

MAY
2012

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REMEMBERING BETTY SPECIAL MAY ISSUE

Attached: twelve pages of personal essays, tributes and photos dedicated to our SFV co-founder Betty Freeman who passed away on March 31, 2012.

Rita Reaches Out

As part of CWC's community outreach program, Rita Keeley Brown, our program chair, has volunteered to conduct a three-series writing workshop at the West Valley Regional Library, located at 19036 Vanowen Street in Reseda.

The workshop will be held on three consecutive Thursday evenings, May 17, 24 and 31, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.



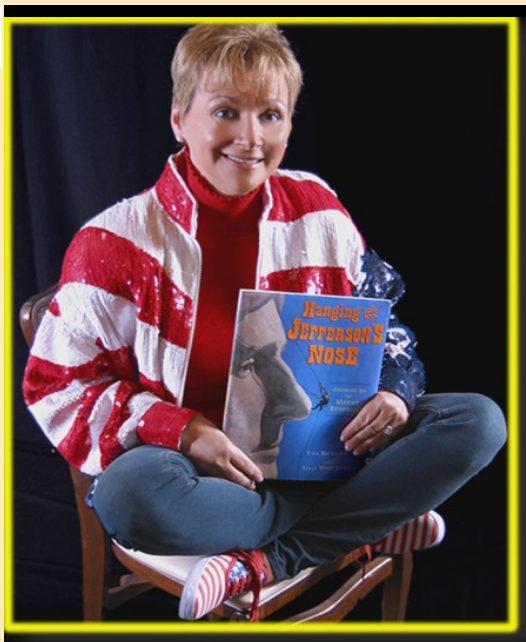
VOLUME 4

ISSUE 9

The Valley Scribe

Double Issue

Tina Coury Knows a Few Tricks



How can authors, published and pre-published alike, use the Internet to promote their books? What makes a blog tour successful and a book trailer compelling? What's a video book pitch? A webisode? How can they be used to sell book ideas, newly published books? Curious?

Author, award-winning multi-media artist and promotion guru Tina Nichols Coury assures us that she has the answers. At our Saturday, May 5th meeting, Coury will give step-by-step instructions for techniques that might help her audience learn a few new social media book promotion applications.

Her background? Coury has interviewed some movers and shakers of the children's literature industry on her popular kid-lit blog, *Tales from the Rushmore Kid*, (<http://www.tinanicholscoury.com> or <http://www.tinanicholscouryblog.com>) including Neil Gaiman, Sherman Alexie, Joan Bauer, John Green and Kathleen Duey. Her article on book promotion, *Blog Tours to Book Trailers*, was published in *Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market 2010*. Her nonfiction picture book, *Hanging Off Jefferson's Nose: Growing up on Mount Rushmore*, is a May 2012 release from *Dial Books For Young Readers*.

Coury also brainstormed *Tina's Trailers*: http://tinanicholscoury.typepad.com/tinas_book_trailers/ — a book trailer production house that creates trailers for authors, publishers and literary organizations.

Come hear our

savvy social media speaker on May

June Issue - Play Ball!

The next issue will focus on the wide, wide world of sports. To date, the June issue has a story titled *The Unnatural*, and a poem about *The Athlete's Lament*.

If you have a tale, verse or essay to share about sports or competition, please send it to me by the third week of May.

— K. Highcove



OPEN MIC IN MAY

All readers for the May Open Mic are asked to share their Betty Freeman stories and memories.

— Y. Fintor

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Vice-president/Programs ... Rita Keeley Brown

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Open Mike ... Bill Sorrells

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Celebrating Her Life



Betty Freeman

Betty would have been very pleased.

The Saban Room was full – standing room only. On rear counter we beheld a large assortment of pies, cookies, sweets of every kind brought by family

members and friends ... waiting for our attention.

This memorial was not a sad occasion. We had gathered to celebrate Betty's life, to listen to those who had known Betty, and to learn about her personal and professional triumphs. And we were not disappointed. We heard from a grandson, co-workers, people from the Movie Home, and Yolanda Fintor, our president, who delivered a touching remembrance on behalf of the CWC.

Before the speeches began we all watched a video tape in which Betty chatted casually (wearing a big flowered hat, of course) with Joe Sutton, the interviewer for Channel 22, the MPTF

(Continued on page 4)

PRESIDENT'S MAY MESSAGE

It is time to send kudos to some special people.

Let's start with Kathy Highcove, editor of *The Valley Scribe*. She did an outstanding job on Betty Freeman's tribute issue. What a beautiful way to remember Betty. Thank you, Kathy. And a big thank you to all who contributed personal remembrances.

I hope you all take the time to read that lovely issue. Those of you who are newer members and didn't get to know the Betty we knew will be inspired by accounts describing this lovely lady who was small in stature but big in life. If you wanted to send a tribute for the Scribe but missed the deadline, you will have an opportunity to have your say during Open Mic at our next meeting. The entire 30 minutes of Open Mic will be devoted to Betty remembrances.

If any of you missed Betty's obituary in the Los Angeles Times on April 22, fear not. Kathy has reproduced it in the tribute issue in a more readable font size than the newspaper's version.

I want to thank Andrea Polk, our Membership Chair, and Ray Malus, our webmaster, for producing our public relations cards that Andrea calls our "CWC recruiting" cards. Andrea conceived the idea and Ray designed it. These business-sized cards can be handed out when you attend conferences, meet other writers, or take classes. Our CWC logo is printed on one side, while the other side of the card has the time and place of meetings as well as our website. Andrea will have the cards ready for you to pick up at her table on Saturday.

Once again, thank you, Kathy, for publishing **two** Scribe issues this month. Not an easy job, but well done.

— Yolanda Fintor



The Presentation Can Make or Break Self-Published Books

By Gary Wosk

Ellen Reid, author of "Putting Your Best Book Forward, A Book Shepherd's Secrets for Producing Award-

Winning Books That Sell," tried to help CWC members and guests do just that at our monthly meeting in April.

Reid, president of **Ellen Reid's Book Shepherding**, began by reiterating that, "The world has changed in such positive ways for writers today," echoing what other recent speakers have expressed.

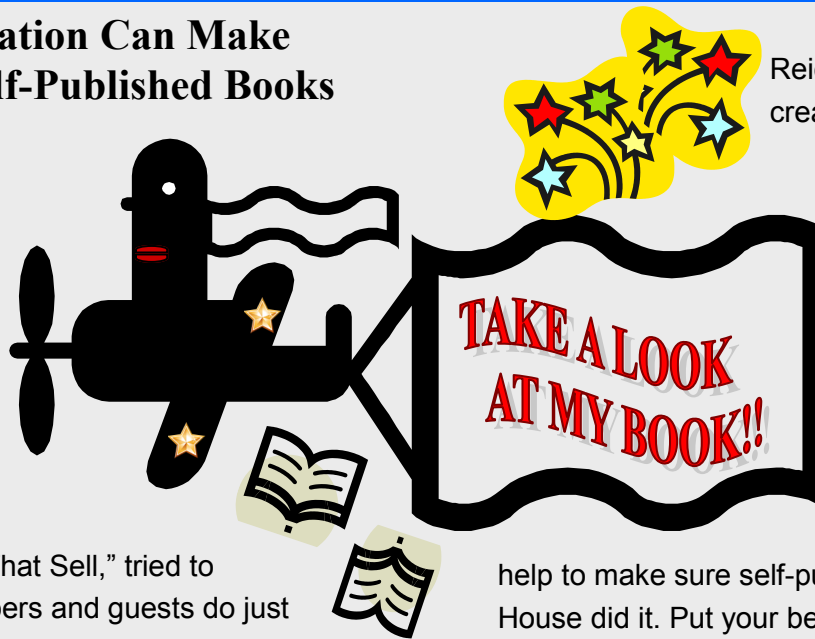
An executive book producer since 1999 for authors and others who want to establish their own independent publishing companies, or who want to learn the new technologies of the independent publishing business, Reid covered many of the ABCs of publishing. Her focus, however, was on the ins and outs of self-publishing and what steps she recommends writers take that can lead to success.

