



The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch



The Valley Scribe

"Our Members' Voices"

March, 2014

Vol. 7

No. 3

Next Meeting: March 1st, 1:00!



March's Speaker

Alexis O'Neill

Hearing Voices: Writing and Revising Historical Fiction

Who has not had a book, or books, that captivated us as a child and still resonates in us as adults? There was a voice in those favorite stories that connected deeply with us. Alexis O'Neill, Ph.D., our speaker for the March 1st meeting, will help us understand what makes that happen.

In her presentation titled *Hearing Voices: Writing and Revising Historical Fiction* she will share with us the techniques in research that "tell" you the voice in which a story should be written so that it "sings" for your intended audience. Ms. O'Neill is the author of numerous children's books published by Scholastic, Simon & Schuster, and others. She is a museum education consultant and instructor in the UCLA Extension Writers Program. Her newest book, *The Kite that Bridged Two Nations: Homan Walsh and the First Niagara Suspension Bridge* was recently launched at Niagara Falls both in New York and Ontario, Canada.

Don't miss this. Come early – get a front row seat!

Rita Keeley Brown



In This Issue

Feature

Page

(Click on title to jump to item)

Reminder: Please Take The On-Line Survey.



February Speaker Review

LeeAnn Krusemark

By Ray Malus

“They HATED it!” The wail goes up. “I’ll NEVER be a writer!” Yet another rejection letter. “I STINK!”

Well, possibly... but probably not. So says LeeAnn Krusemark, our February speaker. In fact, she asserts, unless you have established credibility with the editor, chances are your manuscript didn’t even get read.

In a brisk one-hour presentation, Krusemark took us into the office of a submissions editor, where desks overflowed with submitted manuscripts and the clock raced toward press time. With all those pieces to read and no time, which authors would get attention? The ones with credibility. The ones with a successful track record. The ones who had published.

How do they know? “Easy! From what you tell them in your query letter.”

LeeAnne Krusemark is a journalist and author, and has been the owner of an award winning southern California public relations business since 1988. Her in-person lectures are offered at more than 200 facilities nationwide, including Purdue, and her online publishing class is offered at more than 1,000 facilities worldwide, including Harvard. That’s what you call ‘credibility.’

She got rolling with a very conventional, “Write one sentence using the word ‘...’” exercise. The point being “You need to grab the reader’s attention in sentence one, or they’ll never read sentence two!!” Hardly news!

But then the real subject began: How do you get that editor to read that first sentence. If you can’t get published until you’ve been read, and you can’t read until you’ve been published, how do people ‘get in?’

Here, Krusemark became a juggernaut. She has a whole, delightful bag of tricks, and markets that may even earn you a few dollars as you amass publishing credits.

1. Fillers. Newspapers and magazines abhor white space. Their preference is to fill this space with revenue-producing advertising. But when the ads run out, they use ‘filler copy.’ Filler copy consists of small (one line to a few hundred words) items that can fit in the cracks and corners. They can be so popular

that they eventually get their own sections. (*Reader’s Digest’s* ‘Life In These United States’ comes to mind.) They may even pay up to \$50 per piece. But that’s not the real prize. Each is a publishing credit. (*Caveat: No simultaneous submissions.*)

2. Greeting Cards. Yup, Greeting cards. Someone has to write ’em. And they pay! How much? Well, perhaps \$10 for a one-liner, or up to \$1000 for a compete card (including graphics). And each is a publishing credit. (*AND you can make simultaneous submissions.*)

3. Contests. These can be tricky, because many are fraudulent. But the legitimate ones are sometimes tickets to instant stardom. [*Editor’s Note: I personally avoid contests with fees. I’m fine with people reading my work for free, but I’m damned if I’ll pay ’em. But that’s just me!*] Things to avoid: Follow-ups offering to ‘fix’ your manuscript for a fee. Notices that, although you didn’t win a cash prize, you have been included in an anthology — which you can buy.

