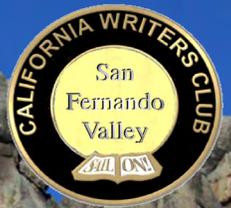




The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch



# The Valley Scribe

"Our Members' Voices"

February, 2014

Vol. 7

No. 2

## Next Meeting: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00!

### February's Speaker

*Lee Anne Krusemark  
by Rita Keeley Brown*

Lee Anne Krusemark, the speaker for our February first meeting, will focus on "Establishing Credibility with Publishers" — a challenge to every writer. She will show us how to build this credibility through query letters, bios, proposals, and the presentation of our work.

Lee Anne is a journalist, author, teacher, Chamber of Commerce Past President and the owner of an award-winning public relations business since 1988. She teaches an on-line publishing class offered at over 1,000 facilities worldwide, including Harvard Adult Education.

She also is in great demand for lectures at business, universities, and government conferences throughout the nation. She knows and understands well the steps to take in the process of presenting your best writing—self to catch the attention of the publishing world.

Among her books are *A Beginners' Book to Getting Published* and *101 Ways to Make Money as a Freelance Writer*.

**You don't want to miss out on her excellent advice!**



### President's Message Nance Crawford

Happy Heart Month! Hope you are taking special care with yours, both in your physical health, and in the relationships you find yourself blessed to nurture.

One of the advantages of serving on the Board is knowing the efforts of love and commitment that are extended for the membership of our San Fernando Valley Branch. We devote a good deal of time to discussing member needs in the many areas of interest reflected in questions, suggestions, and publication histories of our members.

One of the questions that has come up is whether the group is being effectively served by having the meeting begin at 1 p.m.

It has been pointed out that the late starting time is a serious consideration for those who are not retired – Saturday being the one day a week that most working folks have for taking care of personal business, if they wish to use Sunday as a day for spiritual and physical renewal, not to mention family obligations.

In questioning several of our long-time members, I have been

told that, originally, the general membership meeting was scheduled at 10 a.m. on Saturday. We are seriously considering the time change. Not only would it free the afternoon for other matters, but, if the meeting ends at noon, it would be possible for members to attend a "Dutch Treat" luncheon with the speaker at a nearby restaurant. A regular 10 a.m. meeting time would also open the possibility of our next Holiday Book Fair to be held in a larger space on the campus, where it could be extended to last a full four hours.

Changing the time of the meeting would take a vote of the membership. Lots to think about and discuss at the meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

See you then! ☐



(Click on title to jump to item)

## January Speaker Review Victoria Zackheim

By Yolanda Fintor



What do anthologies have in common with acorns? Victoria Zackheim, successful editor of several anthologies, informed her audience they are two concepts or approaches writers can use to develop an idea for a story.

She first detailed how an anthology is conceived, born, and developed. When her fertile mind is triggered by a thought or a phrase that she feels could blossom into a collection of essays, she approaches her agent who advises her to first research what anthologies have been published on the proposed subject. If nothing, or little, has been written, she is given the go-ahead to look for contributing authors.

Zackheim makes a dream list of writers she wants to invite to write on the subject. It helps if their names are publicly recognized. Upon contact, she tells them up front that she doesn't know how much royalty her agent will pay. (This is different from the way publishing houses pay out royalties). An agent takes his/her percentage of royalties off the top and Zackheim divides the remainder among herself and her authors. Unless one has well-known contributors, she admits anthologies are difficult to sell.

One of her project ideas was about "the other woman." She knew it was risky, but put out the word that she was looking for essays on infidelity. Realizing the chances were slim that women were willing to bare their souls on such a sensitive subject, she was surprised at the responses she received. One respondent expressed regret for causing pain as the 'other woman.' Some wanted to rant. Another stated she had lots to say because "she's looked at clods from both sides."

Zackheim confided that some of her ideas are better than others. "I pursue every idea that comes into my head. If I try and fail, I feel better than if I hadn't tried."

Subjects ripe for anthologies are (1) Shame, (2) Addictions, (3) Coming Out. "But if you write a first-person essay on any of these," she cautions, "you must dig deep and tell the truth. Scratching the surface will not do."

The acorn concept is a way to make an idea grow. For example, by combining an adjective and a noun, an essay can evolve. The essay, then, could expand into all sorts of genres: a poem, a play, a memoir, a short story or a documentary. This is where the Acorn analogy comes in. The trunk of a tree is the theme of the idea, its branches spreading out in many directions.

