



May Program

TED Talks:

Presentation and Promotion of You and Your Work

Andrea Polk

In February we had technical difficulties and this program was not presented. May is more promising. Technology, Entertainment and Design, TED Talk conferences all over the world bring top-notch thinkers, doers and speakers to present their ideas. I have selected two plus a bonus to project on the big screen, with time for discussion, sharing and writing.

Join your colleagues of writers who are interested in and write about all genres. Each presentation will bring insights into finding who we are in the creative process.

Two 17-minute TED talks will be shown, plus a bonus spoken-word.

The first is Megan Washington speaking before the TED Talks audience at the University of Sydney in 2014. Megan is Australia's premier singer-songwriter with a distinct revelation about her problem that has hampered her ability to communicate except through singing. Even though hampered she speaks with her authentic voice. Whether writing, speaking, or singing we have challenges finding our style or voice. After hearing her there will be time for small group discussions and sharing insights.

The second presentation is by Chip Kidd, speaking in Long Beach 2012. He is the award winning book cover designer with Alfred A. Knopf publisher since 1986. This is a humorous look at good book cover design. As we perfect the art of writing, the art of cover design is as vital to the eye of the reader-buyer of books as the content of our books. What does a book cover say to us and why do we pick it up? Now what do you want from your book cover designer? Why should someone pick up your book, leaf through it and buy it? Does your cover say with graphic design what the content of your story is all about — clearly?

A BONUS spoken-word poet Sarah Kay, *If I Should Have a Daughter*. TED Talk Long Beach 2011.

This is a great opportunity to see and hear these special productions that can give you ideas about presentation as well as courage to go for it. □

April Review

Laina Villeneuve — Writing as Re-Writing:

The Art of Revision

Ray Malus

Those of you who read these reviews (Yes. I'm talking to you two: The one in the corner and the one in the back of the room), know that I have a predilection for Speakers who deal with the craft of writing and it's perfecting. So, it will not come as a surprise that I was delighted with Laina Villeneuve's presentation. However, first, a disclaimer:

Villeneuve is not a performer; she is a writer and a teacher. She brings no snappy PowerPoint presentations or showy gimmicks. Her outline contained a mere twenty-six words, and her talk was a trifle 'scattered'.



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(Villeneuve from pg 1)

None of this is important compared to what she brings to the discussion: A fundamental, unshakable belief in writing as a craft — an iterative process wherein works are honed and polished into jewels. This belief is so basic to her that I don't believe she actually stated it. But it permeates her approach.

This iterative process is called 're-writing'. And it can entail many, many iterations.

The raw material which drives this process is 'feedback'.

As regards reaction to feedback, Villeneuve defines two different 'Writer Mindsets':

Fixed — a rigid resistance to change and exploration. The idea that, once 'finished', a manuscript is immutable.

Growth — a welcoming of new ideas and perspectives as opportunities perfect the work.

[A small digression: I would sooner trust Tarot Cards than my notes. Much of what I say is my impression. If I am in error, I apologize to Ms. Villeneuve. For example, it seems to me that, implicit in the above dichotomy is the ability to see the *work* as separate from the *writer* — to divorce the product from ego and let it have its own evolution. This seems to be a hallmark of journeyman writers.]

In soliciting feedback, Villeneuve lists a hierarchy of resources:

1. **First Reader** (Spouse?). Probably essential for finishing the first draft. Accepting.
2. **Colleagues**. Fellow writers whose *opinions you value*.
3. **Network**. People with technical (geographical, historical) expertise. (Caveat: While valuable, these are usually not writers and can tend to be overly accepting.)
4. **Editor**. Here, I got really envious. I *wish* I had an editor with whom I could work. (sigh). If you have one, you're blessed.

Once you have feedback, how do you use it?

Reconcile contradictory ideas! Different sources will suggest different changes. Many may be mutually exclusive; all will differ from your version. Choose wisely. Often, adopting them will necessitate removing or replacing significant parts of your manuscript, "Never throw anything away. Retain this material in a separate file!"

Most important: "In the end, you are the driver!"

Villeneuve also pointed out our unfortunate tendency to restrict character diversity, and counseled more variety.

All this advice was accompanied by interesting personal anecdotes. Most of them seemed to underscore the perspective of 'the manuscript as separate from the creator'.

She did share some very perceptive tricks:

While editing a section, she inserts a rarely-used word. When she has finished, she removes it. Then, when she is finalizing the manuscript, she searches for that word to find sections she may have forgotten to finish. (Smart!)

She uses the (Word Processor) 'Find' (ctrl-f) function, to look for over-use of common words. (Gold!)

Villeneuve currently specializes in a narrow genre: Lesbian Romance. When asked to elaborate on this, she responded with a story about a passage she'd written where a couple meeting another person felt compelled to unclasp hands — and a reader's reaction that she had experienced this, but never seen it depicted in writing.