4. Newspapers. Although ‘Letters To The Editor’ are not published ‘articles,’ they are published ‘pieces.’ If you’re just starting out and need credits, include them as such. The watchword here is to embellish all you want — but *don’t lie*. If you do lie, and they catch you, you will be black-listed.

The discussion inevitably strayed into the realm of ‘self-publishing’ and its permutations. Krusemark’s counsel is that, unless your book has sold a thousand copies, it’s not germane.

As for websites and blogging she uses the word ‘juried’ (judged by a third party) and says this: “Anything that is printed and distributed and is ‘juried’ by other than yourself, is [a] published [credit].”

Bright and cheery, Krusemark’s presentation persona is confident, knowledgeable and authoritative. She deftly fielded questions both during and after the main presentation, and avoided letting herself become ensnared in extended ‘conversations’ with listeners.

Brava, LeeAnn! □

LeeAnn Krusemark is a Chamber of Commerce past president and has been asked to speak at a Senate-sponsored business conference as well as for the Department of the Army.

You can find out more about her at: <http://leeannela.wordpress.com/2012/11/15/leeanne-krusemark-bio-2/>

From Your Central Board Rep
Ray Malus

Our Central Board held its biannual meeting in Oakland on January 26th. Minutes will not be approved until the July meeting, and so cannot be published.

The meeting typically lasts seven-and-a-half hours, so including a summary of all proceedings would be unwieldy. However, because several topics may be of importance to our members (the Lit Review, a discussion of 'Active' and 'Associate' Status, et. al.), an unofficial summary has been posted on our website. It will remain posted until March 31, 2014. You may view it at:

http://cwc-sfv.org/M_O/Minutes/2014-01-CB_Meeting.pdf

GROUNDHOGS!

We are very pleased to announce that the first (and only) person to correctly count the groundhogs was Judy Presnall.

Judy is one of our former proof-readers and has an eagle's eye.

Although no prize was offered, Judy has requested a copy of "... your Toilet Book."

We are delighted to oblige.

For those who are curious (or skeptical), here are the counts, by page:

1 - 3, 2 - 3, 3 - 3, 4 - 4, 5 - 4, 6 - 3, 7 - 3, 8 - 1, 9 - 0, 10 - 2, 11 - 2. Total: 28

Happy Reading, Judy!

Club Member Announces Debut Novel

Club member Karen Gorback is pleased to announce the publication of her debut, adult novel *Freshman Mom* (2014) through Outskirts Press.

"*Freshman Mom* is a piece of contemporary women's fiction. The novel tells the story of Meredith Lieberman's first year of college, filled with the angst of single parenthood, the demands of higher education and the excitement and uncertainty of new relationships."

Gorback hopes that the book both entertains and encourages adults to pursue their educational goals — even when life intervenes.

The book is available in paperback through Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com, as well as in Kindle format. Interested readers may read the first several chapters without charge on Amazon or hear the author read an excerpt at www.outskirtspress.com/freshmanmom.

(The audio link is beneath the summary.)

**MISSION STATEMENT OF THE
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH**

The San Fernando Valley Branch is one of nineteen Branches throughout California, organized and operating under the auspices of The California Writers Club.

We are a non-profit professional organization whose goal is to provide a friendly and inclusive environment for members to meet and network; to provide professional speakers who will aid in writing, publishing, and marketing members' endeavors; and other writing-related opportunities that will further members' writing enjoyment and careers.



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!

ZEEK: A JEWISH JOURNAL OF THOUGHT AND CULTURE

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Published monthly online and in print, seeks poetry that is "poetically daring, with shades of the numinous as it manifests in moments non-poets would ignore." Does not want "clicheéd, 'inspirational,' or ethnocentric writing, something that could serve as a greeting card, political poster, etc., cynicism." Has published poetry by Hal Sirowitz, Rodger Kamenetz, Linda Zisquit, Yerra Sugarman, Shirley Kaufman, others. Zeek (print version) is 96 pages, digest-sized, perfect-bound, includes photography. Receives about 500 poems/year, accepts about 20. Press run (print) is 2,000 (200 subscribers), online version gets 60,000 hits/month. Single copy: \$7, subscription: \$14/year. Make checks payable to Zeek Media Inc.