"What if writers have much to say but are reluctant to expose their innermost thoughts and secrets?" one might ask.

"Those who feel an essay is too personal to share, can make it into a short story to release the pain, then go back to the essay," advises Zackheim. "By fictionalizing people and places, you distance yourself." However, she cautions authors to use their real names in the byline, unless they already have an established pen name.

Other themes Victoria has used in her anthologies are: "Faith," "Birth," "Friendships," and her latest, "Exit Laughing or Humor in Death."

Her next Acorn concept is "Redemption." □

(For more about Victoria, go to:

<http://www.victoriazackheim.com/>)



### EEK! GROUNDHOGS!!

Three years ago, our editorial office was infested with groundhogs!!

As you can plainly see, they're BACK!

Dear LORD! They're all over the place!

See how many you can spot in the newsletter, and win bragging rights.

(The word 'groundhog' doesn't count, only the critters themselves.)

Submit your count to [cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com](mailto:cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com).

Winners' names published next month!

Next Meeting:

OPEN MIC!

Sign up for  
5 minutes  
of FAME.

12:30 SHARP!



*(Donna McCrohan Rosenthal is CWC's State P.R. Chair. She distributes a column each month. Space permitting we will publish it in The Scribe.*

*If you want more of Donna's columns, let us know.)*

## SELL EXHILARATION

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

I just watched a *Bonanza* rerun because I saw that the title featured Mark Twain. The plot focused on Samuel Clemens's stint at the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada. At the beginning of the episode, he wrote under the pen name of "Josh" and in that capacity he used satire to attack a political candidate.

The story culminated with a huge gunfight as Clemens struggled at the desk in the newspaper office, trying to finish his latest diatribe, while the Cartwrights (played by the stars of the show) held off the bad guys, shooting through the windows and yelling at Clemens to keep writing. Next thing, the bad guys stormed into the building. The Cartwrights threw punches. Clemens put down his pen and pondered whether he needed a new nom de plume. Suddenly, Clemens had an epiphany. "Mark Twain," he announced with a grin, and immediately finished his article.

Never mind historical accuracy. I had the best fun with every minute of the program. I found myself totally immersed in the various aspects of a writer's life.

Think about it. Whether we express ourselves poetically, weave ingenious tales, convey emotions, persuade and sway opinions, share our memories, advise or inform, we get a rush from wallowing in our element – and the CWC represents a whole community of folks like us, in branches throughout the state.

We can do without guns and fist fights. But we do have to sell that sizzle at our meetings and in our publicity to the media.

With best wishes for a Happy New Year and  
Sail on! ☐

## Behold The Lowly Limerick

Contrary to popular belief, the limerick was not originated by a man from Nantucket. In fact, its origin is not even Irish, as many others believe.

Limericks are English, but they have become as connected to Ireland as whiskey — and who are we to quibble with either?

So for March, we will attempt to celebrate Hibernia's Patron Saint, Patrick with limericks!

Like love, limericks are hard to describe but easy to recognize. (As the Irish Priest said about 'sin,' "Ah Buck-o, oy'm not an expert practitioner me-self, but oy knows it when oy sees it.")

Limericks are poems of five lines. The first, second, and fifth rhyme, as do the third and fourth:



*Writing a limerick's absurd,  
Line one and line five rhyme in word,  
And just as you've reckoned  
They rhyme with the second;  
The fourth line must rhyme with the third.*

Traditionally, there's a 'sting' — a humorous twist — at the end, often ribald or suggestive.

*The limerick packs laughs anatomical  
Into space that is quite economical.  
But the good ones I've seen  
So seldom are clean  
And the clean ones so seldom are comical*

The two preceding limericks are anonymous. Here's one I wrote a few years ago. It should probably be anonymous, as well:

*A swimmer of great reputation  
Paid a fortune for breast augmentation.  
Though they might slow her down,  
It's a cinch she won't drown,  
'Cause they're terribly good for floatation.*

The limerick that is perhaps my favorite was written by Edward Lear, a nineteenth-century humorist and poet:

*A wonderful bird is the Pelican.  
His beak can hold more than his belly can.  
He can hold in his beak  
Enough food for a week!  
I'll be damned if I know how the hellican!*

To celebrate March, pour yourself a Bushmill's, get out your shillelagh, and write a limerick!

