

The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe

"Our Members' Voices"



Vol. 8

Summer Interim, 2014

No. 1

Meet & Mingle: August 2nd

1:00PM!

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California Writers Club
Officers and Appointees of the Central Board (2013-2014)

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Mt. Diablo

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San Fernando Valley

Regions and Cities marked on map:
Mendocino, Redwood, Napa, Maun, Berkeley, Sacramento, Mt. Diablo, Tri-Valley, SF Peninsula, Fremont, South Bay, Central Coast, NorCal, CWC South, East Sierra, Writers of Kern, San Fernando Valley, High Desert, Long Beach, Inland Empire, Orange County.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mid-Summer Meet & Mingle!

Although everybody needs a rest now and then, we'd never want to lose touch.

So we're all getting together on August 2nd to socialize.

There will be no 'program,' but we will show a short, charming presentation, *A CWC Road Trip*, which was compiled by our State Secretary, Joyce Krieg, for last year's Jack London Awards luncheon.

Speaking of "luncheon," this is a pot luck, so bring a dish to show off and share.

Mark it down: August 2nd same Bat-time, same Bat-channel.

(OK. For the Bat-challenged, that's 1:00, at the Katzenberg.)

Enjoy It While You Can!

This will be the first of a series of gentle reminders that

It's Time To Renew!

(They will get more abrasive and obnoxious as we near the September 30th cut-off date.)

Save yourself the pain, and renew now!

Renewal Dues are only \$45!

Bring your check to the Meet & Mingle, or mail it directly to:

CWC-SFV, 9625 Fullbright Ave.,
Chatsworth, CA 91311

We want to enjoy your company and your writing for another year.

—AUTHORS' MARKETING OPPORTUNITY—

Extended Deadline: June 25th!

Display your work at the
Greater Los Angeles Writers Conference
June 27 - 29.

We cannot sell your books, but we can display your accomplishments at our CWC-SFV table.

(Copies of the display will be available for guests.)

Send promotional book covers, post cards,
or business cards to:

Andrea Polk, 16915 Rayen Street, Northridge, CA 91343.

Or email jpegs to: andipolk4@gmail.com.

Questions?

Call Andi: 818-800-5596.

For you adventurous members:

High Desert is once again embarking on a great writers' conference that you and your members will not want to miss!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, November 1, 2014.

The conference will be in Victorville from 9 to 4:30 pm,
and promises to feature the best of the best!

It will be well worth the drive no matter where you're coming from.

Plan a carpool now and join in with us for the fun and creative educational features!

Early Bird prices for CWC members in good standing are only \$35 until September 1st.

You can register online NOW.

Of course, seating is limited. (Non-member price until 9/1/14 is \$40)

The keynote speaker alone is worth twice that amount.

We have managed to get Christopher Vogler, internationally known teacher and speaker and author of "The Writer's Journey", which has sold 180,000 copies!

Come be part of our special event. You're going to love it!

Come on! Be a writer!

<http://www.hdcwc.com/conference-4---howl-at-the-moon-2014.html>

June Speaker Review — Lisa Cron

Weltanschauung...

— Ray Malus

The word is German. We really don't have its equal in English. 'Worldview' is as close as we come, but it's an anemic substitute.

Imagine yourself standing on a mountain, looking at existence: broad, narrow, clear, foggy, distant, near — the entire knowable Universe. Now choose a different mountain. Same existence, different *weltanschauung*. (And, really, isn't that the essence of 'art'?)

Lisa Cron takes you to a new mountain — and the view is spectacular.

That mountain is 'Story.'

Not 'a story.'

Not 'the story.'

Simply 'Story.'

For her, 'Story' is a principle of existence, an abstract formula, a process — and as necessary to human survival and fulfillment as food and air.

Now, this is pretty heady stuff (pun intended) — more suited to endless late hours in a coffee shop or alehouse — and cramming it into one hour in a sun-lit room is a herculean task.

Cron manages this by dispensing highly concentrated information at the speed of a Japanese Bullet Train, nimbly leaping from discipline to discipline (writing, sociology, anatomy, philosophy, medicine ...) as she sets forth her theses and substantiates them.

