



The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe



"Our Members' Voices"

Vol. 6

December, 2013

No. 4

Next Meeting: December 7th, 1:00!

Happy Holidays

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CWC-SFV Book Fair

The biennial CWC-SFV Book Fair
for 2013 is upon us!
Saturday, December 7th from 1-3
PM

In this very busy season of the year we take time out to celebrate our members who have had work published within the last two years. Nine of our authors will be sharing their works which range from poetry to cookbooks to fiction and memoir. Nine of our members will be featured:

Howard Goldstein
Karen Gorback
Nan Hunt
John Klawitter
Marganit Lish
Ray Malus
Gabriella Owens
Judy Presnall
Erica Stutz

This festive affair will offer time to browse, hear from and speak with the authors about their work, book signings, refreshments, a raffle of book copies and a chance to do your holiday shopping. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or for those many birthdays throughout the year, books are a special kind of gift, especially when you know the author and can give an autographed copy. There will also be a table of books by authors featured at previous Book Fairs available for browsing and purchase. Many of the books at the Fair are offered at reduced prices for this event.

— Rita Keeley Brown



President's Message Nance Crawford

As I write this, it's beginning to look a lot like Thanksgiving/Chanukah, Winter Solstice, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and, undoubtedly, a half-dozen specific celebrations that I, mercifully, know nothing about.

It is the season of gratitude. I'm grateful. I won't bore you with the entire list but at the top are the people who have loved and tolerated me during the past twelve months. You know who you are.

Include my fellow members of the Board at the top of the list; in thinking about preparing this column, I realized that those who, at first, were pleasant acquaintances, are becoming close, trusted, and valued friends.

The best part of friendship is knowing that, whatever one gives – even the most preposterous error in judgment – will be accepted in the spirit of the intention. The best part of this time of year is the giving, the challenge of figuring out just the right thing for the right person, and the flood of good feeling when discovering our choice is a success, someone is happier because we have taken the time.

The best gift you can give to CWC-SFV throughout the year is your enthusiastic time. If you have a brilliant idea to present to the Board, figure out how to implement it, and then set the wheels in motion, yourself. If you can give a few hours a month, please don't hesitate. We are growing by leaps and bounds and there are plenty of interesting ways to participate. (It would be wonderful to have a Social Media person, and a Correspondence Secretary.) Lots of good ideas are floating around, and you may be just the person we need!

Let's thank Anne for her Hospitality help by making the meeting this month a Cookie Pot Luck.

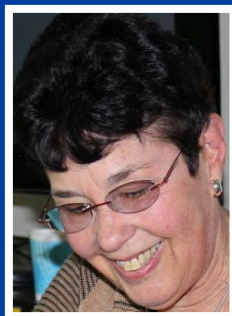
See you at the Holiday Book Fair! ☐

*The greatest words we say or write
are in praise of others.*

Reminder: Please Take The On-Line Survey.

November's Speaker: Beverly Gray

A famous biographer once said, "It is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one." Apparently, Beverly Gray has done both.



Gray is no stranger to the San Fernando Valley Branch. She spoke here 3 years ago. (See the review in *The Valley Scribe* — Dec. 2010). But there has been a wealth of changes since then.

Beverly Gray is probably best known as the unauthorized (but probably definitive) biographer of famed film maker, Roger Corman. As such, one might expect her talks to be chock full of juicy tidbits and tips on writing biographies. Indeed, this was the substance of her earlier talk.

But not this one.

Two of the more memorable quotes from her presentations are:

"Find a subject to which *only you* can do justice..."

"...once you've written a good biography, you're not home free: next you need to find ways to get it into the hands of good readers."

The first quote embodies most of her earlier talk. The second does the same for her more recent one.

Gray's first book, *Roger Corman: An Unauthorized Biography of the Godfather of Indie Filmmaking*, was published in 2000 and quickly became a popular seller. However a few years later, the publisher folded and the book went out of print.

With some difficulty, Gray re-acquired rights to the book, updated the cover and title (*Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers*), and found a new publisher — only to have history repeat itself.

And here is where her presentation got really interesting.

Gray found herself with a highly marketable book... and no publisher. (Sound familiar?) And so she made a very sensible choice — one more and more of us are making. She entered the world of self-publishing.

Her presentation went on to discuss choices she made with regard to publishers and e-distribution.

Then she got to the meat of the second quote. (Hah. Remember that?)

Gray says, "You [*not your publisher*] have to promote your work!"

She recommends these avenues:

Website — An essential. This should also include a blog. (She says she faithfully adds to her blog two days each week. See below for the address.)

facebook (No explanation needed, right?)

Book trailers. These are short videos, promoting your book, that can be uploaded to sites like YouTube.

Speak at events. Let it be known that you have an interesting topic to discuss and are available as a guest. While there, bring your books to sell.

Gray's husband, Bernie, who handles the technical side of the presentation, demonstrated an interesting idea from a firm called **Square**, which markets a service (and gadget to go with it) to turn your smart phone into a credit card reader. (This little tidbit alone would have justified the presentation.)

Throughout, Gray was competent, affable and fun to listen to. Her wealth of experience is always evident.

What's next for Beverly Gray? Well, she says (very hush-hush) that she has another book in the works. She is also exploring the distribution channel of Audio Books.

We wish her well, and look forward to hearing about the next leg of her journey. =rm=

(Learn more about Beverly Gray at: <http://www.beverlygray.com> or follow her blog at: <http://beverlygray.blogspot.com/>.)

— Next Month: NEW YEAR'S DIET —

It's time to lose weight! Time to drop the flab. To trim down. To actually become the lean, mean, writing machines we believe ourselves to be.

