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November 6th



# Hollywood's Take on History



Manny Pacheco

**M**anny Pacheco, a twice published author, will be our November guest speaker.

Pacheco is a 30-year member of the Screen Actors Guild and a popular Southern California radio and television personality. He has been a broadcaster in Los Angeles his entire career and currently hosts *Forgotten Hollywood*, a radio program on 1510 Financial News & Talk on the Astor Broadcasting Network.

His book *Forgotten Hollywood Forgotten History* is the first in a series of paperbacks. *Son of Forgotten Hollywood* *Forgotten History* was recently published in January 2012.

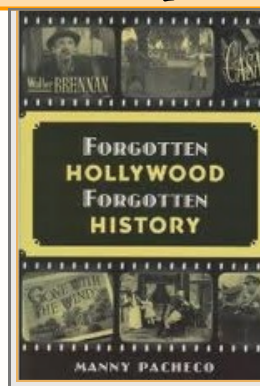
The *Forgotten Hollywood* book series shares America's story through the eyes of folks from Hollywood's Golden Age in-

cluding Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone, Walter Brennan, Cesar Romero, and Hattie McDaniel.

The series was acquired by the Louis B. Mayer Library at the American Film Institute; the Margaret Herrick Library at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences; and the Shavelson Webb Library at the Writers Guild Foundation.

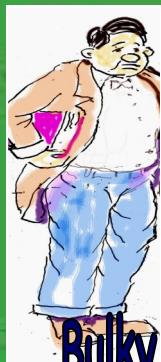
Members attending our up-coming meeting will soon learn much more about Pacheco's books and his writing experiences. We're sure to be entertained by this experienced radio host and Hollywood historian. Please join us in the Katzenberg Room this Saturday.

— KH



## west valley whimsicals

A Schwartz / Highcove Production



Bulky Book Series



## IS BIGGER BETTER?

**A**fter many months of hard work, you've finished your book, but it looks more like two or three books stuffed into one binding. You know it needs editing, but who'll do THAT work? You need another pair of eyes.

Relatives and friends inexplicably

resist your pleas to read the book in order to give you a helpful critique. But perhaps a helpful critique is not to be expected from kith and kin. What to do? The book needs editing, you're pretty sure.

And so you start to search for an editor - a potentially frustrating task.

(Continued on page 2)

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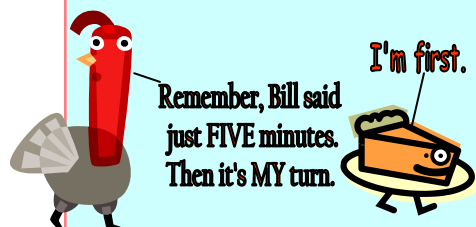
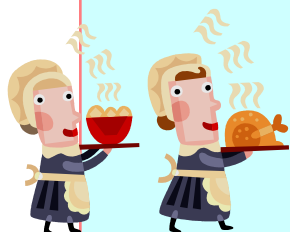
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Member-at-Large ... Judy Presnall

Open Mic ... Bill Sorrells



## President's Message

At the next meeting, THERE WILL BE NO OPEN MIC. Instead, our webmaster Ray Malus will provide information for SFV members who want to set up their own website. He will explain the intricacies involved in procuring a domain, maintaining a website, and the expenses that may be incurred. He will answer questions after his talk.

**Speaking of websites, here are helpful sites for writers:**

[www.smart-edit.com](http://www.smart-edit.com) offers free downloadable software that scans your manuscript and highlights areas that need attention: monitors and counts different dialog tags, highlights adverbs, searches out over-used phrases, words and clichés and more.

<http://www.saclibrary.org/?pagelid=1599> is the website of **I Street Press**, a print press for those who just want a few copies of their books. For a fee they offer advice in formatting your work for print and e-book publications, provide you with an ISBN, and become your publisher of record. For more information, email your questions to [istreet@saclibrary.org](mailto:istreet@saclibrary.org)

[www.myperfectpitch.com](http://www.myperfectpitch.com) is a website owned by Brian Grove. It contains a database of book publishers accepting submissions from authors. "I have around 1,000 publishers worldwide covering all genres. The site doesn't contain any self-publishing or vanity companies," says Brian.

[www.tabletalkatlarrys.com](http://www.tabletalkatlarrys.com) This is an online magazine owned by Larry Levine, one of our own members. He is accepting submissions of all things food-related. His website has guidelines. He pays \$35.00 upon publication.

**FYI—Now that we have the expense of providing refreshments, the board has voted to re-instate the \$5 guest fee.**

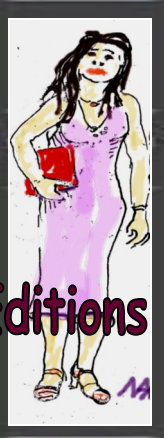


*Yolanda Fintor*

(Continued from page 1)

Why? Because editors are neither kith nor kin. Editing is their business and they mean business when they edit.

Let's hypothesize that you've sent a professional editor the first five chapters to critique. To your dismay, the editor sends back your work with red ink scribbled all over the text. And he tells you that your cherished book in its present unedited form is a bit tedious. Way too much info.