When self-publishing, there are many options to choose from. If a book is presented to the public with a ho-hum design, an uninspiring text on the cover — including the title, subtitle and typos — success will be elusive.

"The best book in the world may have been written. However, if it does not feel or look right, and is not well edited, it will not interest too many people," cautioned Reid.

Reid held up several impactful, self-published covers that looked indistinguishable from those produced by major publishers to demonstrate how to do it the right way.

"I do not want people to pick up your book and say 'this book is self-published,'" she said. "They DO judge a book by its cover."



Though it can be costly, Reid recommended hiring a creative team that can consist of a graphic designer, copywriter, photographer, web master, printer and business professional to deliver the most exceptional version of the book possible.

"Try to hire a company that's really into you," suggested Reid. "You are too close to yourself. Get some

help to make sure self-published books look like a Big House did it. Put your best book forward; it's your baby. Dress it up and make sure your self-published book looks good," she added.

There is no longer a stigma attached to self-publishing, and those who are most successful at it treat their endeavors as a business.

"Self publishing is not the ugly stepchild anymore," she said. "It doesn't matter how you do it — just do it! Let the world see your work."

On several occasions, Reid paused to compliment CWC members, guests and open mic participants on their extraordinary talent. She also emphasized that, "Authors sell books; books do not sell books."

In addition to self-publishing, Reid touched on a wide range of topics including traditional author-agent-publishing relationships, e-book conversions, audio books, MP3s, ISBNs (International Standard Book Numbers), and registering with the Library of Congress. She also delved into wholesale book prices, distribution, starting a Web site, getting your own URL (Uniform Resource Locator) and copyrighting.

Reid can be reached at (310) 862-2573 or ellen@bookshelp.com to arrange a free 30 minute telephone consultation. Her Web site address is www.bookshelp.com.

For more information about self publishing, CWC also recommends Dan Poytner's ParaPublishing at <http://www.parapublishing.com/sites/para/>.



Gary Wosk

New Member Check-In

As a boy, I realized that someday I wanted to become a writer. Blame it all on watching countless episodes of *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* as well as an assembly line of low budget sci-fi movies such as *Godzilla* and *The Giant Behemoth*.

What really sealed the deal was delivering the *Herald-Examiner*. The subscribers complained that their newspapers were not delivered on time. If I was to become a journalist, I reasoned, I had to read the newspaper first before I could deliver it.

I wasn't the greatest English student in high school, but as a teenager I found it easy to write Rod Serling-inspired short stories. I read the stories to my friends and family, and if they enjoyed them, that meant I had a possible future in the writing field.

At one time, like all young competitive athletes, I fantasized playing for the Yankees, the Dodgers, and the Lakers. After tearing ligaments in my right knee during a game of basketball, I decided to become more serious about life. I returned to California State University, Northridge, when I was a little older than most students and earned a BA in journalism.

I was on my way to a new life as newspaper reporter for the *San Luis Obispo County Telegram, Brawley News* and the *Newhall Signal* and then special sections editor for the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

After leaving the newspaper industry, I became a spokesperson and senior communications officer for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). At the MTA, I also produced an award-winning quarterly magazine geared for constituents as well as monthly passenger newsletters.

Following the MTA, I became the manager of media relations for The ALS Association, a national non-profit organization that helps people living with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

I have more than 25 years experience in the field of communications and have written hundreds of articles and news releases as well as managed many media events.

At present I volunteer with two organizations: in a communications capacity for *New Horizons*, a North Hills, Calif., social services agency that helps developmentally disabled adults learn independent living and job skills. I'm also a literary partner for KOREH L.A., which helps Los Angeles Unified School District elementary school children learn to enjoy reading.

I live in North Hills with my wife Mina. Our son, David, is currently enrolled at UC Berkeley.

(Continued from page 2)

in-house TV station.

It was so good to hear Betty's low resonant voice once again. She described arriving in L.A. in the early 1920s with her mother and siblings. Sutton asked several questions about her marriage to Charles Freeman, her family, and her career with the LA City Schools. During the interview we chuckled at Betty's familiar dry wit and smiled at her enthusiasm and optimism about living among the retired people of Hollywood.



The end of the service was, in my opinion, the most moving part. After her daughter Jill sang a poem, a slide show began.

We watched so many happy moments in Betty's nine decades as Willy Nelson serenaded our Lady of the Flowered Hats. When it finished, we were asked to visit the goodies, and talk about Betty. Which we did. Betty would have been very pleased to see us dig into the pies, cookies, and a chocolate cake dusted with rose petals. It was all so heavenly which was ... appropriate.

-- Kathy Highcove

To Market

by Ken Watts



Artists And Artisans Inc. has recently merged its author management operations with Movable Type Literary Group, forming Movable Type Management. MTM welcomes queries from writers of all kinds. Actively seeking: working journalists for nonfiction books. They do not want scripts, photo or children's books. Represents 50/50 nonfiction and fiction. Fiction: confessions, family, humor, literary, mainstream. Nonfiction: biography, child, current affairs, women's, science, self-help, others. Send your BEST work. Make sure your work has been objectively critiqued by a writing group. Address: 244 Madison Avenue, Suite: 334, NY, NY 10016. Website: www.artistandartisans.com. Contact: Adam Chromy and Jamie Brenner.

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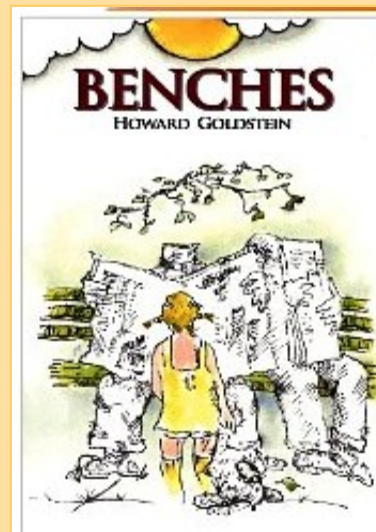
Something To Ponder

If there be a faith that can move mountains, it is faith in one's own power.

— Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

View from the Park Bench

Longtime SFV member Howard Goldstein, has completed a book forty years in the making. A graphic designer, illustrator and writer, Howard believes art is what you bring to the world. He wrote these tales about his grandmother and her friends. Today, he lives in Southern California with his wife Susan.



Howard tells us:

In the 1940s, while her sons served in the war, my grandmother, Yetta, sat on the benches in the Bronx, New York, almost every day. Everywhere in the world, people sit together and share ideas, hopes, joy and sorrow. This book presents some events—as I remember them—as if in the minds and out of the mouths of people I knew.

