



The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe

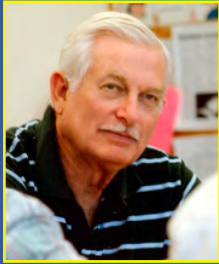


Vol. 8

October 2014

No. 3

Next Meeting: October 4th, 1:00!



October's Speaker Bernard Selling — Writing and Re-Writing

With an M.A. degree in English from the University of Michigan and an M.A. degree in Theater Arts/film from U.C.L.A., Bernard Selling has taught creative writing and film production and history at the USAF Academy, U. C. Santa Cruz and Loyola University and local Los Angeles area community colleges and adult schools. He has authored *Writing from Within* (1988, 1990, 1998, 2004), *Writing from Deeper Within* (2012) and *Writing from Within: The Next Generation* (2013) and a recently completed eight-novel series of the Italian Renaissance.

Selling has given workshops on academic and creative writing throughout the United States and Europe. Currently he conducts private creative writing workshops. He has written and produced short fiction/non-fiction films and has written numerous screenplays (several optioned/one currently in preproduction). A jazz musician and pilot, he is the father of two sons -- one, a paramedic/Marine; the other, a commercial pilot.

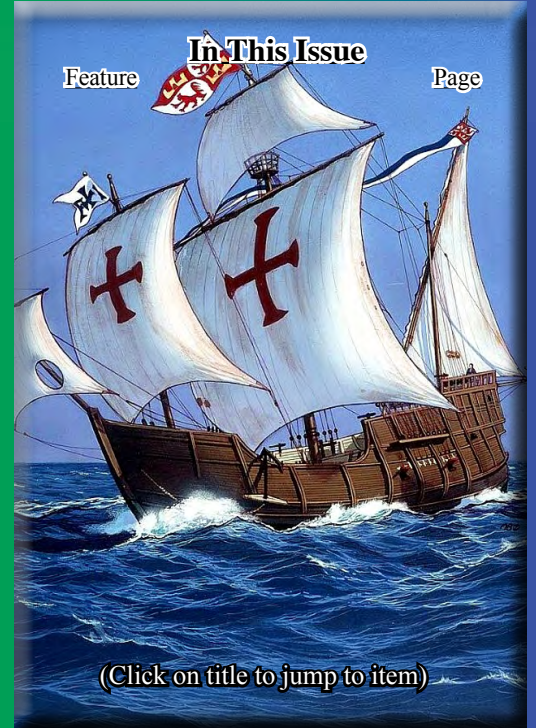
His book, *Writing from Within: The Next Generation* won an award as top of its class in the 'writing' category of the American Library Association. The mention is in "Forward" Reviews of independent books.

Mr. Selling's subject will be, "Writing and Rewriting: Where does our rewriting go wrong? How can we make our write right?" Copies of writing gone wrong will be distributed, and the group will explore ways to make it right.

In This Issue

Feature

Page



(Click on title to jump to item)

The Board of Directors wishes to express its deep regret at the conflict between this October's Meeting and the High Holy Day of Yom Kippur.

We wish you

Tzom kal
and

G'mar Hatimah Tovah

September Speaker Review

Dave Congalton

By Andrea Polk

Dave Congalton gave a media-laced presentation of his journey from mid-west college teacher to indie film scriptwriter of *Authors Anonymous* and *Seven Sisters* (in production). For the last twenty-five years he has been a professional writer; all due to personal connections. No agents, no scripts languishing on some producer or director's desk. "Get out there. It is all about your personal connections. You never know where you might meet a person that will open a door."

He had a dream, risked job security, struggled, met and married a secret weapon, buried jealousy and did the work. Then he learned the flip side of success: losing control of his script, enduring pre-production nonsense, keeping his mouth shut and accepting compromise just to get the movie made.

Risk? He quit his secure teaching post, moved to Los Angeles to realize his dream. Frustrated, he nearly gave up. In 1989 he met Charlotte Alexander at a writing event. She believed in his talent and changed his life. He credits Charlotte, now his wife and partner, with redirecting his career. Through her connections he wrote for newspapers, became a talk show host in San Luis Obispo and for twelve years ran writers' conferences on California's central coast.

