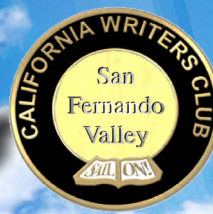




The Newsletter of The San Fernando Valley Branch

The Valley Scribe

"Our Members' Voices"



Vol. 9

April, 2016

No. 8

Next Meeting: April 2nd, 1:00!

April Program



Laina Villeneuve Writing as Re-Writing: The Art of Revision

Andrea Polk

Laina (pronounced Layna) says one of the best attributes a writer can have is a willingness to listen to feedback. It is amazing to think that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was born when Harper Lee's editor said, "Give us more of Scout." With stories to illustrate the influence of feedback, she'll share a narrative of the kind of drafting she did, especially for *Take Only Pictures*, which had drastic changes between each of at least eleven drafts. Here are some of the major points she will cover:

- How to find the best readers.
- How to sort through advice and decide what is most true to the work.
- The importance of maintaining continuity with threads of changes — the dismantling and reassembling of the storyline after going in and messing with a plot point.

For the past fifteen years, the San Fernando Valley native has been a professor of English (MA in writing with emphasis in Teaching Writing and Literature), at Citrus College teaching pre-collegiate and transfer-level composition and children's literature. Academically, she's served on curriculum and faculty senate, chaired hiring committees, and co-chaired a standard for accreditation for the campus. She also had experience teaching conversational English in Japan for eight months. Additionally, she taught English for one year as an adjunct faculty member at Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods right after she graduated in 1998.

After teaching writing and literature for years she submitted her first novel *Take Only Pictures* to Bella Books on Valentine's Day 2013. Three months later Bella Books eagerly accepted her book, and it was launched July 14. Since then, Bella Books has published *The Right Thing Easy* (Feb 15) and *Such Happiness as This* (Oct 15). Her fourth novel, *Return to Paradise*, is due out in the fall of this year. She is also contributing a short story for an anthology Bella is publishing.

March Review

Lisa Cron — The Importance of Backstory

Ray Malus

This is Lisa Cron's second appearance with us. (You can read my review of her first presentation in the July, 2014 Valley Scribe: <http://cwc-sfv.org/ValleyScribe/2014-07/TheValleyScribe-July.pdf>.)

I say this, because Cron is absolutely consistent. Her approach and demeanor were the same on both occasions: erudite and enthusiastic.

Her content was new.

Cron's approach to writing is theoretical and abstract. The cornerstone of her viewpoint is the concept of 'Story'.

"Story," she asserts, "is about how what

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DST Responsible For Global Warming!

Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler

(Pasadena, CA) In a stunning press release, scientists at Cal Tech revealed that their findings place direct responsibility for Global Warming on Daylight Savings Time.

"It's time to end the cover-up," said team leader, Roderick Mantime. Any idiot can see the correlation!"

The report stated, "The population of the United States is 318.9 million. If you subtract the population of Hawaii (one-and-a-half million) plus the people who live in Arizona (about twelve), you get approximately 317 million. We save one hour each day from each of them."

This means that, for almost nine months each year, we pump 317 million extra hours of full sunlight into our beleaguered planet's atmosphere each day! That's nine-and-a-half BILLION hours of direct solar energy per year! And it's been going on for a HUNDRED YEARS. Is it any wonder the earth is over-heating?!"

Charts show that the most significant increase in warming has occurred over the last century — a period which exactly coincides with the adoption of DST.

When contacted for comment, Nobel Prize winner, Al Gore, said, "Tipper, Can I have another lemonade?"

Gore, a staunch environmentalist, (cont. on page 22.)

RRRRR Returns!

Archie Leach

(Las Vegas, NV) Time once again, for RRRRR (pronounced "Ar-ar-ar-ar-ar"), The Roberts Rules Rabbis Regional Round-up. This diversion-filled debate-fest has catered to fun-loving, anal-retentive and argumentative nitpickers for over a decade.

The topic for this year's conference is, "Facilitation Through Obstruction: *How to appear wise by making sure no other opinions get aired.*"

Dedicated to the proposition that, "Appearing Right is more important than 'Doing Right,'" the various colloquia will feature perennial topics like, "Point of Order' vs. 'Point of Information' which can waste more time?," "Minutes: Do they need a vote, or are

CDC Vows All-out War On P.G.