Info at Amazon.com, <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1475032889/>

A Ruff Tale



Kathy Highcove has a new book review on line at <http://internetreview-books.blogspot.com/>

The book, *SOPHIE: The Incredible True Story of the Castaway Dog*, was written by Australian author Emma Pearce.

Doug Douglas



April Voices of Open Mic and guest speaker

Ray Malus



Nance Crawford



Erica Stux



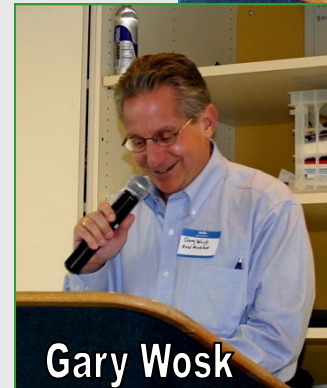
Ellen Reid



Howard Goldstein



Gary Wosk



Now Available on Kindle

My recently published book, *'Good Luck, Mrs. Brown'* has been "Kindle-ized!" In other words it's now available on Kindle for only \$9.99!

These first few months since *'Good Luck, Mrs. Brown'* was published have been very exciting. Here are two excerpts from comments made online:

"...very well written, interesting, and suspenseful. I asked often: What will happen next? How will she handle it? I can't wait to hear her talk in February!" -- Linda K.

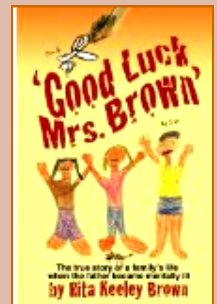
"I am still in awe over your story. You are a wonder to have survived this ordeal and now be able to speak of it. I know I learned many things from you in your talk..." -- Fran H.

If you have read *'Good Luck, Mrs. Brown'* and have comments you're willing to share, it would be most helpful if you would put them on Amazon. Their website promotes and features books based on people's comments. I will be most grateful if you are willing to put your comments out there for all to see.

Find my book at http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss/181-9976340-3883826?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-

My family memoir will also be on display at Book Expo of America Book Fair at Javits Center in New York from June 5 - 7.

By Rita Keeley-Brown

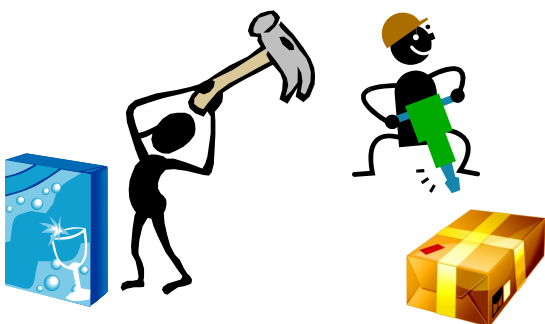


Ken's Pet Peeves



PULL TABS

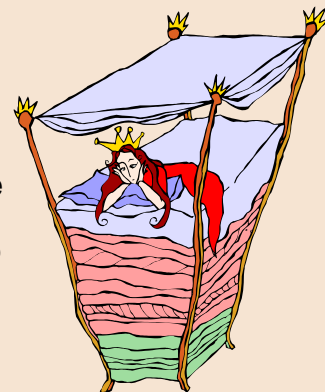
They seem to work well on cans of coke
 But on anything else they're simply a joke.
 The washer's load needs a scoop of soap
 But with unopened box I'm trying to cope.
 By the time I've opened that stubborn box
 A half-pulled tab I've had to outfox.
 It stopped half way ... the story of my life
 And I had to find a real sharp knife.
 It's always the same with a TV dinner
 The opening instruction is hardly a winner.
 "Easy to open" is a lot of bull
 As I grab the tab and start to pull.
 About half way it fizzles out
 And hungry mouths begin to shout.
 The same is true, but with less success
 When boxes arrive by UPS.
 "Push down and pull," the words now differ
 Only to find the cardboard stiffer.
 It's the same sad story, to no avail
 And I end up breaking a finger nail.
 I start to mumble, am tempted to cuss
 Why can't the inventor have pity on us?
 I've learned to endure life's crosses and jabs
 Now if only I could lick those darned pull tabs.



Review and Refresh

Little Things Can Mean a Lot

Little things mean a lot, like... making the verb agree with the subject, not with the noun closest to it. Not ... *One of the children were missing.* *One* is the subject. So it's *One of the children was missing.*



... pronouncing the word "mischievous" right. It's pronounced miss-cha-vuss, not miss-cheeve-ee-uss.

...not misusing the reflexive pronoun *myself*. Don't say *That Toyota barely missed Sally and myself* instead of saying *That Toyota barely missed Sally and me*. Don't say *Mildred, Sammy, and myself saw that movie*. Say *Mildred, Sammy, and I saw that movie*. *Myself* is not somehow magically correct in every grammatical situation.

... remembering that combinations connected by *or*, or *either ... or*, or *neither ... nor* are considered singular. *Either Mr. Gordon or his wife Norma opens the store each morning.* Not ... *open the store.* *Neither Martin nor Bruno knows what happened Saturday night.* Not ... *know what happened.*

... not putting the word *however* at the beginning of a sentence. (Okay! If you insist, go ahead. However, I think there's always a better place for it within the sentence.) *Later in life, however, he thought differently about this ...* has a better ring to it than *However, he thought differently about this later in life.*

... using the word *fewer* with items that can be counted, like *fewer pencils, fewer students, fewer bricks*. Use the word *less* with items that can't (or wouldn't normally) be counted, like *less sand, less milk, less booze*. And in spite of the beer commercials, *less calories* is wrong, as is the *ten items or less* you see at the checkout stand in the supermarket.

... using *him, her, us, or them* after prepositions ... and not using their counterparts *he, she, we, they*. The expressions *between you and I ... for he and Sheila ... with he and she ...* are all wrong. They should be *between you and me ... for Sheila and him ... and with him and her*.



-- Dave Wetterberg

These Secrets of Spring



By Mira Desai



The falls were beautiful at that time of the year, silver gurgling down the cascades. The sparkling water of the central canal, the “shah nahar,” almost in repose, sang as it rushed over worn stone, sang tales of valiant kings and dainty ice princesses, a tune of the times it had witnessed. The waters could nudge the hardest sleeping soul to life.

“Did you hear that winter’s over? The basil and the carnations cannot control their laughter,” Ahmed mumbled the long forgotten words Mrs. Smith had once taught him in middle school all those years ago. But the British had long left, taking their poetry and manners with them.

The wind ruffled the straight line of chinars in the desolate Shalimar gardens. A koyal trilled in the distance. And the backdrop, that ever-present rat-a-tat of gunfire, the remnant of a decade of unrest and fighting.

He sighed.

The lilacs were a feast for the senses, an Emperor’s tribute to life, “Verily if there be heaven on earth it is this,” a stunned Shah Jehan had once said about this Kashmir paradise, the prettiest spot in his far flung empire. Beds of lilacs and white roses lined the central canal and marched in perfect order, part of a grand design.

Basant, the spring festival, was close — time for the magic to begin, like an overlay on the spectacular vista. Soon, he’d hear the sound of tinkling voices and silver anklet bells. When the west winds began to blow across these empty grounds, that’s when the loud neighs of the best Arabian steeds would be heard, sharp on the distant wind. The trumpeting elephant had frightened him the first time he’d heard it, an alien sound against the stillness of rustling leaves, but now he’d gotten used to it.