It's a dazzling display — kind of like Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader's climactic light-saber duel — and, if you listen closely, it all makes wonderful, elegant sense. (However, if you try to take notes, you will soon be overwhelmed. My pages are filled with incomplete words, where I tried to dash on to her next thought.) This is because Cron must compress the equivalent of a major doctoral thesis into an hour. (Eventually, I gave up taking notes, and just reveled in the presentation, so I may have some of this wrong. My apologies in advance.)

Cron says that, as an editor, she was constantly frustrated by the number of submissions she had to reject — all because they *had no story*. She asked herself why this was. She concluded that the ability to construct and tell a story is an innate one that's so ingrained in those that have it, that when justifying their success, they overlook it. Instead, they seek the explanation in terms of 'technique' or vocabulary.

The same is true, she says, of Creative Writing teachers. They teach 'writing.' But, Cron declares, " 'Writing' is the handmaid of 'Story.'" (At this point, 'Story' took on the iconic identity it would have for the rest of the presentation.)

Per Cron: Story is more than entertainment or 'make-believe.' It is essential to human cognition and development.

This is not some personal esthetic judgment. This is a biological imperative. 'Story' is a vital evolutionary tool! Stories let us dare! They are simulations we use to 'try out' new situations.

A revelation from her: "Without 'Story,' all we have is 'Now.'"

Neuroscientists support her. They have discovered that, to

encourage this phenomenon, the brain actually secretes dopamine in response to the curiosity evoked when reading a story.

This implies that, to be effective, writing has to grab — and hold — the reader's interest.

The reader must embrace and 'relate to' the story — a kind of 'unconscious attachment.' Cron says that most decisions are actually made, not by the 'conscious' mind (which is relatively slow), but by the 'cognitive unconscious,' which is very fast, and is the target of Story.

She continues that mere facts are meaningless; there must be a narrative that ties them together and makes them relevant to the reader. MRI scans have confirmed that, as we read a story, the brain reacts very much as if we were experiencing the story's events ourselves.

Finally, Story provokes emotions. Not what Cron calls the 'Big Box' emotions ('Happiness,' 'Grief,' etc.), but *feelings*. Feelings are how we make sense of everything, and are the subjective representations of chemical reactions in the brain. These emotions are how we make decisions. She asserts, "All choice is emotional."

So what is a 'Story'?

Cron says a Story is "... how what happens in pursuit of a goal changes the misbelief of the protagonist." All three are necessary: goal, misbelief, change. (*My only quibble: Here, I actually think she confines herself too much.*)

As an example, she uses the film, "Die Hard." (This also happens to be a good example of the distinction Cron draws between 'plot' and 'Story'.)

The *plot* is about a New York City cop, who goes to Los Angeles on vacation, gets trapped in a hostage situation, kills a lot of bad guys, blows up a high-rise, and rescues the hostages — among them, his wife.

The *Story* is about the reasons his marriage is failing, what he learns during the action, and how he changes enough for the marriage to succeed.

This Story has appeal to both men — who can feel less compelled to play 'masculine' social roles, and women — who see that men can be less aggressive and more nurturing. It is this broad appeal that makes the story a success.

After a (very) brief Q and A, Cron closed with advice: When you write, be specific! "We make sense of the world based on experience, and that is specific."

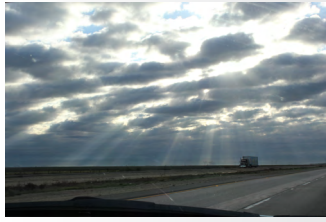
As I reread this review it seems a very inadequate summary of the presentation. You really have to experience the dazzling cataract of facts and conclusions for yourself. One can hope Cron's book, *Wired For Story* (go to: <http://wiredforstory.com/>) contains most of it, but the person is a large part of the presentation.

After the program, I asked Lisa Cron, "What *are* you?"

Fortunately, she understood I was asking, "Professionally, what do you call yourself?"