For next month, we challenge you to write stories of fewer than five-hundred words (exclusive of title and byline)! Come as close as you can, but no more than five-hundred!

Some people call this 'Flash Fiction.' We call it "discipline."

So, for our January issue, any prose submissions must fit this guideline. (Columns are exempt, and you poets are off in your own little world, anyway.)

Those we print will be forwarded to our regional website: <http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com>.

TO MARKET — TO MARKET

Georgina Tagliere

As always, please check the websites for more information before submitting. When you see "ms" or "mss" this means manuscript and manuscripts respectively. Best wishes and good luck to all!

WILSHIRE BOOK CO

9731 Variel Ave., Chatsworth, CA 91311

Phone: (818) 700-1522 Fax: (818) 700-1527

E-mail: mpowers@mpowers.com. Website: www.mpowers.com.

Contact: Rights Department.

Established: 1947. Publishes trade paperback originals and reprints. Simultaneous Submissions: Yes. Ms guidelines online. Responds in 2 months. Pays standard royalty. 25 published titles per year. 1,200 queries received/year. 70% of titles by first time authors. 90% of titles by unagented authors. Publish time after acceptance: Publishes ms 6-9 months after acceptance.

Pays advance.

Nonfiction: Minimum 30,000 words

Needs: psychology. personal success.

Submission Method: Submit 3 sample chapters.

Submit complete ms. Include outline, author bio, analysis of book's competition and SASE. No e-mail or fax submissions. Reviews artwork/photos. Send photocopies.

Fiction: "You are not only what you are today, but also what you choose to become tomorrow." Looking for adult fables that teach principles of psychological growth. Distributes titles through wholesalers, bookstores and mail order. Promotes titles through author interviews on radio and television. Wants adult allegories that teach principles of psychological growth or offer guidance in living. Minimum 30,000 words.

Does not want: No standard fiction.

Submit 3 sample chapters. Submit complete ms. Include outline, author bio, analysis of book's plot, competition and SASE.

Tips: "We are vitally interested in all new material we receive. Just as you are hopeful when submitting your manuscript for publication, we are hopeful as we read each one submitted, searching for those we believe could be successful in the marketplace. Writing and publishing must be a team effort. We need you to write what we can sell. We suggest you read the successful books similar to the one you want to write. You are welcome to telephone or e-mail us for immediate feedback on any book concept you may have. To learn more about us and what we publish, and for complete manuscript guidelines, visit our website."

ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION

Dell Magazine Fiction Group, 267 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10007

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E-mail: asimovssf@dellmagazines.com Website: www.asimovs.com

Contact: Sheila Williams, editor; Victoria Green, senior art director; June Levine, associate art director.

About: "Magazine consists of science fiction and fantasy stories for adults and young adults. Publishes the best short science fiction available."

Covers: Magazine published 10 times/year, including 2 double issues.

Fiction: Magazine: 5' 7/8 x 8' 5/8 (trim size), 112 pages, 30 lb. newspaper, 70 lb. to 8 pt. C1S cover stock, illustrations, rarely photos. Magazine consists of science fiction and fantasy stories for adults and young adults. Publishes "the best short science fiction available." Receives approximately 800 unsolicited mss/month. Accepts 10 mss/issue. Publishes ms 6-12 months after acceptance. Agented fiction 10%.

Publishes 10 new writers/year. Recently published work by Robert Silverberg and Larry Niven. Publishes short shorts. Sometimes comments on rejected mss. Reviews fiction.

Freelance Facts: Established: 1977 Simultaneous Submissions: No. Guidelines for #10 SASE or online.

Buys first North American serial, nonexclusive foreign serial rights, reprint rights occasionally. Works with a small number of new/unpublished writers each year.

Fiction: "Science fiction primarily. Some fantasy and humor but no sword and sorcery. No explicit sex or violence that isn't integral to the story. It is best to read a great deal of material in the genre to avoid the use of some very old ideas. Send complete ms and SASE with all submissions."

Needs: Fantasy, science fiction, hard science, soft sociological.

Does not want: No horror or psychic/supernatural. Would like to see more hard science fiction.

Buys: Buys 10 mss/issue, 100 mss/year. Length: 750-15,000 words. Pays 5-8¢/word

How to Contact: Send complete ms with SASE. Responds in 2 months to queries, 3 months to mss. No simultaneous or reprint submissions. Sample copy for \$5. Writer's guidelines for #10 SASE or online.

Payment/Terms: Pays 5-8¢/word. Pays on acceptance.

Buys first North American serial, nonexclusive foreign serial rights, reprint rights occasionally. Sends galley to author.

Poetry: 40 lines maximum. Pays \$1/line.

Tips: "We're looking for 'character-oriented' stories, those in which the characters, rather than the science, provide the main focus for the reader's interest. Serious, thoughtful, yet accessible fiction will constitute the majority of our purchases, but there's always room for the humorous as well. Borderline fantasy is fine, but no Sword & Sorcery, please. A good overview would be to consider that all fiction is written to examine or illuminate some aspect of human existence, but that in science fiction the backdrop you work against is the size of the universe. Please do not send us submissions on disk or via e-mail. We've bought some of our best stories from people who have never sold a story before." □

IMPORTANT!**IF YOU INTEND TO SELL YOUR BOOKS AT OUR (or any) BOOK FAIR (Dec 7th)**

Understand that if you sell books (or anything else) in the State of California, you are technically a 'retailer,' and therefore are responsible for the collecting and remitting of California Sales Tax (currently 9% in Los Angeles County.)

