

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

The Valley Scribe

SEPTEMBER
2012

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley

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New Plays for Tommy

Our first speaker of the year, Tommy Hawkins, was once on the Lakers team. After playing basketball, he became an Emmy-nominated radio and television broadcaster, and was employed for 18 years as a communications vice-president for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Besides his hectic day jobs, Hawkins has actively supported several civic projects. But he's always found time for ... poetry.

Yes, Tommy Hawkins is a published poet and his latest book is titled ***Life's Reflections: Poetry for the People***.

He visits the CWC-SFV this Saturday, September 1st, to tell us how writing and publishing his work became an important part of his life. His appearance and lecture will launch a unique speaker series. As program chair Rita Keeley Brown informs us on page four: "This year writers from careers varying from anthropology to the legal profession will share their approach to writing with us."

Come hear Tommy Hawkins, an engaging communicator.



Guest Speaker

Tommy Hawkins

west valley whimsicals

A Schwartz / Highcove Production

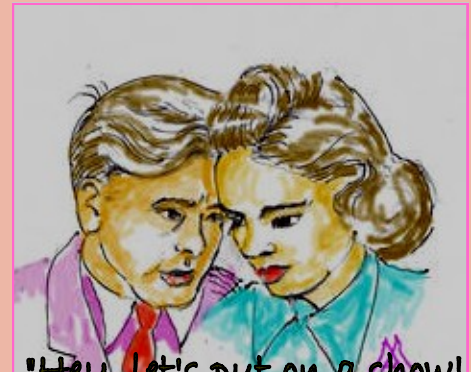


"I want to be alone ...
with my masterpiece."

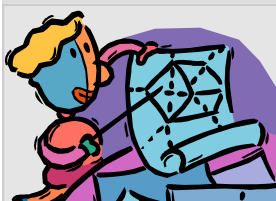
Show Your Stuff

Some writers eagerly share their latest composition. Others are reticent and reluctantly let others read or listen to their work. How do you feel about sharing your writing? Better yet, how do you feel about becoming a better

(Continued on page 2)



"Hey, let's put on a show!
Take a look at my script."



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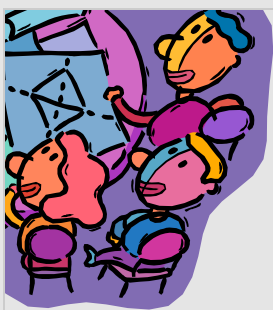
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(W/bimsicals continued from page 1)

writer? Every writer—even the most widely read author—needs copy and content editors. There are several ways to become a better writer: classes, workshops, lectures and ... critique groups. This year *The Valley Scribe* will spotlight our four SFV critique groups. We'll learn how the different groups function, and the benefits experienced by their members. Why spotlight our critique groups? SFV will expand this valuable writing resource by forming more groups. Stay tuned! In October we'll meet our first group.

KH

President's Message

Much has happened since our well-attended June meeting. While many of you may have been traveling, catching up on your reading, or, better yet, polishing up that manuscript, your board has been busy getting ready for 2012/2013.



As you know, we've been without a secretary since last December. Minutes of our board meetings were taken by various board members who graciously filled the void. But now I rejoice because Gary Wosk has agreed to fill in that office. And a fine job he did at our first meeting in August planning the coming SFV year. You'll find the minutes posted on our website: www.cwc-sfv.org

Our faithful treasurer, Pirhiya Goldstein, has retired and we thank her for doing an excellent job. Fortunately, we found a replacement: Mary Rubio Freeman, a long-time friend and past member. Mary served as president of CWC/SFV in 1988-1990. It is our good fortune she has agreed to fill the vacancy.

Rita Brown, our program chair, has been busy filling out our program and has several interesting and diverse speakers lined up for the coming year. (September through June)

Kathy Highcove, editor of *The Valley Scribe*, and Andrea Polk, membership chair, are designing a brochure about our CWC-SFV branch to be used as PR handouts at meetings and other venues where writers and readers meet.

Andrea has been assisting Lillian Rodich with the program and has agreed to become Critique Group Coordinator. Lillian will be Andi's critique group consultant.

Andrea and Kathy have also been working on a plan to spotlight our critique groups and their writings in the newsletter. Andi, Lillian and Kathy have designed an application form for members interested in joining a critique group, which will be available at the sign-in table each month. The documents will aid Andrea and Lillian in setting up new groups—our four existing groups are currently full.

Ray Malus, our hard working webmaster, attended the CWC Central Board meeting in July as our branch's representative. He reports that all but one branch are now using the Membership Record (MRMS) he has designed. And he's added enhancements to simplify our club's record-keeping.

