

The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe

"Our Members' Voices"



Vol. 9

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No.2

Next Meeting: October 3rd, 1:00!

**Octobers Program –
Corinne Litchfield**

"I Wrote a Book, Now What?"

[Information from the speaker]

Our October 3rd speaker, Corinne Litchfield, will share her vast experience working with authors as a social media

consultant and manager. She will provide valuable information on how to create, develop and manage your book's promotion whether published or about to be published.

"There are ways you can ease into promoting your writing without spending a lot of time and hassle," she wrote. This was music to my ears. More good news: she went on to suggest that we can promote our book and still have time to write.

Corinne has worked with all experience-levels of writers and will discuss the four areas you need to consider when building your online platform.

1. Do you really need a blog?
2. What are the tools to choose from to build a website?
3. What is the social media presence that will work for you?

4. How do you develop strategies to manage it all?

Finally, she asks us to bring our questions.

She applies her experience as a publicist and journalist working with authors, nonprofits and small businesses on best practices in self-promotion and content creation. She works with her clients on how best to create and maintain websites and social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

In addition to consulting, Corinne is also the founder and editor of Paper Bag Writers (www.paperbagwriters.net), an online project focused on curating fiction, nonfiction and poetry written on brown paper lunch bags. She is a contributing editor to Sacramento Magazine, has published short fiction and poetry, and is currently revising her first novel.

Tell everyone not to miss hearing from Corinne Litchfield and learning how we writers can survive the book promotion process. See you Saturday, October 3rd, at 1 PM sharp.

Check out www.corinnelitchfieldmedia.com.

President's Connections

Andrea Polk

When I thought of writing this column I thought of leadership, goals and teamwork. Expressing these ideas well was daunting. Then I was reminded of when I showed my mother the pieces of a three-dimensional-wood puzzle for ages 8 to 12. There was a photo of the completed animal and the instructions. She was recovering from brain surgery and her frontal lobe tissue had been severely impaired, thus her reasoning was suspect. But she was both a reader and an artist so I thought she could put it together with a bit of help. She picked up the folded international instructions and quietly read page after page.



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September Review

“Hey, This is Really Good!”

by Ray Malus

Actually, those were the words of an IRS Auditor, when he read one of Irma and Rocky Kalish's scripts. But as you sit and listen to Irma Kalish, they roll through the back of your mind like a mantra.

Kalish says she always knew she wanted to be a writer. To become one, she had to leap some tough hurdles:

Sexism.

Ageism.

And *not* coming from a dysfunctional family.

This is the sort of thinking that makes a great comedy writer. That kind of being-able-to-look-at-the-back-of-your-own-head-and-see-your-part-is-crooked weirdness Kalish feels you must be born with. In many cases, it's characterized by 'wryness' and cynicism. Not so with Kalish. She's just insightful, knowledgeable, and *funny*.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Syracuse University, Irma Ginsberg began her career in New York, where she quickly discovered she was fully qualified to take dictation and type letters.

She accepted a job at *Popular*, a well-known 'pulp' magazine, as an assistant.

Very quickly, she was selling romance stories under the name, Diane Austin. She was paid the proverbial penny-a-word. (She eventually graduated to two-and-a-half-cents.)

She chose the name 'Austin' after a man she'd met during WWII, Austin ('Rocky') Kalish. He would become her husband and writing partner. Together, they would write scripts for *Gidget*, *F Troop*, *My Three Sons*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Family Affair*, *All in the Family*, *Maude*, *Good Times*, *Too Close for Comfort*, *The Facts of Life*, and many, many more.

Over the years, Kalish branched out into teaching (Syracuse, USC and UCLA), and (with writing partner, Naomi Gurian) has written two successful mystery novels: *As Dead As It Gets* and *A Few Good Murders*. They write under the pen name Cady Kalian.

She is also a Past President of Women in Film, Los Angeles, and currently serves on its Leadership Council. She is Past President and

Board member of the Writers Guild of America, West.