Unfortunately, California Writers Club and San Fernando Valley Branch do not have the resources to track this for us. We must attend to this individually.

To do this, you will need a Board Of Equalization Seller Account Number. These are free, but are a bit of a hassle to procure.

The nearest office is in Van Nuys at:

15350 Sherman Way, Ste. 250

Van Nuys, CA 91406-4203

PO Box 7735

Van Nuys, CA 91409-7735

However, being a coward, and unwilling to face 10,000 rabid Soccer Moms piloting 2-ton SUVs, I decided to try the Internet.

The good news is that there is a website where you can procure an account.

The bad news is it's a bit of a pain in the butt.

More bad news is that it's not nearly as easy to use as our home website.

More good news is that it's a LOT better than the ObamaCare website.

It's actually a two-step process, and takes about half an hour.

You will need the usual information (Name Address, Phone, email, etc.) PLUS your California Driver's License Number, and your Social Security Number.

Start by going to:

<http://www.boe.ca.gov/electsrv/ereg/>

Click on the large, "Click Here to Get Started" button, and follow all the directions.

IMPORTANT: When you have finished, you will only have established your On-Line Account.

You now need to go back to the link, above, and Log In. The SECOND option on that page is "Register a Business Activity with BOE." As before, answer all the questions.

The only confusing part is that BOE wants to know who your 'suppliers' are. They expect an address, but many of our suppliers are on-line. Fortunately, they seem quite happy with 'Internet' as an address, and your own zip code as the zip.

I know this seems like a lot of trouble. It's one of the prices we pay for being authors living in endless summer.

Please do not contact me with questions. This is really all I know (or care to know) on the subject.

You can contact them directly at:

1-800-400-7115, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding state holidays,

or:

<http://www.boe.ca.gov/info/email.html>. □

**Remember to check out (and send submissions to)
our CWC-South Showcase website:**

<http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com/>



This &#@*! Thing Is Broken!!!

or

“Why doesn’t anything happen when I click on an MRMS ‘... Mail’ link?”

I don’t think there’s any doubt: The two most used computer facilities are Web Browsers and E-mail.

Web Browsers (*Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, Chrome*, et al) are simply programs that display text and pictures — formatted by ‘tags’ that are embedded in the text, but are not displayed. (If you want to see these, you usually can ‘right-click’ [or ctrl-click] on the page, and select ‘View Page Source.’ You’ll probably only do this once in your lifetime, because unless you can read HTML tags, it’s really not worth it.)

E-mail programs do much the same.

The important thing to remember is that in both cases information (a ‘file’) is being sent to your computer. The expression ‘go to a website’ is convenient, but misleading. You don’t *go* anywhere. Data *comes* to you. In the case of Browsers the data is called a *Web Page* or just a *page*. In the case of e-mail, it’s called a *Message* or an *e-mail*. The fact is it’s really a file, just a collection of related data in a package.

Now, suppose I ‘send’ you an e-mail. It reads, ‘Jack London.’ What really happens is that I send a copy of this small file to your e-mail provider (AOL, Roadrunner, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.) There, it’s stored on a computer disk along with some indication that it’s meant for your account. At some future time, you log in and ask to ‘see’ all the messages that are being held for you. Your provider then sends a copy of each of these files, which is, in turn, stored on *your* computer disk. (Yes, I said ‘copy.’ That’s one of the issues with e-mail: *lots* of copies get made.)

So far, you haven’t seen the message. The last step is that some application (some ‘program’ — usually the one that handled the transfer of the message copy) shows you the message. ‘Jack London’ appears on your screen. The program may be Outlook, Mac Mail, Communicator, Eudora, or any of a number of others. And the full transaction follows a set of rules (protocol) called POP (Post

Office Protocol) or POP-Mail. These programs know how to log on to your provider and invisibly perform all the mechanics in the back ground. It’s what they’re for.

All this costs some money. You pay a monthly fee to the provider.

“But wait a minute,” I hear you say, “I use gmail. That’s free.”

Well, yes and no. Gmail (or Yahoo mail, AOL, et al.) use a slightly different protocol, called *Webmail* or *Browser Mail*, and the work is done by your Browser application.

In this protocol, your provider sends you the file all right, but it comes along with a huge overhead of ads and pop-ups. So there it is on your screen: ‘Jack London’ surrounded by ads for Viagra, other web sites, and promotions. All this slows things down a lot (the added junk can easily be thousands of times larger than the real e-mail message), and can be really annoying. It also gives your provider an opportunity to install ‘tracking cookies’ on your computer.

In return, the *Advertisers* pay the cost of your account.

Obviously, I’m not a fan of ‘free’ webmail.

Why this long discussion? Well, in MRMS (and other websites) you will often see a link that will send e-mail. When you click on it, your default mail application is supposed to open and start a pre-addressed message.

This is fine, if your computer has registered a default e-mail application (Usually one of the dedicated POP-mail applications mentioned earlier.) But if you use webmail, the process of opening your browser, signing on to your provider with your UserID and Password, then starting a new e-mail message that’s addressed to the person indicated is usually a bit too much for your Operating System to handle. So the link doesn’t work.

In this case, you’ll need to do all that work by hand, then copy/paste the recipient into the ‘To:’ field.

So which kind of mail do you have? If you look in the upper-left-hand corner of your screen, you will see the name of the program you are currently running. Look while you are reading e-mails. If it is the name of a browser, you’re running webmail.

OR click on this [LINK](#). If it opens an e-mail message to me, you’re probably running POP-mail.

At this point, I should probably apologize for boring you with all this technical stuff. But if you read this far, you obviously found it interesting. If you didn’t read this far...