Leonard Slye

(Atlanta, GA) At a news conference today, The United States Center For Disease Control released startling new statistics on the explosive growth rate of *Symposiosis*.

Symposiosis (also known as *Panelitis Gravis*) is a condition where sufferers become addled and confused — in particular, mistaking 'Question and Answer' sessions for 'Participation Opportunities'.

The condition usually manifests in public meetings, primarily at the end of an informative presentation when the sufferer has had to maintain silence for five or more minutes. It is often triggered by the moderator's asking, "Are there any questions?"

Symptoms include starting such 'questions' with phrases like, "In my opinion...", "Don't you think (feel, believe, ...) that...", "My experience has shown...", and "I'm writing a book..."; overuse of first-person pronouns ('I', 'me') — as opposed to third- ('you'); and the persistent inability to actually end a sentence with a question mark.

There is no cure. The only known treatments are a lengthy regime of large doses of Adonoitol and Humilicillin — the first of the chemical ego-inhibitors, or surgical gauze packed into the mouth.

The CDC has committed to an (cont. on page 17.)

they approved automatically when most of us doze off?" and, "The President: Is he supposed to talk this much?"; as well as opportunities presented by modern technology, "Using air horns to gain the floor," "Spice up' your arguments with pepper spray!"

All these symposia will be balanced by traditional rompin' fun, particularly the evening 'Bash-off', a contest where attendees try to bludgeon each other to death with printed copies of Robert's Rules.

Per Bash-off coordinator, David Cheese, "With the publishing of the 11th Edition in hard-cover, this year's event oughta be a doozie. The damned thing weighs 1.6 pounds, and can take your head clean off!"

The Bash-off, is only one of the (cont. on page 39.)

[\(Cron from pg 1\)](#)

happens (plot) affects someone in pursuit of a deceptively difficult goal, and how they change.”

“Plot,” she continues, “is just the surface layer. Story is *internal*.”

“Each protagonist enters with a backstory. They want something... for a long time. And they overcome a misbelief to get it.”

She says that this misbelief is often called a ‘fatal flaw,’ but she feels that term is prejudicial. Neither is it a ‘wound,’ as that would imply the character as ‘victim.’ No, it is just a belief — usually long-established — that doesn’t mirror reality.

Cron asserts that — because characters exist long before the narration begins, all stories are *in medius res*. That is, the telling of any story begins in the middle of a larger story, the *backstory*. This backstory, permeates every sentence of the work. It is the ‘lens’ through which the character will see everything that happens. Whether it is exposed to the reader or not, it will influence the character, and direct him. For this reason, the author *must* know this backstory.

As Cron puts it, “Don’t shove your character onto the page with amnesia!”

Backstory can be exposed through many techniques: flashbacks and subjective perceptions (preferred) or ‘Info-dumps’ (Well, maybe not.)

All of these valuable insights were accompanied by rich side-trips:

What is *in medius res*?

What is the nature of amnesia?

She dealt with the “...two schools of writing: The ‘Pantsers’ (write by the seat of their pants), and the ‘Plotters’ (carefully outline plot before writing).” She feels neither school is completely correct.

For Cron, ‘pretty’ writing and plot are less important than suppressing “... the part of the brain that knows ‘it’s a story.’”

And she asserts, “Reading is linear. Writing is not.”

Whether these insights are startling to you or familiar, they have the ring of truth. Lisa Cron is a smart, smart, lady. And she’s given this a lot of thought.

Cron claims she ‘rehearses’ her presentations. I have no reason to doubt her. Yet, the information comes out in a ‘stream-of-consciousness’ style that makes it appear as if she’s discovering these concepts as she speaks. Ideas flash like lights on a pinball machine. (As before, my notes are vermicelli.) She is a virtual geyser of insight.

I find her approach stimulating and engaging, however not all seem to.

[\(Villeneuve from pg. 1\)](#)

Last year, she attended the Golden Crown Literary Society (GCLS) conference where she served on a literary panel, “So I Had This Idea” where debut authors discussed their paths to publication. Among her achievements she was a finalist for debut author at the Golden Crown. She read at Vroman’s when *Take Only Pictures* first came out and recently had the opportunity to read at Laurel Bookstore in Oakland with Karin Kallmaker, an influential voice in lesbian romance for the past twenty-five years. This summer, she will attend the GCLS conference in Washington, D.C. There she will moderate the panel she pitched, “Just One More Chapter—the art of keeping a book in the reader’s hands.” Her second and third books, *The Right Thing Easy* and *Such Happiness as This*, are up for a Goldie award in the romance category.