"Write what you know," Congalton's wife added from the back of room. He's a writer, and *Authors Anonymous* is about writers in a critique group. He hikes, and *Seven Sisters* is about hiking mountains in SLO. He was jealous of his friend Catherine Ryan Hyde's *Pay It Forward* success. "How much success is an author entitled to?" he asked. The answer, "She does the work. You don't." That was



President's Message

Nance Crawford

BOO!

October used to be scary because autumn was well under way – trees turning red, then gold, working their way to naked. It even happened with great regularity in Southern California – at the very least it happened seriously in Big Bear and Arrowhead – if tepidly in L.A., in those front and back yards sporting a maple or shimmering clump of aspen trees, as the warm sidewalks that inspired "White Christmas" ruefully inched toward winter.

Yes, there is winter here. Winter is when the Bermuda grass turns brown. Of course, we haven't had Winter around here for over a year. It's hardly cooled down, and we're all conserving water. That's scary. Winter will be very welcome, when it decides to show up.

The weather will change. Anyone who doesn't want to wait here in SoCal for it to change can run up to San Francisco, where it changes every ten minutes.

The trouble with traveling the same road over, and over, is that eventually the ruts can become so deep they prevent change in the path.

We've reached a crossroads, and it's time to make some decisions about the direction we want to take.

Your Board of Directors cannot do it all.

Since no one has stepped forward to fill a couple of really important jobs, members of the Board have been teaming up to cover the open positions. We really need help.

Do you want speakers who will also teach us a class? Do you know people who are interesting speakers? Do you want to help guide those decisions? If you have positive responses to those questions, you might want to consider helping the Programs team.

Do you enjoy sharing your interest in our meetings, or telling others about the speakers? Would you like the experience of reaching out to the media? We could use your help on the Public Relations team.

Yep. It's scary. But it's also fun. □

HELP WANTED

We really, really, really, really need a Program Chair.

"Secures speakers for the monthly meetings and confirms engagements prior to the meetings; writes up a speaker column for the monthly newsletters; introduces the speaker at the meetings; procures a gift and presents same after the presentation; follows up with a thank-you letter or email."

Suggested qualifications. Outgoing demeanor, reliable, organizational skills, ability to interact with people easily, accountability."

But, honestly, at this point, we'll settle for "breathing."

[Congalton \(from pg2.\)](#)

the last time he was jealous. He realized success is good for all of us. It means there's work for writers. Jealous reactions to success are featured in *Authors Anonymous*.

He reviewed the missteps in trying to produce the movie with a con investor that did not have money. In 2005 a key connection was made. At a local film fest a casting director, who knew Kaley Cuoco, liked his project and wanted in. Finally, \$850,000 was available because Kaley Cuoco was in it and a Louisiana investor was her fan. She could be in the movie because it was shot in Glendale/Burbank and convenient to her family.

Then came pre-production and production lessons. Be prepared to lose control of your script. He said 85% was the movie he wrote; the rest was cut, changed, and the ending altered. The original title, *Scribble*, changed to *Authors Anonymous* by an assistant director for marketing reasons, it went from a quasi-documentary format to "more filmic" because the director was uncomfortable with mockumentary, and a German character was added to satisfy a producer. The producer had a heart attack and died, but the character was good and remained. Changes were constant and he learned to keep his mouth shut.

We were shown a clip of a critique group meeting and a trailer revealing comic experiences of self-publishing, jealousy, success and altered relationships. Opened for questions, he confirmed that there is no right way to get the connections we need. "Get out there. Make as many opportunities as you can. Market yourself." Go on-line to [imsdb.com](#) and [Drew's Script-O-Rama](#) and read shooting scripts for free. *Authors Anonymous* is there. Tell your story. The first seven pages must grab the reader. Congalton's presentation was full of anecdotes and advice too numerous to include. He left us with, "Never give up until your dying breath."

If you couldn't attend, sorry you missed a good one. □

The Sad Case of Thomas Perry

John Klawitter

Thomas Perry wrote two of the most original and fascinating novels it's ever been my pleasure to read. *The Butcher's Boy* (Scribners HC 1982, Charter SC 1983) and *Sleeping Dogs* (Ivy Books/Ballantine 1992). Really, really good writing, as good as Elmore Leonard at his best.