She answered, "I'm not quite sure. Lately, I've been calling myself a 'Story Coach.'"

She's that and much more. Lisa Cron is a *thinker* — and there aren't nearly enough of them! □

On The Cover.

Masthead: While driving back from last year's Oakland Meeting, we saw this solitary truck and the 'Jacob's Ladders.' I asked Sharron to stop and got some really lovely shots. **Map:** I created this at the request of Linda Brown (*Berkeley Branch*), in March. It is actually a picture of the 'live' map on our website, and the MRMS site — with the photos added. It has been re-printed (albeit sometimes without attribution) in about half of our newsletters. Ironically, I have not had the space to share it with you — until now. Linda solicited the Bios from the represented Officers and compiled them. They are below.

New Slate of Officers for 2014

Compiled by Linda Brown (*Berkeley Branch*)

President David George, Mt. Diablo, became a dual member of the Mt. Diablo and Berkeley branches in 2004. In 2009, Mt. Diablo awarded him lifetime member status. Dave has held a number of board-level positions at both branches as well as the Central Board. Dave's writing career includes short stories, poems, and nonfiction. He explores the ironies found during his 30-year high-tech business career and his encounters with the wildlife of rural California. He has won writing awards, most recently First Place in the CWC-San Francisco/Peninsula's Jack London Annual Writing Contest. He is currently writing a novel based on his Irish ancestral roots and an anthology of modern fables about the natural world.

Vice-President Margie Yee Webb, Sacramento, is author/photographer of *Cat Mulan's Mindful Musings: Insight and Inspiration for a Wonderful Life* and Producer of *FEMME: Women Healing the World*. She has served as the CWC-CB's Vice President since July 2012 and has also served as the CB's Member At-Large. Margie is the CWC Sacramento Branch President. In 2011 the Sacramento branch recognized her ongoing contributions with their branch's Jack London Award for service. She enjoys connecting with CWC representatives from all branches to share successes and learn from each other. She also belongs to the Cat Writers' Association and the Women's National Book Association, San Francisco Chapter.

Secretary Joyce Krieg, Central Coast, is the author of the Shauna J. Bogart Talk Radio Mystery Series: *Murder Off Mike*, *Slip Cue*, and *Riding Gain*, (St. Martin's Minotaur). She joined the CWC in 2004 and currently leads CWC-NorCal. Joyce designed the new CWC banner and brochure. A former newspaper reporter, television announcer, radio reporter and newscaster, Joyce became promotion director for Sacramento's KFBK News/Talk 1530. This served her well when she started to write about a crime-fighting, mystery-solving talk-radio host. She currently lives in Pacific Grove, where she is a member of the Central Coast branch and is chief-of-staff to her cat, Topaz.

Treasurer Sharon Svitak, Tri-Valley Writers, has been a CWC member since 2009. She writes romance and is a member of the Romance Writers of America. Her published works include *Letters to Ethan*, *Joe's Story*; *A Book of Memories* (*Chicken Soup for the Soul: Grieving*

and Recovery); and *Medical Benefits* (*Voices of the Valley – Encore*). Sharon has held three positions at her branch and also serves as the CB's Membership Chair, producing statewide membership reports.

Member-At-Large Ray Malus, San Fernando Valley Branch, joined the CWC in 2009. He writes fiction, poetry, and essays, and has published *Ashes In Yonkers*, and *Stories You'd Give A Shit About—If I Was Famous*. Ray has served as branch webmaster and newsletter editor. Ray also designed and administers the Member Record Management System (MRMS), an all-electronic system which saves volunteers lots of time and makes it easy to share contact information within the branches.

He serves on the CWC-CB because he believes that our greatest strength lies in our statewide unity.

PR Director Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, East Sierra, has written for newspapers throughout California and several magazines, including *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Desert Companion*. She's authored over a dozen books on popular culture, including *The Honeymooners Companion: The Kramdens*. When she moved from New York, she transitioned to travel writing. She has appeared on A&E Biography and Oprah, and she has spoken at the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum of Television and Radio. Donna joined the East Sierra Branch CWC in 1998 where she has been president, secretary, and program chair. At regional level, she chairs CWC-South (www.socalwritersshowcase.com). At the CWC state level, she serves as a representative on the Central Board. From 2009 to 2010, she oversaw the CWC Centennial.

