do you think? Please feel free to speak up at meetings, e-mail us, or attend one of our Board meetings with your ideas.

DUES ARE DUE!

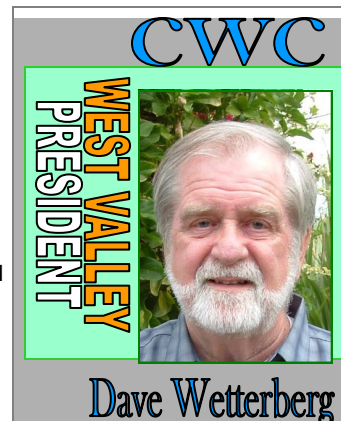
Membership Vice President Sheila Moss will accept dues for 2010-2011 at the Sept. meeting. Annual dues are currently \$45.

Make checks payable to

Sheila Moss

12040 Stewarton Drive

Northridge, CA 91326.



Mensch of the LA Times



Chris
Erskine

Our June speaker, columnist Chris Erskine, displayed a journalist's instincts: he easily homed in on our busy June meeting in the Katzenberg Room. Very impressive. Many a time we've sent out a search party to find our scheduled speaker who is usually hopelessly lost in the MPTF multi-building maze. But ace journalist Chris Erskine came early to watch the action, size up the CWC/WV audience and fashion a topic on the spot for his gig.

Many in the Katzenberg audience were already familiar with Chris Erskine's writing. His *Man of the House* column has been featured in the LA Times Home section for several years. He published a *Man of the House* book in 2006. Regular Erskine readers know that Erskine and his wife had three kids in quick order, a long interval without diaper pails and then Baby Oops, now an active grade schooler. His column is an example of Erskine's specialty: spinning an everyday event into an entertaining slice-of-life story.

Erskine started as a sportswriter thirty years ago. He has traveled around the country, worked for different publications, and learned to write different types of articles and to edit copy. While working for the L.A. Times, he's found stories in every facet of his suburban Southland life. How does he pick up his inspirations?

"I'm great at eavesdropping. Sometimes what I overhear gives me the seed of an idea for an article. I write it down on a Post-It note immediately before I forget it." And from the seed, Erskine has the writing ability to develop a piece with a beginning, middle and end. More revelations from the journalist:

"My favorite topic? Me!" But seriously folks, "I value rhythm, voice and the ironic surprise in a story. The Aha! Moment. And I like to develop character in all my writing."

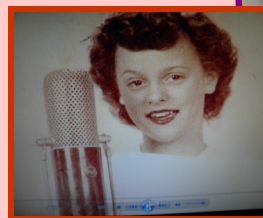
I noticed an example of his character development in a recent sports section article in the L.A. Times. Erskine wrote a *Fan of the House* column about a popular personality at the Dodger Stadium who mimes to "Don't Stop Believin." The man's over-the-top mugging is well known to those who attend games in Chavez Ravine. The giant screen visible only to the stadium crowd shows this act during home games. Thanks to Erskine's article, the larger LA community was brought in on the joke.

His advice for writers? Erskine advised freelancers to always stay alert for a good story. And jot down the ideas on Post-its. (He admitted to being the Post-It Kid.)

"Look for stories in your life. Learn a few lessons, laugh at life's foibles, and then write about them," he told us. And keep a pad of Post-Its with you at all times, right, Chris?

-Kathy Highcove

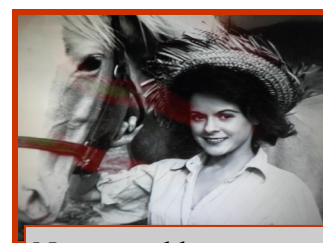
Every Performance Makes Her



Happy

Nancy Kimberly's bright smile lights up the monthly meetings of our CWC/WV. She not only smiles big, she's big on sharing her creative talent. Nancy often reads us a section of her TV Kids script, taking on the voices of her juvenile characters. Close your eyes during her reading and you'd swear a spunky child had stumbled into our meeting and was loudly proclaiming her need to watch TV and play hooky from school.

Nancy is the real McCoy in the acting department. She's been a performer nearly her entire life. She began entertaining folks in her West Virginia community at church and school functions. She had her own radio show at sixteen. When this precocious entertainer reached adulthood, she knew she needed A Plan. *I know*, she thought. *I'll go to L.A. and become an actress!* So Nancy screwed up her nerve, said so long to near and dear and boarded a train to California. She got nervous as the train pulled away from home and she nearly got off at the first stop. A kindly conductor suggested that she should finish the ride and give Hollywood a whirl. "You can get off in Ohio, but your 150 pounds of luggage is checked on to L.A." The plucky little lady wiped her eyes and chugged on across country to our Union Station. The result of Nancy's gutsy decision? A decades long career happily working in the dream machines of movie and television.