Poetry: Submit 3 poems at a time. Considers simultaneous submissions, no previously published poems. Accepts e-mail submissions only (pasted into body of message). Short cover letter is acceptable. Reads submissions year round. Time between acceptance and publication varies. "Poetry editor has final approval, but editorial board of four can propose or reject." Seldom comments on rejected poems. Occasionally publishes theme issues. Guidelines available on website. Responds anywhere from 1 month to 1 year. Pays 5 contributor's copies (to poets published in print edition). Acquires one-time rights. Reviews books of poetry.

THE WORCESTER REVIEW

1 Ekman St., Worcester, MA 01607

Phone: (508) 797-4770 . E-mail: twr.diane@gmail.com. Website: www.theworcesterreview.org .

Contact: Diane Mulligan, managing editor.

The Worcester Review, published annually by the Worcester County Poetry Association, encourages "critical work with a New England connection, no geographic limitation on poetry and fiction." Wants "work that is crafted, intuitively honest and empathetic. We like high quality, creative poetry, artwork, and fiction. Critical articles should be connected to New England."

Annual literary journal covering poetry and short fiction. Magazine: 6x9, 60 lb. white offset paper, 10 pt. CS1 cover stock, illustrations, photos. Has published poetry by Kurt Brown, Cleopatra Mathis, and Theodore Deppe. Subscription: \$30 (includes membership in WCPA). Established: 1972. Simultaneous Submissions: Yes. Guidelines available for SASE or on website. Acquires one-time rights. Circulation: 500. Sample copy: \$8. Responds in 4-8 months to mss. Sometimes comments

on rejected mss. Publishes ms within 1 year of acceptance. Accepts about 10% unsolicited mss. Agented fiction less than 10%.

Nonfiction: Critical essays, literary essays, literary criticism. Submission Method: Send complete ms. Length: 1,000-4,000 words. Average length: 2,000 words. Pays 2 contributor's copies and honorarium if possible.

Fiction: Recently published work by Robert Pinsky, Marge Piercy, Wes McNair, Ed Hirsch.

Needs: Short stories, literary fiction.

Send complete ms. "Send only 1 short story—reading editors do not like to read 2 by the same author at the same time. We will use only 1."

Length: 1,000-4,000 words. Average length: 2,000 words.

Pays 2 contributor's copies and honorarium if possible.

Poetry: Submit up to 5 poems at a time. Cover letter is optional. Print submissions should be typed on 8.5x11 paper, with poet's name and e-mail address in upper left corner of each page. Include SASE or e-mail for reply.

Pays 2 contributor's copies plus small honorarium.

"We generally look for creative work with a blend of craftsmanship, insight and empathy. This does not exclude humor. We won't print work that is shoddy in any of these areas."

ZYZZYVA

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Phone: (415) 440-1510 . E-mail: editor@zyzzyva.org .

Website: www.zyzyzyva.org

Contact: Laura Cogan, editor, Oscar Villalon, managing editor.

"We feature work by writers currently living on the West Coast or in Alaska and Hawaii only. We are essentially a literary magazine, but of wide-ranging interests and a strong commitment to nonfiction."

Magazine published in March, August, and November.

Accepts submissions year-round. Does not accept online submissions. Established: 1985. Simultaneous Submissions: Yes. Guidelines available online. Buys first North American serial and one time anthology rights. Circulation: 2,500. Byline given. Pays on acceptance. No kill fee. Queries accepted by mail. Sample copy for \$7 or online. Responds in 1 week to queries. Responds in 1 month to mss. Publishes ms an average of 3 months after acceptance. 100% freelance written. Works with a small number of new/unpublished writers each year.