(For more information on limericks, go to:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limerick\\_\(poetry\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limerick_(poetry))) ☐





*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!*

### POSSIBILITY PRESS

1 Oakglade Circle, Hummelstown, PA 17036

E-mail: [info@possibilitypress.com](mailto:info@possibilitypress.com).

Website: [www.possibilitypress.com](http://www.possibilitypress.com).

Contact: Mike Markowski, publisher.

About: "Our mission is to help the people of the world grow and become the best they can be, through the written and spoken word."

Imprints: Aeronautical Publishers, Possibility Press, Markowski International Publishers.

Freelance Facts: Established: 1981. Publishes trade paperback originals. Simultaneous Submissions: No Answer. Catalog available online. Guidelines available online. Responds in 1 month to queries. Royalties vary. 2-3 published titles per year. 90% of titles by first time authors. 100% of titles by un-agented authors.

#### Nonfiction

Needs: psychology, pop psychology, self-help, leadership, relationships, attitude, business, success/motivation, inspiration, entrepreneurship, sales marketing, MLM and home-based business topics, and human interest success stories. Submission Method: Prefers submissions to be mailed. Include SASE. Submit ms in Microsoft Word. Your submission needs to be made both in hard copy and on a CD. Label it clearly with the book title and your name. Be sure to keep a backup CD for yourself. See guidelines online.

Reviews artwork/photos. Do not send originals.

#### Fiction

Needs: parables that teach lessons about life and success.

### POETS & WRITERS MAGAZINE

90 Broad St., Suite 2100, New York, NY 10004

Phone: (212) 226-3586 . E-mail: [editor@pw.org](mailto:editor@pw.org).

Website: [www.pw.org/magazine](http://www.pw.org/magazine).

Contact: Kevin Larimer, editor.

Covers: Bimonthly professional trade journal for poets and fiction writers and creative nonfiction writers.

Editor's Note: No poetry or fiction submissions.

Freelance Facts: Established: 1987. Simultaneous Submissions: No Answer. Guidelines available online. Buys 90-day exclusive worldwide, periodical publication and syndication rights in all languages, in all mediums. Reprint rights shared 50/50 after the exclusivity period.

Circulation: 60,000. Byline given. Pays on publication. Offers 25% kill fee. Queries accepted by

mail, e-mail. Sample copy for \$5.95. Responds in 2 months to mss.

Publish time after acceptance: Publishes ms an average of 4 months after acceptance. 5% freelance written. Submit seasonal material 4 months in advance.

Needs: how-to, craft of poetry, fiction or creative nonfiction writing, interviews with poets or writers of fiction and creative nonfiction, personal essays about literature, regional reports of literary activity, reports on small presses, service pieces about publishing trends.

Buys mss/year: 35. Submission Method: Send complete ms. Length: 700-3,000 words (depending on topic).

Photography: State availability. Reviews color prints. Offers no additional payment for photos accepted with ms.

Columns/Departments: Literary and Publishing News, 700-1,000 words, Profiles of Emerging and Established Poets, Fiction Writers and Creative Nonfiction Writers, 2,000-3,000 words, Craft Essays and Publishing Advice, 2,000-2,500 words.

Pays \$225-500.



### HAIGHT ASHBURY LITERARY JOURNAL

558 Joost Ave., San Francisco, CA 94127

Phone: (415) 584-8264. E-mail: [haljeditor@gmail.com](mailto:haljeditor@gmail.com).

Website: <http://haightashburyliteraryjournal.wordpress.com/>, [www.facebook.com/pages/Haight-Ashbury-Literary-Journal/365542018331](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Haight-Ashbury-Literary-Journal/365542018331).

Contact: Alice Rogoff, Indigo Hotchkiss  
Alice Rogoff and Cesar Love, editors.

Haight Ashbury Literary Journal publishes "well-written poetry and fiction. HALJ's voices are often of people who have been marginalized, oppressed, or abused. HALJ strives to bring literary arts to the general public, to the San Francisco community of writers, to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood, and to people of varying ages, genders, ethnicities, and sexual preferences. The Journal is produced as a tabloid to maintain an accessible price for low-income people."

Editor's Note: Haight Ashbury is 16 pages, includes ads. Includes fiction under 20 pages, 1 story/issue, and b&w drawings. Press run is 1,500. Subscription: \$12/ 2 issues, \$24 for 4 issues, \$60 for back issues and future issues. Sample: \$6. Has published poetry by Dan O'Connell, Diane Frank, Dancing Bear, Lee Herrick, Al Young, and Laura Beausoleil.