HUH?! Happy Holidays --rm--



Clockwise from David George: Judy Kohlen (Inland Empire), Anita Holmes (High Desert), Donna McCrohan Rosenthal (East Sierra), Dan McGuire (Writers of Kern), Allene Symons (Long Beach), Jeanette Fratto (Orange County), Kathryn Atkins (Long Beach), Carol Celeste (Orange County)
(Photo by Ray Malus — San Fernando Valley)

President Visits CWC South

Central Board President, David George, paid a visit to our Southern Division (CWC South) meeting, on November 10th.

David's message to the Reps was simple: "I would like each of you to ask your branch leadership what 2 or 3 things the Club Central Board could do to help your branch become more successful, address your most urgent needs, or help solve your most critical problems. Please put these into a simple email reply and copy your fellow CWC South attendees."

CWC South represents the seven Southern California branches of CWC, and meets twice-yearly, in Pasadena, to discuss the special concerns of our Southern California Members. —mm—

FICTION

Representative Democracy Scott Gitlen

Granddaddy's juvenile saplings matured into today's majestic cottonwood; a glorious comfort to Grand Dragonhead Creighton 'Crawdad' Nance, particularly their antebellum elegance at sundown. Another comfort was his granddaddy's still. Before passing the Mason jar to his First Grand Knight, he spied the tardy arrival of Klansman Doogie Dawgson coming through his trees. Two chairs remained vacant at the table. At last, the Sly Fernwood Vale Board could convene. He yelled, "Hope you remembered to do the count!"

Crossing the cow pasture, Doogie licked his thin lips anticipating the First Grand Knight finishing his turn with the quart sized jar and said, "Membership totes up to sixty-two, but truth be told, we do good if'n twenty men in sheets show up tonight."

The First Grand Knight cleared his throat. "Hardly pays to light up a cross, Crawdad."

Doogie took a seat and chimed in, "Kerosene's pricy as store bought lard."

"Never no mind such foolishness. There's sumpin' been gnawing in my craw like a tape worm,"

Nance said, giving his spreading paunch a pleasing scratching. "Klansmen been bitching about this, that and whatever whatnot. Sending me notes. Calling me at home. Talking to me at cross burnings. Those damn fools think I got voted in to hear them out on how things get run."

The First Grand Knight held the Mason jar

tight. "Crawdad, we're only talkin' 'bout two dozen members mostly not saying nothing no how. Some sleep through meetings anyways."

Doogie's throat parched fearsome so much so he actually leaned towards the Mason jar. "Klansman are mighty partial to having their say."

"I won't have it. Them yokels paying dues don't have no right to no say in this chapter. 'Tis beneath my dignity to hear them out, see?" Nance unfolded a looseleaf page titled, By-laws Amendment. "Us three is a quorum of the board. Second this and it's all official like."

Both men hunkered over the page, their lips moving word by word. The First Grand Knight finished first. "Some squirrely trick, Crawdad. I won't do it."

"No sweat." Nance scratched out the First Grand Knight's name and scribbled in Doogie's.

Chugging the Mason jar, Doogie choked out, "Me? What do I got to do?"

Nance smiled with theatrical benevolence. "That's the beauty part. You said folks want their say. You don't do nuthin'. Nuthin'. Not diddly doo dah squat. Just listen. Say thank you like your momma learnt you. See, cross burnings are only ten times a year. Six more, then there's a new Grand Dragonhead. We clear the deck and break for summer. Screw 'em. Read 'er aloud."

Doogie cleared his throat, "Resolution: KWK-SFV. Address all Klan communications no more to the Grand Dragonhead. They go to the member-at-large: Doogie Dawgson." □

Designing a Swimsuit Leslie Kaplan

"Diana, I don't think we'll make it to the disco tonight. My feet are killing me." We have just finished setting up a double booth at the Market Hall convention center for the fine jewelry show in Dallas, Texas.

The show opens in the morning. It's now 8:00 p.m.

She massages my shoulders. It feels so good. It took us eight hours to drape the booth, set up the display of velvet shadow boxes framing necklaces, earrings and bracelets.

Diana is a beautiful young Mexican girl who not only works for me, but has become a valuable and loving friend. "Leslie," she says, "Since we're too tired to go dancing... how about if we go to the indoor pool in the hotel and soak our weary bodies."

Well I think that's a great idea except that it's February and who thinks about swimming on a business trip especially at this time of year? So of course we didn't bring swim suits along.

The Anatole hotel is just across the road from the Market Hall. As we walk back ever so slowly like two pooped out puppies wagging our tails behind us, swimming in a warm indoor pool sounds great. It occurs to me that there are shops in the hotel and perhaps we could find some swimwear.

It turns out that the only shop open after eight is the men's shop. I get an idea. "Di, how about if we get some jockey shorts and sleeveless undershirts and make like a swim suit out of them." "That's a great idea! Let's go for it!"

We go into the shop and look around. There's one person who looks like a Texas cowboy with a touch of the red neck about him. The two of us look nothing like the average Texas girls who are tall, blonde, blue eyed and skinny. Diana and I are both short with dark hair. Two new kids on this block.

"Hi y'all. Can I help y'all?"

"Yes, I'd like a pair of powder blue jockey shorts and a matching sleeveless T- shirt in size small."

He gives me a puzzled look and says, "I'm sorry ma'am, but we only carry white under shirts."

"Well okay then I'll take the white undershirt and the powder blue jockey shorts."

Diana says, tongue in cheek, "I'll have the same

thing in pink."

I couldn't believe the macho look he gave her when, in a voice with an attitude he says, "Pink? The men here in Texas don't wear pink underwear ma'am. And what size does he wear?"

