In this Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Meier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-In-Review</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Corner</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO MARKET</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where I Get Ideas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wright Word</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-Ray Explains</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudos Kolumnn</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAIL, HAIL!</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Gallery</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out &amp; About</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin Board</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fine Print &amp; Directions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Click on title to jump to story)
June Meeting-in-Review:
Lawyer Reveals Cozy Secrets
by Scott Gitlen

At its final meeting of the year, our chapter hosted attorney Linda O. Johnston as the featured speaker. The website, www.cozy-mystery.com, nicely summed up her career: “Johnston, a contract lawyer, writes the Kendra Ballantyne, Pet Sitter Mystery series. The main character is an attorney and pet sitter. Her sidekick is a cutie pie Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Lexie.” After briefly mentioning she remains available for legal work, Ms. Johnston wasted no time qualifying her audience’s familiarity with her topic so we could all get cozy — mystery writing, that is!

As if citing some fiction writers’ penal code, Ms. Johnston defined cozy mysteries as mysteries written for adults where an amateur sleuth solves engaging local crimes (i.e., a murder) which include interesting minor characters (who may be actual law enforcement professionals). The inciting hook often threatens the smart and savvy female protagonist as the presumptive suspect so as to compel the need to solve the mystery (and entice the reader to care about it). The emphasis is on plot and character development. Lastly, she reminded us all rules are generalities which are meant to be broken.

In the series classic “Murder She Wrote,” Angela Lansbury was welcomed into our homes from Cabot Creek, Maine, where she brilliantly solved murder mysteries, much to the amazement of her friends. To her foil, Sheriff Amos Tupper, our beloved heroine was a mere mystery writer and not a law enforcement professional. Her sleuthing was inspired by natural curiosity which lead her into dire situations until she extricated herself (no damsel in distress) and solved the case.

Our speaker explained publishers prefer protagonists’ crime solving process in the form of: (1) a series [three or more independent novels of 75,000 words], (2) with no explicit violence or graphic gore, (3) without explicit sex or swearing, (4) in a setting local to the protagonist’s everyday life, (5) involving interesting local characters who keep the protagonist going, and (6) where the protagonist achieves a satisfying ending although romantic interests or dramatic issues remain unresolved (enriching the fabric of the series).

Cozy mysteries employ themes which have precious little to do with murder most foul. Hobbies (antiquing, crocheting, cooking, scrapbooking), games (sudoku, (See ‘Cozy’ pg. 3)
Cozy (cont’d from pg. 2.)

bridge clubs, mah jong), pet ownership, or non-criminally related vocations provide perfect settings and themes. Devoted readers expect story solutions to be revealed in challenging recipes (included), needlecraft designs (included), or a playful puppy (not included). A cozy mystery novel theme may be found in the paranormal (ghosts, vampires, E.T.s).

How does an aspiring writer chose a theme? Write what you know and love. If it intrigues you, does it intrigue others? Choose what your ideal reader would truly love as a part of your story’s journey. Is it any surprise cozy mysteries involve a protagonist’s experience shared with a beloved pet?

Ms. Johnston blended one cozy mystery into the world of domesticated weasels. Although owning them is a crime in some states, the chirpy little darlings have quite a passionate following of folks who do read. What better theme for ferreting out crime?

Approached from a different analytical perspective, cozy mysteries are comfort reads bought for enjoyment (so justice always triumphs) leaving off-stage yucky sex or oral osculation (kissing). Grisly, bloody, Cormac McCarthy carnage is verboten. As an illustrative circumstance, Ms. Johnston cited a complaint letter from the father of a young girl decrying Kendra Ballantyne’s use of epithets commonly heard on any elementary school playground. Yet, are these stories propelled by conflict? Certainly. Just keep crude language “off the page.” Explicit sex happens “off the page.”

Ms. Johnston generously shared with her audience tips for participating in writers groups such as the Romance Writers of America, www.killerhobbies.blogspot.com, Mystery Writers of America (local chapter meets at Tom Bergin’s Irish Pub on Fairfax), and Sisters-In-Crime (meets at the South Pasadena library where even men can join as “Mister Sisters”). These organizations can facilitate meeting an agent.

When our speaker put on her lawyer hat, she knowledgeably advised about aspects of publisher relationships. Editors come with the territory and so does inevitable genteel arguing and polite explaining by a writer. Copy editor discussions can dissect issues of grammar. Humbly keeping in mind that in a living language, proper usage evolves, Ms. Johnston resigned her audience to the fact editors have the final say.