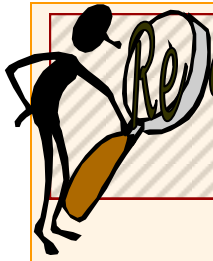


## Edited Editions

WHAT?! And it's several chapters too long. NO! You'll never find an interested publisher. THE NERVE! And here's the bill for my expert advice. OUCH!

What to do? Should you listen to the experts or do it your way? That depends on you. But remember — even experienced writers seek help with their work. Members of our SFV branch get help from four critique groups. In this issue read all about **Leslie, Lillian, and the Four Lads**, a SFV critique group, on page 6.

— KH



## Reading Between the Lines with Sheila Lowe

Even though mystery novelist Sheila Lowe finds the business of publishing somewhat puzzling, she provided several helpful clues to CWC-SFV members at our October meeting.

The London born Lowe put all the pieces together with the help of a very well done *Star Wars*-like PowerPoint presentation that began with, "In a galaxy far, far away... From that point on, she mesmerized our members with her smooth delivery.

Few writers know what makes their fictional characters tick more than Lowe, whose presentation *And the Tortuous Path to Publication* chronicled her careers as a well-known handwriting examiner and successful author.

Lowe knows the characters found in her *The Forensic Handwriting Mystery Series* like the back of her hand. Published by Penguin in mass market paperbacks, the books include *Poison Pen*, *Written in Blood*, *Dead Write* and *Last Rites*. In each, main character and handwriting expert Claudia Rose mirrors the author's career.

Lowe's more than 40 years of experience as a graphologist who specializes in forensics, forgery identification and personality assessment has helped her create complex, well-rounded characters. She knows her characters' thoughts, their social styles, fears, defenses and egos.

Before the mystery series debuted in 2007, Lowe wrote non-fiction books. Her goal was to be published before she turned 50. Opportunity in that genre knocked in the 1990s when her agent invited her to attend Book Expo in Chicago. The agent, instead of promoting her as an author, asked her to sit behind a table and instantly analyze the handwriting of the people who stopped by. She refused and made key publishing contacts on her own, one of whom asked her to write a 35-page proposal for what turned out to be *The Complete Idiot's Guide To Handwriting Analysis*, published in 1999.

She shared some of her insights on such topics

as platforms, proposals, the elements of fiction, self-promotion and working with editors, agents, publishers and publicists.



She flashed back to when she wrote her first proposal, which, she said, "is the hardest part about writing a book." That 35 page proposal included a synopsis, information on each chapter,

who the book would appeal to, the marketplace, comparative analysis, a promotion plan and her biography.

Lowe advised members to find the right editor after their books are completed. "When you've written your book, you need to hire a good independent editor who is familiar with your genre." The best way to find the right editor (who will usually charge between \$700 and \$2,000 per book) is through someone else's recommendation.

Something else to consider when selecting an editor: he should be truly interested in your book. "He'd better love your material or he won't relate to your work." And won't find the right publisher.

Instead of book signings, Lowe suggested blog tours and speaking engagements.

About agents: "I have sold all of my books without agents but a writer may need an agent who knows how to pitch a book to a larger publisher."

Perhaps the most entertaining portion of her presentation was *What Does Handwriting Reveal?* Lowe displayed writing samples of well-known personalities on a large screen and then interacted with members to determine the identity of the authors.

She also recommended the *Author 101* series at [www.rickfrishman.com](http://www.rickfrishman.com), which includes: *Bestselling Book Proposals*; *Secrets from Top Agents*; *Bestselling Nonfiction*; and *Bestselling Book Publicity*.

For more info: [www.sheilalowe.com](http://www.sheilalowe.com)

— Gary Wosk

# Review and Refresh

## The Sentence: Basics

The sentence is the basic unit of thought. The Victorians liked them long and smoky, and our English teachers taught us to write sentences like Thomas Hardy and George Eliot. In today's world, however, we find that the writing professionals in our magazines and newspapers like their sentences simple and clear.

What do  
the simple  
folk write?



### Simple, not Short

The simple sentence is the most popular sentence among professional writers. But “simple” doesn’t necessarily mean “short.” It means one subject and one predicate. The following is a simple sentence: *The explorers moved on.*

But so is this one: *Their food and water depleted, hampered by the lack of oxygen in the cave, the explorers, fearless and dedicated to their mission, moved on.*

### Loose Sentences and Periodic Sentences

The example above could be revised into a “loose” sentence, wherein the subject “explorers” and the predicate “moved on” lead off: *The explorers moved on into the darkness, out of food and water, hampered by the lack of oxygen in the cave, but fearless and dedicated, nevertheless.*

Or it can be written as a “periodic” sentence, wherein the subject and the predicate end the sentence: *Fearless and dedicated, out of food and water, and hampered by the lack of oxygen in the cave, the explorers moved on into the darkness.*

### The Cumulative Sentence

Both explorer sentences above are “cumulative,” that is, they are simple sentences expanded by the use of various word-clusters. Each cluster is separated by a comma. None contain a subject/predicate combination.