Nancy and her co-star Mr. Ed, the Talking Horse. Remember?

We hope Nancy will continue to make personal appearances in the Katzenberg Room this coming year.

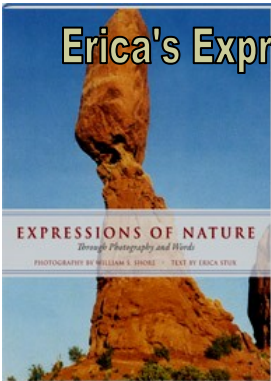
- Kathy Highcove

Judy's book is appreciated anew ...



Judy Presnall is excited to announce that she has signed a contract for her first fiction picture book: *YUKON: SLED DOG*. Judy is the author of twenty-three nonfiction books primarily for the middle grades. One is a series of "Animals With Jobs" for Kid Haven Press. There were fourteen books in the series, including *Sled Dogs*, *Animal Actors*, *Capuchin Monkey Aides*, *Horse Therapists*, *Navy Dolphins*, and *Police Dogs*. These books were written for the school-library market and are available at all the Los Angeles Public Libraries. Check out her web-site: www.JudithJandaPresnall.com

Erica's Expressions of Nature



Through Photography and Words

Expressions of Nature Through Photography and Words is a unique coffee table book combining nature photos taken by my husband William Shore with my poetic captions.

This book of nature photography might grace any coffee table.

For centuries the breath-taking landscapes of Mother Nature have been the source of inspiration for all who bask in her many glories. Following this tradition, my spouse used his camera to record majestic landscapes and close-up images of flowers, birds, insects, and other animals.

To enhance their impact, I have provided captions - some humorous, many of them poetic. The resulting book takes the reader on a visually stunning journey through Nature - a great way to relax after a stressful day.

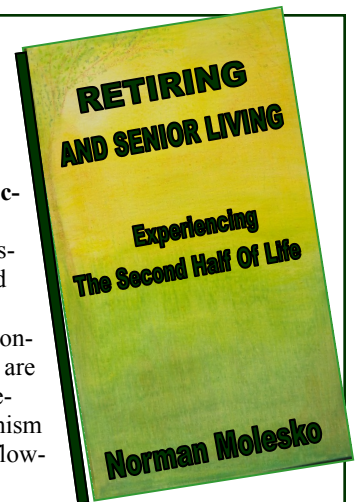
The book can also find a place in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms, to have a calming effect on apprehensive and anxious patients.

- Erica Stux

NORMAN MOLESKO

PUBLISHES BOOK ON THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE

The book is entitled "RETIRING AND SENIOR LIVING, Experiencing the Second Half of Life." Eight major sections are included: Being Newly Retired, Choosing What To Do With Time, Attitudes and Feelings, Knowing Oneself, Relating To Others, Taking Care Of Oneself, Aging Concerns, and Elderly Seniors. Many insights are offered dealing with and navigating retirement and growing older. Threads of optimism and reality shine through, organized in a flowing, meaningful conversation.

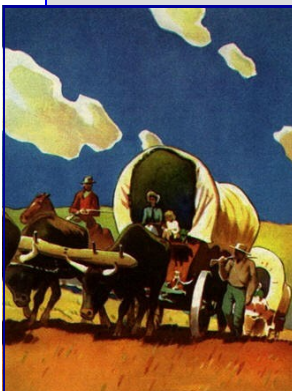


Molesko writes about issues regarding the experiences of retirees, seniors and the elderly. His book will also be of interest to those who care for them, such as, the children of aging parents, family, friends and caregivers. In poetical form, his messages are simple, yet important. Keep this one in mind, as well, for gift giving to Mom, Dad, Grandparents or a newly retired friend. The book will soon be available from Amazon.com, Lulu.com, Barnes & Noble **on line or in their bookstores** and your local bookstore. (ISBN 978-0-557-41811-4)

This Senior writer has recently completed a chapbook, entitled *EXPERIENCES OF A HEART PATIENT*.

ISBN is 978-0-557-41811-4

Diana Does It Again...