Married for ten years, she and her wife have an eight-year-old son and boy/girl twins who are five. Among marriage equality trailblazers, they’ve been registered domestic partners, illegally married in a largish ceremony, and married by their senior minister with two witnesses the first day it was legal in California. Her background is fresh and her presentation informative for all of us who can benefit from learning from editors’ feedback. □

In the middle of the presentation, a member raised her hand. Cron interrupted herself to field the question. Unfortunately, the ‘question’ was a request for Cron to give specific examples of ideas to which she was referring. (It was a fair request. In her former presentation, Cron had drawn on the movie ‘Die Hard’ for examples.)

The problem here was that Cron was currently in the middle of developing a very ‘theoretical’ concept. The question interrupted this development, and ‘broke the thread’.

The solution (in my opinion) would be to leave questions and interruptions until the end of her talk. That way, both purposes would be served.

Admittedly, I have a prejudice for really bright, articulate people. I also have a penchant for folks who like to discuss the ‘bones’ of writing — the principles that make narrative writing effective. For me, speakers, thinkers, like Lisa Cron are the reason for presentations at writers’ clubs.--rjm--



President's Connections Andrea Polk

This column has been a difficult dance between my need to be factual and my desire not to drown the reader in detail. The subject is the quality of our membership. This is prompted by the last edition of *The Valley Scribe* wherein, Ray Malus, published his well-crafted editorial opinion on the purpose and status of the California Writers Club-San Fernando Valley branch; our branch, us. If you have not read it, I encourage you to read it. It is worthy of discussion.

Basically Ray claims that we do not have sufficient writers with Literary Credentials among our membership. Rather we have been guilty of the numbers game. The branches spent months debating the requirements for membership as spelled out in the CWC's Policy and Procedures manual, resulting in two systems for determining Active status.

Without the numerous details, "Active" status means professional quality published authors. "Associate" means quality writing, but not yet published. Published has a broad definition. Some Active members are changing from approved published academic and professional analytic writing to literary/creative writing, which requires a different skill set.

Our primary mission is education. We are not an organization of professional writers. We are a professional organization promoting and encouraging professional writing. Yes, we welcome successful writers in our branch, but we don't deny someone who has just come to the creative writing experience without a published book under their arm. Checking my understanding I turned to the stated mission of our organization from the 1913 Articles of Incorporation to the current mission statement in the CWC Constitution.

The California Writers' Club (yes, with appropriate apostrophe) was incorporated in May 1913. Its mission was "To associate men and women in a distinct way with literature and art; To encourage fellowship, afford inspiration to, and furnish a meeting place for, people interested in literature and art; To stimulate and encourage literary and artistic efforts by asserting, procuring and taking over the production, exhibition and publication of such works as shall be deemed worthy, and of sufficient value, to warrant such action in the judgment of the corporation."

That was 1913. The mission has been amended several times since and in 1994, under the IRS 501(c) (3) laws of 1986, we became a charitable organization. As of 2002 the organization's Constitution Article II: Purposes, Section 1. reads, "For the purpose of providing a forum for educating

Pas De Deux

Ray Malus

At the risk of stepping on her toes, allow me to join our president in her "dance."

I am flattered that she devoted her column to furthering discussion of my article of March. (Oddly, She doesn't say whether she is agreeing or differing with the piece.)

However, if there is to be dialogue, I ask that it be accurate.

Aside from the fact that she may have missed the point of my article, our president has included several inaccuracies in her column.

1. My article dealt with literary *credibility* (not "credentials", as stated), and establishing it. (The term "lit-cred" is a reference to the current colloquialism, "having street-cred," meaning "generally deemed reliable.") It also contained some observations on the workings of the contemporary publishing industry.
2. The article was not aimed at "our branch, us". "California Writers Club-San Fernando Valley branch," was never mentioned. (The phrase, "our branch," was used, but only in an illustration.) It is well known that I am — and have been — devoted to our branch and CWC in general, and spend endless hours serving their welfare. The article was aimed at improving the quality of CWC's (and the general writing community's) writing, increasing readership, and raising our aspirations — my customary mantra.
3. The (rather pejorative) word *guilty* did not appear in my article.