Freelance Facts: Established: 1979. Guidelines available for SASE. Rights revert to author. Responds in 4 months.

Fiction: False

Poetry: Submit up to 6 poems at a time. Submit only once/6 months. No e-mail submissions (unless overseas), postal submissions only. "Please type 1 poem to a page, put name and address on every page, and include SASE. No bio." Sometimes publishes theme issues (each issue changes its theme and emphasis). --m--

## Writing to the Right Brain

Ray Malus

### Ornate — Or Not.

A fellow writer said to me, “You write the way you talk.”

Now, I’m not sure he meant this as a compliment. And really, he’s incorrect: I swear a lot more when I talk.

But yes, I often try to sound conversational in my writing. On the other hand, I sometimes write poetry, and that’s certainly ‘formal.’

Although there are no hard lines, I mentally divide writing into two styles, which I’ll call, ‘direct,’ and ‘ornate.’

In direct writing, the content of the piece is everything. Story, memoir, cake recipe, essay. It’s ‘what’ you say that’s important.

In ornate writing the words and constructs are important. Poetry is the best example, but stories, memoirs and their like can also contain ornate writing.

These are the extremes, and neither of them is intrinsically ‘better’ than the other. In fact, most writing is a mixture of the two styles. Each has its place.

For example: When asked by a bereaved family to write a eulogy for someone, you won’t make many points by writing:

“We buried Dan; we had to, Man.”

But it is direct.

On the other hand, if Ikea instructions read:

“Slowly insert the smooth hard dowel (‘A’) into the deep welcoming orifice (‘B’) and twist to seat firmly...” it would probably break up your bookcase assembly party, and prompt your four-year-old to ask, “What s a ‘oral face’?”

In times past, most writing was fairly ornate. This is probably because literacy was an uncommon and hard-won achievement. The ‘elites’ who had attained it celebrated their accomplishment and delighted each other with their abilities. Even today, what was ‘ordinary prose’ in the nineteenth century seems ‘flowery’ and ‘formal’ to us. Often, we enjoy it. It has a genuine beauty. But that beauty is often one of form, as opposed to content. (There are letters from the Civil War whose contents deal with carnage and tragedy. Their content is dismal, and stripped of their ‘form,’ they are unappealing. However, wrapped in it, they are works of art.)

In our time and culture, literacy has become a birthright, the province of all people. Amazingly,

as you read this, the written word has come to rival — and perhaps even surpass — the spoken word as our primary medium of communication.

There is a tremendous ‘inversion’ happening. The preferred medium for ‘archiving’ speech used to be the written word. Now, because of ubiquitous recording equipment, it is the spoken word. (Who of us has ever *read* Kennedy’s ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ speech?)

On the other hand, the current medium for just ‘talking’ to others is becoming ‘texting’ in all its forms: email, tweets, blogs...

A consequence of all this is that writing has become far more ‘direct.’ For better or for worse, ‘ornate’ writing singles itself out. It often appears ‘wordy,’ or ‘pretentious.’ It calls attention to the ‘act of writing’ (craft), rather than the ‘purpose for writing’ (content).

This is fine, if it is what you intend. Most often, it’s not.

I have my own theory: Ours is a rabidly narcissistic society. Ornate writing shines a spotlight on the writer and his abilities rather than the (neutral) content. It is probably not your intent to provoke an ego contest with your reader.

Please understand, I am not referring here to effective prose imagery which insinuates itself seamlessly into a narrative. I am speaking of writing in which the form becomes the *raison*.

There are many who mourn the current disfavor of ‘ornate’ writing. (And although I am reluctant to say it, ornate writing is exploring new ground in the realm of hip-hop and ‘rap.’) I myself love reading poetry and ‘classics,’ and I rail against the current tyranny of Free Verse.

But still, most of what I write (and will write here) would be characterized as direct.

So why am I discussing this in a column about ‘Right Brain Writing’?

Well, we’ve already said that ornate writing calls attention to the words, and the structure of what you write. If you recall, these are very much left-brain issues. As a writer who is targeting the right brain, you don’t want the flow interrupted. You don’t want your reader to take time out to think, “Oh that was clever,” or “What a beautiful way to put that!” You want to maintain that steady stream of communication between you and the reader’s ear.

Certainly there may be times when you do want to appeal to the reader’s left brain. At those times, you use a different set of tools: structure, vocabulary, logic. Exploring those tools will also be part of our agenda.