Former (and our first) CWC/WV President Diana Johnson has published another historical fiction based on her family's history: *Wagons to Hangtown*. The plot as explained by Diana's press release: "When Edward Daingerfield, age twenty-two, left Green castle, Indiana in 1850 to cross our vast, beautiful country, he assumed he would spend a year or two in California, then return home—pockets full of gold—and marry the girl he'd left behind. Well, that's not even *close* to what happened! Once in California , he *did* discover gold—and much more. He also discovered a freewheeling, exciting lifestyle, where no dream was too big, and disaster lurked as an ever present possibility. He also discovered a most unexpected love." More info: www.BarnesandNoble.com or 1-800-431-1579

Imagery

The Literal Image

A **literal image** is a sensory image drawn without the aid of comparison. No similes. No metaphors.

The fireman exited the building seriously burned and black with soot.

The Figurative Image

A **figurative image** utilizes a comparison (a metaphor or a simile) to assist in the description.

Dad came thundering in the front door. (metaphor - thunder image)

Sensory Images

In life we experience the world through our five senses. We see it, hear it, touch it, smell it, and taste it. And a writer tries to show the world to his readers as he experiences it (nonfiction), or as he imagines it (fiction), through **sensory images**.

An **image** in everyday language is commonly thought of as **visual**, as a **picture**, something we can see.

The dewdrop hung precariously on the edge of the tea leaf (visual image)

In reading and writing, however, the term **image** takes in not only the sense of sight, but also the other four senses.

This writer uses an **auditory image**, an image of sound...

The school band played a collection of noises the teacher identified for us as "Amazing Grace."

This one uses a **tactile image**, an image of touch (feeling)...

His throat pained him every time he swallowed, like sandpaper was rubbing it.

A writer might use a **labial image**, an image of taste...

The wine had the faint taste of something metallic..

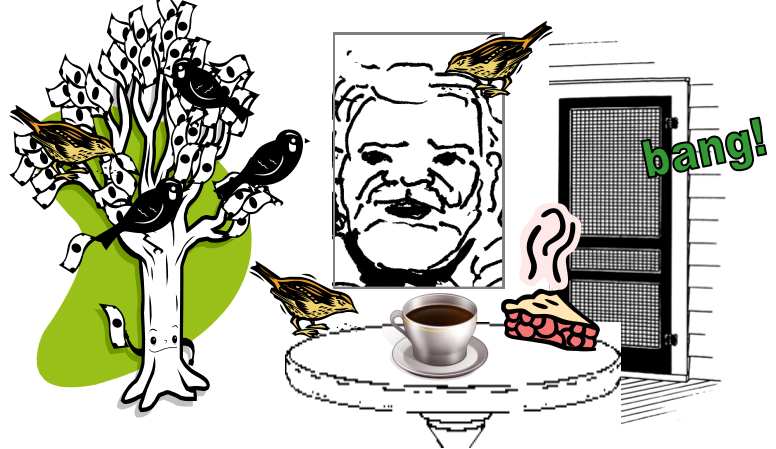
...or an olfactory image, an image of smell...

Surrounded by a cloud of cologne, Maxine, the new secretary, leaned over my desk.

Show, Don't Tell (Again!)

Imagery makes the difference between the writer who *shows*, on the one hand, and the writer who *tells*, on the other. Telling, or narrative without imagery, tends to be vague and general, like *I walked into the back yard*.

But deepened with sensory images, the back yard scene crystallizes:



I walked into the back yard, and the heavy storm door slammed behind me. (sound image) Six frightened sparrows disappeared off the sidewalk into the branches of the scrawny maple tree next door and stared at me. (visual image) I breathed in and caught the aroma of apple pie drifting out from Ma Kempton's kitchen window. (olfactory image) The flavor of cinnamon toast lingered in my mouth, (labial image) and my tongue was still warm from the last sip of my morning coffee. (tactile image)

- Dave Wetterberg

Schiphol Airport



On Wednesday, July 7, 2010, I flew on KLM airline into Amsterdam, Holland.

As the plane was descending into its final approach of the runway it was most fascinating to see through the plane window the topography of the land. One second the plane passed through fields of green pastures, the next second there were clear water canals next to open highways with overhead bridges.

Some areas showed only canals and boats as means of getting around, while other areas showed cars passing by obviously oblivious to the beauty of the land. There were new wind mills posted at the edge of some of the fields. It was rather disappointing not to see the old wooden ones that are so often associated with Holland, yet it did not distract me from enjoying and seeing the picturesque landscape that were made famous by many of the Dutch artists and painters of years ago.

Memories brought back other times of visiting Holland. Remembering and admiring the Dutch people for their ingenuity in claiming the sea and turning it into lush farm land.

Years ago the area around the airport was an open field, but now it has grown into an urban center. Still, every time when coming to Holland, there is a sense of joy because of liking the country and its people.