But all this (and here, I've gotten impatient with myself) is really beside the point. You can Google 'Irma Kalish' and get this — and a lot more.

What you cannot get is the warmth, humor, and insight of the woman herself. She spoke from notes, but the presentation was as spontaneous as a grin. Basically, she told her own story, but with insights into everyone in her audience.

There were warm-hearted anecdotes about her mother — who admired Kalish's writing so much, she got into an argument with another mother over which had the more talented offspring. (The 'other offspring' was Neil Simon).

Prior to a cruise, her mother had Kalish pre-write letters and postcards for her — including ones to Irma herself.

There was the story of the Dean of her school, who after insisting they all submit pieces to the *New Yorker* magazine (for which they all got rejection slips), told the entire student body they would "...never be writers!"

In an era when comedy is often more shock than wit, Kalish is an exception:

(About her aspirations:) "I wanted to be a writer since I was [*gesturing*] this tall. ...Of course I'm not much taller now..."

(About her first writing project, a family newsletter called the *Ginsberg Gazette*:) "*The New York Times* had a motto, 'All the news that's fit to print.' My motto was, 'All the news I can spell.'"

(About writing:) "We all start with the same twenty-six letters."

(About life:) "I had a personal adage: 'Sure, God made man before women, but then you always do a first draft before you make a final masterpiece.'"

Irma Kalish is a member of CWC-SFV, and as warm and accessible in person as she is in her presentations. Although it is a convention to refer to someone you review by her last name, I have found it a strain to refer to her as "Kalish." To me, she's "Irma."

She ended her presentation with a self-professed "treat." She (with Rocky) offered to read and comment on any scripts we choose to send to her.

I must differ. This is a huge *gift*, but it is Irma herself who is the *treat*.

[*Note: I had intended printing Irma's email address in this review. But I realize this newsletter has a wider readership than just our Branch — or even the State Club. Consequently, I have distributed her address separately.*]-rm=

President (from pg 1.)

Finally, she declared, “I don’t understand how they expect anyone to put this puzzle together if you have to follow instructions in all these languages.”

Well, as your president, I have picked up a puzzle. We have lots of pieces. We have excellent speakers, critique groups and successfully published authors. We have an excellent newsletter, website, technology tools and are a branch of an historic statewide organization.

Is this enough? Does this satisfy our mission to educate our members and the public in the craft of writing, marketing and publishing? Is this enough for you to become the best writer you can be? We are a charitable volunteer organization of writers. What disappoints you, what should be improved and what do you appreciate that should not be changed?

We are a solid team, but I detect a little fear among us. There is real caution — afraid that we might bite off more than we can chew. When I mention a club anthology, some shiver. Well-meaning people warn me with tales of painful experiences that writing clubs have had producing an anthology, conferences, and workshops.

Fortunately, I also hear from clubs that rose above the clutter of egos and dissention and successfully produced special events, workshops, conferences, and yes, even anthologies. Buoyed by their experience and shared pride, the inspired clubs accept new challenges. With each project the experience and result was better. I want to be a member of a club that stretches, motivates and inspires, reaches into the community and shares its artful, literary accomplishments.

I am neither afraid nor a fool. I am a product of success and failure, as are you. I am game to tackle a project that we can learn from, be proud of and be inspired by.

Don’t be afraid. Let me know of your dreams for this club and your talents. I am looking for ideas with commitment behind them. It may seem daunting, but as I explained to my mom, you don’t have to know all the languages. You don’t have to know all the answers. We only have to succeed in English. The ideas you send me will be used to survey the membership. Write to me andipolk4@gmail.com.

Hello, World, Here Comes the CWC-SFV Book Fair!

Doug Douglas

Do you want to be the next Clive Custler, Tom Wolfe or Donna Tarte? Well, now’s your big chance. On Saturday December 5th starting at 1 PM, our chapter will have its traditional authors’ showcase, but this time we’ll be sharing it with that great book-buying public out there!