Literary Review Editor Dave LaRoche, South Bay, has published many short stories and has just finished the first draft of a novel. Dave has represented the South Bay Branch at the Club's Central Board for six years and has spearheaded several changes, including using the Internet to conduct official business, which has greatly reduced costs. He currently serves as the CB's Standards and Policy Chair in addition to editing the annual CWC *Literary Review*. Until January, he administered the CB's electronic discussion forum. Dave founded and chaired NorCal, a regional association bent on furthering communication and activities among the twelve northern branches. Dave is VP of South Bay and has previously served as branch president and the editor of *WritersTalk*, the South Bay newsletter. Dave holds the CWC responsible for his writing enthusiasm and success, and a good cigar for his healthy longevity. □

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
August 2nd, 1 p.m. — Summer
Meet & Mingle
Pot Luck. Bring something to show off!
Details on our website: CWC-SFV.ORG

Check out our writers on the
So-Cal Writers Showcase.

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

Do YOU have a website?
Be the

'Member Website of the Month'!
Send your URL to:

cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com

BIRTHDAYS!

Michael Rains	July 3
Ethel Ann Shaffer	July 4
Gary Wosk	July 12
William E. Hitchins	July 27
Karen Gorback	July 30
Gabriella Owens	August 9

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

Regular Features:
Submissions:

Submission deadlines:
TENTH of the previous month.
FIFTEENTH of the previous month.

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.

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.

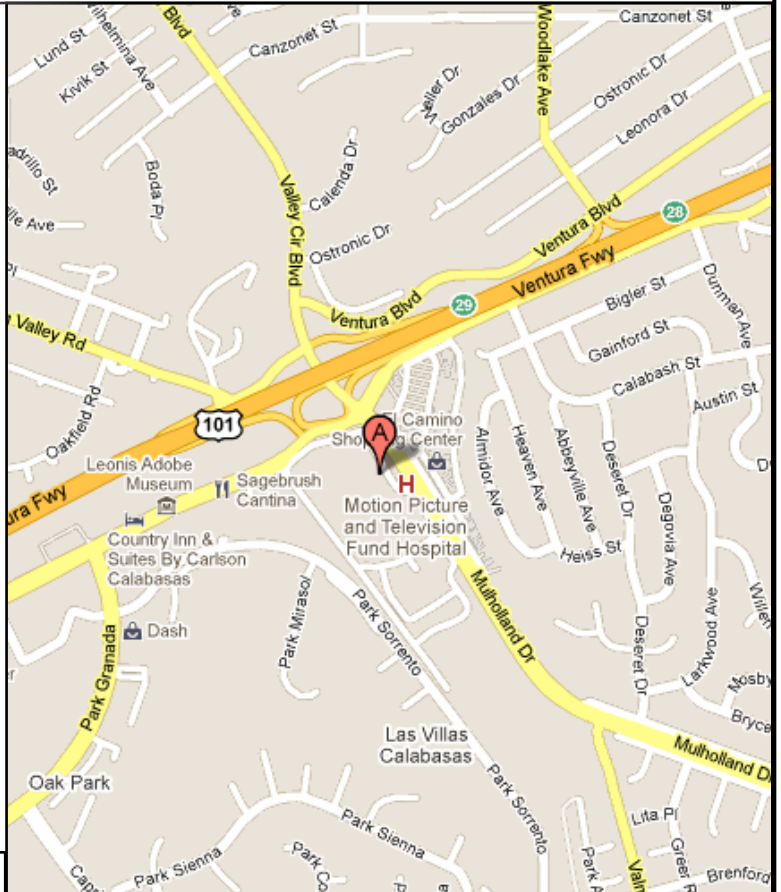
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(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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Ray Malus

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LOTS of great information at our

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www.cwc-sfv.org