*Tarzan stood on the cliff.* (simple sentence, no clusters)

*Tarzan stood on the cliff, dagger in his hand.* (one cluster)

*Tarzan stood on the cliff, dagger in his hand, steely-eyed and defiant.* (two clusters)

*Tarzan stood on the cliff, dagger in his hand, steely-eyed and defiant, his faithful chimp Cheetah at his side.* (three clusters)

*Tarzan stood on the cliff, dagger in his hand, steely-eyed and defiant, his loin skin flapping in the morning breeze, his faithful chimp Cheetah at his side.* (Too many clusters, perhaps)

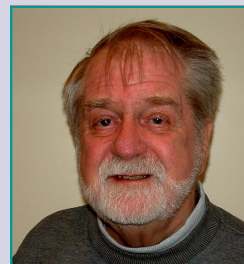
### The Wasted Sentence and Combinations

Good writers try not to waste sentences. They combine smaller elements into longer ones. In the combination *The chairman congratulated us upon hearing the good news. His name was Theo Wallington,* the second sentence is wasted. It would be better combined with the previous one: *Theo Wallington, the chairman, congratulated us upon hearing the good news.*

A sentence beginning with “It is” can usually be better combined with another.

*His home rests in the Loire Valley. It is on a beautiful fifteen acre wine orchard.*

(combined) *His home rests on a beautiful, fifteen acre wine orchard in the Loire Valley.*



— Dave Wetterberg



## ESTER BENJAMIN SHIFREN WANTS EVERYONE TO KNOW

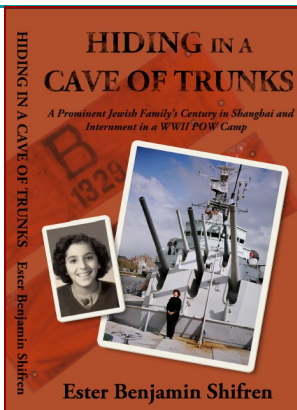
**A**t long last I can announce that I am no longer on the runway and am now in the air. My book, *Hiding in a Cave of Trunks*, about my family's century in Shanghai, will be available within a month in both print and e-book versions.

What a ride this has been! In the early 1970s, when, brimming with creativity, I typed my first pages, my father argued aggressively against divulging family history and secrets. He consistently avoided speaking about our WWII internment by the Japanese and subsequent losses that understandably evoked painful memories.

Between 1987 and 2004, I finally managed to tape three interviews of my parents that yielded 100 transcribed pages of invaluable information.

I've lectured extensively internationally about my life, the multi-ethnic groups and cultures, and the Japanese incarceration of Far Eastern allies in cosmopolitan Shanghai.

I loved public speaking, but it was imperative to finish writing. For several years, I researched and delved deeply, wrote and rewrote, joined writing clubs and gained valuable information and recognition by attending countless conferences and seminars. I vol-



unteered, made myself visible by sitting in the front row, asked questions and gave photo imprinted cards to panelists, so they wouldn't forget me or my unique accent. I know—it's unfair mileage, but it paid dividends!

Social media presence is vital—on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and others. Posting comments and “likes” in groups and forums gets great responses. I learn from online newsletters, author communities, blogs, websites, YouTube tutorials, and Hootsuite—a social media message center.

Dan Poynter's free newsletter has massively informative resource and website links. He periodically allows free book downloads of his own books on Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), and provides news about interesting opportunities for writers. Click on this url: [DanPoynter@parapublishing.com](mailto:DanPoynter@parapublishing.com).

Google Alert (in Gmail) keeps me updated with links to my publishing choices—Amazon's CreateSpace for printed books, and KDP Select for e-book distribution—with 90 days exclusivity and other criteria.

I'll be happy to share more detailed information.

— Ester Benjamin Shifren

### ***NORMIE'S ON YouTube***

#### **"I'm A Somebody - You're A Somebody"**

Carries a message on  
self-esteem, self-worth and self-respect.

A HUMAN INTEREST SHOW

<http://www.youtube.com/TheNormieShow/>

A 27 Minute Show In 3 Parts

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **A Series of Positive Poems**

Retirement choices,  
Senior concerns, health and awareness.

<http://www.youtube.com/TheNormieShow/>

New YouTube readings will be uploaded each Friday

The poetry readings will come from my two books,

***Retiring And Senior Living, Experiencing The Second Half Of Life***  
and ***Heart Attack! Then What?***

Norman (Normie) Molesko

Email: [Normie1934@gmail.com](mailto:Normie1934@gmail.com)

### **Get ready! It's time for National Novel Writing Month**

**SFV Members!**  
**There's still time to join!**

Write a 50,000 word book  
in the month of November?  
How is that humanly possible?  
Find out when you click on

**<http://www.nanowrimo.org/>**



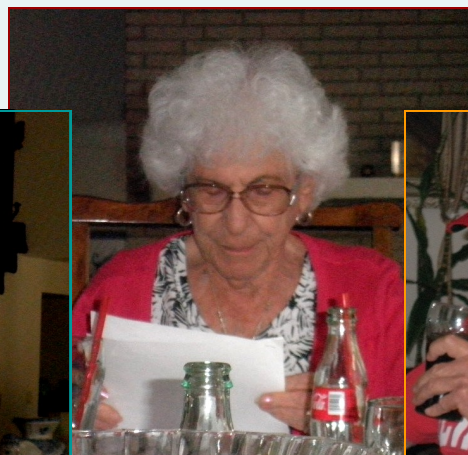


# PRESENTING FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT LESLIE, LILLIAN, AND THE FOUR LADS



Leslie Kaplan

Dave Wetterberg



Lillian Rodich



Ed Rasky

Doug Douglas



Max Schwartz

matching Coca Cola glasses. Dessert? A perfect finale: salt water taffy from Leslie's beloved Philly.