Diana gets her Latina feathers up a bit as she responds with, "Well we're from California and we can get any color there!"

"Anyway, I'll take the same thing as she's getting in small!"

We go to our hotel room giggling all the way, shed our clothes and try on our newly designed swimsuits. But something isn't quite right. We look at each other and can't stop laughing. There's a pouch at the crotch and try as we may we can't seem to flatten it out.

Being the tenacious woman that I am, I say, "Lets try them on backwards. Maybe our butts will fill out the pouch." So we did and it worked... to some extent. Next come the undershirts. It looks like my design will serve its purpose, so we cover up with the hotel terry robes and take the back elevator down to the pool.

"Great! There's no one here but us! Wonderful, caressing, warm, relaxing, sensuous, body massaging, ...that's what it feels like after a hard day's work. We're in heaven. We paddle around like two little kids laughing over nothing and making fun of our swim suits noticing that they have now become see through second skins, something neither of us thought about. Our rose buds were showing clear and perky.

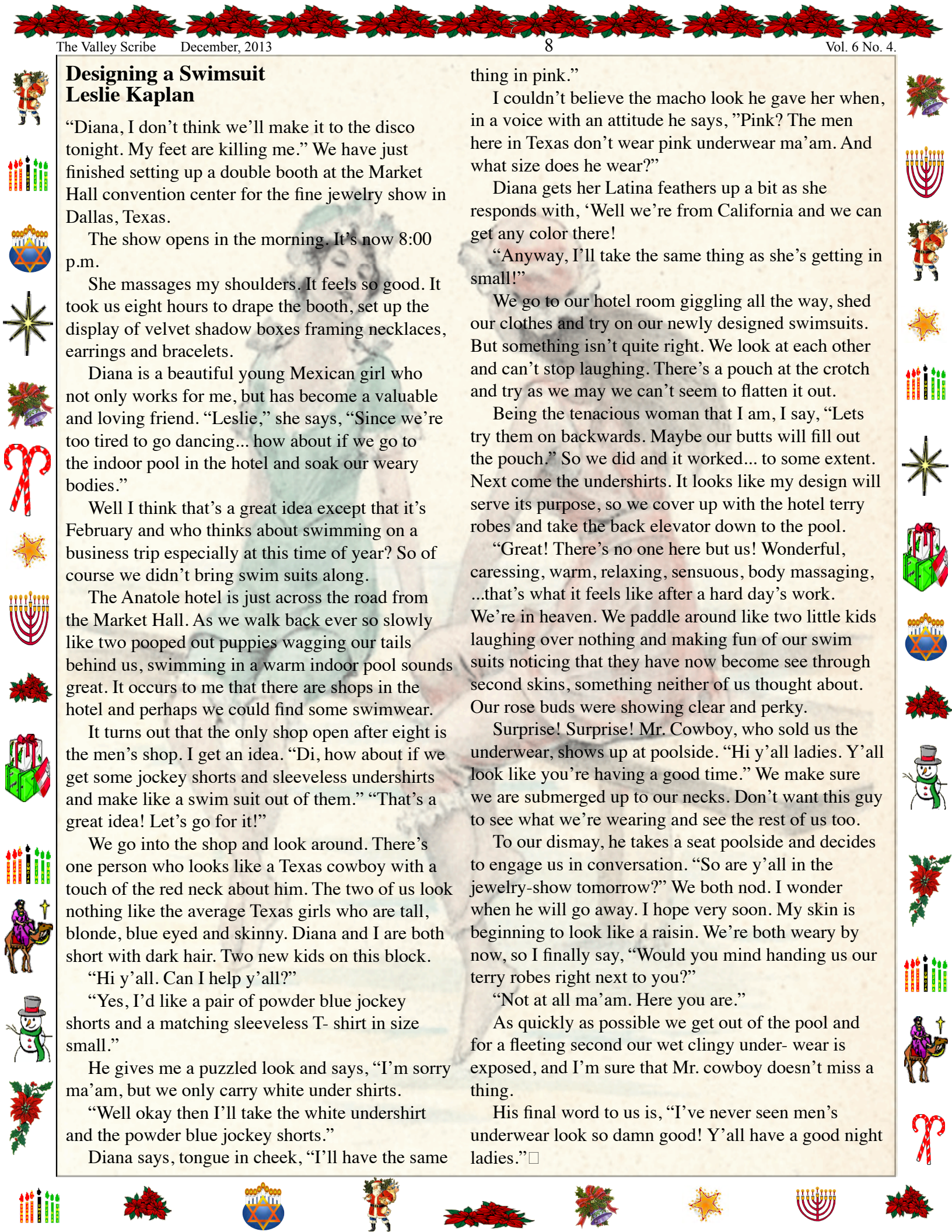
Surprise! Surprise! Mr. Cowboy, who sold us the underwear, shows up at poolside. "Hi y'all ladies. Y'all look like you're having a good time." We make sure we are submerged up to our necks. Don't want this guy to see what we're wearing and see the rest of us too.

To our dismay, he takes a seat poolside and decides to engage us in conversation. "So are y'all in the jewelry-show tomorrow?" We both nod. I wonder when he will go away. I hope very soon. My skin is beginning to look like a raisin. We're both weary by now, so I finally say, "Would you mind handing us our terry robes right next to you?"

"Not at all ma'am. Here you are."

As quickly as possible we get out of the pool and for a fleeting second our wet clingy under- wear is exposed, and I'm sure that Mr. cowboy doesn't miss a thing.