Crown Books, located in the Promenade Mall next to Maggiano’s Restaurant in Woodland Hills (corner of Topanga and Erwin), has agreed to sponsor our CWC-SFV Book Fair (or ‘Faire’ if you’re into the Renaissance) at their store. Criteria will be the same as two years ago: authors may sell their books that have been published within the last two years (print copies must be available at the Fair), and the authors need to be registered with the State Board of Equalization in order to collect sales tax—after all, Governor Brown has to pay for that bullet train somehow. Instructions (for taxes, not bullet trains) are included in this issue. The “published within last two years” criteria may be expanded based on the number of authors who sign up.

Further details will be forthcoming, but we do need to know if you’ll be participating as a seller. Please contact one of the Book Fair Committee members, either Doug Douglas (doubledouglas@verizon.net) or Mary Freeman (mfreeman2207@yahoo.com) by October 31st if you’re going to be wowing us with your wares.

I’m excited about this opportunity, since in the past our club has been selling just to one another like some inbred Appalachian family in *Deliverance*. Good for dueling banjos, not so much for promoting our club or its members. So let’s show the world what real writers can do!

[Editor’s Note: Please include: Title, Author, Date of Publication, and ISBN in your email.]

IMPORTANT!
IF YOU INTEND TO SELL YOUR BOOKS AT OUR (or any) BOOK FAIR (Dec 5th)

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

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

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

You can find a list of all offices at: <http://famguardian.org/TaxFreedom/Forms/States/CA/BOEPhone.pdf>

Unless otherwise noted all offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, excluding state holidays.

Our nearest office is in Van Nuys at:

15350 Sherman Way, Ste. 250,

Van Nuys, CA 91406-4203,

PO Box 7735

Van Nuys, CA 91409-7735

Their telephone number is: (818) 904-2300

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Start by going to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You can contact them directly at:

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

or:

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

YOU SHOULD KNOW

Congratulations!

SFV member, Michael Edelstein, is featured prominently in *Westlake Village Library Writes, A Community Anthology*. The e-book — published by the LA County Public Library System and available on Kindle — contains five of his poems.

CWC Bulletin Goes Digital

Our CWC Bulletin is finally going digital. It will join with all the other Newsletters of California Writers Club, in emerging into the 21st Century.

This will immediately result in a huge monetary savings. In addition, the new format will support color, more flexible layouts, and (possibly) more frequent issues.

The Central Board is actively seeking an Editor and staff. If you are interested, please contact our CB Rep, Mary Freeman (mfreeman2207@yahoo.com)



SOMEBODY'S WATCHING

California Writers Club, San Fernando Valley Branch, is providing this notice to inform our members, and guests at our events, that Still Photography may be taking place.

These pictures are occasionally posted on our website. If, for some reason, you don't want your likeness used, you must notify us in advance.

GUEST POLICY

In general, guests at our meetings are asked to pay a small (\$5), tax-deductible donation. However, each member of the branch is permitted to sponsor TWO FREE GUESTS during the year.

(Unfortunately, these do not 'roll-over'.)

If you are sponsoring a guest, please assist in their checking in, and notify our Membership Chair.



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!

Analog Science Fiction and Fact

Dell Magazines, Analog Science Fiction and Fact, 44 Wall Street, Suite 904, New York, NY 10005-2401 Website: www.analogsf.com. Editor: Trevor Quachri, (all information as posted by editor)

Story Content: Analog will consider material submitted by any writer, and consider it solely on the basis of merit. We are definitely eager to find and develop new, capable writers. We have no hard-and-fast editorial guidelines, because science fiction is such a broad field that I don't want to inhibit a new writer's thinking by imposing Thou Shalt Nots. Besides, a really good story can make an editor swallow his preconceived taboos. Basically, we publish science fiction stories. That is, stories in which some aspect of future science or technology is so integral to the plot that, if that aspect were removed, the story would collapse. Try to picture Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* without the science and you'll see what I mean. No story! The science can be physical, sociological, psychological. The technology can be anything from electronic engineering to biogenetic engineering. But the stories must be strong and realistic, with believable people (who needn't be human) doing believable things—no matter how fantastic the background might be.