When the plates were cleared the group got down to business. Each member had brought copies of their story and passed them round when their turn came in the circle. No one had studied the documents beforehand so the group read the piece for the first time as the writer read the document aloud. Heads bent down over the papers as pens busily made notes and underlined phrases and words.

The members of this group are all veterans of other critique groups. Some have been teachers, others have written extensively, performed their work for an

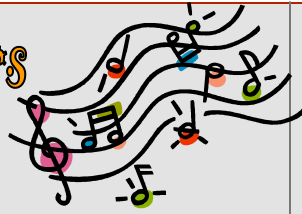
audience or have been published. They don't beat around the bush. The critiques are quick, tactful yet frank. Each commentator told the author exactly what had worked and decidedly not worked in their POV. Each author listened quietly to all the comments and then spoke to the critic and the group. Leslie Kaplan comments, "After ten years our critique group has become like a family. We think the quality of our work has gradually improved. Friendships have grown but do not prejudice our critiquing. Sometimes we laugh out loud; other times we're moved to tears and Kleenex."

Doug Douglas volunteers, "In this group I really appreciate fellowship with my comrades-in-letters, both to read their creative submissions and to benefit from their input on my own attempts. This group has both enriched my life and immensely improved my own writing and style."

The group interaction clearly demonstrated to this visitor that Leslie, Lillian and the Four Lads are a winning act. Good food, talented writing and perceptive critiques keep the group in sync.

- Kathy Higheove

# Musical Chairs



They say that each generation has its own music, slang, dress code, and that may be true to a degree. But I recall loving my mom's music from her birth country and from her youthful time during the Roaring Twenties in America. She dressed like a flapper. I know her style of that period by some of her photos. And she in turn loved "The Great American Song Book" and would jitterbug and ballroom dance around the room with me. So I never felt a generation gap in those periods of musical history.

My memory of the music in my life blurs when I try to remember the popular songs people enjoyed in the Seventies and Nineties. I'm not much of a researcher when it comes to dates and numbers ... but what I DO remember, I REMEMBER!



During the Woodstock period in the musical history of America, I was already married and living in California with husband number one, a compulsive gambler. Because he needed the crap table like an addict needs his drug, we spent a lot of time in Las Vegas. So while he gambled I enjoyed my time watching Keely Smith and Louie Prima for free in the lounge shows. The drinks and cigarettes were on the house in those days.

Sonny and Cher entertained in the lounges frequently. She was so hot! At the same time that Cher split with Sonny, I split with husband number one. When Cher showed up in the clubs on the Sunset Strip she was often dating younger men ... and so was I. Until ... I met Sy.

My good husband number two happened during the period of the hippy and flower children movements. California developed their own "Woodstock" styles. There was Haight Ashbury in San Francisco where the hippies, flower children, runaways and drugies congregated. Musicians became street entertainers playing for donations to support their habits.

Small basement clubs on the Sunset Strip were gathering places for guitarists and folk singers like Joan Baez. And even though I grew up with Frank Sinatra and the big band music, I always kept current and trendy when it came to what was IN.

So even though I was just an ordinary young suburban housewife and mother at the time, I dressed like the flower children and the hippies and was accepted as one of them in their hang-outs.

Soft rock came into my life through my young daughter's musical time in her life. The Bee Gees and songs like "Killing Me

Softly," written by Carly Simon, were stories told in lyrical form and I could relate to them.

But then something happened. Something like hard rock, acid rock, rap, etc. is what happened. I didn't understand this new music. Not the lyrics, not the melodies, and my ears began to hurt. And I couldn't comprehend what it was all about. But ... I did go to see the Broadway show, "Hair." In one scene I saw several naked hippies on stage. It was shocking! But my love for musical theater embraced this modern version of a Broadway show. And the music was great!! My favorite song of that show was, "Let The Sunshine In."

I LOVED the movie about the Woodstock concert. I could see that the first big rock music festival was very LOVING and YOUNG and SEXY and CRAZY and MUDDY and ... RAINY!

IT'S A GREAT COUNTRY... AMERICA!

## When I Was Five

When I was five...Daddy got sick and died  
But he visited me in my dreams every night  
And I just couldn't wait 'til I fell fast asleep  
For the same favorite dream to repeat and repeat

Each night he would bring me his hugs and a toy  
At the same secret place where I felt so much joy  
It was our special secret for more than one year  
I told no one for fear that he might disappear

My dreams they continued 'til one awful night  
Where's Daddy he's gone he is no where in sight  
And then I awoke with a heart-broken pain  
Something told me you won't see your Daddy again

Our visits just stopped it was then that I knew  
That Daddy has died that it really was true  
Secret meetings each night they were finally gone  
And this five-year-old child was completely forlorn

So my favorite dream it just faded away  
How I wish that my Daddy was still here today  
I would hug him and kiss him if he were alive  
As a tear trickles down and I'm once again...FIVE