You are the writer. It’s up to you to decide how you want to communicate with your reader. We will simply examine and clarify your choices. —m—

### Help A Guy Out!

*This originally appeared in March, 2011. We're reprinting it, because it is still valid. Please read!*

I will be honest. I don't always understand, or like, everything we print here. But that's irrelevant. Someone else (perhaps, many someones) may. So it is my task to faithfully publish your work, as presented.

This often leads to a dilemma: Each issue contains contributions from well over a dozen different members. The individual idiosyncrasies of one are not a major bother. But the combined 'quirks' can add up to quite a problem.

You can help:

- **Please, only submit finished work.** Take time to be sure your piece is exactly the way you want it. Lately, I have been getting a lot of submissions which are then followed by endless revisions. Not only does this add unneeded work, but it makes it very difficult to insure that the published piece is what you expect.
- **Please, submit a manageable number of pieces.** I know you're proud of your work, but let's be reasonable. If members submit multiple items, with the invitation for me to "choose the one(s) I like best," it imposes a terrible burden on me. The fact is I do not have the time to read, critique and cull these submissions. Also, I am not the arbiter; you are. In the confusion, 'print later's are bound to get lost, and there's not much I can do to prevent it. Send things you feel represent *your* best. (One or two pieces each month is reasonable.)
- Conversely, we customarily get submissions from the same people each month. If you're not one of them, **submit something!** *The Scribe* represents everyone.
- **Please try to submit well before the deadline.** We actually start formatting the next layout the day after publication of the Scribe.

Public Relations Director

(And earlier submissions tend to get better 'slots.')

- **Please, include the title of your piece, followed by your name** (as you want it to appear) with each submission. (How can people forget this?!)
- **Please, use minimum formatting.** You may feel that all the 'bells and whistles' word processors can add make your work more appealing. Mostly, they do not. Writing is about content. Bad writing, rendered in an **Olde English** font is still bad writing, and complicated line spacing and indenting do not improve awkward phrasing. I often spend more time trying to figure out and undo your formatting than I do adding mine. Use a standard font. (Most of *The Scribe* is set in Times, with the occasional foray into Helvetica or novelty font, when appropriate.) Use tabs for indents. We prefer single-spaced copy. In poetry, leave a blank line between stanzas rather than a double-space line. Unless you feel it will absolutely kill your piece, align your text at the left margin.
- **Please, try to adhere to the rules of Standard American grammar, spelling, usage** (all bets are off in dialogue) **and punctuation.** Yes, I know the rules for quotation marks are antiquated and irrational. Our proofreaders disagree. When in doubt, look it up! Somebody has to!

If we all just follow these guidelines, we'll continue to have a fine publication that represents all the members of the Branch. I mean, in the words of that renowned American 'Man of Letters,' Rodney King, "Why can't we all just get along!" -rm-

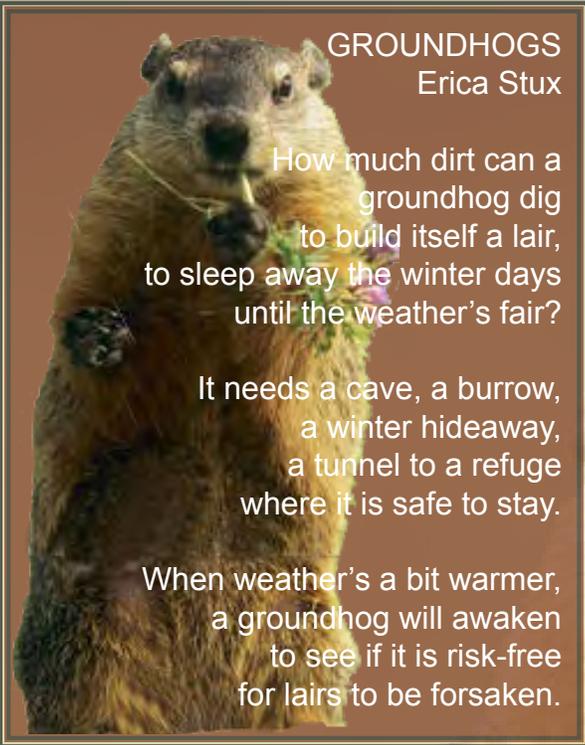
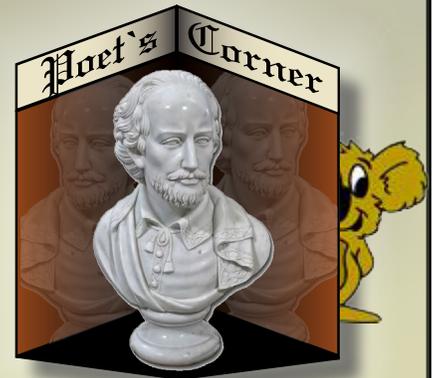
It Doesn't Follow  
J. Raymond Kent