Fact Articles: Fact articles for Analog should be about 4,000 words in length and should deal with subjects of not only current but future interest, i.e., with topics at the present frontiers of research whose likely future developments have implications of wide interest. Illustrations should be provided by the author in camera-ready form. In writing for Analog readers, it is essential to keep in mind that they are, in general, very intelligent and technically knowledgeable, but represent a very wide diversity of backgrounds. Thus, specialized jargon and mathematical detail should be kept to a necessary minimum. Also, our readers are reading this magazine largely for entertainment, and a suitable style for our articles is considerably more informal than that in many professional journals.

Electronic Submission and Manuscript Format:

Analog now uses an [online submissions system](#) that has been designed to streamline our process and improve communication with authors. We do not accept email submissions. Please see Manuscript Guidelines for information about paper submissions. Our [online submissions form](#) for fiction asks for your name, email address, cover letter, story title, and story. Your cover letter should contain the length of your story, your publishing history and any other relevant information (e.g., if you send us a story about a medical disaster and you happen to be an emergency room nurse, mention that.). We ask for the same information for poetry. Please fill out a separate form for each poem submitted for consideration. All stories and poems should be in standard manuscript format and can be submitted in .DOC format. For information about standard formatting, see [William Shunn's guide to Proper Manuscript Format](#). After you have submitted your work, a tracking number will be displayed and an automated email confirmation containing this information will be sent to you. If you have not received this email within twenty-four hours, please notify us by [email](#). Your tracking number will allow you to monitor the status of your submission through our website, so please don't lose it. NOTE: Yahoo.com occasionally treats our email as spam, please keep an eye on your spam folder.

Reply Process: Our average response time runs about two to three months. If you have not heard from us in four months, you can query us about the submission at analog@dellmagazines.com. Thanks for your interest in Analog and good luck!

Manual Submission and Manuscript Format:

We strongly prefer that submissions be made through our electronic submission system at analog.magazinesubmissions.com, where full instructions can be found. No simultaneous submissions, please.

Payment: Analog pays 8-10 cents per word for short stories up to 7,500 words, 8-8.5 cents per word for longer material (Works between 7500 and approximately 10,000 words by authors who make more than 8 cents a word for short stories will receive a flat rate that will be no less than payment would be for a shorter story.), and 6 cents per word for serials. We prefer lengths between 2,000 and 7,000 words for shorts, 10,000-20,000 words for novelettes/novellas, and 40,000-80,000 for serials. Fact articles are paid for at the rate of 9 cents per word. We pay \$1 a line for poetry, which should not exceed 40 lines.

Review and Refresh

Dave Wetterberg

Allusions

An allusion is a reference to something with which you expect your audience to be familiar.

Literature: *Luckily, the priest had had a similar Tom Sawyer youth.*

Mythology: *She wouldn't stop trying to playing Cupid.*

Folklore: *Abner ran off like the gingerbread man.*

Theater and Film: *Like Dorothy's oil can, the little girl's charm loosened up the old man.*

The Bible: *The professor carried an air of Solomon about him.*

Geography: *"When it bleeds . the Red Sea!" (Cyrano's nose)*

History: *Tired of fighting the Battle of the Bulge, Sam finally went on a diet.*

Contemporary life: *My uncle is about as religious as Bill Maher, and he's an athiest*

Showing and Telling

Remember Show and Tell way back in first grade? Well, long after grade school, writers still do it. But the good writers *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.* □

Whatever Happened To Ralphie

John Klawitter

We're gonna be in the tenth grade next year, but I don't think Ralphie's gonna show up. He's always been a little crazy, what with those whacko-bird religious nut-ball parents of his. That's actually what started it, you know. We was jabberin' away about Halloween costumes an' Ralphie says he wants to go as St. Paul, some holy guy I never heard of but Ralphie says it's gonna be a snap, all he needs is a bedsheet and an old pair of his dad's Birkenstock sandals. I tell him that's a good idea and we can team up only I'm gonna add 30 quarters and go as Judas.