What Villeneuve seemed to be saying was that she was trying to illuminate the experiences and perceptions of individuals of a specific group of people, and share them with members of that group, and with the general public.

That's as good definition of 'Literature' as I've heard. --rjm--

Check out: <http://www.bellabooks.com/Bella-Author-Laina-Villeneuve-cat.html>



MTVF Book Donation

We are extremely pleased that twenty-one books, all authored by our members, were donated to the Motion Picture and Television Fund Library.

The library is very grateful. We will repeat this drive in the Fall, so keep writing!

Bravo, SFV!



President's Connections Andrea Polk

We had a beautiful day Saturday, April 2nd. We had very good attendance and met several new guests. Our charismatic speaker Laina Ville-neuve spoke of the importance of us writers to find critical readers and to be open to valuable feedback. As I walked her to her car she mentioned again that while we are the drivers of our work how important a writer's open mindset is to feedback. "Good questions are so important," she emphasized.

It is fitting that as critical readers we ask probing questions. Our anthology process will be announced soon. Be prepared to give readers your best writing. Please find a critical reader and edit your work carefully before you submit it.

This is my first experience producing an anthology, so naturally I am excited and confident. We should produce a worthy book representing our best efforts. Use all the tools at your disposal, inspire us and have fun.

Due to Sylvia Molesko's, our vice president and anthology chair, recent illness, she had to resign as vice president. Thankfully, she is improving every day and we hope to see her soon at our general meetings. In Sylvia's place Rita Brown accepted the challenge of taking on the vital role of anthology chair. Rita's experience in the anthology field will serve the project well. I am also pleased to announce that the board approved the appointment of Rita as our vice president. Rita has served on the board in the past and accepted the responsibility graciously.

As many of you know, Sylvia is an especially dedicated person. She coordinated the anthology project and came to her last anthology meeting although very weak from pneumonia. Accepting her resignation was important to allow her to get well or she would have somehow found the energy to continue. Although we miss her, we want her to recover completely.

My deepest thank you Sylvia for serving the board and the general membership with your warmth, energy, creative ideas, generosity and humor. Now take care and the best to you for your continued recovery. □

Younger Old People

Leslie Kaplan

Connie Sawyer called me a couple of days ago. She is about one hundred and three years old and still working as an actress.

She lives in the Motion Picture Home where I met her at a writer's meeting. I am totally in awe of her.

Jerry McPhie, also a resident there, has known Connie for sixty years. We got to talking during a break at which time Jerry purchased my first published book of memoirs as a gift for Connie. He thought it might be of help to her, as she is in the process of writing her own memoirs.

My book's title is "Forever...Until."

And so the conversation begins:

"Hello Leslie ... this is Connie Sawyer and I just finished reading your book. I enjoyed it very much and related to some of your stories. I liked the ones about your girlfriends, especially the one about taking your friend for an abortion. I had a similar experience with one of my friends when she was only sixteen years old."

I thought to myself ... she sounds so young, so able, not only to telephone me, but to review my book, to ask some intelligent questions, to make some worthy comments, to be so sharp of mind. For example she asked ...

"Can you tell me the name of your publisher?"

"It's BookBaby."

"How do you spell it"?

So I spelled it for her. Then she asked me how to send the manuscript to them ... how they charge and other pertinent businesslike questions. She continues to amaze me.

I look forward to seeing her again at the next writers meeting in May. She reminds me a little of my sharp old grandmother who danced like a fairy princess at her one hundredth birthday party. She was a great story teller and lived to be one hundred and seven years of fine old age.

I also met an especially impressive well known writer. It is her sense of humor that got me. Her name is Irma Kalish. She offered to read my book and comment on it. Her feedback will be appreciated. She told me that she has been married to the same husband for over sixty years. Because of his failing health he is being cared for at the wonderful Motion Picture Home known as the MPTV Fund. Their motto is ... "We Take Care Of Our Own."

As a young child of immigrants, little did I ever imagine that I would someday meet famous people ... live in Hollywood ... sing and dance ... write a book ... and admire ...

SO MANY YOUNGER OLD PEOPLE OF WHICH I AM
NOW ONE TOO.

YOU SHOULD KNOW

HELP WANTED

The Valley Scribe is currently short one proof-reader.

We do not re-write submissions; we feel that each of you has a unique voice.

But we do check them for blatant errors in spelling and punctuation.

The requirements for this job are speed, accuracy, and — most of all — tolerance.

If you would like to help, please contact me: cwc-sfv@roadrunner.com.

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.

SMILE!



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.

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.



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!

LONGRIDGE REVIEW

Website: <https://longridgereview.com/submit/>.

Editor's Note: Founder and Editor: [Elizabeth Gaucher](#), Middlebury, edg@longridgeeditors.com.