Some of you had a busy summer, some a relaxing one. Whichever kind of summer season you had, come to our meeting Saturday and reconnect with your fellow writer.



Bob Dylan once assured his listeners: "Don't think twice, it's alright."

A laid-back mindset, however, doesn't apply to serious writers, according to Maralys Wills, author, instructor and lecturer.

"Writers must constantly revisit their work and 'clean it up,'" Wills advised the audience at our June meeting.

But how to dust off and polish the nooks and crannies of a finished manuscript? Will the speaker's tried and true formatting devices, help our members clean up their copy?

The short answer is "Yes," although Wills warned that too much reliance on outside advice can keep work mired in continual corrections. She believes that at some point a writer needs to sit down at the computer, roll up his sleeves and write, write, write new material.

Wills covered a lot of territory during her presentation on writing skills. She first passed out a five-page document which listed **ten techniques** to help authors upgrade a manuscript from "good" to "publishable."

Wills honed in on the construction of sentences at the outset of her talk.

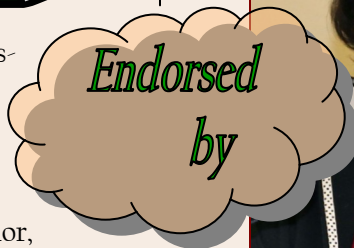
"My number one writing technique: Always end your sentences with a strong word. Your writing will have more power. The last word resonates in the reader's mind. Set it up first and then end sentences with action. What happens comes last. You are building the action."

While it is not known if Wills is an environmentalist, she is definitely against littering pages with a steady barrage of dull type. She's a big believer in paragraphs consisting of short and long sentences to make the work more dramatic and intense.

"Mix things up for sentence variety. Include a long sentence occasionally and then follow it with a short sentence. Don't be afraid of one word sentences; they work very well. If it flows, go for it."

Using the word "as" repeatedly in descriptive phases needlessly elongates a sentence. "You're better off dividing a long sentence into two sentences. Don't glue sentences together, it becomes obvious. Two actions work better as two sentences. Otherwise, it's very poor writing."

According to Wills, "said" is the right word to use ninety



MARALYS WILLS

percent of the time, and leave it at that without adding superfluous narrative. "The dialogue itself should carry the message."

She is also a stickler when it comes to upgrading dialogue.

"You can be more clever when writing dialogue than when you speak aloud in a normal conversation. You can be sharp, pithy and mean... things you would not think of saying in person. Write as fast as you can. It's more meaningful. Use brilliant and incisive things people say;

boring things people say do not belong in books. You can go back and make them **more** interesting, things you wouldn't do in a normal conversation."

Incorporating disharmony into a book makes for a more interesting plot line.

"Conflict makes the book move along. For example, a good plot would not be about visiting the Eiffel Tower; it'd be about the Eiffel Tower falling down!"

A very good book, she maintained, has long dramatic passages.

"Dramatic scenes are why readers buy books. A dramatic scene should be no shorter than ten pages to adequately build the conflict."

And sometimes, Wills emphasized, the rules—her techniques and devices—can be bent.

"I am pragmatic. If it works, it works, even if it doesn't fit the techniques I'm talking about today."

When asked afterwards what was the most important lesson she wanted members to take home with them in addition to her ten techniques, she replied, "Read, read, read!" In other words, find out how other authors have become successful by studying their style.

Finally, our June speaker reminded members that even "bad writing days can be worth something, because everything can come together the next day." And, as Dylan also counseled his listeners, "We shall be released." A determined writer's copy will finally—after countless editing sessions—be ready for the publisher.

For more information on Wills and books she has written, visit her Web site at www.maralys.com. Her email address is Maralys@cox.net. She can also be reached at (714) 544-0344.

by Gary Wosk

WANTED: REFRESHMENTS CHAIR

CWC-SFV urgently needs a hospitality chair who will oversee the coffee and refreshments provided at our monthly meetings.

If you are willing to help us with this popular feature of our gatherings, please contact Yolanda at 818-624-1926 or at yfintor@sbcglobal.net

A Good idea from Rita Keeley Brown:

Let's feature quotes each month from famous authors or lesser known writers that we can apply to our own writing. Here's a good one by Vladimir Nabokov - The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become visible. This quote reminded me of speaker Deborah Edler Brown's references to Michelangelo and the statue of David "waiting to be found" in that slab of marble.

Who's next? Send in your writer quotes.