Well, Ralphie gives me one of his goony looks and goes all serious and tells me I better not but you know Ralphie, he's half way to nut-ball anyway so I just laugh and show up at his house after dark, and we get a couple of Trader Joe's bags and head out to scarf the freebies. All is going great with our bags half filled with candy and chocolates. We have to go past St. Mel's church to get to a fine stretch of houses where we're sure to score big and Ralphie tries to hold me back to go around the long way 'cause he says I'm wearing a disrespectful costume, but he's kind-of a little guy and so I just push him off. Well, actually, I knock him down a little, but he gets up and dusts himself off and we go on past the church and nothing happens so we forget all about it mainly because everybody is handing out the goodies and we have to break out our spare plastic bags cause the Trader Jose bags are way full.

Anyway, it's getting late and the givers are turning out the lights and pretending they ain't home no more, so we think maybe it's over. Ralphie says he wants to cut through the park, 'cause it's shorter, but he's got no sense, see, there was a gang murder there a month or so ago, and even a guy like me gets the creeps when you're talkin' murder. But there's no persuading Ralphie once he gets his head set, so I end up tagging after. And there we are, half way through the park when some sorry dude shambles up to us and holds his hand out. This loser looks like he's fried on dope and hangin' on by his last thread.

"Hey, fellers, can you spare me some coin? I could use a little help here."

Well, in the next moment Ralphie does the one thing I never would have expected. He actually rears back and whaps the guy alongside the head with his heavy Trader Joe bag!

"Ralphie, no!" I say. "What you doin' man?"

"I'm tryin' to knock some sense into this junkie's head!"

The sorry dooper fell over like he was hit by a rock and before I could say or do anything else Ralphie ran away. I didn't know what to do. I hadn't done anything wrong, but here he was, this poor old guy crumpled on the ground all whimpering and wheezing an' gasping like he had soap bubbles in his lungs. I was hearing my mom's warnings about catching strange diseases and pervert strangers who made you do weird sex stuff, and just then this frail old guy grabs my wrist and I was scared even though I probably could swat him away like a bug but there was something in his eyes and I was thinking Hell, this could be me in another bunch of years so I don't know what was exactly going on in my head but I reached under my bedsheet and into the pocket of my gym shorts and scooped out my bunch of quarters and handed them to him.

He said some weird stuff about blessings and stuff, at least I guess that was what he said, I wasn't listening too close because by that time I was running hell-bent after Ralphie, at least running in the direction I thought he went.

I never did find Ralphie that night, and I haven't seen him since, but that's no surprise. I seen on the local news there was a freak lightning bolt and his house burned so bad they had to move away. Me, I got that bedsheet back on my bed before Mom got freaked out about that. And something else really crazy. Last week Pops, who never plays the scratchers, took a shot and got lucky to the tune of three million bucks. He says I better start applyin' myself 'cause I'm goin' to college. I never even knew he expected that, but what the hell, I'll give it a whack. □

Suspicious

By Mary Freeman

"Janie, this trunk carted all my worldly possessions. From Arkansas to here. When Pappy died. Your mama was just an itty-bitty thing. Your great-aunt Tee Tee had married this rich fella, so she had him give me this house. Of course I worked thirty years in their restaurant to pay it off. But pay it off I did."

"See this burl-wood coffer?" Grandma Sarah held up a six inch square box, "Anything ever happens to me, you get it right quick, and call the sheriff. You understand Baby Girl?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Jane, now in her twenties, had spent most of her summers with Grandma Sarah. She moved in permanently when Momma married Number Three.