About a week ago, I was idling at a traffic light, when approximately a dozen Catholic Sisters riding those funny little two-wheel scooters pulled up next to me. I asked what they were doing, and one Sister said, "We're raising money for our school by touring the entire Valley."

Curious, I asked to follow them, but she said I couldn't, because it was a "Nun's Segway Tour."



Hot Investment Tip!  
On January 25<sup>th</sup>,  
buy \$1,000,000 worth of  
'Forever' stamps.



### GROUNDHOGS

Erica Stux

How much dirt can a  
groundhog dig  
to build itself a lair,  
to sleep away the winter days  
until the weather's fair?

It needs a cave, a burrow,  
a winter hideaway,  
a tunnel to a refuge  
where it is safe to stay.

When weather's a bit warmer,  
a groundhog will awaken  
to see if it is risk-free  
for lairs to be forsaken.

### Wedding Congratulations

Lillian Rodich

Life provides beautiful sunsets  
And stormy seas  
Life smiles through each dawn  
And sometimes casts a shadow over the moon  
Life sings with the melodies of birds  
Or sighs with lonely winds through barren trees  
Life is a warm circle of family  
And cries of anguish at midnight  
And through all of this  
LOVE remains the constant  
To soothe away the sorrows  
And replenish the spirit  
And bind the wounds  
And ignite joy

### I WAS THERE WITH JOHN GLENN

Norman Molesko

In 1963, four of us were sitting around a table,  
three engineers and a psychologist, that was me.  
The Apollo man-in-space crew was our concern.  
A secretary entered the room that we were in.  
She asked us what kind of coffee we all wanted  
and left the room and went to fetch the coffee.  
Astronaut John Glenn arrived to offer his advice.  
The secretary returned with the four cups of coffee.  
I took my cup of coffee and offered it to John Glenn.  
I recall he replied with the words "Mr. Generosity".  
I felt good receiving this comment from John Glenn.

## The Door Knocker

Leslie Kaplan



“Guess what,” he says as he hands me a package. Every time there’s a knock on the door, I can tell by the rhythm that it must be Sy.

I feel the shape and size and I guess. “It’s an L.P.”

He says, “That’s right, but, which L.P.?”

“I don’t know, Sy. You’re the music expert and I can’t begin to guess.”

So far he’s brought me Finians Rainbow, Guys and Dolls, Pal Joey, Kismet, and The Pajama Game, just to name a few. He has introduced me to the world of Broadway, and I absolutely love the music and have learned most of the lyrics since I enjoy singing. He has opened a whole new world to me. I look forward to his daily knocks on my door around dinner time when he returns home from his job.

Sy works for the May Company buying Junior sportswear, and I love clothes and dressing trendy. My high school class book describes me as, “An ardent follower of the latest fashions.” Even then I designed my clothes which were sewn by my Aunt Celie and hand finished by my mom. We didn’t have much money, but I was always in style.

There’s that familiar knock on the door. “Who’s there?” (as if I didn’t know.) By now, we’re pretty much keeping steady company. It’s Sy with a package in his hand. “Hi honey. Guess what I have for you today,” he says.

I know it’s not a record by the soft feel of the bag.

“Okay, I give up.” I’m growing more and more fond of this man. After a warm hug and a long tender kiss it’s time to open the package.

I find a pair of leopard print, fur like capri pants. Very sexy! Sy says, “Try them on.” I think it’s great that he is in the fashion industry since I love clothes so much. They fit like a glove. “Thank you Sy, you really know how to spoil a girl.” We hug, we kiss, with a little more intensity this time.

The next day, something is missing. There’s no knock on the door today. I wonder if anything is wrong. It’s 7:30 pm. Still no Sy and no phone call either. So I go to his apartment and knock on his door.

He opens the door, and says, “Don’t kiss me, I’m sick.” He flops down on the couch. I sit down next to him. I touch his forehead. He’s burning up with fever.