Nonfiction: Needs: book excerpts, general interest, historical, humor, personal experience. **Buys mss/year:** 50. Submission Method: Submit by mail. Include SASE and contact information. Length: no maximum page count.

Fiction: Needs: ethnic, experimental, humorous, mainstream. Buys 60 mss/year. Send complete ms by mail. Include SASE and contact information. Length: no maximum word count.

Poetry: Submit by mail. Max Number of Poems: 5. Length: no maximum page count.

Buys 20 poems/year, Pays \$50

"We are not currently seeking work about any particular theme or topic, that said, reading recent issues is perhaps the best way to develop a sense for the length and quality we are looking for in submissions." □

Writing to the Right Brain

Ray Malus

Stop 'Writing'!

In a former life, I directed local theater. Most of our actors were seasoned, but occasionally I would work with someone less experienced. I often got to give them the two best words of advice you can give an actor: "Stop 'Acting'!"

This doesn't mean, "Give up the theater, and go flip burgers!" What it means is, "I can see your craft, and it's distracting from the reality." The performer is doing things that call attention to himself, instead of the work.

In the same way, when I read narrative prose, I often want to say to the writer: "Stop 'Writing'!"

In literature, as in theater, 'honesty' has replaced 'style.'

Someone is reading your words. Your story has captured their attention. Now it must hold that focus. What you're trying to do is engross the reader in your work, to quietly talk into their mental ear and wrap them in your spell.

A thousand things may compete with this: the phone, the doorbell, the cat, just 'life' in general. 'You' should not be one of them.

'Writing' breaks this spell.

'Writing' is usually the interjection of the author's ego. The writer becomes more important than the story.

Long, convoluted, run-on sentences may demonstrate your ability with logic and analytical thought, but if the reader has to stop to parse them, the spell is broken:

"Swoozie, who had been a hairdresser since those dark days in Pre-WW II Berlin, when the Nazis had strutted around carrying their dark Swastika banners, infiltrating into Poland where they incited looting and the burning of Jewish Synagogues that had stood proudly since the Middle Ages, when enlightenment had encouraged tolerance for the long-persecuted Jews of Europe, and shattering beautiful stained glass works of art, and store windows, leaving such a quantity of broken glass in the cobblestone streets that it had been termed, 'Kristalnacht,' the 'Night Of Broken Glass,' stood waiting for the bus."

WHAT?!

Well, yeah. We now know that the writer knows some basic European history, is sympathetic to the plight of the Jews during WW II, and has a fondness for stained glass. What a guy!

But so WHAT?! That's all about the *writer!*

Basically, in the story, some gal is waiting for a bus!

Even if all that background is important (and we can't be sure it is...) doesn't it deserve its own little existence?

"In the dark days before WW II... [LOTS of nice

simple declarative sentences here] ... Swoozie had become a hairdresser. Now she stood waiting for a bus."

Long, complex sentences and gratuitous detail may seem erudite, but they can frustrate your reader, and they certainly pull him out of the narrative.

I'm sure you have a massive vocabulary. But a vocabulary is not a collection of butterflies — lifeless, on pins, in a glass case. It is more like a collection of socket wrenches and Allen keys. It's not meant to be *displayed*; it's meant to be *used*.

Yes. Repetition can be distracting (That's why Edison invented the pronoun), but there are ways to handle this that don't send your reader screaming to find a dictionary.

Repetition, in itself, is not a bad thing; it can often be a powerful tool:

"In his rage, he slammed his fist into his assailant over and over and over and over and over — until he realized there were no longer any moans."

Or try this passage from Poe's, *The Bells*:

To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—

From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

It is *unintended* repetition that is distracting. It can set off a kind of 'echo' in the reader's mental ear. The reader stops to ask himself, "Gee. Have I heard that before?" He may even physically go back through the work to see if his perception is correct.

It can also create the impression that the writer's vocabulary is limited, and thereby impeach him.