**CURRENT MEMBERS - RENEWAL DUES \$45.
PAY NOW THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30th, 2012.
The October meeting is **TOO LATE!****

After September 30th all members paying dues are considered NEW MEMBERS and the dues are \$65. Make it easy on yourself and bring your check made out to the CWC-SFV to the September meeting, Saturday, September 1st, or mail it to

Mary Freeman, CWC-SFV Treasurer
9625 Fullbright Ave.
Chatsworth, CA 91311

Turning the Page to 2012-13



Rita Keeley Brown
Program Chair

Our CWC theme for last year's speakers focused on *A Journey through the Basics of Writing*. This year we will be focused on genre and writing from the perspective of people who write in addition to maintaining a professional career. The basics and the practical side of writing will also be presented but in a different context.

We start our CWC year with an exciting speaker, Tommy Hawkins. Tommy is best-known as a college All-American basketball player from Notre Dame who spent 10 years in NBA professional basketball playing for the LA Lakers and 18 years as a Vice President of Communications for the LA Dodgers.

During his active sports career he was also a civic leader supporting many community projects such as the LA Center Theater Group, Friends of Jazz at UCLA, LA Sports Council and was a Golden Mike and Emmy Award-nominated radio and television broadcaster.

Throughout his active career he loved writing poetry and now has published a book of poetry entitled ***Life's Reflections: Poetry for the People***.

Our speaker for October is Sheila Lowe who writes mysteries which incorporate her knowledge and experience as a professional court-certified handwriting expert.

Other scheduled speakers, immersed in careers varying from anthropology to the legal profession, will share their unique approach to writing. Join us in the coming months for this stimulating lecture series.

— Rita Keeley Brown

In Print

A Little Help from My Friends And A Writers' Resource Website



By Gary Wosk

The fact that a relatively inexperienced creative writer such as I could have three stories accepted by publishers only a few months after joining the California Writers Club should be encouraging news to every SFV member.

First I joined a CWC-SFV critique group, which was and still is an immense help. The group makes sure that the stories I submit are as well polished as possible. It is a quite painless process, and it is a joy to be around such fine people.

And then I discovered **Duotrope** (<https://duotrope.com/>) and before I knew it, my sci-fi short stories were accepted and are expected to begin appearing in e-books and printed books.

The Web site **Duotrope** describes itself as an “established, award-winning writers’ resource and we’re here to help you spend less time submitting so you can focus on writing.” And it works. At least, **Duotrope** worked for me.

I don’t want to give the impression that every submission was accepted, but once I received that first “Yes,” I knew anything was possible.

“My Gym,” which chronicles the travails of a fitness center member shocked by the new members, who happen to be hungry zombies, was scheduled to be published in **Shadows of the Mind** by Trinity Gateways (<http://trinitygateways.net/>) last month.

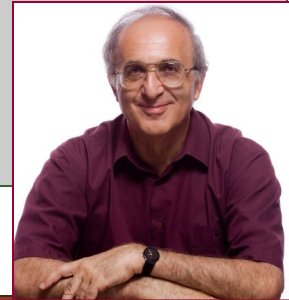
The equally bizarre “They Are Here,” a look at a future where grieving is no longer necessary, will be featured this September in the Fiction Brigade (<http://www.fictionbrigade.com/>) **Elixer: A Collection of Sci-Fi/Fantasy Fiction**.

“Flameout,” the story of an over-the-hill Elvis Presley impersonator facing the end of his career and the world, is slated to appear later this year or early next year in **Spiritual Awakenings** by G.IS. G Heavenly Publications. Here’s the url:

(<http://gisgheavenlypublications.wordpress.com/2011/05/25/welcome-to-g-is-g-heavenly-publications/>).

Sail on! And keep on submitting, SFV members.

Gagik Melikyan has received a Finalist Award in the **Science** category of **The 2012 International Book Awards** competition. His book is titled: **Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Antioxidants, Foods, Supplements, and Cosmetics**. Find more info here: <http://www.internationalbookawards.com/2012awardannouncement.html>. Gagik will be glad to share other news of his writing activities at our Saturday meeting.



Judy Presnall has signed a contract with Learning Island to author seven ebooks in a series entitled “I WONDER ...”

Learning Island specializes in 15-Minute eBooks, based on the idea that a child should practice reading for 15 minutes every day.

Her first books include: *I Wonder ... Does a Hammerhead Shark Pound Nails?* *I Wonder ... Does a Bedbug Snore?* *I Wonder ... Can a Bald Eagle Grow Hair?* The books will be out before the end of the year. The

eBooks will be available through BarnesandNoble.com, Amazon.com, Smashwords.com, and other outlets, usually for 99 cents each.