- Leslie Kaplan

# Morningside Memories by Lillian Rodich

## Estella

Estella is my secretary  
she wears a paper badge  
declaring her position

her lips are pursed  
her head bent over her work  
while she  
counts milk money  
folds copy sheets  
gets paper and pencils ready

she wanders from desk to desk  
busily passing out supplies  
and listens for the office buzzer  
ready to be a messenger

her gold flecked brown eyes  
speak to me  
focused serious  
waiting for me to start the day  
a signal for her to do her job

like a baby bird  
beginning to fly  
she hovers near me  
prettily poised  
a box of blue pencils in her hands

Estella doesn't speak a word of English

## Ginger

Ginger's face is the color  
of desert sands  
her hair a flaming sunset

she dances in and out  
of room 15  
music somewhere within her  
accompanied by laughter  
and her patent leather shoes  
tapping along hallways

she always wears a costume  
white dresses adorned with flowers  
a red rose  
clipped in her hair  
quivering in time  
to her own music

## Carpool

we ride together each morning  
for convenience  
and to work as teachers  
in the same school  
children's voices echo  
against traffic's hum  
lesson plans jumble  
and blur within our imagination  
while fatigue and hope  
struggle for recognition

the tears are not there  
at 7:00 a.m. their urgency  
dispelled by morning coffee  
make-up covers our flaws  
and our conversation streams  
over the cracked glass of reality  
too gently to shatter it

## Mario

your paint brushes are magical  
they fly over paper  
like bright birds  
wings brushing colors  
purple yellow blue red  
bright green  
vibrant pictures  
your expression colorless  
while your painting shouts  
with joy in its creation

## Pedro

once Pedro brought a pet to school  
sharing time how sublime  
to bring a pet lizard  
and charm the class

alarm the creature escaped  
whipped away across the floor  
to screams of delight at the sight  
and disappeared  
I knew not where  
I was up on a chair

chaos and laughter  
Pedro in tears  
my worst fears

the pet never found  
a sad fact  
still my nerves left in tact

dear dear Pedro dry your tears  
the years will heal your loss  
and your lucky lizard is free at last

## Daniel

shock of red hair  
freckles everywhere  
his ready smile greets me  
with the morning bell  
and flickers from eight to three

meanwhile Daniel dawdles and doodles  
marking on every scrap of paper  
on the front  
on the back  
on each corner  
between spelling words  
next to number columns  
oblivious to the big school clock  
making warning faces at him

some days among the doodles  
between the squiggles lines and circles  
like a small flower in a garden of weeds  
a unique picture emerges  
and I smile as I paste a big gold star  
next to it

## Molly

like a moth to light  
she reaches for a book  
and flutters through the pages  
with abandonment and joy

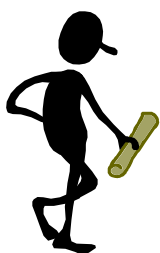
Molly makes friends  
with Rapunzel and Snow White  
cavorts among the Seven Dwarfs  
becomes entangled in Charlotte's Web

like a moth she flutters  
from page to page  
alights momentarily on a picture  
flies over each story  
comes to rest wings spread

# Marathon Run

## Senior Style

**H**ave you ever thought of running in a marathon race? If so, I can help you accomplish this goal because I've completed twenty five of those races (26.2 miles) with a pretty good average. It



can be done and I intend to show the average reader how this feat can be achieved.

I was 54 years of age when I decided that I wanted to do a marathon. I was 81 years of age when I completed my 25<sup>th</sup> marathon. I now do 10K's and completed my fourth 10K at age 86. I am now 87 years young and plan on doing a 10K on March 27<sup>th</sup> in 2013. And I plan on completing the 6.2 miles in two hours. (10K on Old Agoura Road)

In my youth I was a fair athlete; handball and tennis were my two major sports. I loved playing handball where the small ball sized by me at 65 miles per hour. Tennis was my second sport which began at age 14 in Toronto, Canada. At age 87 I still play doubles tennis at the Calabasas Tennis Club five times a week.

I always loved to run but knew nothing about the mechanics of running. I had to find a coach who wouldn't charge too much and was also very dedicated to his profession. I found out about Lazlo Tabori from an article about him in *The Daily Green Sheet*.

Lazlo was the fourth runner in the world to break the four minute mile. In the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, he came in second in the 10,000 meters run. Right after his victory he defected from Hungary to become a United State citizen. Hungary was quite upset when Lazlo made that change.

Lazlo coached four nights a week at Valley Junior College from 5 to 8 p.m. The only thing holding me back was what he might charge for his services. When I heard that he charged only \$29 a month, I signed up immediately and became a member of the San Fernando Valley Track Team.

The workout lasted three hours and Lazlo pushed us very hard. I was ready to quit the first night we ran the track but I kept coming back there two nights a week and eventually I ran about nine miles in three hours.

One of the first things Lazlo taught us was how to swing our arms. He used the example of a marionettes' arm action. He taught us how to keep our heads up at all times. Our stride was quite important and he taught us how to widen it.

Lazlo was 52 and had a broad Hungarian accent. He would shout out at his runners: "Put some guts to it! Wake up! You are falling asleep!" The three hour workout included exercises, ten-minute run, and then we were grouped with three other runners of our ability. I loved it when I beat someone who was much younger than I was.