The foci of the two pieces differ: Hers is on 'membership'; mine was on 'effective, consistent writing'.

Most of the rest of our president's column has little to do with my article. It is simply, familiar information taken from our governing documents. (These are available to all, on our club's website: <http://calwriters.org/central-board/documents/>). You probably either already know it, or don't care.

PresidentPas De Deux

both members and the public in the craft of writing and in marketing their works. This is served by the monthly public meetings, workshops, and seminars of each of the branches, as well as the state conference, which is open to all writers and is conducted for the purpose of educating writers of all levels of expertise. California Writers Club networks with and is a model for other groups and agencies involved in similar pursuits.”

Since our mission is education, it is understandable that we have aspiring writers among our membership eager to develop their literary writing skills. Members find our critique groups valuable sources of support, criticism and education. To each of you, keep writing, learning and getting better at it. Be proud of your achievements and growth. Don't stop because you haven't achieved the illusive literary credential of a well-known author. This is what education is about. □

In either case, these documents are on file. They are often contradictory or just plain out of date (Anyone been to the state conference lately?), leaving room for differing opinions.

I have always acknowledged that we are a community having different abilities. My urging was, no matter what your level of skill, focus on your reader and build a relationship.

Our president's column ends with words of encouragement — as does my article, which exhorts the reader, and the club, to stop obsessing on 'getting the book into print' and focus more on 'getting quality into the book' — to explore ways of making our writing more compelling and effective.

As for “agree/disagree,” if our president is taking issue with my call for us to aspire to greater excellence, then we disagree. Otherwise, we are in accord. —rjm—

OF INTEREST!

Below is our Mission Statement as it appears in our Branch Bylaws. With the exception of an increasing number of branches, it has appeared in these pages, in exactly this form, many times over the past six years.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH

The San Fernando Valley Branch is one of twenty-one Branches throughout California, organized and operating under the auspices of The California Writers Club. We are a non-profit professional organization whose goal is to provide a friendly and inclusive environment for members to meet and network; to provide professional speakers who will aid in writing, publishing, and marketing members' endeavors; and other writing-related opportunities that will further members' writing enjoyment and careers.

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.

WANT MORE READERS? HERE ARE TWO OPPORTUNITIES!

by Ray Malus

Neither of these will make you any money, but they may make your day.

CWC-SFV/MPTF Book Drive

By a tremendous stroke of good fortune — and the largesse of one of our founders, Betty Freeman — we meet in the midst one of the most sophisticated and well-read communities in the world: the Motion Picture and Television Fund (MPTF). This is a locus of creative and literate people, the ‘Entertainment Industry’!

And they’re avid readers!

Having done staged readings of several of my plays at the on-campus ‘Country House’ facility, I am aware that the facility contains a large lending library.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful (I thought) if we could get our books placed in that library. The facility would benefit by having its stock increased, the residents would have more reading material, and we would benefit by gaining access to a uniquely erudite and creative reader pool.

I called the Fund’s Administration, and with a little trouble, spoke to the facility’s librarian, Jon Poer. He was delighted with the idea.

We chatted for a bit, and agreed to try a ‘pilot’ program.

Our branch will donate between twenty and forty books. He will review them and stock them in the library for the residents.

Whoo-HOOO!

We will collect books at our April meeting. (Depending on how well this works, we will probably periodically repeat the opportunity.)

Here are the details:

- At our April meeting, we will collect books, written by our members, to be donated.
- For this pilot, a maximum of TWO titles per author may be donated.
- ONE copy of each title may be donated.
- Paperbacks are preferred, but hardcovers will be accepted.
- You may write a dedication inside the book, if you wish.
- CWC-SFV *may* place a sticker on, or in, the book.
- If you want a receipt, you must bring one, pre-filled out, to be signed by an officer of our branch.
- There is no guarantee that any particular book will be stocked, and none will be returned.

I, for one, feel this is a tremendous opportunity to benefit our hosts, and to reach a readership that is second-to-none!

Make a note to bring your books to our April meeting.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

I think we are all familiar with the very romantic idea of the ‘Message In A Bottle’.