In both novels, Perry's protagonist is a killer, but you like him, anyway. You understand who he is and how he got the way he is. And you actually cheer for him. (At least I did, and maybe that tells you something about me.) That aside, Perry's two novels are innovative, beautifully plotted and taut as a bowstring. The characters are...well, lovely, in their own way.

Perry told me personally (some years ago at the UCLA book fair) that both novels were optioned by the studios, but for one reason or another, these stories never caught on big time. The next thing out from Perry was a series with a female protagonist who helps women in distress disappear from their desperate lives, usually situations where they have been snared by rich and bad tempered men. The female protagonist who performs these "Disappearing Acts" is part American Native Indian, and so uses the cunning tricks of her heritage to hide these women and to evade the wrath of the rich, ill-tempered and powerful men who are naturally unhappy with her efforts to steal their mates from them.

Okay...Perry, being the really good writer he is, manages to 'do a pretty good read.' But even he can't overcome the fact that he's enslaved himself to an assortment of popular social notions of the moment, including feminist bigotries and racial stereotypes. The stories have been fairly popular; still, even critics don't take them seriously, and I think history will find them overheated and even goofy. What, you may ask, is the tragedy? After all, Perry is publishing his stuff. Ahh, my friends, go to a used bookstore and buy your own copies and read *The Butcher's Boy* and *Sleeping Dogs*. Then you won't have to ask why this is such a sad story... You'll know for yourself. □

Sage Advice from JRK

*When writing, let nothing be deliberate.
When re-writing, let nothing be by chance. - jrk*

Literary**Review****News****NOTICE**

If you submitted to the 2013-2014 Literary review and were not included, but did not receive a 'critique,' please contact me at CWC-SFV@roadrunner.com

Submissions, Issue 2014-15 open Sept 1 through Oct 31, 2014

CWC members are invited to submit their published or unpublished work following the guidelines below. Work meeting a threshold of quality and interest will be published. Minor editing may be performed. Proselytizing or potentially libelous material, gratuitous vulgarity or obscenity will not be considered. Rejections will be accompanied with editors' suggested improvements.

Send submissions, for this issue only, as an email attachment to dalaroche@comcast.net, "CWC Lit-Review" in the subject line.

General Guidelines (Nonconforming work will not be considered)

- Prose: 2500 words or fewer: fiction, memoir, or essay (excerpts if the submission can be judged as a complete story). Poetry of 30 lines or fewer. Photography and graphics through arrangement with the editor .
- A maximum of two submissions per member, same email, separate files, will be accepted per issue.
- The author must have the rights to convey for this one-time use by the CWC.
- Work selected will be published as is except for (possible) minor editing changes.

Preparing Your Submission (electronic, via email attachment only)

Body of email:

- Author's name, email address, and branch affiliation.
- Title(s), word count, and genre: fiction, memoir, essay, or poetry.
- Statement must be included: **"I, (name here) own and convey the right to publish this/these work(s) (title or titles here) for this one time publication in the CWC Literary Review."**

Attachment(s)--your artistic work:

- Pages numbered in footer, prefer bottom center. Do not use a cover sheet.
- Each page will contain the title of the work; once above the body of the work on the first page. Include the notation, NF-M, NF-E, poetry or fiction. Please, no other identifying information
- MSWord:doc, docx or rtf format.
- Left justified, one and one-half line spacing, New Times Roman 12 pt font.
- No page breaks, special leading, or any other unusual text manipulation or spacing.

A Message from Lit. review Editor, Dave LaRoche

Please include the following in your copy of the Literary Review 2012-13 recently distributed.

In the Acquisition Editor's credits on page 1,

Change: "Elisabeth Tuck (Tri-Valley)" to **"Elisabeth Tuck (Mt Diablo)"**

In the table of contents, page 2, under the heading of Poetry,

Change: "Alice Knight" to **"Alice Kight"**

On Page 10,

Change the attribution for the poem, "If I Changed Places" from "Emily Edding" to **"Alice Kight."**

For those affected, Alice Kight, Emily Edding, and Elisabeth Tuck, please accept the editor's apologies.