With regard to contract negotiation, attorney Johnston stated certain clauses are utterly non-negotiable, while others can be put on the table. For example, publishers firmly require their writers to indemnify their company for any lawsuit arising from the misuse of actual persons’ names. Sure, books print the standard disclaimer, “This novel is a work of fiction. Any references to ...” Publishers leave the writer to experience the joys of pre-trial law and motion and extortionate settlement negotiation all alone.

Thankfully, compensation is negotiable. Option clauses are negotiable. Most significantly, Ms. Johnston mentioned that at the negotiation table, a savvy agent who shelters a stable of similarly talented writers may, by weight of clientele alone, assure an author of better treatment in negotiable areas. Perhaps that is why some publishers are open to unrepresented writers.

During the question and answer session, Ms. Johnston graciously was open to provide services as a mentor inasmuch as she has previously taught at CSUN Extension, UCLA Writers courses and the Learning Annex. Chapter members were invited to contact her through her website, www.LindaOJohnston.com. Without a doubt, those members in attendance truly experienced a delightful, generous, and masterful speaker.

Ms. Johnston commented cozy mysteries are not the sole domain of women writers portraying the adventures of female protagonists. There could be gay cozy mysteries. The cozy mystery genre’s great tent is as welcoming as that of the G.O.P. and just as Log Cabin Republicans have their place, a little person with an enormous magnifying glass could provide the late Hervé Villechaize his own cozy mystery series. There may be a readership hungering to hear him shout, “Da poisoned champagne! Da poisoned champagne!”

DUES ARE, uh... well... DUE!

Primary membership for the year is only $45.
Renewal: $45. New Members: $65.
Secondary dues (those already in another Branch) are only $20!

Pay by October 1st, and avoid the late (initiation) fee!
BOARD MEETINGS

Our SFV Branch holds its Board Meetings every month after the Speaker’s Presentation.

Non-board members are not permitted to speak or participate, but are encouraged to audit and observe these meetings.

Something To Ponder

“Analysis kills spontaneity. The grain once ground into flour germinates no more.”
— Henri Frederic Amiel

President (cont’d from pg.2)

Speaking of appreciation, I want to thank our fabulous Board — Lenora Smalley (VP-Membership), Judy Presnall (Treasurer), and Ken Watts (Secretary) — for their support during the summer transition. Another big thanks goes to Ray Malus (Valley Scribe editor and pre-session leader) not only for this newsletter but for being a resource on all things CWC-related.

I also want to welcome Pirhiya Goldstein as our new Hospitality Chair. Pirhiya will buy supplies, coordinate the signups for bringing refreshments, and see that our table settings look attractive.

Thanks also to Ed Braun for offering to help with publicity and Liz Cooke for volunteering to be hospitality person of the month for our September meeting.

Look for a report from me next month about what’s happening at our fellow CWC branches in the southern region as I report to you from the Central Board. I’m off to Anaheim on Sept. 12th to represent our branch at a regional meeting. □
My hubby is a hot-rod enthusiast. His contacts netted me stories about car owners and clubs (one club donates to the City of Hope, another collects toys for needy kids at Christmas). A man stopped to admire our flashy-red Roadster in the driveway and began talking about the vintage airplanes he restores. I got some terrific photos and a story about his current plane ... and the two he’s crashed. (I declined a ride!)

**Unusual Occupations.** I’ve written stories on a local alpaca rancher, a magician who teaches kids about books, a man who drives a cesspool pumper truck (Oh the things they find in those portable potties!). An inside tour of a lifeguard station — with a few true-life rescue-stories — made another fine story.

A family-owned art glass company promised to be an interesting business profile, but then I heard the grandfather tell how he’d earned his apprenticeship restoring the ancient glass in England’s Canterbury Cathedral after WW II. (Still gives me shivers.)

My horseshoer and large animal vet were fodder for interesting equine stories. The photo I took of the farrier ended up in Country Magazine, the equine dentistry shots on the vet’s website. (Note: it helps to be able to “shoot” your subjects.)

**Event notices.** Pay attention to neighborhood signs and banners announcing upcoming events or shows. I’ve written several stories about events at a local institution for the developmentally handicapped. The American Legion once hosted an official “flag-burning” ceremony. An elementary school drama club and a new horse trail dedication also got ink as well.