Kathy Highcove reviewed **The Last Will and Testament of Lemuel Higgins** by Patrick O’Connor for the International Writers Workshop Book Blog. Here’s the URL if you’d like to peruse it: <http://internetreviewofbooks.blogspot.com/2012/08/buy-book-fiction-sacrifice-plays-last.html>

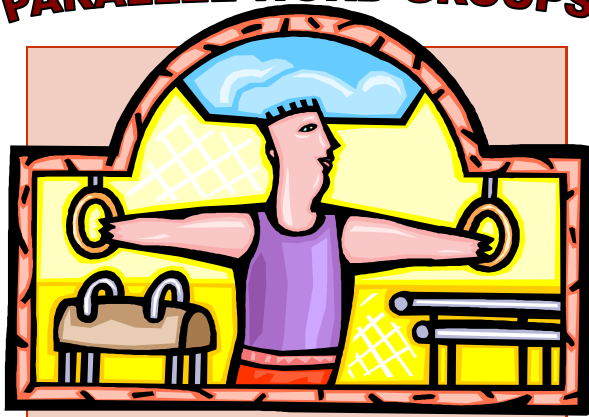


How About You? Share Your Publication News

Review and Refresh : *Parallel Structure*

There's an old English-teacher joke about how Lincoln's Gettysburg Address would receive a C minus with "needless repetition" written in the margin had it been handed in as an essay assignment. The joke, of course, is that the teacher's grammatical nearsightedness completely misses the power of repetition and parallel structure. In the same comic spirit, The Sermon on the Mount would have received the same grade with all its *blessed are the poors, and blessed are the meeks*, much less God's Ten Commandments with all the *Thou shalt*s and *Thou shalt not*s. (Okay, that may be stretching it a bit.)

PARALLEL WORD GROUPS

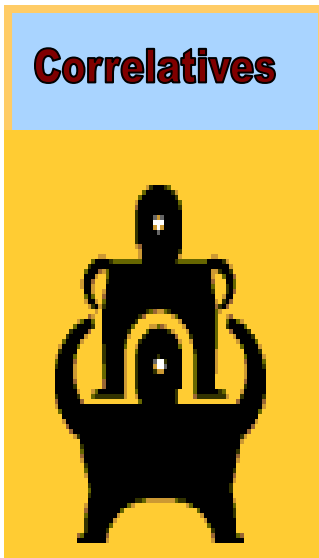


In a series of words or word groups, each word or word group should be parallel; that is, on the same grammatical level as the others in the group. This principle is easy to see in sentences like *My girlfriend likes swimming, hiking, and cuddling*, where the enjoyments all end in *-ing*. Had the sentence been *My girlfriend likes to swim, to hike, and cuddling*, on the other hand, the sentence would have lacked *parallelism*. And *When I relax, I like an interesting book, a good hammock, and I like some soft music too* would be better parallel written as *When I relax, I like reading an interesting book, lying in a nice hammock, and listening to some soft music*.

Some words in one part of a series should be included in all parts of the series: *Everyone thought that Jason was the witty one, that Georgia was the wise one, and that Howard was the crazy one*. In the same way, if a word or words are missing from one part, they should be missing from the other parts: *Everyone thought Jason witty, Georgia wise, and Howard crazy*.

The articles *a*, *an*, and *the* should appear either before the first word only: *He liked the French, Italians, and Portuguese best*, or before every parallel word: *He liked the French, the Italians, and the Portuguese best*. The same applies to prepositional phrases—one, or all, with no mister-in-between: *Mike looked in the encyclopedia, the card catalog, and the Sears catalog*; *Mike looked in the encyclopedia, in the card catalog, and in the Sears catalog*. NOT this mister-in-between form: *Mike looked in the encyclopedia, the card catalog, and in the Sears catalog*. It's not necessary to use the same preposition each time. Remember " ...of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Correlatives



A correlative is two or several words used in a rhetorical partnership: Correlatives are always followed by parallel forms.

both, and - *Both detailed computer knowledge and sales experience are essential for this Best Buy position.*

either, or—*He had to either control his temper or expect a divorce.*

first, second, third -- *My objections to the proposal are first, the ambiguity of the language, second, the impossibility of the requirements, and third, the inevitability of a contentious debate.*

not only, but also - *She was not only a competent mystery writer, but also a fine cellist with the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra.*

—DAVE WETTERBERG



RINGTONES

KEN'S PET PEEVES



The place is quiet, it's a romantic scene
When silence is broken by a noise obscene.

By mistake or intent a ringtone is heard
Shattered is the mood as quiet turns absurd.