The exact opposite of Momma, Grandma Sarah was steadfast and Jane could always depend on her. They depended on each other.

Jane peered out the window of the small kitchen. Red, gold and brown leaves carpeted the small backyard adjacent to the dense shadowy Wilder's Woods.

Worried, Jane had made the phone call and now she had to wait.

She and Grandma Sarah had the habit of enjoying their afternoon tea on the tiny covered back porch. But today Jane was alone. Buttoning her sweater, grabbing her cup and the ornate burl-wood box she trudged outside letting the screen door slam as she sat down in the porch swing.

Grandma Sarah's somber voice echoed in her mind, "Now you listen to me good Janie. Strange carryin'-ons has happened in these woods. I always had suspicions. Burton Gummer went huntin'. Never came back. Martha Jones went to pick berries. Never came back. Now, if ever I disappear you tell that sheriff I always had suspicions. Remind him about that reporter gone missin' too. I got all the evidence he'll need in the burl-wood coffer."

Sighing in apprehension, Jane opened the small box. She carefully removed yellowed newspaper clippings. All the articles were written by Winston Nottingham starting in the 1940s and ending

in 1986. The man was obsessed with squirrels. Grandma Sarah never let Jane venture into Wilder's Woods saying the squirrels were as evil as evil could be.

Jane read aloud, "*Squirrel Goes Nuts, Neighborhood up a Tree, Squirrel Terrorizes Neighborhood, Rodent Gone Mad, Animal Control Chloroforms Squirrel, Dark Secrets in Wilder's Woods, Strange Disappearance of Winston Nottingham.*"

Whispering to herself, "Whoa. This explains Grandma's fears. Every time she heard the 'Chit. Chit. Chit.' of a squirrel she would scream for me to get inside, lock the doors, pull the shades and have me play the piano as loud and fast as I could. I thought something had happened to her as a child making her so afraid of squirrels. Like the way Great-aunt Tee Tee was afraid of birds."

The doorbell startled her. Sheriff Jones called out, "Jane?"

"Come around back sheriff."

"What's this I hear about Miz Sarah gone missing?"

"I came home from work this afternoon and Grandma Sarah was nowhere to be found. The tea kettle was whistling on the stove. She always told me if she disappeared to call you right away and remind you that she had suspicions."

Amused, Sheriff Jones replied, "Yep. She called me out here regular. She'd show me bits of newspaper clippings and say I needed to take her suspicions into account. Seems like you'd be smart enough to know the ramblings of an old woman when you heard it . . ."

He continued softly, "I'm sure Miz Sarah just forgot the kettle. Maybe took a walk in the woods for berries. Anyway, can't take a missing person report for twenty-four hours."

Annoyed with his condescending tone Jane spoke steadily, "Sheriff, Grandma Sarah didn't ramble on and she had her faculties. She didn't drive and she couldn't walk far. There's no way she would stay outside if she heard a squirrel. And I know for a fact she wouldn't wander into Wilder's Woods."

Chatterbox Ray Malus

My wife started talking on our wedding day.

It was as if “I do” was the start of an interminable monologue.

Oh, she’d talked before. But not like *this*. *This* was an unstoppable *torrent* of words, a *cataract* of inane babble. She was like some demented *mockingbird* — or one of those mindless *car alarms* gone berserk.

She was an infant who — having discovered she could produce sound — incessantly glutted the air with it.

It would start in the morning as soon as the alarm clock went off, and continue on and on throughout the entire day... until, mercifully, I drifted off to sleep at night.

No doubt she went on far longer.

She babbled about the weather, the neighbors, her relatives, *my* relatives, our diet.

Anything.

EVERYTHING!