Longridge Review is an evolution of the [Essays on Childhood](#) project. Our mission is to present the finest essays on the mysteries of childhood experience, the wonder of adult reflection, and how the two connect over a lifespan. We are committed to publishing narratives steeped in reverence for childhood perceptions, but we seek essays that stretch beyond the clichés of childhood as simple, angelic, or easy. We feature writing that layers the events of the writer's early years with learning or wisdom accumulated in adult life. We welcome diverse creative nonfiction pieces that depict revealing moments about the human condition. We look forward to reading your work!

Submission: Longridge Review has multiple reading periods each calendar year. Please read the submission guidelines before submitting. We recommend that you also read work on this site to see what we publish. Our emphasis is on literature that explores the mysteries of childhood experience, the wonder of adult reflection, and how the two connect over a lifespan. We welcome diverse creative nonfiction pieces that demonstrate perceptive and revealing moments about the human condition. We will not consider trite, light narratives; genre nonfiction; critical analyses; inspirational or motivational advice; erotica or pornography; or any writing that purposefully exploits or demeans. We encourage established, unpublished, or emerging writers to submit their best work to Longridge Review.

1. We will consider **one** creative nonfiction piece (up to 6,500 words) per submission period. Please do not submit more than once during the reading period. Individual authors will not be published more than once per calendar year.
2. We accept only electronic submissions through our online submission manager, [Submittable](#). There is no submission fee.
3. The title of your submission should be included with your name (e.g., Jane Doe "My Essay Title"). Include a short biography (five to seven sentences) with your submission.
4. In your biography, please include your publications, but please list no more than four

journals where your work has appeared. Book titles should include the publisher and year of publication. Please list only literary awards and prizes (not nominations or semi-finalist statuses). Generally, we will not include information about your family or your pets. We want to focus on your literary accomplishments and/or interests.

5. We will consider simultaneous submissions as long as you let us know if your work is accepted elsewhere. We will not consider previously published materials, including online publications, personal blogs, social media sites, etc.
6. Longridge Review acquires first electronic and indefinite archive rights. Upon publication, all other rights revert to the author. Please credit Longridge Review as first publisher if you reprint elsewhere. Longridge Review reserves the right to reprint work at a later date if we have the opportunity to occasionally make a print anthology and want to include your work.
7. Longridge Review reserves the right to edit manuscripts for grammar or clarity issues without notification if necessary. If a manuscript requires a substantial amount of editing, we will notify the author of such changes for review before publication.
8. Longridge Review is published three times a year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. As a new publication we are working to evaluate our best schedule, so please feel free to email us if you have questions about due dates.

Our submission period for the Spring 2016 issue is now open. The current submission period is announced on our HOME page under NEWS. We try our best to respond to submissions within four weeks. If you haven't heard from us within six weeks you may inquire about your submission via edg@longridgeeditors.com, but please not before.

TOM HOWARD/JOHN H. REID FICTION & ESSAY CONTEST

<https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/tom-howard-john-h-reid-fiction-essay-contest>

We will award \$1,500 each for the top story and the top essay. Ten Honorable Mentions will receive \$100 each (any category). The top 12 entries will be published online.

Contest submission period: October 15, 2015-April 30, 2016.

Results announced on October 15, 2016.

Please submit as many stories and essays as you like. All themes accepted. Entries may be published or unpublished. Length limit: 6,000 words. Fee: \$18 per entry.

Review and Refresh

Dave Wetterberg

The Semicolon

A semicolon may be used to link two closely related sentences.

She was slightly nervous with him; she was utterly frantic without him.

But hardly any professional writers use the semicolon this way any more. They just end the first sentence with a period and begin another.

She was slightly nervous with him. She was utterly frantic without him.

If the items in a series of word groups contain other commas, a semicolon is used to separate the items. In the following sentence, the semicolon makes it clear that Ivana took three people to lunch, not six.

Ivana took Mrs. Reed, her best friend; Marco, her makeup consultant; and Jose, her hairdresser, to lunch at the Brown Derby.

When there are additional commas in a compound sentence, a semicolon, not a comma, precedes the conjunction.

To their relief, Orville, a graphic artist, said he would be happy to help them out; but Bill, suspicious of Orville's motives, objected to his inclusion, prompted, we suspected, by jealousy.

The Colon

A colon is used to prepare for an answer that comes at the end of the sentence, so to speak. A colon must always have a complete sentence to the left of it. This answer can be one item or a list of items.

The most common element in all Mother's recipes was missing: garlic.

The evidence was found later: a camera, a map, and a pistol.

If you prefer items to come at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle of a sentence, you might use dashes.

The evidence — a camera, a map, and a pistol — was found later.

Capitalization

When a word is used to refer to a member of a class larger than itself, the word is not capitalized.