I peruse newspapers and group newsletters for upcoming events that sound fun or informative (art exhibits, author signings, workshops, expos). I wrote stories on Pet Scanners, Protecting Pets in Hot Weather, and another on an FBI agent’s class on Identity Theft from messages I found on announcement boards.

**Organizations.** You can write about things your club or organization does. *Sisters in Crime* sets up many interesting author panels and workshops. My critique group’s “field trips” (a class on hand-gun safety at a local firing range and a visit to the famous Greystone Manor for a reenactment of a murder) made fun stories.

These are only a few suggestions. Use your natural curiosity, your observation skills, your contacts, and various announcements/notices. Soon you will have more stories than you have time to write.

Next, query or submit them to your local newspapers, club newsletters, magazines, specific interest groups, or online news venues. Some will pay; some won’t, but your work and your name are getting out there, and you are gathering clips. □
The Wright Word — by Ray

As I see it …

Hi. Welcome back! I hope you’ve all had a wonderful summer.

I didn’t get as much writing done as I’d planned (When do we ever?), because I was busy (finally) putting up my own website. But I did work up the courage to discuss a kind of complicated subject. Here goes:

We’ve all read discussions — and pondered on — Narrator Point Of View issues. First-person, Second-Person, Third-Person, Omniscient, Limited Omniscient, on and on.

I think we can agree that Third-Person Omniscient is probably the most common (this is the one we use when telling fairy tales to children). But is it that simple? Take a look at this:

The inside of the church was a welcome relief from the summer heat outside. He sat in solitude, smelling the sweet floral scent of incense. Along the walls, dimly illuminated by banks of votive candles, statues of Saints kept a protective vigil. The Nave, where he sat, was warmed by the glow of sunlight from the Rose Window behind the High Altar.

Now, look at this:

The inside of the church was abandoned — cold, dank. Statues of long-dead Saints, partly revealed by rows of timid candles, glowered like gargoyles in the gloom that lurked along the walls. Light from the Rose Window behind the High Altar only served to highlight the wisps of cloying incense smoke that hung in the air like the pall from a funeral pyre.

Obviously, these are both descriptions of the same place. Here are “the facts”:

The inside of the church was dim, cool and unoccupied. It was illuminated by the light from a window, and flickering candles. Statues stood against the wall. He could smell incense.

But the first two are very different in ‘color.’ Why did the writer choose one over the other? Why did he choose either?

Well, obviously, the narrator is portraying a mood, an impression. But wait! I thought the narrator was Third-Person Omniscient. Isn’t he supposed to be objective — “above the fray?” Whose mood is this? Whose impression? These are presented as objective “facts.”

The narrator has adopted the CHARACTER’S perceptions.

In the process, the writer has transformed this brief description of a location into an exposition on the inner state of his character. In addition, he has set the mood and expectations of what is to follow.

Objectively, the emptiness is neither “solitude” nor “abandonment.” It is simply the absence of other people. The temperature, the statues, the incense, the light, are only neutral things. It is the character’s perception that colors them: The emptiness becomes “solitude” or “desertion.” The temperature is “a relief” vs. “dank.” The statues “protect” or “glower.” The incense is either “sweet” or “cloying.” The sunlight either “warms the room” or “highlights the … pall from a funeral pyre.”

It is all “in the eye of the beholder.” And the beholder is not the narrator; it is the character!

Here’s another example (Charles is Jessica Nelson’s lover. Ronnie is the 7-year-old who lives next door.) :

The first thing Charles saw as he entered the kitchen was Jess, standing over the stove.

as opposed to:

When Ronnie went in, Mrs. Nelson was standing over the stove.

The narrator has adopted the relationship of the characters. To Charles, she is “Jess”; to Ronnie, “Mrs. Nelson.” In doing this, the writer has instantly established their relationship: Charles and Jessica are intimate peers. Ronnie is a little boy who is respectful of his elders.

Not bad for a single sentence!

Granted, things can get complicated when multiple characters are interacting, and which character’s perception to adopt is a matter of taste and skill. The reader can easily get confused by the narrator’s jumping around too much. But, as an omniscient narrator, you are God, and “with much power comes much responsibility!”