On car trips, she prattled road signs: “Speed Limit: 35,” “Gas, Lodging — 5 Miles,” “Motel — Vacancy,” “Newman For Sheriff,” “Deer Crossing,” “Slippery When Wet,” “Burma Shave!”

My opinions were instantly parroted back, endlessly expanded — fatuous and banal doctoral theses.

She would describe, in exquisite detail, things we were both already looking at.

Watching a DVD, she’d comment and converse with the TV: cinema for the sight-impaired!

She shredded silence.

Shattered meditation.

Ground contemplation under her heel.

On, and on, and ON, AND ON, AND ON.

FOR.

TWENTY!

SEVEN!

GOD!

DAMN!

YEARS!

— until,

finally, a massive, crushing, head trauma *mashed her brain to pudding and put a blessed end to it*.

Now really!

How could you even suggest that I had anything to do with that? □

(*Suspicious cont’d from pg. 9*)

“We need a search party!” shouted Jane.

“You can’t be serious!” bellowed Sheriff Jones.

Abruptly changing his demeanor, “Sorry girl ... I understand your concern. Just you and your grandma living here, right? Your boyfriend or other relatives worried too?”

“No boyfriend. No time with taking care of Grandma Sarah and working. Family’s all gone.”

Sheriff Jones sat in the nearby rocking chair and took Jane’s hands in his, “No search party needed, my dear. Looks like you’ll be leaving here yourself. Don’t worry, it’ll be over real quick.” His toothy smile was overpowering, “Trust me, you don’t have the same strength as your grandma. You’ll go easier.”

“What? Ow, let me go! You’re hurting me,” panic and fear engulfed Jane. “No! No! Please, let go!”

Wilder’s Woods was encroaching . . . Definitely moving — creeping — oozing — closer . . .

Chit. Chit. Chit. □

A Ghost of a Chance Lillian Rodich

I wake up. My body floats under the covers. Weightless and confused, I look up at the ceiling. Lights and darks form a moving pattern. For a moment I expect to see stars or a slice of moon. No, there is only a ripple of shadows across the plaster.

The Pricilla curtains next to my bed stir. I sigh and look out at a faintly glowing sky. Then I notice it ... a pale waxen arm lying in my bed next to my pillow. My heartbeat thunders in my ears and my eyes tear with terror. Gingerly I pick up the horrible limb and drop it.

It is dead! I try to scream but fear clutches at my throat. As I roll away in terror the arm follows me! Now I AM crazy I have no logical explanation. I dash out of the bedroom in sheer panic. Only now does a sudden tingling in my left arm turn my terrified tears into embarrassed laughter. □

THE RED ROSE

BY: Keyle Birnberg

She had loved
 Everything about him...
 Now he was gone
 Leaving her empty
 As the leaves tired from winter
 Drop from a tree—
 On a park bench she sits alone, crying
 Crunching the red rose petals one by one
 Her fingers tint with blush...
 The night spreads her sobs
 Like broken melodies
 Of rustling leaves—
 But, he is gone...
 As fast as the wind tousles her hair
 Ignoring the crystal tears flowing in her eyes...
 Dark clouds flirt with the moon
 Until a thin-ring of deep yellow appears
 Like the shiny gold earrings gypsies wear
 While dancing in frenzy through the night—
 She follows the clouds with her eyes
 As they glide gently in the sky
 Scattering faint pieces of moonlight
 Behind skeletal branches of trees—
 Counting petals one by one
 Tinting her fingers in indelible red...
 A prisoner of night...
 She sees walls grow higher
 Elongating skinny shadows
 Making her feel tall and flat
 Like a giant dressed in black—
 She is alone...
 Crying in the starless night
 His frozen fairy tales
 Spill silent melodies on empty branches...
 Beneath her feet she hears
 The sound of crunching leaves
 Scurrying away...