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!

THE WRITING DISORDER

P.O. Box 93613, Los Angeles CA 90093

Phone: (323) 336-5822.

E-mail: submit@thewritingdisorder.com

Website: www.thewritingdisorder.com.

Contact: C.E. Lukather, Editor; Paul Garson, Managing Editor; Julianna Woodhead, Poetry Editor.

"The Writing Disorder is an on-line literary magazine devoted to literature, art, and culture. The mission of the magazine is to showcase new and emerging writers—particularly those in writing programs—as well as established ones. The magazine also features original artwork, photography, and comic art. Although it strives to publish original and experimental work, The Writing Disorder remains rooted in the classic art of storytelling."

Covers: Quarterly literary magazine featuring new and established writers.

Established: 2009. Simultaneous Submissions: Yes. Guidelines available on-line. Acquires first North American serial rights. Circulation: 10,000+. Byline, bio, and link given. Pays on publication. No kill fee. Queries accepted by mail, e-mail. Sample copy on-line. Responds in 6-12 weeks to queries, 3-6 months to ms. Publishes ms an average of 3-6 months after acceptance. 90% freelance written. Submit seasonal material 6 months in advance. Editorial lead time 3 months.

Nonfiction — Contact: C.E. Lukather, Editor

Needs: book excerpts, essays, historical, humor, interview, nostalgic, personal experience, photo feature, profile, travel, comic art.

Special Issues: "We publish an annual anthology book that showcases the best work from the website during the calendar year."

Buys mss/year: 1-3

Submission Method: Query.

Pays with a copy of annual anthology for those published within it.

Fiction

Needs: ethnic, experimental, fantasy, historical, horror, humorous, mystery, novel excerpts, science

fiction, serialized novels, short stories, slice-of-life vignettes, comic art.

Does not want to see romance, religious, or fluff.

Buys 1-3 mss/year.

Query.

Length: 7,500 words maximum.

Pays contributor's copies.

Poetry

Query. Annual print anthology of best work published on-line.

Needs: Avant garde, free verse, haiku, light verse, traditional.

Pays contributor's a copy of anthology to writer's whose work has been selected for inclusion.

ZOETROPE: ALL-STORY

Zoetrope: All-Story, The Sentinel Bldg., 916 Kearny St., San Francisco CA 94133.

Phone: (415) 788-7500.

Website: www.all-story.com.

Contact: fiction editor.

Zoetrope: All Story presents a new generation of classic stories.

Quarterly magazine specializing in the best of contemporary short fiction.

Editor's Note: Does not accept submissions September 1-December 31 (with the exception of stories entered in the annual Short Fiction Contest, which are considered for publication in the magazine).

Established: 1997. Simultaneous Submissions: Yes. Guidelines available on-line. First serial rights and a one-year film option are required. Circulation: 20,000. Byline given. No kill fee. Queries accepted by mail. Sample copy for \$8.00. Responds in 8 months (if SASE included). Publishes ms an average of 5 months after acceptance.

Fiction

Buys 25-35 mss/year.

"Writers should submit only 1 story at a time and no more than 2 stories a year. We do not accept artwork or design submissions. We do not accept unsolicited revisions nor respond to writers who don't include an SASE."

Send complete ms.

Length: up to 7,000 words. "Excerpts from larger works, screenplays, treatments, and poetry will be returned unread."

Pays up to \$1,000. □

Editorial. Please Read and Heed.

I guess periodically, it's necessary to review the rules of the road.

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.
- **Be sure that this is what you want to submit.** Another recent trend has been the people who submit, then a week later want to substitute something they "like better." Guys, if you look through the issue, you'll see that I not only

try to make sure your work is error-free, I try to 'set' it in a complimentary way. There's nothing more frustrating than to have found the perfect 'kiss' photo, and then have the submitter want to, "... go with this car-racing story, instead."