Using this technique is one of the great joys of writing narrative fiction. It is often called Impressionism — although if you try to research it, you will no doubt end up confused and discouraged. The “experts” don’t seem to agree on what to call it.

I call it a “damned fine idea!” —rjm—
The Fly In The Ointment

A friend recently sent me a small article, claiming that urinals in Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, have the likeness of a housefly etched into the inside of their bowls. It seems that men instinctively “aim at” the fly, and this keeps things tidy.

Upon consideration, this makes a lot of sense, and explains a ton of human behavior. For example, “War.”

Obviously, man (the male of our species) is genetically engineered to be a hunter!

Now, the average man is not going to be satisfied with a target the size of a housefly for long. They’re hard to hit, and as trophies, they have very small pelts. Pretty soon, he’s gonna hanker for something a little easier to hit — bigger game. I know. A BULL MOOSE!

Now, a little experimentation will disclose that the average moose will not be felled by a simple stream of urine.

We need something more powerful.

So, man invented the “gun.”

But a gun alone is just a stick — albeit, a very finely engineered and machined one. He needs something to raise the stakes. Something LOUD. I know! “Gunpowder!”

Careful observation will soon reveal that the average moose quickly becomes inured to loud sticks. In fact, they tend to annoy moose. The solution to this is to invent a “projectile” of some sort that will damage a bull moose. Since we’re designing this “thingy” to attack bull mooses (‘Meese?, ‘moosei?’), we could call it a BULL “it.”

The inevitable success of this gun-gunpowder-bull-it combination will inexorably lead to a massive proliferation of all of them, which demands to be put into service. The natural answer is to shoot people (smaller than moose, but far more annoying). And so we devise “war.”

Of course, none of this explains women hunters — who are anatomically helpless against a housefly. We’ll explore this another time. □
It Could Be Verse

The Valley Scribe   September, 2010   Vol. 3 No.1

It Could Be Verse

Reversal
Gil Roscoe

I thought the full moon
and Reggae night at
the Hollywood Bowl
would be a fine combination.
It was and I have
seldom swayed so smoothly.
I have also seldom
been in such a thick,
blue marijuana cloud.
What entertained me most,
was watching a teenage usher
run up and down the
amphitheater
as he tried to get his elders
to stop smoking pot.

Beneath a Jacaranda Tree
Edward Louis Braun

When I look into your eyes
The why’s of why I’m here
Disappear.

When you’re not near
I can brighten my day
By closing my eyes
To make you appear.

My favorite scene
Is the two of us,
Hand in hand,
Heart to heart,
Happily in love,
Hugging each other
Beneath the splendid
Purple canopy
Of a Jacaranda tree,
And caressed
By its blossoms
Floating down
To bestow its grace
On you and me.

THE BOX
Lillian Rodich

Somewhere
in a dark corner
surrounded by the musty smell
of many months...
a box taped
with yellowing plastic
and covered with a gossamer web
of memories,
its frayed edges
like an old novel
dusted with neglect.

One day noticed,
one day visible
and pulled into the sunlight
away from the anonymity
of my garage’s crowded corner.

I sit alone, not wanting
the reality of today an intrusion,
as my gloved hands push away the cobwebs
and, wiping across the years’ debris,
rip the fragile cardboard
and open the box.

I barely notice the dust
floating around me…
my hands tremble
as the memories settle
around me and I wonder…
what was fragile
and enveloped in the scent of storage…
what was treasured and preserved
resting in a cloud of tissue?

Slowly I touch each object.
I hum an old tune,
IS THAT ALL THERE IS?
And wonder why
the lyrics come to mind
as I caress my treasures…

(More Poetry: pg. 9)
A Mystical Presence
Edward Louis Braun

Though life and the universe
Will always be
An irresolvable mystery
I’ve known rare moments,
As in certain passages
Of inspired music
(Saint-Saens Organ Symphony, Faure’s Requiem,
Mahler’s Tenth Symphony),
Where there is a sudden
Pervasive exhilaration
From experiencing
A momentary glimpse
Of exquisite, elusive beauty,
A tantalizing, fleeting moment
When a door opens
Into a world sublime,
And I can feel the expansive
Serene presence
Of peace, harmony and love
I’ve always longed for.

The Long Dance
Ray Malus

He bounces in his crib on rubber legs.
And, apple-fisted, holds himself erect
suspended from the bars. He reels and stomps
his pudgy feet and gurgles with delight
at hurdy-gurdy strains that fill the air
with flashing music only he can hear.