I do what any Jewish mother would do. Aspirin, juice, tea, chicken soup, and some, or all, of the above. Most

of all I want him to feel that nurturing is the best cure! I have no fear of contamination. I lie down beside him. I hold him close. I caress him. He responds and our desires finally come to fruition. This is the first time we make love in over the year that we have been going together.

I really think I seduced him. What a way to cure a fever! He sweated it out and was fine the next day. I was very, very fine too. I also knew for sure that it was love.

The next night Sy says, “Let’s go to the Saratoga for dinner tonight.” It’s on Sunset Blvd. and walking distance from where we live in each of our own apartments. It’s a place we like and frequent. I have a feeling that something unusual is going to happen tonight.

“Let’s have a drink before dinner,” he says, looking at me in a way that makes me feel alive and beautiful. The waiter knows us by now as he says, “Your regular?” Sy orders, “Two vodka martinis.” He knows his drinks and his wines better than I ever will. “And,” he adds, “two regulars.” We always have broiled filet mignon, sautéed mushrooms and onions, baked potatoes and Caesar Salad.

“To us,” he toasts as we lock elbows like I once saw it done in a movie. “Leslie,” he says, suddenly looking shy, as he reaches across the table to hold my hands, “I love you. Will you marry me... and.... promise not to become your mother?” The mother part was cute and funny for a moment such as this, but in reality, he and my mom actually get along great. Besides, I don’t tell him, but the truth is, I always wanted to be like my mother.

I squeeze his hands, take another swig of my martini, and say, “Yes, and I promise.” My inner voice is saying, “Doesn’t he know that every woman eventually becomes her mother?” I move closer to him and we kiss, not caring at all who may be watching this public display.

We plan our own wedding, and every night Sy continues to knock on my door. If for any reason the rhythm is interrupted, I know what to do. I knock on his door. □

**BIG BULLY**

Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein

The night is charcoal black. I see the Big Bully hiding in a dark corner---just waiting for me to pass by---waiting for me to jump and catch me unaware. Thank God, he hasn't spotted me yet. I bring my thumbs to my ears and flap my open palms in his direction.

'NA-NA, -NA-NA, NANA! YOU DON'T CATCH ME,' I think it but I don't say it aloud.

I make faces at him and stick my tongue way out even though I'm so afraid.---I'm safe, because he can't see my silent gestures or hear my thoughts.

The BIG BULLY once said that he would kill me before New Years — but first he would make me suffer by snapping my head off separating it from my body — leaving me twitching on the ground like a slaughtered dizzy drunken turkey always ready for folks who devour the bird for Thanksgiving dinner.

In my mind I see the skeletal remains scattered on the table searching for the rest of ME or the wish bone now too late to change my fate.

Aught, what a nasty end to my young life! But — I don't think he would take that chance.

I think he just wants to impress others.

YOU! BIG BULLY! I yell with my mind. I am not a fool. YOU SICK DEMENTED CRETIN, I'LL BULLY YOU. SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT! At least for a fraction of time I can only draw half breaths? I am floating above my head. I sit down in the-cave-like-dark-pit of night exhausted.

I THINK-OUT-LOUD. THE BULLY KNOWS WHERE I AM NOW. HE IS WAITING IN THE DARK--JUST WAITING FOR ME TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

'YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH IT. DO YOU HEAR ME?' My mind continues to silently speak--I don't want to give him the opportunity to hear even a minimal faint breath to locate even a whisper of my mind voice. I still want to BULLY THE BULLY but, I don't know how.

'HEAR ME OUT, YOU BIG OX. YOU DON'T SCARE ME' I'M GOING TO KICK THE S\*\*T OUT OF YOU. SEE HOW IT FEELS WHEN THE SHOE IS ON YOUR FOOT!'

'OH, OH- some how he has heard my mind voice. He is coming fast with bulging eyes; his

*(This is a manuscript for which Sylvia won Honorable Mention in the East LA College Booklet entitled MILESTONE — sixty-four years ago. We think it really holds up.)*

**SOMEDAY**Sylvia Molesko (*nee Rubin*)

She sat there thinking. "Who? When? Where? How? "Sometime, somewhere, somehow, she would meet him... her man. He would be polite and intelligent, with strong, outstanding features and an equally outstanding personality. He would be able to do all sorts of things: cook, clean house, mow the lawn, fix the baby buggy. He would be athletic, yet write poetry; discuss world affairs and make ardent love. He would be a combination of all the fellows she had ever known or would ever know. And he would be hers. Of all these things she was certain. Her only doubt was his name. What if it should be Percy or Eustace? How unbecoming a name like that would be for an all-round man!