Rafat. Old Rafat, the overseer of the gardens like him, a

gardener on government pay, would send him away on Basant, insist that he take a leave, that the spring festival was the right time for a young lad like him to wear new clothes, greet family and fly kites. And then Rafat was found dead by the poplars one evening. People said his heart had given way.

That first year, he’d hidden behind a boulder and trembled as he watched that other worldly court slowly come to life. Although what was visible to him was only a wisp, fragments, never the complete picture, but with the clarity of sound, as if some audio channel had been turned on. Some poet reciting a delicate couplet, words so fragile they’d bring a tear to the sternest eye, and appreciative murmurs of applause when he’d finished. The air had been fragrant with laughter and song, bustling with silks and perfumes as damsels rushed past, their bangles and anklets tinkling, and the garden hummed with secret assignations and protocol, though in bright sunlight, nothing was visible.

Not an ailment you could seek treatment for, from the hakeem. They’d think you were mad.

He’d understood why old man Rafat been so particular. A special celebration unfolded in the deserted garden. It was still too cold for the crowds to picnic, but later busloads of tourists would descend on the place.

He smiled, the secret celebrations were a special time of tehzeeb, of grace.

The next year and every year since, he’d prepared the upper gardens before the festival, ensured not a stray leaf marred the picture-perfect beauty of the place. He’d repaired cracks in the paths and the holding walls, and painted them a delicate azure and yellow. He’d waited till he heard the call of tinkling anklets and then had assembled a bouquet of ice-white lilies, and left them in the middle terrace where the Emperor and court once gathered.

He’d expected anger at this intrusion, perhaps a tree struck down—but the spirits had left him alone.

He sighed. That was many seasons ago. Amina, his wife, had long gone her way, and his son was lost in the rebel war across the border, a path he’d chosen. He was getting old, his bones weary, soon it would be time to go. Sometimes he felt as if someone was watching him from the shaded pavilions, the

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

restless souls of ministers and courtiers from times past, demanding of him what he, Ahmed Baksh, had done to preserve the legacy of this seventeenth century miracle.

What would happen to the garden after him? Who would prepare the velvet carpet for the spring festival? Ensure that all the trees and hedges were pruned, and the streams cleared of fallen leaves and twigs? Who'd repair the paths, paint the walls, and wait?

The sighing in the trees grew louder. Last evening, he'd placed the bouquet of lilies in the terrace as he had for the last four decades, and walked out, saluting.

He'd returned this morning to find a golden sash, jewel-encrusted and intricate, shimmering in the light. He examined it with shaking hands. What did this mean? This had never happened before. A trickster perhaps, or was he losing his mind?

A crow swooped overhead and settled to a spot not far. Even the common crow was reassuring.

With bent fingers, he'd fastened the sash around his waist. The gardens burst alive with life--children playing hopscotch, tag, old forgotten games he didn't know the names of. By the central canal a poet was singing to the accompaniment of a lyre, exquisite flower arrangements floated past on the rippling waters, and a princess and her coterie were listening in rapt attention.

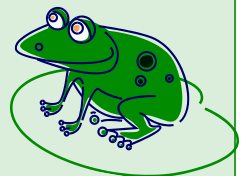
"For long you've watched over this place. It is now time for you to cross over. This evening I'll present you to the Emperor, even as lights float down the central stream and the strains of the sitar permeate the air," old man Rafat said, walking up and shaking his hand. "Didn't you recognize me in the crow you'd feed at lunch everyday?"

In the distance, a sudden burst of gunfire disturbed the peace, followed by the caw-caw of panicked birds and an awkward silence. Then quiet was restored and the wind ruffled the leaves.

Mira Desai writes, works and lives in Mumbai, with a day job in pharmaceuticals. Her expert translations of Indian authors have been featured in *Words without Borders*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *91st Meridian*, *Indian Literature*, *Pratilipi*, *Muse India*. She has contributed fiction to several Eastern and Western publications. Mira is a member of the Internet Writing Workshop, and experiments with poetry to further exercise and amuse her muse.

Mayflies: A Love Story

*The Mayfly flies only o'er water
Although certain of danger, it's fraughter.
What appears to us frantic,
Is to Mayflies romantic,
In this season of courtship and dating.
Though they spend all their time in midair,
Their lives are essentially square;
Other bugs are out biting
But Mayflies are fighting
In a pattern peculiar to mating.
Over water she flits left and right
At all times horizontal in flight
Weaving back and across
As if searching for lost
Children or sailors at sea.
You may wonder by now, where is he,
The debonair courtly May-flea?
How do they connect
Do their lives intersect?
Does he woo her, pursue her, and win?
Where is this prince charming of May time?
Does he sing to her sweetly in gay rhyme?
Is it romantic love,
Or none of above?
Church wedding, or bedding and sin?
For some reason, known only to God,
In a twist that's exceedingly odd,
He flies up and down,
One to two feet 'bove ground zero,
Over water, right angled to she.
They are fated, of course, to collide.
And her prince stays aboard for the ride.
It's a very small pond;
They become very fond
Of each other, and briefly, they show it.
It's natural, not at all spurious.
So in the event you were curious,
I thought I might tell you the reason
There'll be Mayflies aplenty next season.
On the off-chance you wanted to know.*



— Howard Goldstein

A poem for the spring season

May Morn in Mumbai

Spring sings!

In marigold garlands on gleaming cars

In the first call of the cuckoo at the blush of dawn

In the insanely fluorescent green on the badaam tree

In tender green that invents new hues everyday

In the light that filters past the rough jumble of trees

In the saffron circlet up high on the flame tree

In the glee and squeals of tag on green velvet

In the distant drumbeat of celebration that wafts in through my window

In the lines of Kalidasa, master poet of ancient times,

In words that still float unseen in the air-haze,

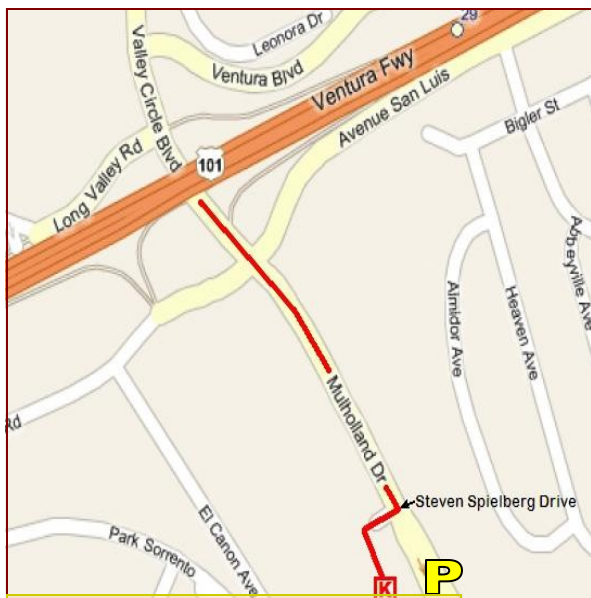
Of princesses true, and pining braves,

Forgotten words that the bee still hums to,

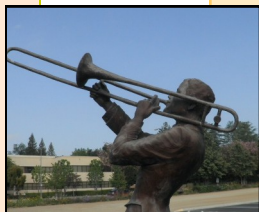
And that line of birds flying home in the dusk, know

Spring sings!