This time it was the energy and enthusiasm of the people was especially obvious because the Dutch Football team players reached the final contest game against its neighbor Spain in the World Match competition of football.



Orange was the dominant color and it was seen everywhere in the airport. Colorful tulips real and wooden painted, cheeses of all varieties, native costumes and Delft wares greeted those arriving at the spotless clean airport.

But most of all it was the water canal that was seen through the window in the airport that greeted the visitor and reminded me that only in Holland can this scene can be found.

- Marganit Lish

The Beasties of Porter Ranch



Remember the song, "The black bear went over the mountain to see what he could see"? In this case he saw some startled, worried, and fascinated Porter Ranch neighbors on Stewarton Drive. The 100-pound adolescent wasn't running away from home. He was in search of food. He left muddy paw prints on our gate to our tomato garden. He didn't stay; guess he did like tomatoes. The young male was pretty shy since when my neighbor came out armed with her camera, he started climbing the pine tree one up from ours..We knew that May 17, 2010 was going to be memorable.



mobile

It wasn't long that a media circus descended: three helicopters, four fire engines, four TV units, police cars, Fish and Game and Wildlife Rescue. Everyone was waiting for the tranquilizer sharpshooter to arrive. During this time officials deployed a safety cushion to catch the bear's fall. Once the bear had been shot it landed on the trampoline cushion at a perfect three point landed. Last heard of the bear had been returned to its wilderness habitat.



But just as the talk of the bear dissipated, we had another encounter of the animal kind. This time my fellow walkers and myself spotted two rather large rattlesnakes. They were dead. One of them had ten rattles. This time there was no media circus, but much distance and respect. Working with the clues: white bucket and white powder it was determined that a pick-up truck had turned too fast and the bucket and snakes fell out. Ironically the incident occurred not far from a sign proclaiming CAUTION RATTLESNAKES.



Who says suburbia is boring?

- Sheila Moss

A Wedding in Las Vegas

I was excited to be in Las Vegas for my niece's wedding during my summer vacation. Allen's daughter, Bobbi Lee, got married at Caesars Palace on July 7, 2010 to a guy named Nick.. Allen is my brother's son and a hypnotic charmer. Little girls and old ladies fall in love with him. When he hugs you...you know you've been hugged.

Allen's mom, my sister-in-law Loretta, the widow of my brother Herman, needed a scooter-chair, but she was determined to attend the wedding. Her daughter, Phylis, planned to drive Loretta from San Diego to Las Vegas. I thought nothing could stop Loretta! She's always been tenacious and stubborn. It was, after all, her granddaughter who was marrying a guy named Nick.

AT THE HOTEL

My room was in the same wing as the Lemberg/Jamarillo wedding party. When I called the operator, she said they hadn't checked in yet. So I contacted Allen and we met at the elevator.

"Aunt Essie, you look awesome!" That's Allen the charmer.

After exchanging *awesome hugs*, I asked about Phylis and Loretta.

"Shouldn't they be here by now?" I could tell by Allen's expression that something was wrong. His eyes welled up. There was a silent pause. It was apparent that he needed a moment to compose himself. Finally he said, "Phylis called to say that my mom had gone into cardiac arrest in the car just as they were about to begin the journey to Las Vegas."

I let out an, "OH MY GOD!" We gave each other a long *holding on* hug.

Instead of going to her granddaughter's wedding, Loretta went to intensive care and Phylis remained at her bedside. Her condition was critical. With or without Loretta or Phylis, the show must go on. So there we were in this bitter sweet situation. And I said to Allen, "Nothing can stop Loretta." I was wrong.

THE WEDDING

The ceremony took place in the hotel chapel the next day. Bobby Lee was a most gorgeous bride: Tall, long-legged, blonde hair piled on her head. Her smile reminded me of, "Charlie's Angel," come back to life. Her gown was strapless, formal and virgin like. She was, "Nick's Angel."

Now... to Nick the groom. He was without a doubt a most untraditional groom. Not bad looking. But... he wore a black suit, black shirt, a regular long red necktie, red rose in his lapel, and *white sneakers*. "Guys and Dolls," came to mind. In his left ear a gold loop earring and another piece of hardware in his eye-

brow. His black hair was styled like a porcupine. I imagined if I touched his hair my fingers would bleed.

Phylis left her mom's side and flew in the same day as the wedding, just in the *Nick* of time. After the ceremony we drove to the reception hall. The music was loud and very rock n' roll, but that didn't stop me. As I got up to dance, I leaned on the back of my chair for leverage. The chair was light weight, like those at an ice-cream parlor, and tipped over taking me along with it. Yes... I went down and hit the floor. Being the senior Auntie in my family everyone at our table ran to help me up. It was quite embarrassing. But I dusted myself off and got right up and on to the dance floor. What's a little bruise or two...when you're young. But when the party ended I was ready to go home.