They would have a song—preferably one that he had composed. And he would hum it whenever they went out. They would dine at the same cozy eating place. The waiter would smile as he ordered in perfect French. Sometimes they would go driving—just drive for hours. She liked to think of this—just he and she, driving in the future.

But when would they meet—and how? Maybe he would see her at the theater and politely hand her his card. Perhaps at a lecture or as guest speaker at a club meeting. Maybe on a bus or at the seashore. She would know him anywhere. Would he know her?

No time to think of this now, though. There were other, more important things to do. She must braid her hair and get ready for bed. Mother would soon be coming up to give her the teddy bear and tuck her in. □

nails sharp as daggers reach for my throat. Now I'm sure he has heard my mind voice.

HELP! HELP! I SCREAM LOUDLY THIS TIME, BUT NO ONE HEARS THE CHOKING SOUND--

"QUIET! QUIET! LISTEN UP, CREW. ERASE THE BLACKBOARD NOW", THE TV HANNAH BARBERA VOICE SAYS. "WE HAVE ENOUGH TOM AND JERRY CARTOONS. THIS IS THE END."

COLORED CHALK MICRO-SPECS FLY INTO SPACE. THE TV CARICATURES OF BIG BULLY AND ME ARE NO MORE,

NO MORE--□

# 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](mailto:andipolk4@gmail.com).

## MEETINGS

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

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS  
February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 p.m. — Lee Anne Krusemark  
Credibility with Publishers

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

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

Articles/Essays  
Short Stories  
Poetry

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.

## This Month's BIRTHDAYS!

Janna Orkney	14 <sup>th</sup>
Dean Stewart	20 <sup>th</sup>

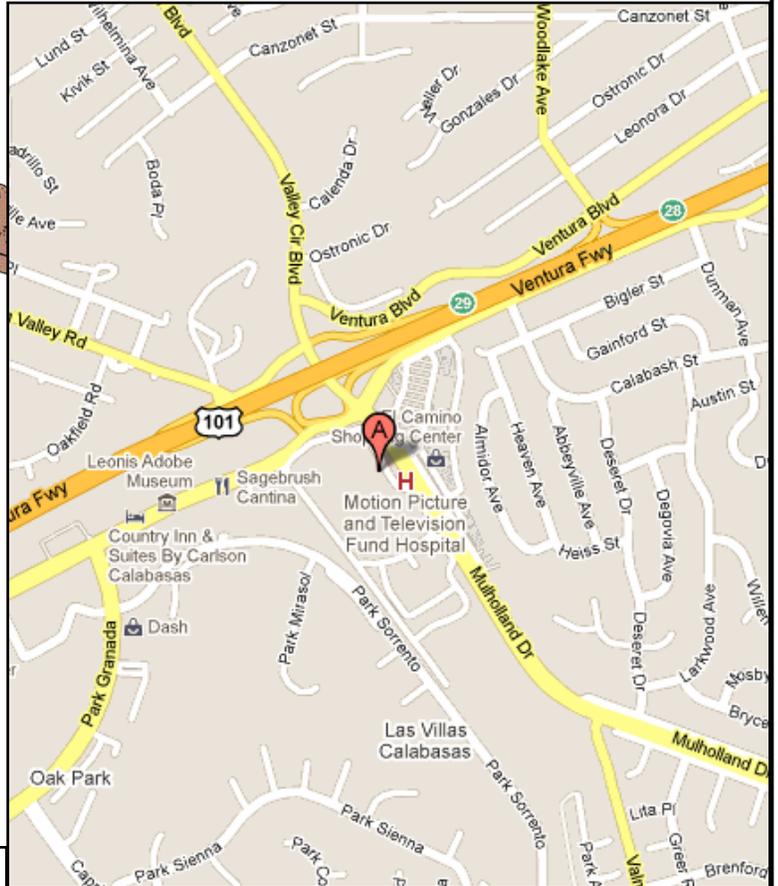
# The Fine Print

## 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  
San Fernando Valley Branch  
of  
California Writers Club

is published monthly.

We solicit submissions from members.  
(See Bulletin Board: "SUBMISSIONS")

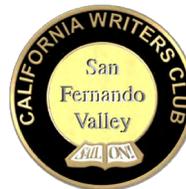
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[Ray Malus](#)

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## California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch



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