The solution lies in that word, *unintended*. In most cases, all the writer need do is acknowledge that he's aware that (for whatever unexplained reason) he is repeating himself.

You've told the reader, "The wake had a 'solemnity' about it." A little later, you want to allude to this quality again.

Now, 'lugubrious' is a wonderful synonym, and I might use it: "Its very lugubriousness gave it an air of orthodoxy." (In many cases, even if the reader isn't familiar with the word, context will explain it.) But it is perfectly acceptable for you to say, "*That same solemnity* gave it an air of orthodoxy." The reader now knows that you're choosing to repeat yourself.

[As I said,] it is *unintended* repetition that is distracting.

Read the previous sentence with — and without — the part in brackets, and you'll get the point.

As I said (see?), it is *unintended* repetition that is distracting. Avoid it if you can — but not at the expense of breaking your reader's concentration.

Probably the worst offense is the 'Author's Wink.'

This is that utterly reprehensible moment when the writer communicates to the reader, "Of course, you and I know this is all bullshit," or, "Look at how clever I am!" It happens most often with novice writers of 'children's stories.' It's usually an attempt by the writer to bond with some imagined parent who is reading to the child: "You and me, Babe. We don't believe this infantile crap."

This is deadly! You have seduced your reader into believing you — and then betrayed him.

Be Shameless

John Klawitter

(Reprinted from 1st Turning Point, 2009)

Come on, look over here right now and answer me this one simple question: Who among you is going to throw the first stone? By my way of thinking, it damn well better be you. No, no, no, this isn't some biblical stuff, and I'm not *the second coming*. Actually, I'm the original devil, the one and only little voice inside your head that knows the secret to getting you published. We're standing together on the broad brow of the mountain, and looking down I offer you all that you see before you, if you'll just cast aside your whimsy and your preconceptions (unfairly ingrained by institutional learning) and go for it. Yes, Fame, yes you can have it. Riches, certainly. Happiness, probably not. But come on, now, don't go all crazy on me, two out of three isn't all that bad. Here, it's simple: Just rear back and fling your best shot.

Okay, so maybe I've tantalized you enough, you just might huck that rock, *but where?* Well, let's say you pick the top 20 agents and let a whole barrage fly. "But Devil-Boy," you complain, "agents don't like multiple submissions..." Well, I get your point, but how about we just lie to them, then? It's not like you're making your first communion or fibbing about something important like your taxes here. Are these literary *cogniscenti*-dudes or wenches as they may be—are they actually *family*? Or your dearest and most cherished best friends? Do they even have your interest at all at heart, except where it may incidentally parallel their own? Think for a moment about what they're asking. Why the hell do they want *exclusive*, anyway? Well, the answer to that one is simple: The industry is built on laziness and greed. It's easier and safer to publish the 33rd tired old Robert B. Parker Spenser Detective rerun than to consider your fresh new offering. And, knowing that, don't you think it's unfair of them to ask such an enormous concession of you? *Exclusivity?! Give me a break here!* After all, didn't you just spend a year of your life writing something almighty sweet that could make a goddamn lot of people including them very, very rich? Well, yes, you did. It's just that the right ones don't know it yet. And how are they going to know it if you don't smack them square between the eyes with your best, smoothest, roundest skipping stone? After all, it's not like we have seventeen Albert Einsteins, Teddy Roosevelts, Mohatma Ghandis and Donald Trumps in the same room here.