- **Please try to submit well before the deadline.** We actually start formatting the next layout the day after publication of the Scribe. (And earlier submissions tend to get better 'slots.') The deadline for columns and regular features is the tenth of the month. For 'creative writing,' the fifteenth.
- **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 a 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-

Sage Advice from JRK

*Who you write, what you write, when you write,
where you write, why you write, how you write,
are not as important as that you write! -jrk*

Showing and Telling

Dave Wetterberg

Remember Show and Tell way back in first grade? Well, long after grade school, writers still do it. But the good ones *show* more than they *tell*, and they do it 1) by being specific, 2) by making careful word choices, and 3) by using imagery.

Specificity

Think of specificity in relationship to a funnel. Words at the wide top are general words. Words at the narrow end --- the neck --- are specific. Hence, *hot* is at the top, and *scorched* is at the bottom. In the same way, *The sun was very hot that day* would be at the top of the funnel, and *In five minutes the two o'clock sun had turned Letitia's neck crimson* at the bottom. In each case, the first version tells; the second shows.

Word Choice

Anything is better than *the hot sun*. The sun is always, permanently, endlessly hot, anyway. Don't *flaming sun*, *burning sun*, *fiery sun*, *boiling sun*, *blistering sun*, and *sizzling sun*, show off the sun better? Use your thesaurus. I did.

Imagery

Like everyone else, writers experience the world through their five senses. They see it, hear it, smell it, touch it, and taste it. In their stories and poems and columns, most effective writers try to convey an experience, real or imaginary, through images made out of words --- visual images (*blue eyes*), auditory images (*crashing waves*), tactile images (*rough hands*), olfactory images (*onion-breath*), and labial images (*murky coffee*). Most writers use the first two --- sight and sound --- because they're easiest. Tactile comes next. Smell and taste tie for last. (Except for poets. They *like* to do smells and tastes.)

Next time you read your rough draft, check to see if you *told* or *showed*. After you do, maybe you'll want to make a change or two, like these:

From: *The room smelled bad.*

To: *The room reeked of puppy pee.*

From: *At this, Kellerman became angry.*

To: *At this, Kellerman put his fist through the wall.*

From: *Stanley was shy.*

To: *Stanley's cheeks caught on fire.*

From: *Sam's mutt had fleas.*

To: *Sam's mutt scratched a flea off* □

Exercise

Each statement below *tells*. Write a sentence or a brief passage that *shows* the same thing.

- Grandpa missed Grandma.
- Jeremy threw a tantrum.
- Old Solly was obviously unwelcome among his former buddies.
- After her third trip to the punchbowl, Grandma started acting silly.
- Mrs. Thorndike busied herself in her garden.
- Mother acted mean to me the rest of the day.
- Mrs. Larrabee enjoyed her morning walk.
- The little store was strictly small town.
- The child enjoyed riding on the swing after being afraid at first.
- Sandra thought how she missed her boyfriend's face.

Sage Advice from JRK

Save a tree! Don't finish your novel! -jrk

Writing to the Right Brain

Ray Malus

Figure/Ground

In targeting the Right Brain, words are our raw material, but our tools are *images*.

I'm sure you've seen some variation of the illustration. It can be perceived as either a white goblet, or the silhouette of two men talking.

It is used to illustrate the concepts of 'figure' (the thing being represented) and 'ground' (what surrounds it).

Poets have the luxury of dealing only with the 'figure' if they want. A poem *may* simply be an elegant 'snapshot'

As narrative writers, we do not have this option. We are telling stories, and a story is a series of events in a *context*. An event is just 'something that happened' — a 'what,' or maybe a 'how.' To be part of a story, an event must tie to other events. We must know the 'who,' 'when,' 'where,' 'why.'

This is done by 'setting the scene.'

Think of a movie.

Most often, it will start with a long 'establishing shot' — a series of pictures designed to orient the viewer in space and time — often in mood. After that is done, we will have a series of medium shots and close-ups that define the 'event.' The viewer will rarely get another 'orientation,' until the location changes and makes this necessary:

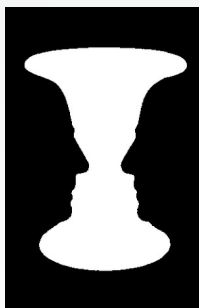
Exterior of a church. The camera moves in, the doors open and the camera travels down the aisle, to where there is a coffin. *Then*, a shot of a man saying, "David was a fine father and provider..."