HOME AGAIN

No sooner did I get unpacked, when the phone rang. It was Phylis. She said, "If you want to see Loretta, you'd better come down this weekend because she could leave us at anytime. My daughter Julie and I drove down to La Jolla where Loretta was in a beautiful hospice with an ocean view.

When I had my chance to be alone with her, I held her hand and said, "Loretta, if I were to go to sleep tonight and not wake up tomorrow, I would say that I really had a very nice life. She responded in a whisper, "Me too." Then I told her, "We were very fortunate, you and I, to have had two great husbands." She nodded. "We sure had more fun than a lot of people we knew, didn't we?" Again... she nodded.

At this point I kissed her and left the room before she could see my tears streaming down. And that was how I said goodbye.

THE FUNERAL

Allen and his family arrived at my home the day before the funeral. Phylis, her partner Mary and my daughter Julie arrived. We were seven people sleeping, eating and mourning together. My home, normally quiet, was now like a bustling bed and breakfast motel. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

The graveside service at Mt. Sinai was simple. The rabbi spoke of Loretta's life and her legacy. When they lowered the casket into the ground, right next to my brother's grave, I lost it. They were now both side by side. And I just cried my heart out.

The reception was at my house and most of the day as people came to pay their respects. We celebrated Loretta's life by telling humorous stories about her.

It's funny how this story started out about a wedding and ended up with a funeral. That's life...isn't it?

Anyway, that's what I did this summer in July 2010.

-Leslie Kaplan



-Juliana Richmond

I love to shop--or used to, anyway, in the days when I could drive myself to the store. Since I am now sporting a new, artificial right leg, I no longer drive and now all of my buying excursions, most of them to the grocery store, are with Bert. Of necessity, Bert transports me everywhere and though I welcome his company, his attitude to shopping is very different from mine. To Bert, shopping is a necessary evil for providing the rudiments of life: food for the table, gas for the car, fittings for a pipe or a new pair of jeans.

Shopping, to me, is something to anticipate. One of the highlights of my week is the day the grocery ads appear in the morning's *Mercury News*. While Bert takes the front page, I glom onto the ads in the back of the issue. The world's news can wait; I want to know what we will be eating next week. As I sift through the many different ads from the stores, I sort out the ones that apply to our shopping orbit, which has narrowed considerably. No running to Lucky for that special on strawberries, to Cosentinos where they have the best lettuce, or Safeway for toilet paper. Now our excursion can extend to only two stores, or at the most, three. If one of them is

Trader Joe's, Bert is fine with that. He likes the sample goodies that are invariably served there--and the peanut butter.

As I scan the ads, my mind is busy--*oh, good, pot roasts on sale at Nob Hill. Great for this rainy weather we've been having. And steaks too--we'll get some to have on hand. And the spring mix lettuce m lange is on sale at Lunardi's, along with several of my favorite veggies.* My mind is a veritable cache of dinner recipes as I continue to look over the ads and to write out my list.


Sometimes I think back to my early-married days, and remember watching my mother and father going through this same routine together.

"Look, Paul," mother might say, "There's a special on spareribs at Lucky's--wouldn't that taste good with the sauerkraut you got last week?" And Dad would just puff on his pipe a little harder and grunt in agreement. I swore I would never use precious time in this way, as I got older. There were certainly a lot more important things on which to spend one's time!

Now Bert is not averse to food, and not totally averse to shopping for it. It's just that he doesn't want to spend much time in getting it. His method is certainly efficient. Do we need cookies--these look good (the most expensive ones on the shelf); the list says spareribs but the short ribs look better so that's what he orders from the butcher standing behind the counter. I like to look at the product, compare prices, ingredients, and calories. I've never intentionally bought organic milk; now it sits sneakily in our 'fridge (unless I've intercepted the purchase at the store) with: "Not that kind--the 1% over there, honey." I add the endearment because I don't want


(Continued on page 9)

to seem bossy, even though I know I am. I want to shop my way!

Buying vegetables is the worst. Picture this: we're a twosome in file, me with the walker, Bert following with the grocery cart. I bag a head of broccoli, toss it  backwards into what I hope is our cart,

"My gosh, haven't you got enough?" he remarks as I stuff another tong-full into the bag.

avoiding Bert's pained expression. His indifference to broccoli is only exceeded by the shudder that Brussels sprouts bring forth. I proceed to the mixed salad greens, hoping Bert will be too busy buying the apples as I've suggested to notice how much lettuce I'm piling into the plastic bag. I love salad; Bert tolerates it, espe-

cially  "that stemmy stuff". "My gosh, haven't you got enough?" he remarks as I stuff another tong-full into the bag.