Oh, I almost forgot the most important thing—make sure it's a smart rock. (You still following? It's the one I've convinced you to huck simultaneously to twenty or so lucky agents.) What's a smart rock? Well, it's an informed communication, like a sword between the 2nd and 3rd rib on the right side of the chest, like a heat seeking missile going after your mother-in-law or a just-right chop to the artery on the side of her neck. A dumb rock would be sending a girly-man, metrosexual literary editor your smoldering new, better-than-James-Bond-and-Dirk-Pitt-Combined action thriller novel. Or wafting a haut-sniffing, literary feminist sweetie pie your fiendishly clever but insane manuscript proving women should be barefoot in the kitchen, chained to the stove. In both examples, you've written like the genius that you are but marketed like Clyde Clodhopper. That's seed thrown on fallow ground. Pearls to swine. A waste of your time. No, no, no, no Julio (and Julia)—*know* who these stumbling blocks in your way are, and you'll know what they want. Know what they want—and *give it to them!* Do that and they will fall down, slaves to your bidding, and rightfully praise your genius. Yes, they will. □

(Stop Writing — from pg. 5.)

Please, don't misunderstand. Some of the most effective moments in narrative writing have been when the writer shows the reader that the reader has mis-perceived the story. Examples include John Fowles' *The Collector*, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. The results are devastating. But in these works, it is the *reader* who assumes the responsibility, and it is the reader who eventually redeems himself by recognizing the true reality.

The repulsiveness of the 'Author's Wink' lies in the *betrayal*, and the smug superiority it evinces. I can assure you a reader treated this way will think a *long* time before reading another word you write.

When a reader honors you by devoting time to your words, honor his time. Tell your story as simply and honestly as possible. Cast your spell, and then protect it. Always remember: it's the story that's important — not the storyteller.

Stop 'Writing'!—m=



There once was a gal named Lori,
 Who carefully crafted each story
 Her words were unique
 Only hers to speak
 Whether poetry or allegory
 — Lillian Rodich



While pulling tree roots like a yeoman
 With no warning to act as an omen
 I felt my groin pop
 Soon I was in post-op
 With a mostly bionic abdomen.
 — Doug Douglas

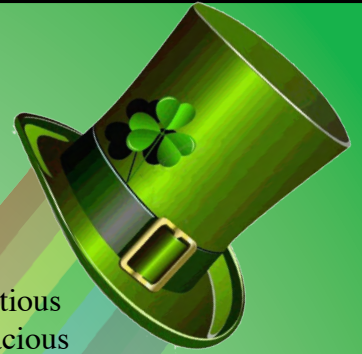
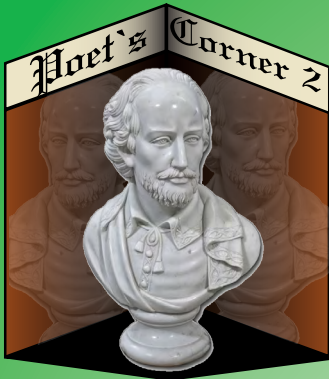
There once was a barmaid named Hannity
 Who had little reason for vanity.
 She'd the face of a pony,
 And knees that were bony,
 And her figure resembled a manatee.
 — Ray Malus

A floozie the fellows all tarted with,
 In regard to the favors she parted with,
 Said, "Well, you may say
 That I give 'it' away,
 But I've still got as much as I started with."
 — J. Raymond Kent

CHOCOLATES: NOT!!
 She fully expected a Valentine Sweetly
 labeled "Will you be mine?"
 But when it came by urgent mail
 And unwrapped was a bathroom scale.
 "A few less pounds would suit me fine."
 — Ken Wilkins

I despise the law of gravity,
 That tries to fill every cavity,
 And dumps to the ground
 Everything I'm around.
 Damn Newton and his depravity!
 — Michael Edelstein





His big heart is oh so flirtatious
 His craving for jokes, voracious
 He likes them unclean,
 Though none that demean
 But mostly he likes them salacious —
 Yolanda Fintor

Poetry's dead, so I've heard it said
 By many a profligate reader
 So I add it to prose
 Thus compounding my woes:
 The unpublished, poor slush-pile's leader.
 — Doug Douglas

There once was a bird in the sky
 Who always wanted to fly
 She started too soon
 On her way to the moon
 And had no time to wave good-by
 — Lillian Rodich