— Mira Desai



Free parking is available in a large lot behind the Katzenberg Room. Look for the trombone statue — that's the CWC/SFV parking lot.



MEETINGS

The California Writers Club meets the first Saturday of the month except July and August at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

Villa Katzenberg
23388 Mulholland
Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

NEXT MEETING

Saturday May 5th, at 1 p.m.

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cwc-sfv.org



The Valley Scribe

May 2012
In memoriam

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley

Remembering Betty

by Di Johnson

I retired from teaching in 1990 to begin my second career as an author, writing stories about people on my family tree. By January of 1993, I'd taken two novel writing courses at CSUN, and was well into my first book.

One day my mom called to say she'd been talking to a dear college friend of hers, who'd been a principal with Betty Freeman. She knew Betty was active in a writing group called California Writers Club, and maybe they'd let me become a member.

My husband Bill and I inquired and were told I should bring the first chapter of my manuscript for review in order to become an associate member. Bill and I arrived, manuscript in hand, and met Betty at the sign-in table. They accepted me, and by the end of our first meeting Betty had talked us into being co-hosts in charge of storing all of the coffee supplies and bringing them to the meetings—Bill setting up the coffee-maker. We were quick to learn, no one could possibly say 'no' to Betty! We accepted.

I credit Betty Freeman with spearheading the establishment of CWC in Southern California in 1986. She was a co-founder of the San Fernando Valley Branch. Until that time, all of the branches had been located in Northern California. Soon people came to CWC/SFVB from as far away as the High Desert, East Sierra, Bakersfield

and Orange County. They traveled great distances, liked what they witnessed, and then established new branches in their own hometowns.

Everyone in CWC came to know Betty Freeman when she was elected president of the Central Board.

Betty met everyone who walked in the door of our branch meetings—perhaps timid and a bit anxious—with personal friendliness and professional interest. She mentored many of us. I know I could never have become the author of six published novels without her practical help and cheerful encouragement.

Betty was not only friendly and a great promoter for CWC she was an accomplished writer herself. I particularly remember reading a published article she wrote describing the 1948 Academy Awards celebration during which her husband, Charles "Chuck" won the Oscar for sound editing on the film, *Portrait of Jenny*. Her writing painted a picture of a smaller more personal event in contrast with the razzle-dazzle, TV extravaganzas held in Hollywood today. Her reporting of her Oscar celebration was a consummate demonstration of fine writing.

With Betty's encouragement Bill and I became co-treasurers of CWC/SFVB, and I later became



(Continued on page 13)



President's Message

GOODBYE MY FRIEND AND MENTOR, BETTY FREEMAN

When I think of Betty, these words come to mind: gracious, energetic, generous, funny, mentor, and ... crafty recruiter. Many of us who joined CWC as associates soon found ourselves volunteering (at Betty's gentle prodding) in some minor capacity. Not realizing that her own example of CWC service would prime us for a "higher calling," we eventually became officers and helped Betty run the organization so dear to her heart. And because we all emulated Betty, CWC became dear to us also.

If you were lucky enough to be in a critique group that was hosted in Betty's home, then you had a tasty treat waiting for you: her famous homemade cookies. A corner of her large dining room table was covered by an artistically folded tablecloth on which she placed flowers from her garden, fruit, cheese, crackers and cookies. Leftover cookies were always bundled up at the end of the meeting with the remark, "Take some home to that handsome husband of yours." What a flirt she was!

Speaking of cookies, one day back in 1994, she excitedly greeted her critique group with the news that her Oat Pecan Praline recipe won the \$2,000 first prize in the Quaker Oatmeal Recipe Contest. Her quote, published in a *Daily News* article about her win, captured her pragmatic side: "As a writer, you're lucky to get 15 cents a word. I got \$9 a word for writing this recipe. That's pretty good."

Betty had a collection of *cymbidiums* growing in the shade of her patio cover just off her kitchen. All you had to do was admire them when they were in full bloom and you went home with one, along with some plant food to nourish it.

This act of generosity exemplifies Betty's basic nature of giving, sharing, and nurturing. She touched so many lives; her spirit will live on in those of us who were fortunate enough to meet her in this lifetime.

- Yolanda Finton

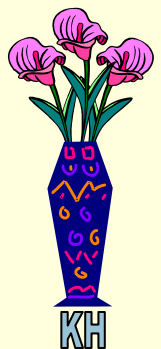
west valley whimsicals

A Schwartz / Highcove Production

Our Gardener



Many people loudly proclaim
passion and proficiency
growing seeds, blossoms and fruits.
But ... true nurturers,
capable and confident producers
of prolific crops,
quietly find promising ways
to enrich the soil,
and research the perfect times
to water the roots.



(continued from page 11)

president. During my tenure as president we were delegates to the State Board of Directors, where we became state co-treasurers. We certainly couldn't say 'no' to Betty!

We became dear friends. One day we drove my mother and Betty to visit the mutual friend who had instigated our joining CWC. On the way, Betty and my mom discovered they had attended UCLA at the same time, though they hadn't met then. Mom and Betty became friends. **Everyone** was Betty's friend.

We happened to drop by Betty's house just after the love of her life, Charles, passed away. Instead of saying this wasn't a good time, she and her children welcomed us into the family as they reminisced, grieved, and talked of the future. Because of Charles' job in the industry, Betty was eligible to move into the MPTV complex, whose motto is "We take care of our own." My dad, as an executive at MGM, had served on their board of directors. Another personal connection!

Betty continued to promote CWC, even while living at MPTV. She received permission to schedule at Villa Katzenberg on the grounds of MPT, inviting other residents to join in our meeting.

Our nurturing friend loved to garden, rejuvenating a weedy patch behind her residence building. There, in an upraised plot, she grew flowers that she fashioned into bouquets to grace our CWC meetings.

Bill and I will miss her. Her optimism. enthusiasm, friendliness and her gifts of beautiful flowers. Farewell dear one. We'll meet you in heaven, where you will probably have a new branch of CWC up and running by the time we get there... and a spectacular garden of flowers.



YOU CAN'T SAY NO TO BETTY!

Back in 1986 when I joined CWC-SFV, I was a wanna-be author. My writing instructor, Joan



Jones, was the first president of the San

Fernando Valley Branch. She invited her students to join the club. So I did.

After each meeting, Betty Freeman encouraged me to come to the board meeting. I didn't realize she was grooming me for future assignments and positions within the club. First, she called me to write the Market Column for the club newsletter. Who could say, "No, I'm too busy" to Betty? The following year she called and asked me if I'd do a member success column. We entitled it "Applause! Applause!" Again, who can say, "No," to Betty?

As the years went by, I found myself taking on program chair, assistant state rep with Betty, and special events co-chair to help out when we had Steve Allen as a guest speaker. Betty forced me out of my shell, and the board positions made me grow — even as a writer. After seven years, my first book came out. Betty encouraged me and gave kudos.

She made writers stretch for the stars. We not only helped enhance the CWC/SFV but we simultaneously learned ways to improve our own writing careers.

I'll miss her presence at our meetings. She's probably in heaven organizing a writers club.