The music is junky and rattling the nerves
Could it possibly please the owner it serves?

Curse them or bless them it seems they're here to stay
Irritating ringtones will just have their day.

LATE PHONE CALLERS

I do not go to bed along with the chickens
But I hate late callers like the very dickens.

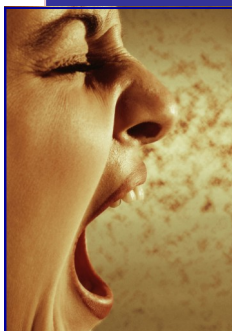
Friends calling before nine I'll accept with grace
A minute later and here's pie in their face.

A salesman calling at the forbidden hour
Could easily be hung from the nearest tower.

Solicitors calling for a charity
Find a reception missing hilarity.

Now the evening hours were made to unwind
But the telephone brings little peace of mind.

So spare your fingers from dialing my number
And let me prepare for a night of slumber.



Ken Wilkins is a long-time member
of our CWC-SFV. Below is his poem that
won first prize in a '94 SFV poetry contest.
It's September and Ken remembers

The One Room School

My mind travels back to an
autumn cool
In the land of Lincoln
and a one room school.

Summer is past and
the fields are dead
Southland geese fill
the skies overhead.

Squeaky the shoes re-
cently bought in town
Hiding sore feet and their
summer tan brown.

Stiff the new trousers un-
washed as yet
While starched is the shirt
and free from sweat.

Our teacher so pretty and mar-
ried last June
Warmly greets each student so
fears vanish soon.

Now it's great to see Ronnie, Sid-
ney and Glen
Of much matured Ruthie we ask,
"Where's she been?"

Twenty young faces in grades
one through eight
Sharing one room, an experi-
ence so great.

Years pass, memories fade
is the general rule
But never forgotten is the
one room school.



— Ken Wilkins

Guest Stephanie Edwards

Andrea Polk

**Roses abloom in the
MPTF rose garden.**

**June guest speaker
Maralys Wills**

**Scenes from our
June meeting
Please put yourself
in the September picture.**

Dave Wetterberg

Jerry McFee

Gagik Melikyan

Guest Bob Sherman

Sam Glenn

Geri Jabara

Yolanda Fintor

Memories of Helen Katzman



By Lillian Rodich

Helen was my dear and cherished friend. We laughed and cried together about our families, our writing and the challenges of widowhood. She was loyal, kind, considerate, sensitive and giving, welcoming people into her life with warmth and generosity of spirit. Her hospitality was famous and known to everyone who crossed her path. Her favorite saying was, "my home comes alive whenever I have guests." All those who knew her loved and admired her.

In past years some of her poetry and non-fiction articles were published in several journals. Her interest in writing led her to join CWC where she had many poems and articles published in *The Valley Scribe* and *In Focus*. She loved her SFV critique group activity and worked very hard to polish her pieces. In addition, she was an active member of a SFV creative writing group for many years. Her emerging confidence and appreciation of nature were reflected poignantly in her poetry. Many of her poems and other pieces emphasized this love of nature's beauty and her true compassion towards her friends and family.

In addition, she was a gifted artist, whose style was free and colorful and revealed her love of nature's beauty.

I'm glad she was my friend. I shall miss her very much. This is an excerpt, the last verse, from a poem Helen wrote in 2004:

The Butterfly

I hear the wings of the butterfly
Fluttering through the air
Igniting a divine spark in my heart
A spark that carries me
Through the metamorphosis of widowhood
The symphony of life
I am the butterfly!

Toro! Toro! Toro!



By Max Schwartz

It was the 1942 holiday season in San Jose, Costa Rica, when I asked Reina to accompany me to the *Estadio de Toros*. Her response shocked me.

“Are you crazy? I would not go to a bullfight even if my life depended on it. It is *barbarosa*. I cannot understand why you are going.”

I was surprised by her reaction. I only asked if she would like to accompany me to the Mock Bull Fight. According to Valverde, my Costa Rican engineering aide on the Pan American Highway, it was a parody of a bullfight, not the real thing. Bull fighting was illegal in Costa Rica.

“But Reina, I was told it’s a lot of fun and part of the year end festival. Besides, the bull doesn’t even get hurt.”

“Go if you want to, but to me it is barbarous.”