Sometimes, this is reversed. We see part of an event (perhaps, a hand violently gripping the arm of a chair), *then* we see the interior of a Dentist's Office.

Either way, the 'ground' makes the 'figure' meaningful. They are both essential, but they are very different. (For simplicity, I will now call the 'figure,' the 'action,' and the 'ground,' the 'background'.)

Things that are part of the action are noticeable. They are brought to your readers' attention. They are usually dealt with in great detail. They have the spotlight.

Things that are part of the background are generally less well-defined. Usually, they are 'sketched' (although sometimes in great detail), and they are fairly constant. (If they change a lot, they really become part of the action.)



So, what belongs where? And how do you allot space to each?

It depends on the writer. I know several contemporary writers who (in my opinion) provide far too much detail. It slows the story, and makes me suspect they're 'padding' their word count.

On the other hand, it is infuriating to find a plot point hinging on something that was omitted from the background.

It also depends on *genre*.

In mysteries, it is almost *de rigueur* to 'hide' solutions in the background: A cop goes through a restaurant's trash bin. He finds assorted tin cans, an empty wine bottle, a corkscrew, several cloth napkins with dark red stains, and a carving knife.

The reader has no complaint coming, when it turns out the vital clue was the corkscrew. It's there; it's just in the background.

On the other hand, in *suspense*, we would move the detail into the action: "At the bottom of the pile, nestling in its bed of C4 unnoticed, the digital timer continued its countdown." Even if the cop doesn't know, the reader must, or there's no suspense.

The choices are infinite, and often separate the great writer from the mediocre one.

I apologize for cutting this short. Of late, I have had almost no time for the luxury of actually writing. I've missed it. So, with your indulgence, here's a single event (in bold), with two *very different settings* — *one before; one after*:

Samuel looked down the twin ribbons of gleaming steel that stretched forever. He'd been told they reached all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, but this was a concept far beyond him. Even 'ocean' was a foreign idea. "Bigger than the Salt Lake." The very idea was daunting. At fifteen, Samuel could grasp 'forever,' but not 'ocean.' He turned and walked through the haze of wood smoke to the front of the locomotive, where it snubbed about 3 feet from the snout of its Pacific counterpart. Two pigs rooting.

The 'Golden Spike' had been removed, and an iron one had been placed. A small crowd watched as the burly man raised the hammer overhead, and swung.

The crowd roared, as the hammerhead drove the spike deep into the hardwood.

The man who lay splayed on the crossbar groaned through gnashed teeth, as the stroke hit.

Heedless of the merciless sun and the reek of death and corruption, the crowd watched as the soldiers raised the crossbar and cantilevered the cross into the ground. It swung upright and dropped three feet into its hole with a thud that almost tore the man who hung from it free. The man screamed.

The crowd settled back to wait.

Ohh. That felt soooo good! I really needed that! --rm--

THE TALKING DOLLS

Keyle Birnberg-Goldstein

We are moving again.

It seems like every two years we pack our belongings and need to get ready right away. Mom and Dad are ready just waiting for us to join them in the big truck.

This time Dad is renting the penthouse of a beautiful apartment building. I look up stretching my neck to see where our 18th floor ends. It looks very beautiful way up there almost touching the clouds. Dad says there is no elevator and we must climb the stairs one by one, resting our feet for a few minutes in the landing space that separates the floors above.

My brother Salem is breathing hard saying; “Dad probably rented it very cheap on account of climbing up and up with no end.”

By the time we get to our front door everybody is bending touching their knees to help with the breathing. We are young, but Daddy’s face is all blue including his lips.

As soon as Dad opens the front double door, brother runs to select his room. It’s huge with wood-like planks and wonderful windows reaching the ceiling.

My sister Norma and I look at each other and both walk directly to a small room with French doors, dragging our small suitcase full with dolls, most of them broken.

“Don’t worry” she says, ‘now we have time to select legs to legs, arms to arms...and some will be whole again.’