· Judy Presnall

Betty was the heart and face of our San Fernando Branch of CWC. She was the first smiling face I saw when I went to the Fallbrook Mall to check out the writer's group I had heard about. Although I didn't join on that day, Betty made sure that I received *The Valley Scribe*. It wasn't long before she had me hook, line and sinker.

Besides a love of writing we also shared our love of flowers. She was a special lady who touched the hearts of many.

— Sheila Moss



Oh Betty!

You adorable pixie. So petite...so spry...so witty...so lovable. Your smiling face under many large brimmed hats, one of which I gave to you, is another lingering portrait of my friend Betty. It was the red one.

We worked together gathering celebrity speakers for our writers club, sharing lunches and laughter ... never complaining about anything. Your wisdom advised me on personal matters ... such as not telling my age until I turn ninety. And Betty... I remember you as being one of my guests of honor at my big birthday party. You called me the hostess with the mostest ... a regular Pearl Mesta! No one ever said that to me!

You encouraged me to get my writings into a published book. I'm doing it, Betty ... it's in the works.

I promised to attend your one hundredth birthday. You almost made it. I'm so blessed to have had you in my life. Rest on a marshmallow cloud with other unforgettables. I will miss you.

— Leslie Kaplan

My first visit to a CWC meeting, when I was a complete stranger to the group, Betty greeted me with warmth and interest. We became friends very quickly with a bond of similar interests and passion for creativity and education. What a shining mentor, talented and warm friend!

Once in a while

*As we follow our path through life
Someone crosses that path
And affects us all deeply.
New friend, or old, Betty
You came into my life
With your friendship and talent
And brightened our times together.
No dearer or more generous friend,
Always there to help and encourage
With wisdom and humor
Memories I shall always cherish.*

— Lillian Rodich



**Three good pals:
Betty, Leslie and
Dave Wetterberg.**

The first time I met Betty was in 1997 on my very first visit to CWC when we were meeting at "The Meeting Place" in Fallbrook Mall. She made me feel welcome from the get-go and it wasn't long before she had me reluctantly and deeply involved in service. Before the end of my first year as a member, wondering how the hell it had happened, I was one of the two vice-presidents. My function was to find the speakers for our meetings. It was a lot of work but thankfully only a two-year commitment. Right! Then she got me to be a state representative. By 1999, I was state treasurer and couldn't for the life of me get free. Finally, in 2004, they found a new treasurer. Then we formed the West Valley Branch in 2006 and nobody wanted to be treasurer, especially not me. Right! In 2011, we reunited with the San Fernando Branch and I was able to step down as branch treasurer.

Betty and I knew a wonderful friendship. We struggled through some disagreements, and even those were kind. She was and remains my friend. Near where I write these words hangs the 2004 Betty Freeman Award. I look at it and remember her as someone who asked me to grow up and give of myself. You are deeply missed, dear lady.

— Dean Stewart

I'm probably the only Club member to ever get kicked out of a meeting, but to be coaxed back in by our loveable Betty Freeman. The best I remember, back in the early 90s I let the speaker know he was straying far off the given topic and we should get back on track. He told me if I didn't like it I could leave and ... I did. Betty came running after me and persuaded me to promise I'd attend the next month's meeting. Who could resist Betty? I returned and have enjoyed many a happy year with the Club.

— Ken Wilkins



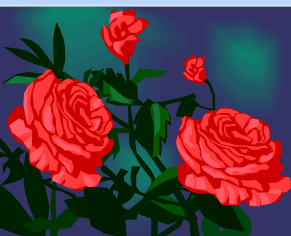
Dean Stewart helps Betty blow out the candles on her cake.

To my loss, I wish I'd been able to serve in the California Writers Club with more time alongside Betty. Certainly, I was so glad when we did eventually meet, because long before, I'd already heard of her amazing achievements. So, we did have opportunities to exchange warm greetings when I was able to attend San Fernando Valley area events, and when crossing paths at Central too.

Betty was indeed a vivacious, kind, and charming personality! I know she contributed beyond measure, and will be greatly missed.

— Tina B. Glasner

I went to my first CWC meeting out of curiosity. I was retired and I was interested in pursuing my interest in writing. This was over ten years ago. Betty was the little lady who welcomed me warmly and enthusiastically. The next week she gave me a follow-up phone call to invite me to her home for a special meeting. How could I refuse? Betty was a joy, sprightly and witty. Once when we went to a Rotary group luncheon, I asked her if she'd mind if I mentioned her age in the introduction. She informed me that it would be fine, because when a lady reaches ninety, it's perfectly okay to admit her age.



-- Dave Wetterberg

I loved the woman! She was such a fantastic person who did many, many wonderful things for our club. I'll miss her so much; it's hard to think about a SFV branch without our Betty Freeman.

— Bill Sorrells

WRITING, MARKETING, SELLING and what else?

By Betty Freeman, *The Valley Scribe*, December 2005

Actually, much more ... Writing is an essential in our lives today. It occupies most of our time, whether we are marketing to sell or trying to keep track of the day's schedule..through the years I have written and sold, but always about a very special moment, something that truly excited me, personally. Like what?

My youngest daughter's wedding, a delightful experience to re-live, one more time, the stillness of the church candles flickering, that moment when the wedding march began. How I love the music and the triumphant exit with the brass section of the organ bellying the elation of the moment!

Selecting her dress. She is so beautiful, this youngest daughter. I couldn't wait for the try-ons; immediately I told her we would pay for her dress and anything else she needed, and what church would it be in?

When I discovered they were being married in Elysian Park, not far from the baseball field, using three ministers of various faiths, and hip-hop music of their generation, my enthusiasm zinged to a new low. I swallowed and wondered what part I could possibly play in this amazing event. Would you believe, they did need me! On the morning of the wedding the best man and I fastened a billowing white canopy over the special spot for the bride and groom. And that afternoon I watched this 'today' ceremony and cried tears of joy over this precious service. The story sold to the *Chicago Tribune* and the *LA Times*.

The night that my husband won an Oscar for his sound effects in *Portrait of Jenny* was a great story, not only because he won, but because that 1949 event was held in a tiny theater around the corner from Santa Monica Blvd.

The theater is long gone. But the celebration that normally was held in the Ambassador Hotel, the Phil-

harmonic and other massive halls was in that tiny theater because of funds. The backers of the event – three studios – suddenly pulled out because the 'word' was out that they were winners each year because they financed the event. For us, it was amazing. Only nominees and the press could attend. My husband and I walked through the doors with the stars, listened to them call to each other, relating the latest gossip. In essence, we were a private party and loved every minute of it. Of course, the fact that he won his Oscar that night was the perfect topping.

The *L.A. Times* bought the story for \$400, then held it for two years, then published it, with pictures. Yes, I picked out the pictures at the *Motion Picture Library* on La Brea, and the *Times* paid for them.

Some years later I sold them a story about attending the Oscars, driven in a limo and a beautiful gown. My husband wanted us to do it up in style that year, and we did, except for one dreadful moment. My beautiful gown lost some of its stitching (a five minute fix I had given it at the last moment) and, as I'm clutching myself together, our limo dropped us off

at home to make a change, and then go for a later dinner. By that time we were laughing at our wild adventure.

And still another story sold to the *Times*, and to the *Chicago Tribune* — the one where we crashed an Oscar party just off of Wilshire. Of course it was unintentional. We left the Oscars early to avoid the crowd, whizzed out to a street in Beverly Hills and began looking for a special restaurant

that was supposed to be the absolute best.