She turned angrily away and went into the kitchen to join her mother. I could hear the two women chattering in Spanish and shout words *barbarosa*, *terrible* and *inhumano*. Still puzzled, I left Reina’s house, shaking my head. “*Ay, las mujeres son locas!*”

On Friday afternoon, Valverde and I entered the dusty Plaza Vicas stadium. The crowd of city and countryside people reminded me of the Saturday football games at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Unpainted wooden bleachers surrounded an oval-shaped sand-covered arena. A lean-to roof shaded the southern side of the structure, while the rest of the stadium lay exposed in full sun.

“Our seats are in the shade,” said Valverde as he led me up the steep wooden steps to a bench seat at midheight of the grandstand.

“Thanks, Valverde. These are good seats. We’ll be able to see the whole show from here.”

Valverde always encouraged me to speak in Spanish. “Don’t worry about mistakes. Just blurt it out. The important thing is not to be afraid of making

mistakes.”

I watched with growing excitement as our part of the grandstand filled with well-dressed women in expensive coats escorted by men in suits. The best seats at the front contained consulate officials and government bureaucrats. Flags of many nations fluttered from the top of the grandstand.

The sandy arena had been raked clean. A small water-filled pool stood at the center and a heavy wood plank fence surrounded the ring, broken by several wooden gates. Signs painted on the fence advertised the local beer and rum.

The unsheltered grandstand across the arena began to fill up with the common city people and villagers. Most were barefooted men in torn white pants and shirts. They wore tattered straw hats and the ever-present machete hung from their belts.

Many young boys accompanied their fathers or older brothers, but only a few women could be seen among the crowd of the common people.

Then to my surprise, dozens of young men began to gather in the arena. Most were barefooted and wore simple *campesino* clothing. Some carried gunnysacks or large red colored cloths. A few stood out in colorful *toreador* costumes and carried bright red capes.

I had not expected to see the audience in the arena. I remembered seeing pictures of a bullfight with only the participants in the ring.

“I thought the ring was supposed to be clear except for the *toreadors*, *picadors*, *matadors*, and the bull,” I said.

“This is a mock bull fight, remember. The fun will start in a short while.”

Then the band began to play the theme song of a bullfight - *La Virgen de la Macarena*. The audience hushed and there was excitement and anticipation in the air.

“When are those guys going to get out of the ring?” I asked.

“They volunteered to be in the ring. They are the *toreadors*.”

“What? They’re just a bunch of kids. They’re going to get hurt.”

(Continued from page 10)

Valverde laughed. "Just watch."

Four horsemen mounted on fine-looking animals with silver trimmed saddles entered the ring through a wooden gate. The riders looked impressive in their colorful *picador* costumes and flat black Spanish hats.

They pranced back and forth before the grandstand with their horse's hooves kicking high. Each *caballero* sat rigidly straight in his saddle as the audience howled its approval.

The band finished the theme music of the bullfight. As loudspeakers announced that the bullfight was about to begin, the colorful horsemen left through the same gate and two costumed attendants carrying a pair of straw-filled mannequins came into the arena. They set up the dummies in front of the gate and then left the ring.

The crowd of young men in the arena backed away from gate and the dummies. The audience hushed into silence and waited. I sat on the edge of my seat as the action in the ring would happen directly in front of me. I could clearly see the colorful clothing on the dummies.

Then the wooden gate opened and out charged the most ferocious beast I had ever seen. Its solid black coat covered its huge chest and rump. Two-foot-long pointed horns reached outward from its large head. The bull spotted the propped-up dummies, lowered its head, and charged towards one. It struck the mannequin so hard that it flew high into the air spreading straw in every direction.

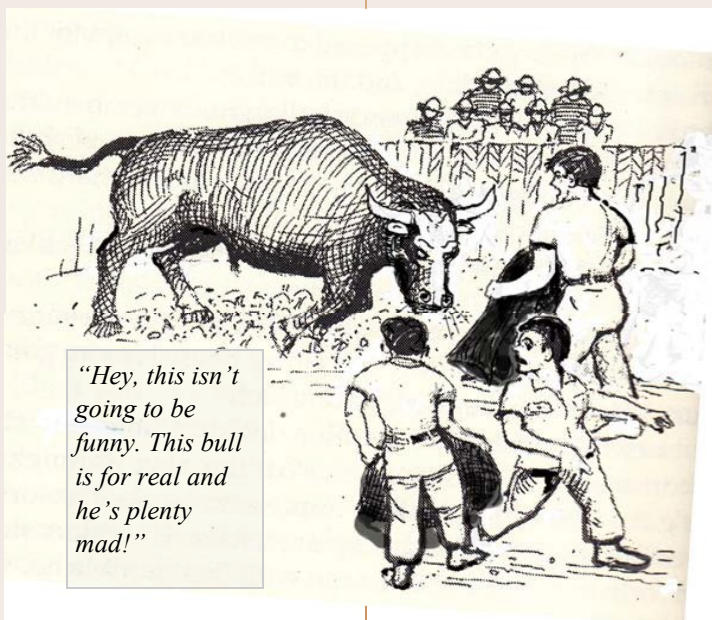
I was stunned. "Hey, this isn't going to be funny. This bull is for real and he's plenty mad!" Valverde ignored me as he was on his feet yelling with excitement, "*Toro! Toro! Ole! Ole!*"