When he coached us, Lazlo would stress the velocity of the race. He would say, "Two 440's, very hard, then two 330's, just easy, then four 220's, medium."

Then he would take out his stopwatch and time us.

In a short period of time, I went from eight minute miles to six minute miles.

I couldn't believe it! I asked Lazlo to prepare me to run a marathon. He said, "It will take six months."

I replied, "I'm so excited! I can't wait for the next part of my training."

— Ed Rasky



Overhead, the sky was murky and gray. Straight ahead, evil-looking black clouds strung across the horizon in long ribbons, moving faster than I had ever seen them. And then I noticed something I never had seen before. The cloud mass on the left was streaming into the cloud mass on the right, and they were both pouring down into a funnel.

"Dad, look at those clouds !" I said, pointing. He kept driving, but he leaned over the steering wheel and looked. I knew by his expression he was as bewildered at the sight as I was. At the base, a tip bounced on the highway and skidded over it eccentrically, scribbling like a crazy pencil. Pieces at the top tumbled out and floated down. Riveted, I stared, trying to get a better look.

"That's lumber coming out of that thing!" I said. Then the truth sank in. This was a tornado and it was heading for us, hell-bent on a collision.

"Dad, we'd better pull over," I said.

He did. As soon as we stopped, a raging wind hit us. It uprooted the trees and laid them on their sides, the sod clinging to their roots. An artillery of rain suddenly overwhelmed the car.

I slid to the floor and exhorted Dad to do the same, but he sat upright and watched, hypnotized. Mud and leaves slapped the car and stuck to the windows like wet cardboard, blinding us to the outside. My side of the car heaved, about to tip over, then set itself back down again.

Immediately the wind stopped. We saw the sun again. The tornado had moved on. On a hill in the distance, I saw the remains of a house, spread out like a deck of cards except for its chimney and fireplace. Drivers who had pulled over like us now exited their cars. One car had a hole in the rear window where a rock had obviously smashed through. Another had the top of a tree on its hood. A woman covered with blood seemed to appear out of nowhere, dazed. We got her into the back seat and set out to find a hospital.

The motor was still running. Dad tried to ease back onto to the road, but it was packed with other vehicles. A man holding his ribs, his clothes and face bloody, walked



toward us. Dad rolled down his window. "Are you hurt, pal?" he asked.

"My chest is killing me," the man said. "I think my ribs are caved in."

"Get in," Dad said. "We're taking this lady to the hos-

pital. We'll take you too." We still had no idea where a hospital was.

In a weak but coherent voice, the injured man told us that he was sitting in his car at his neighborhood filling station when the tornado hit.

His car turned over three times. When he crawled out, the filling-station was destroyed. The station's attendant was nowhere to be seen.

We came abreast of a policeman doing his best to keep traffic moving. "Sir, can you move some of these cars so we can get his man to the hospital?" I asked him. "He's hurt pretty bad."

"Son," he answered, "these cars all have injured people in them. You'll have to wait like everybody else."

The emergency area was deluged with stretchers and attendants with clipboards examining the wounded. An ambulance screamed to a stop and unloaded a father and two sons, all unconscious, covered with mud. They had been fishing, someone said, when the tornado roared across the pond. They looked like three mud statues.

An attendant noticed us and our bloody passengers. She yelled for a wheelchair, and an assistant came and wheeled the man off. Then she walked the injured woman inside. Dad thought it was too bad we didn't get their names and addresses, but we agreed that it was best they get attended to as soon as possible.

On the road again, I was surprised at the calm that surrounded the tornado's destruction.

"Dad!" I said. "Look over there!"

I pointed out where there had obviously been three buildings. Of the three, the middle building was missing. The buildings on each side were intact, though tilting inward, precariously.

We drove on carefully, slowing down and squinting at the spot where we rode out the tornado and barely missed death.

-- Dave Wetterberg

## As Shadows Lengthen

As shadows lengthen on  
The hidden recess of remembrance,  
Silently escape the day.  
Will peace be yours tonight  
Or heart-ravaged tears?  
There comes a solemn calm;  
Expectation and fear,  
Elude or ensnared?

Charred cathedral spires  
Impale the moon's cool lustrous glory.  
There, be still, you'll hear  
Remorseful sighs reveal the story  
Of love that once existed,  
Now loathed, broken and twisted.  
Come dawn, life's trudge must go on  
'Til raven swell breaks o'er obsession's grave.

From *The Black Lake*

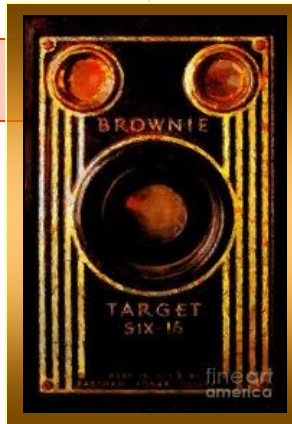
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## The Kodak Brownie

Glossy black-and-white, three inches square, white border, serrated edges: the frozen moment, captured caricature of emotion (or lack thereof). I recognize my dad; Mom told me I'm the one he's cradling tentatively in his arms, a tiny infant's slumbering face exposed among the layers of blankets. My dad is wearing the white shirt and scratchy, pleated woolen slacks he always seemed to have on...I think he had a dozen identical outfits. He has a pipe in his mouth, and his head is reared back, like this thing in his arms just befouled its diaper with the biggest brown baby bomb ever to fill his nostrils with sludge perfume.