We found one with a French name. When we arrived we were asked if we were with any special party. We said, "No," and were seated at a party for ten. For our food, we were guided to a buffet table with hors d'oeuvres.

Starving, we filled out plates with these tooth pick items. Gradually people came in. A couple asked if

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(Continued from page 16)

they could sit with us.

"Of course," was the gracious reply of my husband, who then said, "We have been curious about the seating this evening."

The man replied, "It's a private party!"

I almost choked on my olive.

My husband asked, "Who is the host?"

The man replied, "I am."

I looked at my plate laden with pits and tooth-picks.

The man continued, "You are most welcome to stay."

My husband smiled. "Thank you."

After finishing the last bite we both said our thank you's, and we left.

Going home Chuck said, "Would you like to go out to dinner?" I shook my head and we continued laughing at this, another amazing Oscar night. The story sold to the Times.

Now you have some of the articles I have sold. Have you any idea why? I think it helps to have your story connected with the Oscars or an event that is a special part of our lives at that time. Not always.

Sometimes a story may be a day-by-day incident with a new twist, with an angle many of us didn't know.

I haven't focused on selling articles on a regular basis because I've always been involved in other angles of my profession. The articles happened because I was so enthusiastic about a particular experience. I wanted to share it.

As for books? I tried several, and was most intense about a teen-age story of a sperm bank boy and his search for identity. It was early in this "process" and many, if not most, of the donors were young men in college.

My protagonist was thirteen and concerned about who he was. Even more so, he was concerned about who he might meet that could be related to him. (i.e. a girl friend).

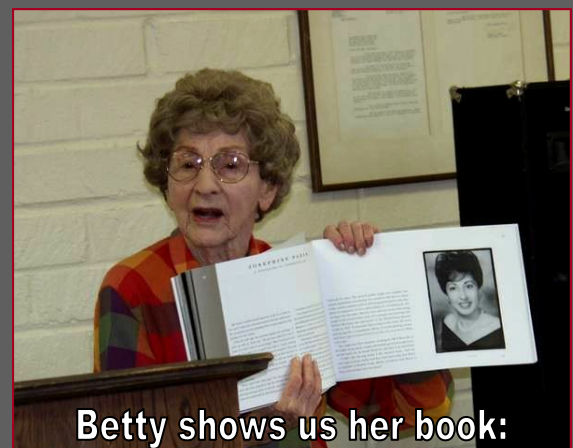
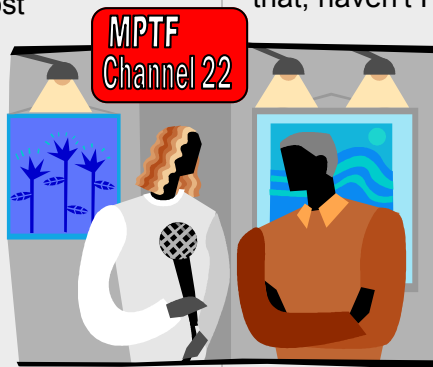
During this time period, rules were changing, restrictions were making this less possible. I gave up the project when I talked to a young mother who expressed her intense desire to keep her son's life private. *The Sperm Bank Book* was put to bed.

Of the sampling of my stories that sold, why did they sell? I think it helps if the story is connected with an event that is timely, and a special part of our lives. And of course, the blocks and disasters in an event are vital. If I were to write today, it would be about the MPTF where I live. Yes, but I've already done that, haven't I? And now it's a book. I'll settle for writing in the Gazette, our MPTF newsletter.

Also, right now I am helping develop materials for our in-house TV station, Channel 22, another way of telling our stories. Being a part of any kind of development is a vibrant tie to life — a blessing! If you are not into it, start looking.

There is so much to know, so much to do. Offer to write the story of something being developed and ... good luck!

Ed's note: Betty went on to interview several of her fellow MPTF residents. The showbiz veterans recounted their careers, accomplishments and memories for viewers of the in-house television station. It was a hit show, we heard. Tapes were made available for the interviewees and residents after each show.



**Betty shows us her book:
"Behind the Silver Screen."**

Betty's Coolbrith Award

The Ina Coolbrith Award was conceived as a complement to the Jack London Award except that where the JL is for service to a branch, the IC is for service to the central board and CWC as a whole.

The first name that came to mind when the central board created the award was Betty Freeman.

— Casey Wilson
CWC/East Sierra



Betty received the Coolbrith Award in 2004

As a volunteer at the Motion Pictures and Television Fund, I met Betty regularly on campus whether it was in a garden where she would pick fresh flowers, or the conference room where she and I shared a festive meal together or just waving "Hello Mrs. Freeman," in the Stark Villa.

She would always respond with a warm smile and a friendly comment. When I would remind her that we both attend the California Writers Club she would say: "That is good, that is important."

I already miss her but I have my fond memories of her.

— Marganit Lish



Betty warms up the crowd before Open Mic.

One morning last week, I woke from a dream in which Betty and I were arranging a table of refreshments as we had done for so many years at the California Writers Club meetings.

I first met Betty when I joined CWC-SFV in 1988. I soon dropped out due to spending long periods of time in Pennsylvania with my aging parents.

In 1993, I rejoined CWC and was amazed that Betty remembered me — even remembered my name. She invited me into the critique group she hosted and involved me in many different jobs in CWC. For many years we had almost daily communication in regard to CWC.

When her husband, Chuck, was in a nursing home, she became acquainted with other residents in the MPTF and, I believe, put together a photo display for the residents.

In the Motion Picture Home, she was the catalyst for the publication of a book of the residents' memories. She inspired the rejuvenation of the residents' garden plots.

She arranged a meeting place at the Motion Picture Home when CWC/WV split from the original CWC/SFV.

I am confident that Betty will live on in our memories and dreams and continue to inspire all those who knew her.

-- Mary Houston Shaffer



When did I meet this great lady, Betty Freeman? How long ago? I don't really remember the exact day and year. But, it seems like I have known her all my life.

Fresh in my memory is a meeting we had in her large comfortable house. There were flowers everywhere on top of artistic tables. Most of them in every color were potted or planted in the front

yard. We had a meeting of sorts and a large crowd of writers gathered around in her large white living room. Many already packed and sealed boxes were scattered here and there. A group of writers were wrapping with newspaper her elegant family china and other small gifts she wanted to keep. She was moving the next day to her new home at the Motion Picture Home in Calabasas.

Just fresh from one of my European trips, I gave Betty a small memento from Venice. "How did you know my new place is going to be only a small room?" she asked, delighted. "I know exactly where I'm going to put it."

Betty, the proper hostess, prepared tea for all. I can almost smell the foreign aromatic fumes. Later she passed around silver trays brimmed to the top with triangular, no crust little sandwiches, assorted cheeses and shiny-like-glass fruit of every kind. She always knew how to make her writers feel at home

And today, thanks to Betty, the members of the SFV meet at the Katzenberg Room of the MPTF. Betty, a small colorful lady with a big heart was the main instrument to secure a proper space. As we all know, there is a writers meeting the first Saturday of every month. We enjoy a warm home where we feel comfortable sharing our stories with other wonderful members ... who have become good friends as well.