Our dear prexy Obama
 Under duress no one's calma
 The man is so cool
 You'd think him a fool
 Which IS what he's called by his momma.
 — Michael Edelstein

A lass of Bohemian attitude,
 Who is known for her sexual latitude,
 May accrue "ill repute",
 But it's hard to refute,
 She engenders a "pant-load" of gratitude.
 — J. Raymond Kent



Ode to Peugeot

There once was a young man named Barry
 Who learned to live mobile and wary
 From finding his toes
 In it up to his nose
 With the women he met, hot to marry,



“There has got to be more,” he would sigh,
 As a new one, with sweet smile, passed by.
 “From the look of that grin,
 There is nobody in,
 But she’s selling – I may as well buy.”

They came and they went in parade.
 Yes, Barry had everyone made.
 He partied and roared
 Until frightfully bored,
 But consistently, endlessly laid.

“I have got to get out of this bed
 And do something constructive,” he said,
 One morning at noon
 (Which came hours too soon),
 “There is more than this ache in my head.

“A writer!” he shouted out loud,
 And left the young Miss there quite cowed.
 “I’ve got stories to tell!
 No offense, what the hell,
 You can leave – for today, two’s a crowd.”

He now lives as a hermit, they say,
 Weaving words into novel or play.
 No longer a suitor,
 He’s bought a computer
 And plays with himself all the day!

— Nance Crawford



Los Toros — The Bullfights

Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein

“Pronto, get dressed!” Mommy says. “We are going to the bullfights!”

I don’t think she means me. I hate the bullfights even if I have never seen one. Mommy is all excited about going.

“Don’t look away from the child for even a minute,” she orders Rosario.

Rosario, our maid, is my shadow, or I’m hers. I follow her everywhere.

“I don’t want to go Mommy.”

But before I can continue Nanny is dressing me in a toreador outfit. I feel uncomfortable in the tight-black pants, boots, ruffled white blouse, long sleeve bolero, with a wide red sash around the waist.

“OLE, OLE! Here grab this red carnation with your teeth!” Mommy says clapping and tapping the floor with her heels at the same time.

“Honey, El Cordova is the best bullfighter in the world, you can tell your kinder-friends all about it.” She walks away saying that I’m lucky to be going with her and Rosario.

It’s Sunday and everybody in the whole world is going to the bullfights. The traffic is bumper to bumper — people everywhere shoving and pushing to get the best seats.

“We have reserved seats in the shade,” Mommy says, adjusting her binoculars.

The benches are hard wood with sticky splinters scratching my backside through my clothes. Rosario folds her Indian poncho for me.

Mommy is not paying attention. “Shah, the quadrille is ready,” she says moving the camera to watch the toreadors march in their satin tight outfits. Their sequins blink in the sun like a thousand mirrors. I think I’m going to like the bullfights.

A mean black bull is released into the arena. The toreadors run for cover behind the wooden fences around the plaza. The earth trembles with the weight of the animal looking for a target. One of the toreadors running zigzag sticks two giant metal-like toothpicks with long nails between the bull’s ears.

“Move out of the way!” I scream hoping the bull can hear me, but he is confused. Blood is oozing out like a faucet. I cover my eyes hiding them inside Rosario’s poncho. She is cursing in her Quechua

Indian language, praying to her Inca spirits to spare the bull’s life. “Madre de Dios — esa carne yo no comere.” (Mother of God I would not eat that bull’s meat).

“OLE! OLE!” the crowd screams. We are rooting for the bull hoping he will take revenge against his tormentor. A matador is getting ready for the kill, hiding his spade-blade behind his red cape. The crowd is silent after his sharp sword finds its mark sinking into the victim’s neck to the hilt. The poor animal trips over its own legs as if drunk, his mouth spitting blood. His eyes glaze in agony and he lands nose-first on the ground. I’m screaming — feeling faint and hot.

Mommy looks at me and tells Rosario to get ready to leave. We move slowly between the crowded benches and people’s knees.