The crowd of young men in the arena cautiously moved closer to the bull and taunted the animal with

shouts, sticks, and stones. Some waved their gunnysacks and colored sheets. Those in *toreador* costumes struck dramatic poses and gracefully waved their red capes at the bull. I held my breath as the bull turned and charged toward the nearest group of amateur bullfighters. They ran as fast as they could away from that angry animal. Several jumped into the pool in the center of the arena, laughing.

The scene hypnotized me. My friend had assured me that this was in fun, but my eyes told me otherwise. I knew I would never forget the sight of humans running in every direction to avoid the bull's horn.

The bull didn't catch anyone on the first charge, because whenever it charged, the boys fled. Finally, it stopped, probably due to indifference or to catch its breath, I thought. It just stood still without looking dangerous anymore.



The boys continued to taunt the beast by jabbing it in its side or under its tail, while shouting, "*Toro! Toro!*"

Then the bull charged again, but halfheartedly. The spectators and the participants were disappointed with this passive bull, and shouted for another bull.

Two costumed horsemen trotted into the ring, and from two directions roped the indifferent animal and led it back to the big gate. Valverde voiced his disappointment but I was relieved. At least, no one got hurt.

The band played the *La Virgin de la Macarena* again. The bull's gate opened again and another larger bull plunged out snorting and pawing the earth. It charged at the remaining mannequin and it exploded in the air. The audience gasped and I didn't feel safe in the grandstand.

"That animal weighs more than my Chevrolet back home," I said. "It's all muscle, horns and meanness!"

The bull towered over the young men surrounding it. But this time when it charged the boys, it suddenly changed

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

directions and caught one of the young men in the stomach with his left horn.

"Oh God," I exclaimed as I watched a human body fly into the air. The bull flung its head upward again to disengage the victim from its horns. I stared unbelievably at the red intestines staining the sand.

While other young men distracted the bull, two men clad in white aprons with red crosses ran with a stretcher into the ring to remove the victim.

"Pobrecito," (Poor little one) cried the spectators. "Que lastima," (What a pity.) moaned Valverde.

I was stunned, "What did you expect?" I asked. "A two thousand pound bull with two foot long horns against a barefooted boy with only a gunnysack."

The frightful scene was repeated again and again throughout the afternoon. By the end of the day, five bulls were let loose in the ring. Finally, a young *camposino* succeeded getting on the bull's back and he rode the animal, even while it attacked others.

The crowd was ecstatic and shouted, "Ole! Ole!" as



they do in a real bullfight. The young barefooted rider stayed on until the bull tired and stood still.

Then proudly, the young man triumphantly dismounted and was hailed as the hero of the mock bullfight. His reward was the privilege of collecting donations from the spectators in the grandstand.

I watched the barefooted country boy fill his pockets and open shirt with Costa Rican money until he couldn't carry any more.

As we left the stadium, Valverde was still excited. "Wasn't that thrilling? I told you we would have a good time here," he said.

"Yeah, the guys in the arena got their thrills alright, but some got much more." I replied. "Eight were gored and torn apart. We saw their guts spread out on the sand."

"You *Gringos* are not very macho," said Valverde, smiling at me.

Maybe he's right, I thought. We do have different cultures, but we're macho in different ways. We North Americans have boxing matches and we go to war. Now I wonder ... which culture is more barbaric?

OH BOY! PUNOGRAPHS



When chemists die, they barium.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.

Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.

We're going on a class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there's no pop quiz.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

▪ anonymous

Moving Parts

Dan heard a knock.

"Who's there?" he asked, his gaze intent on a bright computer screen.

"Hey, Dan, it's Artie. How've you been?"

Now Dan stopped working and looked up. "Who let YOU in?" he asked.

"Pretty cold welcome for your brother-in-law, Dan, my man. It's been awhile — like last Thanksgiving at my mom's house. Right? I came all the way from my place in Palmdale to see your new Hollywood digs. This is a really classy place. You must love it here."