Now for some zucchini, and the asparagus looks good. I know I'm stretching my limits when I hear a muttered "Enough of that green stuff!" It's time to head for the pasta sauce and the meat counter.

Groceries aren't the only thing we shop for. Sometimes we go to Home Depot's Garden section and that is where we tend to lose one another. While Bert shops for the basics--fertilizers, potting soil, washers for a leaky faucet, I wander up and down the aisles of the brightly blooming spring plants, wondering if I can get another six pack of petunias into the basket on my walker. We've gotten separated, even though we agreed to meet at the tomato plants, which I can't find. Neither, it seems, can Bert and he has disappeared. I look in vain for his snowy hair while I ponder the pansies. Finally, tiring, I sit on a stack of bagged cement bundles and trust that we will connect

soon.

Have you ever shopped for a bathing suit with a man? If Bert had his way, I'd be in a skimpy bikini. I know he is visualizing the models on the signs at the end of the aisle, but those models are not me. Not at this stage of life when my waist has disappeared and the only fat I carry is in my middle. No, what I need is a black or navy blue one-piece suit with no eye catching features, a style that is at a minimum on these racks except in very large sizes. Besides, who cares when the wearer is sitting in a wheelchair?

The other day we went to Marshall's, my favorite browsing place, to shop for men's handkerchiefs, a difficult item in today's Kleenex world. We didn't find the handkerchiefs, or the women's underpants I tried to locate, or a bathing suit (too early in the season) but we did come out of the store with treasure: jockey shorts and new white socks for Bert, a summer white sweater for me that I slipped on over my winter T shirt and that Bert said "Looks good. Take it." (I didn't see what it looked like until I got home), and two pounds of gourmet coffee beans, saving us a stop at the grocery store. When we're on a roll, we're profligate!

It's a relief to both of us when the shopping to be done on any given day involves a trip to Fry's, or to the hardware store. I am delighted to be left alone in the car, preferably in a shady spot, with the windows down (in hot weather), and reading matter in my hands. "Take your time," I say cheerily, knowing this is the kind of shopping trip where "the green stuff" won't be an issue.

Juliana Richmond: "I've been a member of CWC for at least six or seven years. In 2007 I published a memoir, *Dancing Mama*, which was well received. I've published in *Across the Generations*, volumes 6 and 7 and *The Sand Hill Review*, 2006 edition. I am now writing chapters for a book about my newest adventure--learning to walk with prosthesis--tentatively called 'Let's Take a Walk'. I celebrated my 89th birthday recently, and though I wasn't dancing, my heart felt a good deal younger!"



Tea in the Attic

The trunk, crowded with things
From older days,
Stood waiting up the stairs
Sweeping the shadows back
Listening for the children
To come and play
Bouncing their echoes against the walls-

Lifting the ancient latch I see
Treasured things of long ago
Miniature tea sets and broken dolls
Three legged horses
Staring at nothing with opaque milky eyes-

Giggles, trinkets, and thimbles
Connecting faded stitches
With bashful loose foreign threads
Distorting yellowish blankets
Coughing old memories
Inside the confining trunk space-

Fingering fragments of folded years
Before the silence inside breaks with thunder
Opening a space where the roof leans low
Showing a piece of sky blue
Pouring fistfuls of muddy rain
Overflowing the immense like-bucket
Drowning the old trunk away-

-: Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein

The Laguna I Knew



I loved the town as it used to be
Before they made a "window to the sea."
There's a park there now with flowers and grass
And benches tilled with the homeless mass.

But I miss "Benton's" with the homemade pies
And "Curries" ice cream with the triple highs,
The sounds of the ball game from the barbershop,
And the scent of wildroot that they rubbed on top.

The malt shop there behind the Rexall Drug
And the dance hall where locals would "cut a rug."
'Course Neal and Jean and their hamburger stand,
Serving patrons fresh off the sand.

Right around the corner, not too far,
An ice-cold beer from friend "Turk's" Bar.
The boardwalk filled with the sounds of jazz
From Tommy Morey and the Razz Matazz.

Casteel's Bath House where the guards could shower,
Right across from the lifeguard tower,
The cottages strung along the sand,
Picturesque and not too grand,

Little fenced yards with ice plant there,
Shingled and cozy and oh so rare,
Cooper's shop where you could get photos,
Of the Saturday night's game before the Rotos.