We like this room so much; we think we will only come out at mealtime to join the family at the main table.

Dad has an announcement. “This time there will be no Hanukkah presents, only one for the first night... the seven other nights are erased this year.”

He hands Norma a package wrapped in newspaper, and a bigger one for me. We run to our precious room to open our packages. Norma’s doll has painted red hair and freckles. The entire doll is breakable made of YESO (*plaster*). But wait, she is *dormilona*; she can open and close her eyes. She names her doll Diana.

I name my doll Sonia. Her hands and feet are made of delicate plaster. Her torso and the rest filled with straw and fabric. Her face is painted including her huge wide-open blue eyes staring straight ahead. My brother says that my doll is the ugliest thing he has even seen... and dumb on top of everything else.

At that moment I became Sonia and started to cry calling Diana to come and be my friend. Norma became Diana and with a tiny voice said, “Sonia, you are truly beautiful and smart.”

Sonia and Diana became best friends. Went shopping together. Had tea in the afternoon in their tiny delicate almost-complete china set.

One late afternoon the dolls had a fight about something borrowed and never returned. At that time Sonia decided to move out. She went to the room next door where brother drilled a hole connecting the 2 rooms with an empty can at the end. The dolls used this telephone to patch things up, but Norma and I were not talking. After meals we ran to the toy room to apologize. Tea was served — our pinky finger out, as Mom instructed.

One day the dolls disappeared. Vanished from our lives forever. When we asked Mom she said they were probably ‘pinched’ when we moved to another house far away from the Vargas penthouse.

“WOW, my legs still hurt,” she said, rubbing her feet.

Norma and I decided to offer a juicy ransom by word of mouth because we had no money. All the kids from the 17th floor down from ours just laughed and laughed covering their teeth with their hands.

For years after we searched for them in many flea markets, willing to pay a small ransom for their return. They were one of a kind, never to be duplicated again.

“I would recognize my Diana anywhere. She is missing a tuft of hair in the front. She also has beauty marks I painted in her ‘you know where’”, Norma said.

“Your Diana was bald. No hair anywhere. Everything was painted.”

We laughed until we had tears in our eyes.

‘Well, my Sonia doll was perfect,’ I said. “I never even washed her clothes not even once.”

To this day we remember our dolls so fondly. The best Hanukkah present we ever received. My doll is probably sitting on someone’s bed staring straight up into space with her painted blue extra large eyes. □

My Dancing Shoes Trilogy

Lillian Rodich

once I wore high heels
and waltzed under a glittering mirror ball
that showered silver coins
like giant raindrops
all around me
my feet floated
across the floor barely touching
its polished surface
I danced with a stranger
who held me within his stiff frame
while I melted into the music

~//~

once I wore black leather sandals
and danced the Hasapico
in a Greek restaurant open
to Santa Monica breezes
musicians played the oud and clarino
while we danced with abandon
like children at a fair
a ribbon of dancers
weaving in between the tables
and saluted by patrons' *OPAS!*
Zorba's calls echoing down the line
wine laughter dancing
until everyone else had disappeared
and we toasted the dawn

~//~

once I wore laced up gillies
and a plaid scarf across my shoulder
bagpipes started our *performance*
Scottish dancers changing *roles*
in sets of eight
long ago tales translated
by strathspeys and jigs
into complicated patterns
and I was part of the puzzle
reels and pas de basques
bagpipes fiddles drums
pointed toes and kilts bouncing
polite greetings whenever
dancers met
patterns completed
each couple in turn
bagpipes sighed fiddles faded
drumbeats echoed away
while I waited for the next dance



The Writer

Michael Edelstein

"Did God find my words derogatory?
Or was he critical of my Big Story?"
"Not at all," said Saint Peter,
In a voice nothing sweeter,
Weak writers belong in purgatory."

AT 100 – I GET ALONG

Norman Molesko

I have reached the Big One.
From this day onward,
you can call me, a centenarian.
Mee Mom, she got me
at the start of World War One.
I have lived a good hearty life.
I have two daughters and a son.
Both daughters now live far away.
I don't see them much any more.
They send me a post now and then.
Mee son lives close and comes by,
to see how his old dad gets along.
I enjoy when he gives me a ride.
Mee old gal, I remember her well.
Not here anymore. She passed on.
I recall and can say to mee public,
she was mee lucky pick.
Mee memories of her are swell.
From now on,
please call me, a centenarian.