We write a sentiment or message, seal it in a bottle, and cast it into the sea. It floats to some un-known recipient who reads the message. We wistfully wish we could be there to meet that unknown person, to see what reaction, what influence, our message has. Does it get passed on? Dismissed? Ridiculed? Embraced? Does it make a difference?

We can’t know.

Or can we?

BookCrossing (<http://www.bookcrossing.com>) takes this concept to its furthest extreme, and it’s a powerful idea.

Here’s how it works:

1. You REGISTER your book with BookCrossing. (They assign a unique identification number [BCID] to it.) You then print out a label (including the BCID) for your book, and stick it inside the volume. (You can download labels and print them at no charge. Or you can buy printed labels from BookCrossing. Or you can design your own label, using on-line tools BookCrossing provides.)

2. You SHARE your book. This can mean passing it to a friend, donating it to one of those community bookshelves that have sprung up, or simply leaving it where it may be found by a stranger.

3. You FOLLOW your book. The label in your book invites your readers to post comments, experiences, and reactions to your book on Bookcrossing.com. You get to read, and respond to, these.

You can do this with multiple copies of your book.

If this sounds at all appealing, it is expanded upon in a delightful way on the site (<http://www.bookcrossing.com>). Take a look.

BookCrossing and I invite you to put your own special message in a bottle and share it with the world. --rjm--



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!

FTB PRESS (FREE THE BRAIN/FOR THE BOOKS)

Website: <http://www.ftbpress.com/fiction-1.html>

Editor's Note: Anne Wilburn, Editor - As a micro publisher FTB Press goal is to publish the fine works of all writers, including new, up and coming or established. We believe writers pour their heart and soul into their works and each story is good in its own right. One of our goals will be to supply feedback to writers as to why their work was or was not chosen for publication. To eliminate bias, all works selected for publication will be chosen by a committee. We are growing with our first anthology currently available and more books on the way. Should you have any questions please feel to email us at info@ftbpress.com. We will respond in a timely manner.

Submission: With this anthology, we want to focus on you the writer. Challenge your creativity and take risks with the subject matter and style. We are not looking for a specific genre, just a unique character driven story. A story that defines the writer as a Renegade of Prose.

1. Length between 2400-4200 words.
2. MS Word file submitted with author's last name, title, and word count at the top. Please no headers.
3. We are not picky with font style as long as it is easy to read.
4. Please do not double space.
5. Please title submitted files as lastname.titleofstory.renegades
6. Author's full name and mailing address in the email with a brief 50-word bio.
7. Multiple submissions are ok, we will only publish one per author and they must be submitted separately.
8. Simultaneous submissions are ok. We only ask you inform us if your story is chosen elsewhere.
10. Send submissions to fiction.submission@ftbpress.com with Last Name/Title/RENEGADES in the subject line.

What we are not looking for in submissions:

1. Erotica, fan fiction, poetry, or Young Adult. 2. Reprints.

Pays: All authors will receive a contributor's copy of the completed anthology. Royalties will be paid quarterly. The amount will be 50% of the proceeds divided evenly between all authors. Submissions will be open until May 28, 2016 at midnight Arizona time, unless we FILL THE

BOOK prior. If you have any questions please email scott@ftbpress.com

THE RAIN, PARTY & DISASTER SOCIETY

Website: <http://rpd-society.com/submit/> Editor-In-Chief:

Jordan Rizzieri. *The Rain, Party, & Disaster Society* is a free online literary publication featuring works that voice unpopular opinions and unspoken ideas, that are highly stylized, or that tackle hot-button subject matter. The works our readers find here are meant to excite, infuriate and challenge them. To respond directly to a work you see featured in this issue, use our [Contact page](#) to send a letter to the Editor-In-Chief. You may also write your own rebuttal and submit it for publication in a future issue. If you have questions, write to RainPartyDisaster@gmail.com.