They knew you and you knew them all,
From the time you were a kid till you got so tall.
The town turned then, not to the sea.
But towards one another, towards you and me.

The Donut Kettle was the leveling spot,
The bookie, the grocer, the astronaut
All were equal in Russell's domain.
A cup of coffee and a donut, plain.

The L.A. Times and the sporting news.
The place just echoed with everyone's views.
The races starting down at Del Mar
And what was happening to the Coast Inn Bar.

I long for the crowd that therein gathered
When long long ago. friendship mattered.
I miss the place. I miss the scene.
So embracing. a local's dream.

- Bill Sorrells

POETRY CAN BE EXCITING!



Every fall I think about the excitement that comes with a new semester of teaching at the senior high school level. Thirty-nine creative years with fifteen - eighteen year olds brings back many memories.

Teaching poetry was always a challenge. How can I make this subject interesting? Choral reading, a little acting, and a few sound effects can make a difference. Everyone must participate is the goal.

I chose Edgar Allen Poe and "The Raven" in my first experiment. First, I closed all the lights in the room. I took out a flashlight so I could read the words. Then I chose two students to be in charge of sound effects. All 39 students in the class practiced rapping on the desk. It was very noisy in the classroom but we were having fun.

Then the sound effects experts played with the window blinds. They soon had achieved the right sound for the curtains shuffling in the wind. Then we went back to the rapping, tapping noise.

I always recruited a football or weight lifting expert to be the raven. We perched the raven on a small table. Then we had someone knock on the door and our football player jumped to the floor with a loud thump. After he recovered his senses he ran around the room lifting his arms as if he was going to fly. Our raven departed the room and we were still in darkness.

Mrs. Carson, the teacher below us, heard the loud noise and came running to our room. The lights were still out and the kids were all laughing.

I apologized to the teacher for the commotion and noise. I assured Mrs. Carson that no one had a heart attack and that I was a sane person.

This was only the beginning of odd things that took place in Mr. R's classes. One time I was teaching about all the different beats and rhythms in poetry. I had three students bring their guitars to class the next day. We explored the beats in poems like "Chicago" by Sandburg and "Leaves of Grass" by Walt Whitman.

I am now retired for 19 years. Every September I think back to those days when English was the most exciting thing in my life.

-Ed Rasky

Autumn Trees

Autumn trees lining streets,
tawny-haired colonnades on each side,
they shower shade and summer secrets,
leafing sidewalks yellow-brown.

With burnished arcades overhead
they shed rusty coats, peeling to skin,
bare themselves to winter wind;
dance with abandon, stretch, twist



feeling strength deep down in roots.
When air is still in chill of winter,
chagrined they surrender with uplifted arms,
subletting to silent, scrawny lions,

gray sphinxes stoned in rows
standing guard till warmth of spring--
till bouffant shade and summer secrets
touch heads above the streets again.

-Lenora Smallzy



Tell Me a Story

Everyone has a story...
Traded like coins
on a bumpy train ride.
Sung in low tones
inaudible on a dark dawn
morning.
Sprinkled through laughter,
a light opera
with notes of pathos.
Shared casually
over a cup of coffee,
blending into the hum
of strangers' voices.

Tell me your story,
carefully, tenderly,
guarding your secrets.
Dictate your story
into a book
with words often overlooked
by those who skim
like restless birds
over the pages.

Your stories rest
on my bookshelf,
holding hands with each other,
and nodding through the dust.
Mountains
echo your stories
where there is no one to listen
and words bounce off
canyon walls.



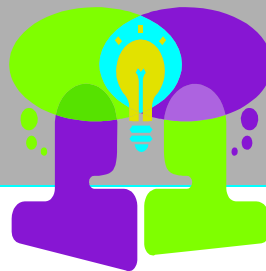
I want to tell you my story,
some of it once scribbled
on pages of decades past,
now only shadow memories.

My pen trembles with the
effort.

Words tumble
off the page
and deny their own exis-
tence.

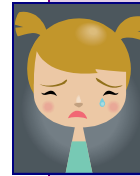
My story doesn't climb a
mountain
or reside proudly and alone
on a book shelf.

I am trying
to make peace with it
and find peace
within its pages.

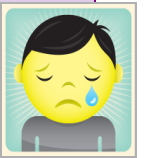


-Lillian Rodich

CRIES OF CHILDREN



Cries of babies
Cries of children
World over
Sound the same



No accent
No language of their country
No signs of ethnicity
Tears salty
Faces crunched up
Streaked with tears
Tears saying: "help, help me, I'm
alone

They are alone
No mommy or daddy
Brothers or sisters
Aunts or uncles
To hold and cuddle them
To kiss their tear streaked faces

They are alone
Alone in
Afghanistan,
Haiti,
Ghana,
And so many other places

Their cries of anguish
Their cries of hunger
Tear at our hearts
As our tears mingle with their tears

- Helen Katzman

BORN TO RUN!