His final word to us is, "I've never seen men's underwear look so damn good! Y'all have a good night ladies."□



Hanukkah in the Middle of the World

Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein

The whole city of Quito-Ecuador where we live, is celebrating Christmas. Churches and homes are glowing with brilliant lights. We are celebrating Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. The few Jewish families who live here, meet in the basement of a private home... all is dark, only the Menorah lights are glowing in the corner of the living room's fireplace. The songs we sing are in Hebrew, not in Spanish like the Christmas songs my friends sing.

I am five years old and Mama says, "We have to go on our money diet, AGAIN! Your Papa's new business has gone belly-up". I don't know what that means. I don't think I like the money diet either! Mama explains. She says it means, be careful, do not spend, save for a rainy day. It is not even raining outside... it has not rained for five months in Quito, which is in the smack center of the world. They call this winter; 'Invierno Del Diablo' ('Devil's Winter'). But, I think Mama means, do not ask for Hanukkah toys this year!

My best friend Sandra comes over to show me the long list of toys she wants for Christmas. We are in the living room, sitting on mama's one-of-a-kind-brocade sofa. Our feet don't reach the floor yet, so we swing them back and forth, leaving wavy brown and black lines with the tips of our leather shoes — scratching Mama's beautiful polished floor. I don't care about the floor today, all I want is to see Sandra's long list for Santa. But, before I have a chance to see it, she quickly folds the wrinkled piece of paper and puts it in the pocket of her dirty yellow dress.

"You can't ask Santa for anything," she says, "because Jewish girls are not entitled!" She walks away moving her hips from side to side, and muttering something her Mother told her, 'our people crucified a nice-young-man many years ago... putting him to die straight up on a giant cross'. I just don't understand.

"That's OK, Sandra, I will ask my Papa. He knows EVERYTHING!" I scream at her back. She covers her ears with the red gloves I gave her last year. She wears them every

single day, because Quito is very cold due to the high altitude of almost 10,000 feet altitude. She gives me the cold shoulder... I don't think Sandra wants to be my friend anymore!

So, I ask my Papa about Santa's list... "But of course," he says, with that special accent of his... "It wouldn't 'hoirt' (hurt) ... ask the Jewish Santa for anything and everything you 'vant'.

I run to meet Santa and the kids down the street. Everybody is happy including me... who is not entitled to anything. Papa is at the gate waiving. "Don't forget, ask the Jewish Santa for all the toys you 'vant'... but, don't sit on his lap." I see he is wearing a blue kipot, and white tassels dangling down his white shirt. I think I know him and sit on his lap anyway, whispering in his ear.

"Oy vey," (dear me) the blue Santa says. "It doesn't 'hoirt' (hurt) to ask, but are you sure? All you 'vant' is, only a 'plaine' (plain) doll?" Santa talks just like Papa ... but his voice sounds, like Mr. Greenberg's next door.

"I've changed my mind, I want everything that's on her list," I say, pointing at Sandra. I hear a hoarse Oy! Oy! Oy! It sounds like coughing coming from the center of his, white-silk-like beard.

It is getting dark outside... all the Christmas houses have zillions of blinking lights. Our Hanukkah Menorah is on top of the fireplace mantel, shining bright. A small white pillowcase tied with blue ribbons hangs on a crooked nail. I squeeze gently, trying to guess what is inside. Funny, it does not feel like a doll. I open the tight knots one by one, but all I find is a roll of toilet paper, a coupla-marbles, and a collection of apple seeds. My older brother Salem is laughing and I am crying and crying.

Mama, gives me a big hug..."What you want is sitting on your bed," she says.

I run to my room... the most beautiful doll I have ever seen sits in the middle of the embroidered blue pillow-case Mama made just for me. The doll is soft, with curly-like-old-stockings-run's hair. Red, wool stitches stretch her smile wide. Two un-matched buttons, one gray and one purple make her eyes wink at me... her clothes look familiar, just like a blue, pink, and lavender flowered dress I had when I was four. The material is faded because my sister wore it next and the dress was washed a zillion times.

There is another doll with a different dress, sitting on Norma's bed. Her doll's dress looks like the sleeves of a-multi-colored-knit-old-sweater Mama had a long, long time ago. I couldn't sleep all night waiting to show my doll to everyone. I'll show Sandra that Jewish girls are also entitled! I hope Sandra, the rainy days and money diets are-forever-forgotten. □

Christmas Carousel Lillian Rodich

the carousel turns
while Christmas lights greet the night
and painted ponies prance to nowhere
on enchanted silver poles
magic tinsel of children laughing fills the hour
with their innocence and joy

now it is time
to reach for the golden ring
and share its bounty
with those whose tears
wash over their smiles
their souls starved
and immune to joy

it is time
to share our treasures
and our hope
before the gears
grind into silence
and the glitter of laughter
is covered with dust

it is time
before the ponies cease to gallop
and the music stops

Christmas at Home by Nance Crawford

The First Noel came in
August, this year
They tell us we're tanking,
but be of good cheer!

The family's descended two
weeks in advance
But am I upset by it? No, not a chance.

The shopping I'm missing won't lighten my purse
And all of those sales folks will not miss my curse
While I sit by the fire, or telly or pool,
Relieved that I can't be one more spendthrift fool,
For while I am praising my own common sense
The crunch on my bank book will slide to past tense.

It's now very cool to be Scrooge McDuck,
And squeeze every penny, caress every buck,
For suddenly Christmas is what it should be:
A time of reflection in lights on a tree
While people we hardly see, ever, are near
With new ways of showing they're glad that we're here.