Submissions: We are now accepting submissions exclusively via Submittable! 1) When submitting your work to The RP&D Society via Submittable, please make sure to send your pieces to the appropriate genre (poetry, fiction, etc.) This ensures that the proper editor will review your work. As submissions are reviewed blind, please do not include your name on or in your submission files. Any information Submittable asks you for will be appropriately filtered from the editorial staff. 2) We at The RP&D Society believe in building a relationship with our contributors and like to keep the lines of dialogue open. When reviewing submissions, we utilize an editing style akin to a one-on-one workshop of each piece. Once you have submitted your work to us, you may receive notes on spelling, grammar, style, and language. These notes are merely suggestions and it is up to the author whether or not to apply them. While publication is not necessarily contingent upon compliance with editorial notes, it is the sole discretion of the editorial staff to decide when a piece is ready for publication. The RP&D Society now accepts submissions on a rolling basis and therefore cannot guarantee publication in the issue immediately following a contributor's submission. 3) We at The RP&D Society want to thank you for submitting your piece to us. We know you've put a lot of a work, time, and passion into it, and we will treat it with respect. If we choose to publish it, we will let you know if any changes need to be made. If we choose not to publish your work at this time, we will also send notification and we will let you know why, in case you want to amend the piece and re-submit it.

Pays: If we publish your piece, you still retain ownership of the copyright on your work. You are granting us the right to publish your work on our website or in any future RP&D Society print publications. If you wish to publish your work anywhere besides The RP&D Society after publication, it must appear with the phrase "First published by The Rain, Party, & Disaster Society" followed by the issue it was featured in and the date it was published. When you submit your work to The Rain, Party, & Disaster Society, you are thereby accepting these terms and conditions. □

Review and Refresh

Dave Wetterberg

The Comma

Let's get it straight. There is no rule that says you insert a comma somewhere within a sentence because of some vague notion that a comma belongs there. And there is no rule that says you insert a comma because you can feel a hesitation between words somewhere in the sentence. And there is no rule that says that when you're in doubt, plug a comma in just to play it safe. On the contrary, when in doubt, leave the comma out. You'll be right more times than you're wrong.

The Comma with Items in a Series

Put a comma before each item in a series when the series has more than two items.

The only dissenters of the plan were Bill Murphy, Al Newman, and Mark Kitahara.

Note: Some would say that this rule has changed, leave the last comma out, that the sentence should be:

The only dissenters were Bill Murphy, Al Newman and Mark Kitahara.

I don't know where this notion came from. I have five composition textbooks in my personal library, including Strunk's *Elements of Style*, that rule that the comma goes there.

The Comma and the Appositive

An appositive is a word or a word group placed after a noun that identifies or supplements the noun. Commas are necessary to set off an appositive. "Set off" means one before and one after.

I haven't seen Tillie and Barbara, two of my closest college chums, since 1977.

In some cases commas are not necessary when the proper name comes first and the appositive shows a close relationship.

My brother Bob and my sister Sue are in the Air Force.

A reverse order would call for commas, however.

Bob, my brother, and Sue, my sister, are in the Air Force.

The Comma in the Compound Sentence

The conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *nor*, *so* and *yet* are the only words that can join sentences together correctly. When they do, a comma before the

conjunction is necessary.

The car raced off after the shooting, but a bystander got the license number.

If the compound sentence is a short one, the comma may be left out.

The dog barked and Melissa screamed.

Sometimes the pronoun *it* is used incorrectly as a conjunction.

He looked down at the map, it was drenched.

The following are examples of the pronoun *it* used correctly in the same situation:

He looked down at the map, but it was drenched.

He looked down at the map. It was drenched.

He looked down at the map; it was drenched.

Introductory Expressions

Use a comma after introductory expressions like *yes*, *no*, *oh*, and *well*.

Yes, Jim is applying for a scholarship.

Confusing Sentence Parts

Use a comma to separate sentence parts that might otherwise cause confusion.

Whenever possible, alternatives should be considered.

Modifiers

Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that modify the same noun.

Marci got a new, challenging job.

Repeated Words

Use a comma to separate repeated words.

Whomever she loved, loved her back.

Dates

Don't use a comma between the month and the year when the day is not given.

It was the December 2002 issue of The Times.

Use a comma after the year when the year is in a sentence with the month and the day.

The club moved on October 1, 2008, and began with a new enthusiasm.

Addresses

On an envelope, use a comma after the city, but after nothing else. Don't use a comma between the state and the zip code.