Doodling a Poem

Leslie Kaplan

Sitting at my kitchen table
 Enjoying the taste of sweet cinnamon bread
 Enjoying the aroma of freshly brewed coffee
 My window frames the tall tree in the garden
 It's Irish green leaves freshened by Spring

Like the grace of a ballerina she sways
 To the will of the breeze urging her on
 Like the way I once moved to the Latin beat
 Of a Rumba ... a Tango ... a Cha Cha Cha
 Hips gyrating reminding me of my own sensuality

Years escape rushing the days
 Every minute scurrying ... hurrying
 Just yesterday I sang a love song
 Just yesterday I danced along
 Just yesterday my mind was strong
 Just yesterday ... what went wrong

Slow down the rush ... Let me be here
 Loving this life like loving love
 Dance like the branches of my tree
 Taste my cinnamon bread smell the coffee
 And dream of my youth
 Come ... sit with me

The Bulletin Board

GUEST DONATIONS

Non-members attending meetings are asked to pay a \$5 (tax deductible) donation. (Members may sponsor 2 free guest visits during the year.) New membership is immediate upon application at door. For details, contact our Membership Chair at the sign-in table 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
November 7th, 1 p.m.

Naomi Hirahara

Flourishing in Blockbuster Times

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

October BIRTHDAYS!

Pirhiya Goldstein

Oct 20

Harold Giedt

Oct 24

David 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.
(We regret that we cannot accept 'hard copy' submissions.
We simply do not have the personnel to re-type them.)

Size limits (with a tiny bit of latitude):

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

Articles/Essays

Short Stories

Poetry

Book Release Notices

Regular Features:

Submissions:

- 150 words or fewer + front cover
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.

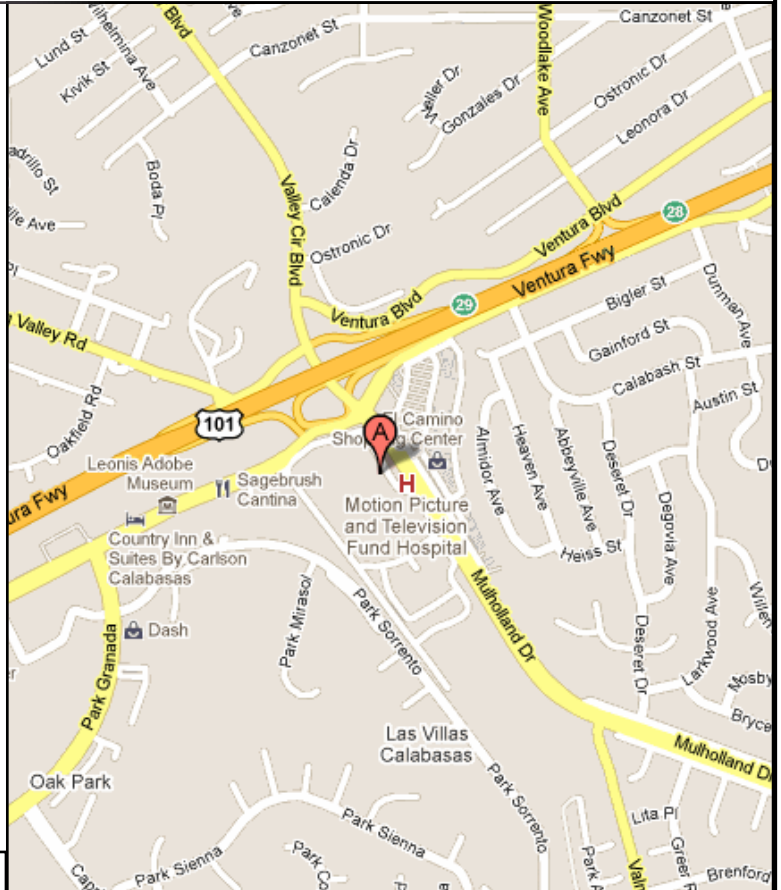
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(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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San Fernando Valley Branch

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LOTS of great information at our

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www.cwc-sfv.org