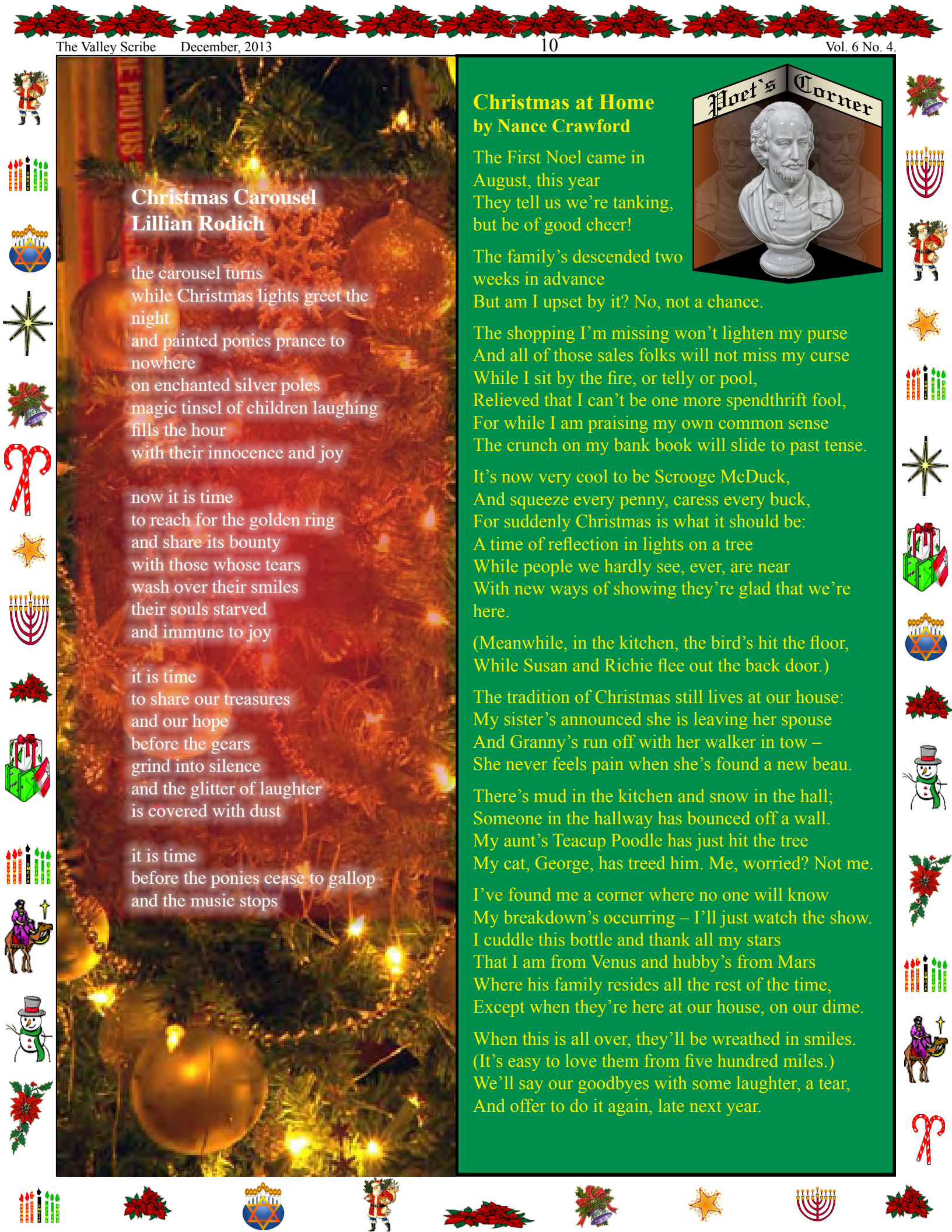
(Meanwhile, in the kitchen, the bird's hit the floor,
While Susan and Richie flee out the back door.)

The tradition of Christmas still lives at our house:
My sister's announced she is leaving her spouse
And Granny's run off with her walker in tow –
She never feels pain when she's found a new beau.

There's mud in the kitchen and snow in the hall;
Someone in the hallway has bounced off a wall.
My aunt's Teacup Poodle has just hit the tree
My cat, George, has treed him. Me, worried? Not me.

I've found me a corner where no one will know
My breakdown's occurring – I'll just watch the show.
I cuddle this bottle and thank all my stars
That I am from Venus and hubby's from Mars
Where his family resides all the rest of the time,
Except when they're here at our house, on our dime.

When this is all over, they'll be wreathed in smiles.
(It's easy to love them from five hundred miles.)
We'll say our goodbyes with some laughter, a tear,
And offer to do it again, late next year.



Winter Winds Ray Malus

*Summer runs, when Winter muscles in
And shoulders Autumn's modesty aside,
To clothe the pavement with his pap'ry skin
Of frozen leaves and promise that has died.*

*Autumn cringes, craven, at the clutch
Of Winter's blust'ry gales and icy blast.
She shrinks and shudders at his bitter touch
And hides in dread until his time has passed.*

*Winter wins, when wanton tempests blow
And make the lush and blushing summer quail.
When timid Autumn cowers 'neath the snow
And shrinks in wretched terror from the gale.*

*But, sunny Spring need only bide a while,
Then warmly wither Winter with her smile.*

Autumn Trees

By Lenora Smalley

**Autumn trees lining streets,
tawny-haired colonnades on each side,
shower shade and summer secrets,
leafing sidewalks yellow-brown.
Burnished arches overhead
they shed rusty coats, peeling to skin,
bare themselves in winter wind;
dance with abandon, stretch, twist
feeling strength deep down in roots.
When air is still in chill of winter,
chagrined they surrender with uplifted
arms,
subletting to silent, scrawny lions,
gray sphinxes stoned in rows
standing guard till warmth of spring--
till bouffant shade and summer secrets
touch heads above the streets again.**