Sheriff Andy Taylor

29 Maple Avenue

Mayberry, South Carolina 56034 □

Rooosssaaarriiio Comes to Stay

Keyle Birnberg

Mommy opens the front double doors to admire her garden filled with beautiful flowers in different colors. There is a long carpet of grass ending in a tall palm tree riddled with pink *orquidias* near the wrought-iron portico exit doors. On top there is a cement ledge with lots of broken bottles shining in different colors stopping crooks from getting inside the house. If they try, the cuts on their fingers will identify them to the police. Anyway, that's what Mommy says. Daddy also pays some retired policemen to patrol the area by blowing whistles very late at night, letting people know they are protecting our house and all the others in the area.

This morning Mommy is not shining the brass stars incrustated into the thick top window-pane-doors, as she does every day. She loses her balance as she trips on a moving bulk, dressed completely in black. From somewhere inside, an iridescent copper-green rooster jumps up, its wings flopping scarring the hebee-jeebes out of her.

'Who are you? And what are you doing at my front door?' Mommy asks the moving flesh-bolt.

"Patronita, in my pueblo they call me Rooosssaaarriiio. I walked five days and nights all the way from the High Andes Mountains in Quito to find you. My gods, the Sun, Moon and the Stars ordered me to stop here and be your property forever with no pay. I only need *techo*, *comida* and a year's collection of old newspapers to make my bed."

Mommy rolls her eyes to the sky as if asking permission of someone up there to decide. She was always putting ads in the newspaper looking for maids lasting only a month or so, leaving soon after stealing the silver and many Lladro china figurines from Mommy's collection, not caring about the dust shapes left behind.

"Rooosssaaarriiio you can stay but your rooster has to go."

I remind Mommy we already have a pet German Sheppard dog who doesn't mind that we are Jewish. We don't care that he is German either. The dog and I are twins, four fingers old.

Rooosssaaarriiio says, "*Colorado* is my clock, and wakes me up real early for me to do all the chores in your house. Besides he is a trained *macho* boy, as you can see by the red curvy-fluffy *cresta* on its head."

Colorado "koo-koo-roo-koo"s loud and clear, doing some back-and-front steps, showing off some rooster-y machismo.

So, Mommy couldn't argue what her eyes had seen, and both stayed forever.

Right away Rosario is my shadow, or I'm hers. I follow her everywhere. She laughs with happiness showing her white teeth framed in gold. Her face color looks just like bronze. Her shoes are handmade from pieces of old car-tires discarded in some far away dump. She wears a blouse whiter than the Andes Mountains' icy tops, which look like crowns surrounding the city of Quito where we live. She walks straight as an arrow because she wears 10 gold necklaces around her neck. My brother says that she looks 'constipated' like she's looking for a bathroom — needed at any moment. Her beautiful felt-like skirts are in bright colors, showing lace at the bottom. A long thick-braid hangs down her back. She looks just like the dolls in souvenir shops sold at the OCEPA store.

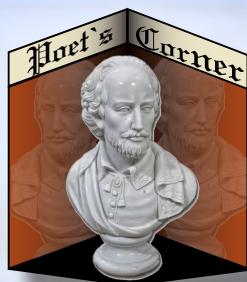
That night I see Rooosssaaarriiio wearing one of Mommy's white sheets with 2 holes for eyes. She jumps up to scare me saying she was a ghost, but I don't believe her because I know she is inside. I am not afraid, but I think brother is.

Mommy warns Rooosssaaarriiio not to scare the children with her made-up ghost's stories, but she doesn't listen. She slaps the floor with her open hands, telling me to sit next to her. Covering me with her red poncho she tells me about Gregorio — ghost who still lives very far away up in the Andes Mountains near the clouds. Eusebio is a ghost who does tricks with fire scaring the *diablo* away. Also, she tells me about the *cucurucho* a ghost who floats around without a head. I am afraid and beg her to sleep at the foot of my bed, which she does now almost every night.

Mommy is not happy these days; *Colorado* wakes everybody at 5 A.M. But, by the time everyone is up, the house is sparkling clean and the table set for breakfast.

Daddy is happy. He says, "For the first time in years I am able to open our New Manchester Raincoat factory on time."

"Our life with Rooosssaaarriiio is going to be lots of fun," Brother says. She knows wonderful spooky stories which we are to listen to every night. Can't wait for tomorrow. □



A Good-Bye

Norman Molesko

Living in this Senior Residence Home,
I hibernate in my room alone.

Time now to go to the dining room.