Or at least that's how it looks to me now. And that stink must have left scars on his olfactories, because (other than the occasional, admittedly well-deserved open-handed thwack to my rear) I don't remember him ever touching me again.

That precious moment of paternal affection was captured by a Kodak Brownie camera. I've seen that



slightly off-square, black metal box because my dad never threw anything out -- never to be used again, just stashed away, forgotten.

I came across this archival photo while searching for pictures of you and me. Here I am standing next to you at Lake Tahoe with my hands in my pockets. When we were opening these Christmas presents, the red-eye flash didn't work -- we both look demon-possessed. You and I are walking along the beach at Cambria in these -- always at least a yard of space between us.

In this note you left, your words play a tune: a neat gigue, a traditional sarabande. But I can hear the counterpoint -- I know the coda's coming. I thought about calling you, but my voice'll crack; maybe even end up crying. Pity is so embarrassing.

There's more room in the closet now...I forgot how big it is, even with all my junk. So I change my clothes, hang up my white shirt and wool slacks, then sit down with the newspaper and light my pipe.

— *Douglas William Douglas*

## Rough Ride from Normandy Beachhead

By Max Schwartz



Listen my children, you may have read  
Of my famous ride from the Normandy Beachhead.  
It was sometime in August, Forty-Four  
When we sailed thru the ocean breakers' roar.

My Engineer Regiment bogged down in hedgerows  
Near the famous French Normandy Western shores.  
Also mired in the marsh was most of General Patton's  
United States Third Army Invasion factions.

Rows of ancient Boxwood trees and shrubs stopped  
Not only us, but all of General Patton's armor and infantry troops,  
Causing the 1306 Engineer General Service Regiment  
To dig in for days in soggy marshy inundated encampment.

Then suddenly Patton's Third Army broke through the barriers  
And plunged eastward into France's central interiors.  
I was awakened in the damp dark of the night raging  
By the shouts of men and roar of engines left and right.

"What's happening?" I yelled from my trench in the ground.  
"Get packed, we're leaving," shouted someone around.  
I collected my rifle, helmet and other gear  
To prepare for whatever danger was near.

Our company trucks laden with men and equipment  
Rumbled out in line from our military encampment.  
"Oh hell!" I cried out in great desperation,  
"Those guys are leaving without me in this operation."

I ran to catch the last Army truck in the line.  
On its flatbed, a bulldozer and on its bumper benign,  
Sat a tall earth-drilling Auger with an iron screw.  
The truck, I knew, was from our Regimental Motor Crew.

"Wait for me," to the driver, I shouted above the roar,  
As I pounded and pounded upon the cab's steel door.  
"If you want to go with us, buddy," the driver did shout,  
"You had better get on the front bumper now or drop out."

Without hesitation onto the vehicle's front end, I climb.  
Grab the drilling Auger attached to the engines drive line.  
The truck's transmission began to roar and whine  
As we accelerated to join our regimental convoy line.

I clung tightly to Auger's cold steel spiral blade,  
Struggled to keep my rifle slung over my shoulder right,  
Field pack on my back, and steel helmet on my head.  
While my bottom sat uneasily on the bouncing bed.

Only yesterday, I was bored in the shadow of the boxwood trees,  
Now to a war I am riding, in the dark of night and noise Valkyries,  
Mounted on this hard steel galloping bronco monster  
With myself intact and excitement growing mightily stronger.

"You're one hell of a buddy,"  
I said hoarsely to my new friend, the Auger, grumpy.  
"I guess we're stuck together till daylight, I hope."  
His only answer was silence as ever.

At midnight, our convoy, with only cat-eye headlights on,  
Entered the Normandy port of Avranches town.  
I could barely make out its broken street cracks  
Between burned buildings wrecked by pyrotechnics.

Not only was I uncomfortable, I felt dangerously exposed.  
And Auger's sharp cutting blade, my hands abused,  
As the bouncing steel bumper, my behind bruised,  
And the engine's roar, my two ears, did deaden.

A shadowy soldier with an MP painted on his helmet, I saw  
Directing traffic with his flashlight's illuminated arrow.  
When our convoy passed through the town's ruins,  
The nauseating stench of decaying bodies filled the air.

"That's the smell of death," I said to the Auger friend.  
"French civilians, German or American fighters?" I asked.  
"Whoever they were, they were now dead," I said.  
"Is this how I'll end up, too?" I wondered. Auger remained silent.

"God, I can't believe I'm riding this bumper like an ass.  
Can't even see the driver through the dirty glass.  
He wouldn't know if I fell off, and that'd be hell of a bad luck,  
Being run over by a U.S. Army truck."

I knew we had passed through the town of Avranches  
When clean fresh sea air replaced the death's stench.  
I could see the shimmering water of the Bay of Biscay,  
"Thank God, we're out of there!" My lungs filled with clean sea air.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

A half-hour later, our convoy slowed,  
And turned right at a fork in the road.  
I saw neither MPs nor road signs at that junction.  
"The Krauts don't leave road signs for us," I assumed.

Then I saw our convoy's lead trucks pass to my left,  
Going in the opposite direction from us.  
"My God, we are going back," I noted in alarm,  
"To where we came from, I'll be damned!"