(Untitled)

Sylvia Molesko

There once was a sage named Buddha
I'm not certain what-all he duddha
I know he duddha lot
Although I'm not sure what
But I'm sure that it's more than I cuddha

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

October 4th, 1 p.m. — TBA
Bernard Selling — Writing and Re-Writing
Open Mic: 1:00 p.m. (Sign-ups start at 12:30)
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

This Month's BIRTHDAYS!

Pirhiya Goldstein Oct. 20
Harold Giedt Oct. 24
David A Wetterberg Oct. 29

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.

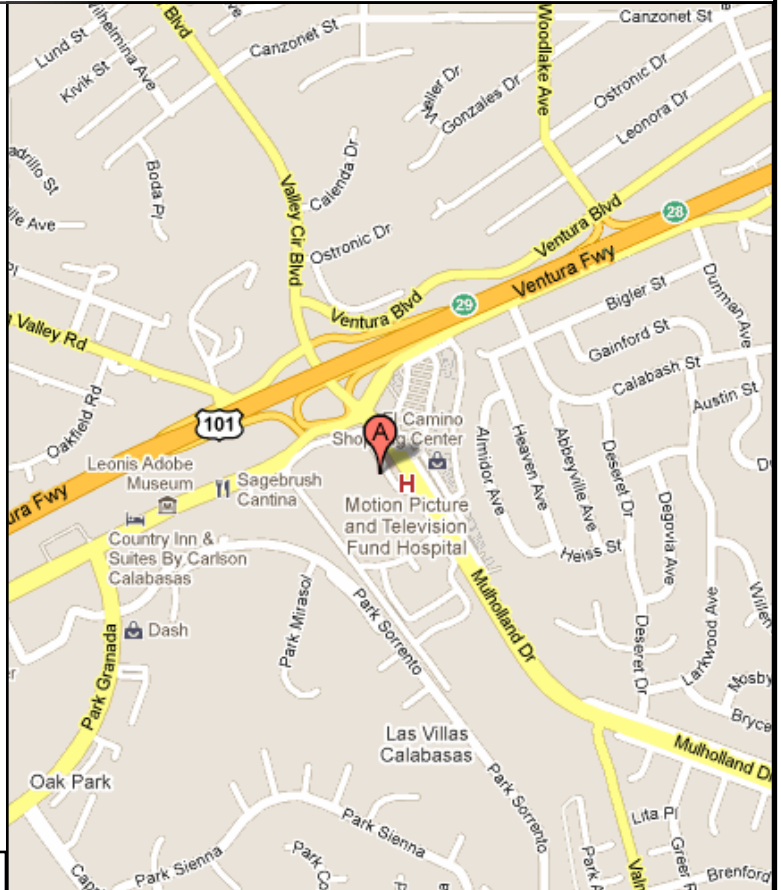
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(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")

Editor

[Ray Malus](#)

Staff

Proofreaders	Ethel Ann Shaffer, Doug Douglas, Sharron Malus
Columnists	Nance Crawford, Ray Malus
Guest Columnists	Andrea Polk, Dave Wetterberg

*All attributed works are copyrighted by the author
and are used with permission.*



California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL & BOARD MEMBERS

President, Nance Crawford	Nance@NanceCrawford.com
Membership, Andrea Polk	andipolk4@gmail.com
Programs, Nance Crawford	Nance@NanceCrawford.com
Treasurer, Mary Freeman	mfreeman2207@yahoo.com
Secretary, Gabriella Owens	spoiledgrrrapes@att.net
Member-At-Large, Doug Douglas	doubledouglas@verizon.net
Central Board Rep., Ray Malus	cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com
Pre-Session Leader, Bill Sorrells	N/A
Webmaster, Ray Malus	cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com
Newsletter Editor, Ray Malus	cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com

LOTS of great information at our

Website:

www.cwc-sfv.org