He slouches like the cigarette that hangs
from sodden, sullen lips that droop beneath
his hooded eyes which cannot hide the fire
of throbbing drum and shrieking trumpets’ blare
and fevered rhythms pounding to the pulse
of howling music only he can hear.

He glides with polished shoes and polished hair
and polished grace on polished marble floors,
with studied style and faux-seductive grace
and serpent’s choreography that apes
the muted horns and satin saxophones
that croon the music only he can hear.

FRIENDSHIP
Helen S. Katzman

Warm and nurturing
Friendships
They’re with you
During illness
And grief
They’re with you during times of joy
Birth of children
Grandchildren
Great-grand children
Speaking on the phone
Sharing the day’s activities
Listening, listening
For a change of tone
A change of voice
A quiver

What can be done to ease the pain?
I know, let’s go to a play
A movie
A joyous concert
Or let’s just be together
Sharing memories
Sipping hot coffee
With a bouquet of flowers
On the table
Returning a sparkle of life
Into your eyes —
ELECTIONS

Elections were held at our June meeting. These Officers will serve for two years. Elected by acclamation were:

President, Stephanie Sharf
VP-Membership, Lenora Smalley
Treasurer, Judy Presnall
Secretary, Ken Watts

The membership thanks the retiring Board members: Ethel Ann Pemberton, President; Glenn Wood, Exec. V. P.; Judy Presnall, Treasurer (continuing); Cara Alson, Secretary, and welcomes the new Officers.

Here’s to an exciting year!

(L. to R.) Ray Malus, Stephanie Sharf, Judy Presnall, Glenn Wood, Ethel Ann Pemberton, Cara Alson, Ken Watts, Lenora Smalley. (Photo by Nance Crawford)
Out With The Old

CWC-SFU Board 2010

In With The New

Our new officers: Ken Watts, Secretary; Judy Presnall, Treasurer; Stephanie Sharf, President; Lenora Smalley, VP-Membership.

Photos: Nance Crawford
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ABOUT THIS ISSUE:**

Welcome back!
Hope you had a wonderful vacation — but 'Here we go again!'
Most of your favorite contributors are back — along with some new ones.
Our poets have had an active summer. There’s good news in the Kudos Kolumn. Great speakers lined up! Valuable information in the articles and columns!
Come to think of it, it’s pretty-much 'business as usual.' Enjoy!

— Ray

**KUDOS KOLUMNIST WANTED!**

We are searching for someone to write our monthly Kudos Kolumn.
It’s not hard. Simply compile all our Branch’s good news for the month into one place!

If you like spreading Good News — PLUS being the first to hear it, this is the job you’ve been waiting for!

Just contact Stephanie or Ray.

**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.

**A Big Thank You**

To **Duke Howard** for helping with the June set-up.
To **Pirhiya Goldstein** for all her help with Hospitality and refreshments, and welcome as the new Hospitality Chair.

**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.)

**THANK YOU**

Earn a Thank You — Volunteer!
Give a Thank You!
Tell us about someone who’s helped!
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.

Out And About

With great regret, SouthBayWriters reports that the East of Eden Writers Conference September 24 to 26, 2010 Has been cancelled.

Anyone who has made a deposit or paid their full conference fees will be given a 100 percent refund.

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITY

Bright Light Multimedia is calling for the submission of short stories – 100 words to 3,000 words - on the theme of uplifting, positive, romantic love between 2 people, for possible inclusion on our writer-showcase website, The Bright Light Café, and, more urgently, for possible publication in our anthology of Bright Light Café stories and poems, currently in development and scheduled for release later this year.

Guidelines and online submission form are available at www.brightlightmultimedia.com/SubGuide.htm
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)
October: Bernard Selling — Creating Interesting And Important
Minor Characters
November: Beverly Gray — Biography

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
Please type “SUBMISSION” 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 - 500 words or less
- Short Stories - 800 words or less
- Poetry - Limited to 40 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 e-mail address or a phone number. Writings will not be returned and may be included in future issues.

The Bulletin Board
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, VP-Membership, at the meeting entrance or e-mail membership@cwc-sfv.org.

UPCOMING MEMBER SHOW-CASES
October 16, 2010 — Peter Brothers
December 18, 2010 — Erica Stux

Go to TOC
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.