Then I saw an American Sherman tank ahead  
And a squad of armed infantrymen around.  
They stopped our truck in its track  
"What's goin' on?" our driver shouted in the dark.

"You guys are heading straight into St. Malo,  
The Krauts are still there, so turn around now,  
And follow the other trucks back to where you came from,"  
Said the Infantry lieutenant to our driver up front.

"I knew it!" I said to the Auger, "I knew it!"  
"We didn't know where we were coming or going,  
We should have taken the other road," I shout  
But my iron friend was still in a silent mode.

Our convoy to the same fork in the road returned,  
But this time eastward we headed, away from St. Malo,  
On to Paris, the Rhine and Germany. "Hallelujah!" I yelled,  
"I'm through the Normandy Beachhead on the bumper of a truck."

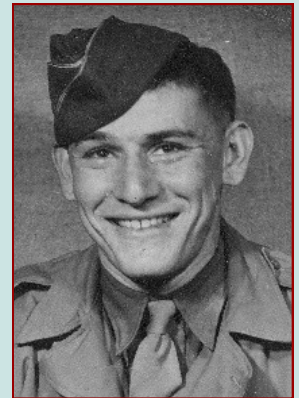
At dawn, our entire Company's trucks into a forest halted,  
Men from all of our vehicles disembarked  
For a few hours of well-needed rest and sleep,  
While our trucks were watered and filled with oil and gasoline.

Upon awakening we learned the Allied Master Plan  
Was for Patton's Army to help clear Brittany  
While Bradley and Montgomery  
Drove the enemy eastward to Germany.

But Patton refused in the hedgerows to remain,  
Ordered his army, "Forward, we've a victory to gain,"  
Then bravely led his forces across France's interior  
Through Germany, Austria and finally ... **victory.**

That, my children, is a piece of the story  
Of your Grandpa's service with the Army Engineers,  
And General Patton's Third Army Breakout  
In the Normandy Invasion of European Theater of Operations.

**By Max Schwartz**  
**Formerly**  
**M/Sgt 1306 Engineers**



## *The Birds in the Ivy*

Through the sun-glistened panes of the patio door  
The cat watched the clouds, glad the storm was no more.  
She stretched then and polished her fur, her pride,  
And the birds in the ivy sang outside.

This gray striped devil'd lain under the bed,  
And remained through the thunder, so great was her dread,  
Determined to stay there, need be, 'til she died,  
Or the birds in the ivy again sang outside.

But be kind to old Tabby. How often have we,  
In our own soul's darkness, felt shackled, unfree,  
Afraid of some forces about to collide,  
And the birds in the ivy stopped singing outside?

But our clouds split and scattered, made way for the sun,  
And our dark time spent under the bed was quite done.  
We started again, stretched, and polished our pride,  
And the birds in the ivy again sang outside



—Dave Wetterberg

## Refreshments Volunteer: Sharron Malus



## Heartfelt Words of Thanks

*Sharron Malus to the rescue. In my mind's eye, when she showed up last month bearing coffee and cookies as she had volunteered to do, she might as well have been wearing a cape. She was and is my hero. If you see her setting up the refreshment counter or cleaning up, please show your appreciation.*

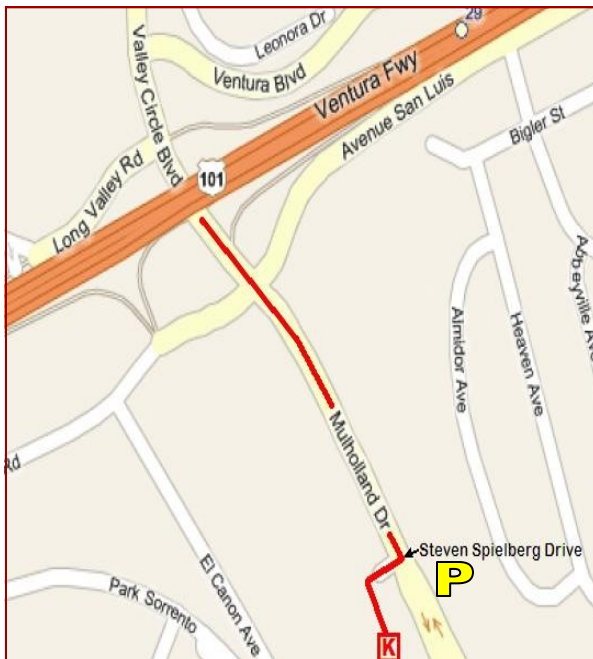
*Yolanda Finton*

And Sharron's spouse, Ray Malus, has been busily adding helpful features for SFV writers onto our branch's website.

Take a look. Click on [cwc-sfv.org](http://cwc-sfv.org)



**Webmaster/Photographer Ray Malus**



## MEETINGS

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

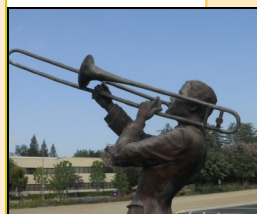
Villa Katzenberg  
23388 Mulholland  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

## NEXT MEETING

Saturday, Nov. 3 rd. at 1 p.m.

No Open Mic this meeting.

**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.



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