“Hurry,” Mommy says as we see a new bull charging madly against the stands getting closer to where we are. Rosario picks me up and we rush for the exit — Mommy following close behind. Only half the gate is opened. All of a sudden a tremendous crowd is trying to get out at the same time.

“Señora, es una estampida,” Rosario says pulling my arm.

“Hurry, Hurry!” Mommy screams, quite frightened. One of my shoes is missing but she says not to worry. Half our clothes are stretched out with the frenzy of the people trying to reach the exit door at the same time. We are perspiring and out of breath. Mommy’s stockings are covered with runs and one of her heels and several nails are broken trying to protect me from the big crowd. Her huge emerald-cut stone is missing from her ring

Rosario’s poncho is all stretched out. Mommy’s purse is gone. Only two leather straps remain around her shoulder. Good thing Daddy is waiting outside the gate and pays the taxi.

“I was glued to the Zenith radio,” he says. “Dozens wounded, y tres muertos.”

I go to my room to mourn the passing of the bull. The estampida must be the bull getting even.

I am sick for three days.

I go back to my kinder-class and see all the bull-posters still there.

“Does anyone know what a matador is?”

“Yes”, I say raising my hand. “A Matador is a bull murderer.” □

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

March 1st, 1 p.m. — Alexis O'Neill
Hearing Voices: Writing and Revising Historical Fiction

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
- 150 words or fewer

- Articles/Essays
- Short Stories
- Poetry
- Book Release Notices

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!

- Andrea Polk March 14
- Ray Malus March 21
- Mary Freeman March 22
- Norman Molesko March 30

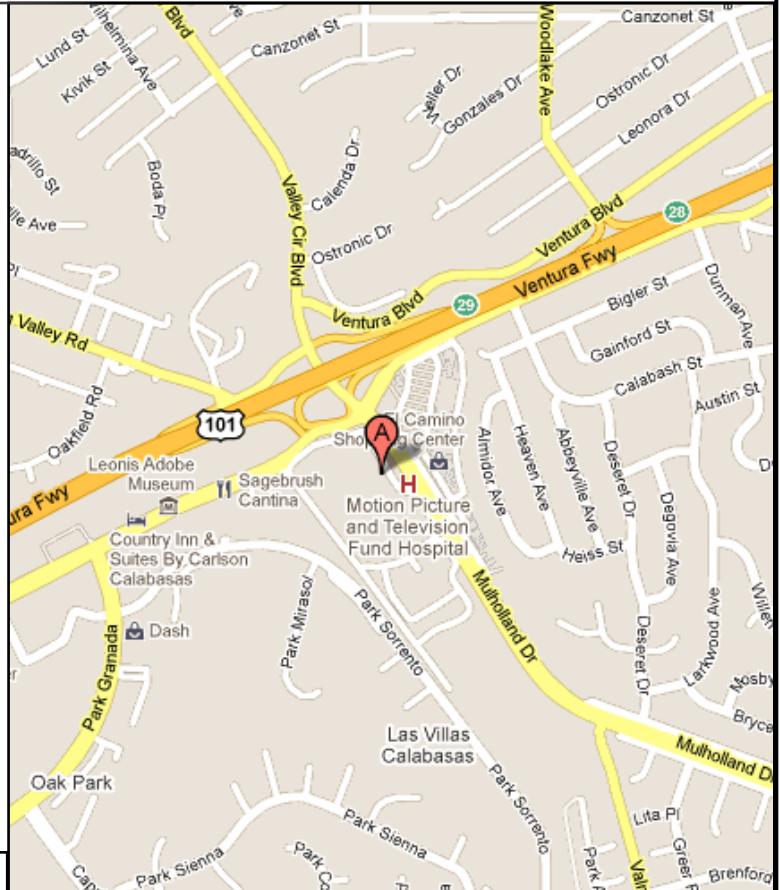
The Fine Print

**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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LOTS of great information at our
Website:
www.cwc-sfv.org