"Thanks, I do like this new place. But, why're you REALLY here? And what's in that big bag? More free samples from your Miniature Movie Sets? If so, I don't want 'em. Don't bother showing me any more teensy palm trees and cheesy little buildings. We can photo shop scenery these days, y'know. And we don't do puppet shows."

"No miniature scenery samples this time. And I'll be straight with you. I really came to pitch my idea for *Cool Kids*, your new TV show. Wait, wait. Don't say 'No' until you hear my pitch. Promise me FIVE minutes to show you what I got in here, pu-leeze, and if you aren't sold, I'll leave. Deal?"

Dan sighed and leaned back in his chair.

"I should know better, but ... deal. Make your pitch. You've got five minutes. Then you'll leave and we won't meet again until next Thanksgiving."

"Great, I'll be quick. You won't be sorry," said Artie and he put the bag down on Danny's desk. Then he reached in and carefully lifted out a rectangular container completely en-



cased in clear plastic acrylic. Ramps, wheels and ladders were visible inside.

"What is that?" asked Dan. "Some kind of crazy maze?"

"Sort of," said Artie. Then he produced a sack of bright candy balls and poured them into the top tier of the container.

"Candy? And little ladders and ramps heading toward that candy. Looks like a maze to me," said Dan. "Holy smokes, Artie, you don't have mice in that box, do you?"

"Relax, no mice. Something better. I thought of some unique science experiments for kids. This one is called *Test for a Pest* or *How Smart is A Roach*? In this bottom compartment is a whole bunch of roaches. Ordinary roaches. But— they MIGHT do extraordinary things!"

Dan rose slowly out of his chair. "You can't be serious! A bunch of roaches packed in that box? Why would I EVER need a roach act for the *Cool Kids*!? Artie, forget the pitch and just LEAVE! ... NOW!"

Artie shook his head and replied, "Hold on, Dan. You promised five minutes. Gotta show you the experiment first. Here we go. I open this little door, see? and here come the roaches. Oh ... they smell the candy! They're running up the ramps, crawling up the ladders, making the little wheels spin, and WOW! See here? A bunch of them pile up on this lever and ... PRESTO! A trap door opens and the candy balls drop to the bottom of the cage! Look at that! The roaches are all over the candy and ... you aren't watching! Every time I test 'em they hurry faster up the maze, figure out stuff better and better, and now— see?— all of 'em pile on and press down on the lever. That takes smarts! C'mon Dan! Think about it! Roaches might be smart! This maze is fun science for kids! They'll love it!"

"GET THOSE BUGS OUT OF MY OFFICE BEFORE I CALL SECURITY!"

"Okay, okay, chill out. But I'm really sorry that you feel that way. Don't worry. I'm putting stuff away as fast as I ... OOOPS!"

— Kathy Highcove



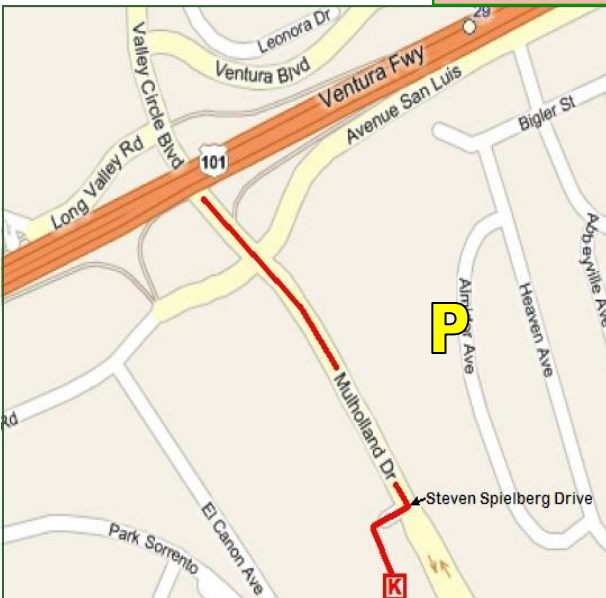
Beginning

I felt about me everywhere
stillness of the morning air,
softness of the dawn's first glow
and strength of flowers as they grow.
Then my face was turned as one
with bud and leaf up toward the sun.

Lillian Isenberg Rodich

Lillian Rodich has been our Critique Group Chair since our branch arrived at the MPTF. Thanks to her hard work and careful monitoring of the critique group program, many SFV members have experienced positive peer review and significantly enhanced their writing. This fall she passes the Critique Group Coordinator position over to Andrea Polk and becomes our critique group consultant.

Kudos to Lillian! Our thanks for a job well done.



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, Sept. 1st., at 1 p.m.

Sign up for Open Mic at 12:30 p.m.

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