Walter reluctantly arrived on time for his dental appointment. The receptionist was waiting for him.

"There's been a cancellation, Mr. Schmidt, so Dr. Goldstein can see you right away. Just follow Jeannie. She has your chart."

Walter followed Jeannie down the hallway to a white cubicle, and lowered his torso into a padded leather lounge chair. The nurse fastened a paper bib around his throat.

"Need some water," Walter croaked.

"Sure. Here you go. Oh, I see you brought some music this time. Will that help calm your nerves when we get to work on your tooth?"

"Yeah, a favorite CD, earphones and this little iPod," he replied. "Gonna listen to Bruce Springsteen. I think 'Born to Run' should drown out the drill."

I hate it here, he thought. Always makes me feel claustrophobic. A light sweat misted his forehead.

"Oh, Bruce the Boss from Phillie! My mom listens to Springsteen. Cool choice." Jeannie now extended a cotton swab toward his gum line. "I hope it helps you relax...open wide...this is numbing lotion...before your shot."

Walter gaped for the gum ablution, and immediately inserted his earphone. Dr. Goldstein in a bright yellow lab coat suddenly entered the cubicle and gave Walter a friendly wave.

He looks like the friggin' Tooth Fairy in my kid's picture book, Walter thought as he gave a stiff nod hello back to his dentist.

"Ready to get our crown work started?" asked Dr. Goldstein in his habitually cheerful tone of voice. "Atta boy! Open wide. Small prick."

Like a dexterous magician, the dentist inserted a long needle into the base of Walter's back gum. He probed here and there. Numbness quickly spread and Walter's jaw felt like warm modeling clay.

Shot didn't hurt, Walter thought. A miracle. Start the Springsteen music. Here comes the drill and... Goldstein's wearing a mask and weirdo glasses ...leaning right over my mouth. SHUT EYES NOW! Up the volume. **"Baby we were b-o-o-r-n to run... La la la, LA!"**

As long as I keep my eyes closed, I'm with Boss Bruce. No drill. My back doesn't itch. Don't have to jump up and run through the frigging office...ripping a paper tourniquet off my frigging throat. la,la,la. Bruce can run. I must not. I'll watch Bruce run. LA!

After six rollicking songs, Jeannie touched his shoulder. Walter's eyes flew open and his thumb hit the iPod *off* button. The Carpenters warbled through the office sound system. Dr. Goldstein had apparently flitted on to visit another cubicle.

"All done, Mr. Schmidt," chirped Jeannie. "How d'you feel?"

"Fine. Jusht great. It wash sho eashy. Painlesh." He rinsed, spit and then lurched out of the chair. Holding his earphones and iPod close to his chest, he ambled back to the receptionist's desk.

I'm free. No pain. Just slightly numb. I didn't humiliate myself with a panic attack. Thanks, Boss. The receptionist handed him a print-out.

"Here y'are, Mr. Schmidt. A copy for your records: \$1100. How do you want to pay? Let's see, your insurance will pay 25 per cent. Do you want to pay the balance with cash, check or credit card"

"Ouch," said Walter, and dropped his iPod as he fumbled for his frigging wallet.

- Kathy Highcove

CWC Contests Fall 2010

Berkeley: The annual **Write On!** Story Contest is open to all genres of literary fiction. For more information, please visit us at www.cwc-berkeley.com or e-mail Tatjana Greiner, Editor-in-Chief at wordshop@mac.com



SF/Peninsula: Contest deadline has been extended to **September 30, 2010**. Previously published work will be considered. Contest information at www.cwc-peninsula.org

Redwood: 2010 Conference Poetry/Prose Contests
See the [Guidelines and Entry form](#). The Poetry Contest is open to the public. Registration to the conference is not required. **HOWEVER**, registered attendees **ONLY** of our [Redwood Writers 2010 Conference](#) may enter our prose contest. For more info: www.redwoodwriters.org

East of Eden Writers Conference Cancelled

All registrations will be refunded in full, and contest and editing fees returned. Contact: this site: www.southbaywriters.com

The California Writers Club/West Valley meets the first Saturday of the month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex. Meeting location:

Villa Katzenberg
23388 Mulholland

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday Sept. 4th, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

cwcwestvalley.org

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