Betty's shadow lurks in a corner at every single meeting. You can't help turning your head around trying to spot her smile.

— Kyle Birnberg-Goldstein

Betty was the first recipient of the Ina Coolbrith Award as well as a mover and shaker on the Central Board years ago. She instituted the Policies and Procedures too! After she retired to the Motion Picture Home, she organized a writing group. She was eligible to live there because her husband was a cinematographer in Hollywood and even won an Oscar. A CWC beacon, most missed.

— Barb Truax
CWC/ Marin County

Betty cheerfully participates in her umpteenth CWC committee meeting.



What a saint!

In addition to co-founding the original SFV branch, Betty Freeman also was involved in the founding the High Desert branch and the West Valley branch. After West Valley merged with SFV, the combined membership has continued to meet at the movie industry's beautiful retirement home — all because Betty Freeman, a resident there, received permission from the facility's management.

-- Bob Garfinkle, President
California Writers Club

In the Gardens of the Movie Home

Several years ago I was assigned to write a story about the gardens of the MPTF for the newsletter of a national horticultural association. The editors were especially interested in the individual gardens and planting beds that were made available and used by several of the residents.

I learned that Betty was instrumental in establishing gardening opportunities for the residents. And ... come to think of it ... she may have been my inspiration for the article. By happy coincidence, my neighbor Linda Mann was a California state officer in the horticultural group. Hmm. Maybe Linda was the inspiration for the article. Whoever thought of it, the article was okayed by the MPTF honchos, and we made a date with Betty.

One lovely spring morning, Linda and I, accompanied by Colleen Sharmat, another neighbor who'd be our photographer for the article, drove into the parking lot of the Movie Home. Betty met us in the lobby of the Villa where she had her apartment.

She informed us that we would soon meet Nacho Rodarte, the head MPTF gardener, when he was free from his chores. (Nacho, evidently, was yet another person who couldn't say, "No," to persuasive Betty Freeman.) In the meantime, and no one who knew Betty will be surprised, she told us that we three were first going to lunch at the facility as her guests. And so we did. Who was going to say, "No thanks, I'm not hungry," to Betty Freeman? No way, Jose.

We had a pleasant lunch on a shaded patio and chatted merrily with Betty over our tasty entrees. I remember that she especially enjoyed hearing about our neighborhood – all the gossipy bits about this and that. Vivacious Betty was interested in anything we wanted to talk about – the facility, our neighborhood, or who might be that attractive older couple at a nearby table.

It was clear to all of us how much Betty enjoyed people and conversation while her guests supped and sipped like happy birds at a garden feeder. Betty

made people feel comfortable and relaxed.

After lunch Betty found Nacho and after the introductions our tour began. We saw large beds of flowers, accented by tall shady trees, and areas where one talented resident had been encouraged to practice his topiary skills.

Nacho showed us a potting shed for residents and told us that cottage residents were allowed to choose their own garden plants – within reason – outside their front door. We learned the history of the facility's landscaping and how Nacho had labored hard for decades to create gardens that looked like garden photos in *Sunset Magazine*. Betty asked thoughtful questions

that encouraged the modest man to describe how he had brought beauty to the lives of show biz retirees. We realized that Nacho was an artist whose "oils" were flowers, bushes and trees.

I took many notes. Colleen took several photos and we all learned that horticulture had played a major part in the healthy environment of the Movie Home.

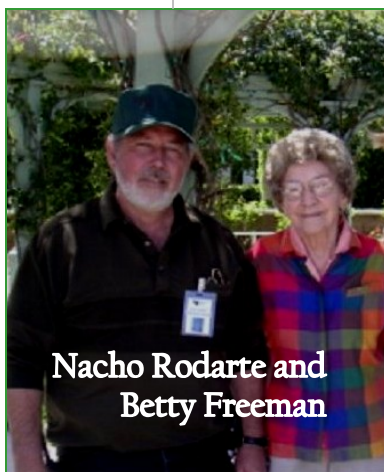
"Many MPTF retirees adopt gardening as their new hobby in their new home," Betty reported with a smile.

We learned that some residents of the Stark Villa opt to maintain their own garden plots in a side courtyard area. We walked around and surveyed the up-raised garden plots, bursting with veggies and a variety of flowers. Betty proudly showed us her garden plot.

And so we three neighbors spent a memorable afternoon viewing the landscapes and gardens of the Movie Home. My article and photos were well received by the horticultural newsletter and their readers.

Today, I look at the photos and recall a very pleasant day with Betty and my friends. Maybe Nacho still has the article and his photo framed and hung on the wall of his office in the garden center. Betty made a point of seeing that he got a copy and kudos from his bosses at the facility. She thought of everything.

— Kathy Highcove



Nacho Rodarte and
Betty Freeman

Published in the Los Angeles Times
on April 22, 2012

Composed by Betty's children

Betty J. Freeman, November 14, 1913 —
March 31, 2012

Innovative educator and writer Betty Freeman passed away peacefully on March 31, 2012 in Woodland Hills at the young age of 98.

Betty was born on Nov 14, 1913 in the small town of Marmarth, North Dakota. After her father's death in 1924 she and her mother, grandmother and brother moved to California. Betty attended Van Nuys HS and later [UCLA](#) graduating with a degree in education with a music minor. She taught music and general education in LAUSD elementary schools. In 1960 she received her MA in Education at USC placing 1st and 2nd in L.A. in her oral and written exams to become a principal.

She was a principal at Hazeltine Elementary and then at Dixie Canyon Avenue Elementary, which during her tenure became the highest rated elementary school in LAUSD. She is noted with pioneering an "open class" system for her 4th to 6th grades, providing three periods a day, and also introducing after school electives such as film editing and aeronautics.

She retired in 1977 to pursue her life long dream of becoming a writer. Betty wrote articles for the LA Times and the Chicago Tribune and started the first Southern California chapter of the California Writers Club, later becoming president of the entire statewide organization.

After the death of her husband, Oscar and Emmy Award-winning film editor Charles L.

Freeman in 2001, Betty moved to the Motion Picture & Television Fund facility bringing along her CWC/SFV chapter.



Betty in a moment
of repose at the MPTF.

Fascinated by the creative and bright individuals who'd become her new neighbors, Betty began a writing collaboration with MPTF volunteer Lauren Dow to create a book of interviews of the residents. In 2005 Variety Maga-

zine published their book ***Behind The Silver Screen***, with an introduction by Kevin Spacey.

An avid and talented gardener, Betty filled most of the residents' garden plots with flowering plants and made daily flower arrangements for the MPTF residents, especially for the frequent birthdays! She maintained the gardens by herself until the age of 96.

Preceded in death by her husband Charles, Betty is survived by her children Richard Freeman (Candace Howerton), Jerilyn Covell (Charles Grotke) and Jill Freeman (Joel Wachbrit), grandchildren April, Jason and Rune and four great grandchildren, also many nieces and nephews and many, many friends. She will be greatly missed by all.

A memorial to Betty's remarkable life will be held on April 29 at 2PM at the Motion Picture & Television Fund, 23388 Mulholland Dr., Woodland Hills, CA. Donations in Betty's memory may be made to the MPTF.



Here's Betty sitting in our midst at the June 2011 meeting.
We'll never forget our dear friend and co-founder. Keeping
her memory close to our hearts, we'll face the horizon ... And sail on!