REFLECTIONS FROM A SAGE-ING POET

When I was young I was creative and optimistic.
By the time I was age 29, I had been employed
by a large organization and heard the following

HOW TO KILL AN IDEA

I don't know, so it can't be worth much.
The emphasis changes from year to year.
You're many years ahead of your time.
It's lot of money you're giving away.
Can't teach an old dog new tricks.
Not practical for ordinary people.
That's beyond our responsibility.
Let's shelve it for the time being.
Why change it, it's still working.
Has anyone else ever tried it?
We'll be the laughing stock.
We did all right without it.
We're not ready for that.
It's too radical a change.
Let's get back to reality.
We don't have the time.
That's not our problem.
Let's form a committee.
Don't delude yourself.
It isn't in the budget.
We tried that before.
Don't be ridiculous.
It costs too much.
Too hard to sell.

Now it is 54 years later.
This sage-ing poet remains
creative and optimistic.

© Norman Molesko, 2012

The Bulletin Board

GUEST DONATIONS

Non-members attending meetings are asked to pay a \$5 (tax deductible) donation. New membership is immediate upon application at door. For more information, contact Andrea Polk, VP-Membership, at the meeting entrance or e-mail andipolk4@gmail.com.

MEETINGS

ARE HELD AT 1:00 P.M.
ON THE 1st SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Katzenberg Pavilion, Motion Picture & Television Fund
23388 Mulholland Drive, Woodland Hills, CA 91364
(Directions & Map on last page)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December 7th, 1 p.m. — GALA BOOK FAIR!!
January 4th, 1 p.m. — Victoria Zackheim

Open Mic: 1:00 p.m. (Sign-ups start at 12:30)
Details on our website: CWC-SFV.ORG

Do YOU have a website?
Be the
'Member Website of the Month'!
Send your URL to:
cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com

SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit writing contributions to *The Valley Scribe*. This is your newsletter, and you should be part of it.

Submit your prose and poetry to
cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com

Please type "SUBMISSION" in the subject line.
If submitting a hard copy, please bring it to the meeting and hand it to the Editor, Ray Malus, or to the President, Nance Crawford.

- 500 words or fewer
- 800 words or fewer
- Limited to 40 lines

Submission deadline is the FIFTEENTH of the previous month. ("Beware the Ides....")

The Editor (or President) has license to accept or reject any work submitted based on available space or editing problems.
All submissions must include an e-mail address or a phone number.
Writings will not be returned and may be included in future issues.

BIRTHDAYS!

Judy Garris
Doug Douglas

9th

12th

The Fine Print

San Fernando Valley Branch of California Writers Club meets at:

Motion Picture Television Fund
Katzenberg Pavillion
23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Directions:

From the 101 Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive South. Proceed to Steven Spielberg Drive and turn right into the campus.

(If questioned at the gate, tell the official that you are attending a CWC meeting.) At the 'T', turn left and follow the road to the large parking lot on the left for Villa Katzenberg.

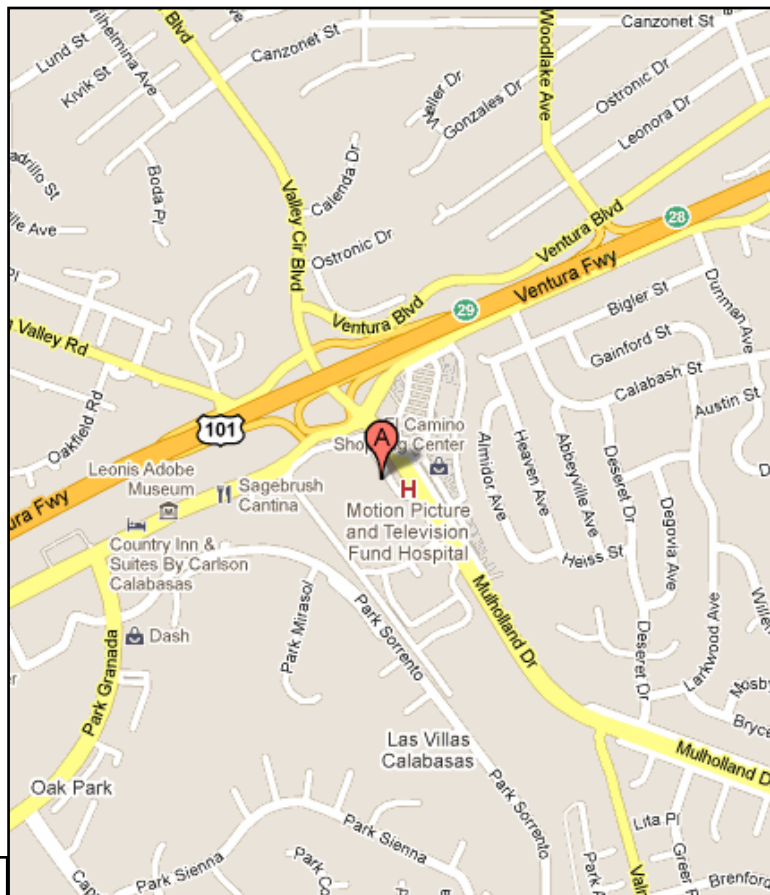
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(Please do NOT park on any of the streets.

You will be ticketed!)

Interactive maps at:

<http://cwc-sfv.org/Meetings/Location.php>



The Valley Scribe

The Newsletter of the
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of
California Writers Club

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(See Bulletin Board: "SUBMISSIONS")

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LOTS of great information at our

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