I leave to follow a line of people,
some moving with walkers,
some pushed in wheelchairs,
others still able to walk like me.

This is the way I arrive at my meals.

I am hazy about how I got to this place.

I recall my daughter saying to me,

"Enjoy living at your new Senior Home.

Take care of yourself."

Then my daughter left my room,

uttering the words, "GOOD-BYE."

Time Changes

Lillian Rodich

much said

succinctly

too late

and lately relevant

to a mood

of sleepless wonder

as time springs forward

an hour is lost

somewhere

in our conscious struggles

Winter Winds

Ray Malus

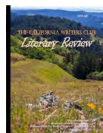
Summer runs, when Winter muscles in
and shoulders Autumn's modesty aside,
to clothe the pavement with his pap'ry skin
of frozen leaves and promise that has died.

Autumn cringes, craven, at the clutch
of Winter's blust'ry gales and icy blast.
She shrinks and shudders at his bitter touch,
and hides in dread until his time has passed.

Winter wins, when wanton tempests blow
and make the lush and blushing summer quail.
When timid Autumn cowers 'neath the snow
and shrinks in wretched terror from the gale.

But, sunny Spring need only bide a while,
then warmly wither Winter with her smile.

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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
May 7th, 1 p.m.
TBA
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

April BIRTHDAYS!

Judith Presnall

Mary Freeman

April 2

April 22

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

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

Regular Features:
Submissions:

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.

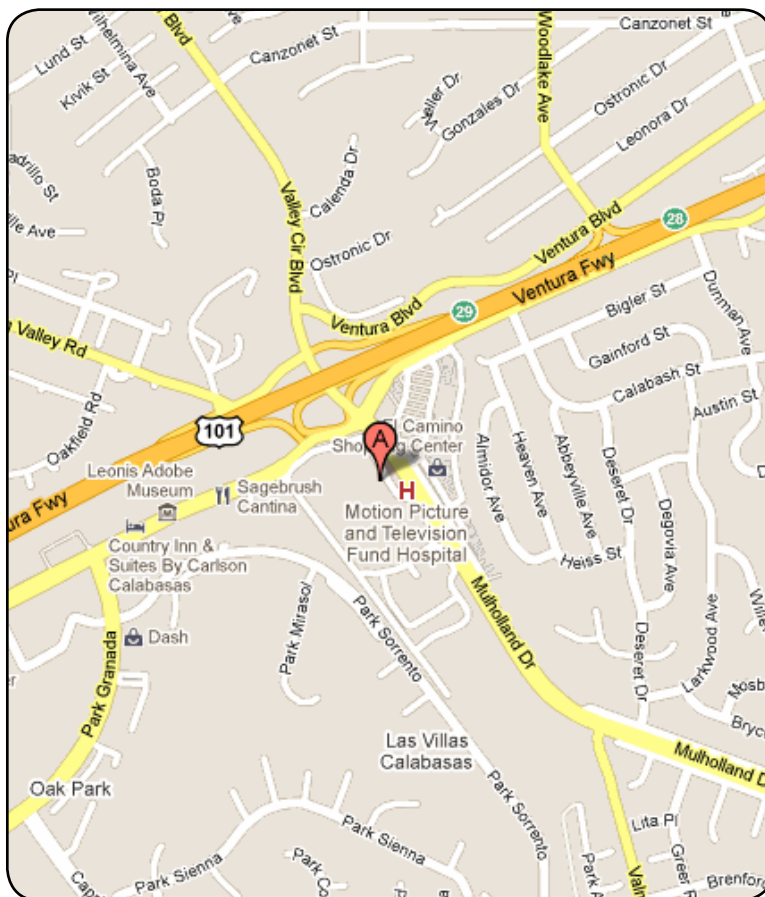
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(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: Doug Douglas, Sharron Malus
Columnists: Andrea Polk, Mary Freeman,
Dave Wetterberg, Ray Malus

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California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

President, Andrea Polk	andipolk4@gmail.com
Vice Pres., Sylvia Molesko	nsmol@twc.com
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Media Relations, Kay Henden	CWC@Hendon.com
Member-At-Large, Bob Okowitz	apthealth@hotmail.com
Central Board Rep., Mary Freeman	mfreeman2207@yahoo.com

Pre-Session Leader, 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