These words are usually preceded by possessive pronouns like *a, an, the, my, his, her, their*

my mother (class = mothers)

the colonel (class = colonels)

their father (class = fathers)

the club president (class = presidents)

When one of the above is used with a name that is normally capitalized, it is capitalized also.

Mother Teresa

Colonel Whipple

Father Briggs

President Obama

The word *president*, when referring to the *President of the United States*, however, is capitalized.

We waited for the President's speech.

When the same word is used in direct address in place of the proper name, the word is capitalized.

When are you coming outside to join us, Colonel?

A Moment With A Pissy Goddam Old Man

By John Klawitter

It was Christmas season, a good time for fattening the wallet. Joe watched as an old man parked his SUV and painfully climbed out. The confused old bastard pointed his keys at his car and a beep sounded and the lights flashed. He turned and headed toward Albertsons; but then he paused and clicked a couple more times, unlocking and then locking the car again.

Joe shook his head. He was tall, well over six feet, and he wore a plain khaki outfit over a red flannel shirt. He had watery blue eyes, a sun-tanned and age wrinkled face and a scraggy beard that hung like a brownish grey mop half way down to his belt.

"Help a Nam vet," he droned as the old man limped toward him. "Help a Nam vet make his way in the world. Holiday season, ho ho ho. Help a Nam vet make his way."

The old fart was only a few steps away when he paused as if he didn't know what to do next. He had a vacant look on his face. Joe decided it was meds rather than drugs. Ordinary dopers didn't live long enough to become old crappers who drove fancy SUVs. Joe wasn't sure how long the poor old asshole was going to stand there, but then he started up as if he remembered he was on some sort of assignment, or maybe he'd been dreaming and now he was coming out of it. The old guy pulled a shopping cart from the back end of the bunch stacked inside each other near the entrance.

"Help a Nam vet," Joe murmured with a little more urgency now that the prime moment was at hand.

The old fellow jerked around as if seeing him for the first time. He looked a little wild-eyed. "What?" Percocet, maybe, Joe thought. Vicodin for sure.

"How's about helping a Vietnam veteran?" he said.

The fellow started on past, but then he paused and gave Joe a quick glance, top to bottom like he was scanning him or something.

"You're a Vietnam vet?" he said.

"Why yes I am one such," Joe said, beaming his best smile. Things were going to be A-okay after all.

"It's just that I've fallen on some really hard times and I –"

"Where were you in Vietnam?"

The guy interrupted him, cut off his patter as if he wasn't even talking. That was rude.

"Norfolk," Joe mumbled and then sniffed with an arch lilt.

"Where?"

"Norfolk," Joe said, cutting off the word like he was saying Nor-fuk.

"Norfolk isn't in Vietnam."

"I know that. Everybody knows that. I was in the army during the Vietnam War. That makes me a Vietnam Vet."

The old guy looked at him without saying anything for what seemed like a long time. Then he said, "I was in Vietnam."

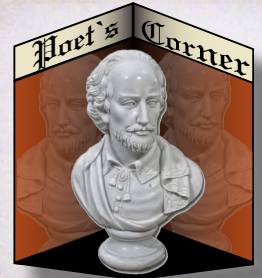
"Cool," Joe said, trying to make light of it.

"No," the old man said, "It was not."

He pushed on past Joe with not even a tip of his hat, much less a buck or two in the old tin can. In another moment the door hissed open and all Joe saw was his back disappearing into the store.

He didn't know why the old fart's comment made him so angry, but without practically even thinking about it, he yelled after him, "You asshole! I'll never tell you anything again!"

That was the thing about people; they could be entirely pissy even to an absolute stranger that they didn't even know. □



TEARS OF ICE

Keyle Birnberg

Tears of ice skip down my face
 Melting fragments stored behind the ruins
 Invisible chains leave painful stains
 Ignoring nuggets of dreams
 Hiding in the night

Splinted petals of wilted flowers
 Entwine around my throat
 Scratching my life
 With invisible necklaces of time

Tears of ice
 Reflections gazing in a dream
 Submerging phantoms in the sea

No grace or charm
 Cover my bony hands

Empty veins with no emotion
 Lick my pen
 Where extinguished fires
 Still linger in the ashes of my mind

Muddy words emerge once more
 A distorted symphony
 Scratch my bored lazy eyes

Like forgotten tombstones
 Names fade in the night

Words connect once more
 Penned in shaken opaque shrouds
 Silhouetting the somber portrait
 Of my soul

Tears of ice
 Cover my transparent thoughts
 Leaving me traces
 To repair my spirit
 Suspended and trembling
 Even in seclusion

My tears of ice melt
 Blurring my eyes with anguish
 Serpentine ardor make my words dance
 I dip my pen in tear water
 Toasting my new discovered inspiration

A SMILE

Norman Molesko

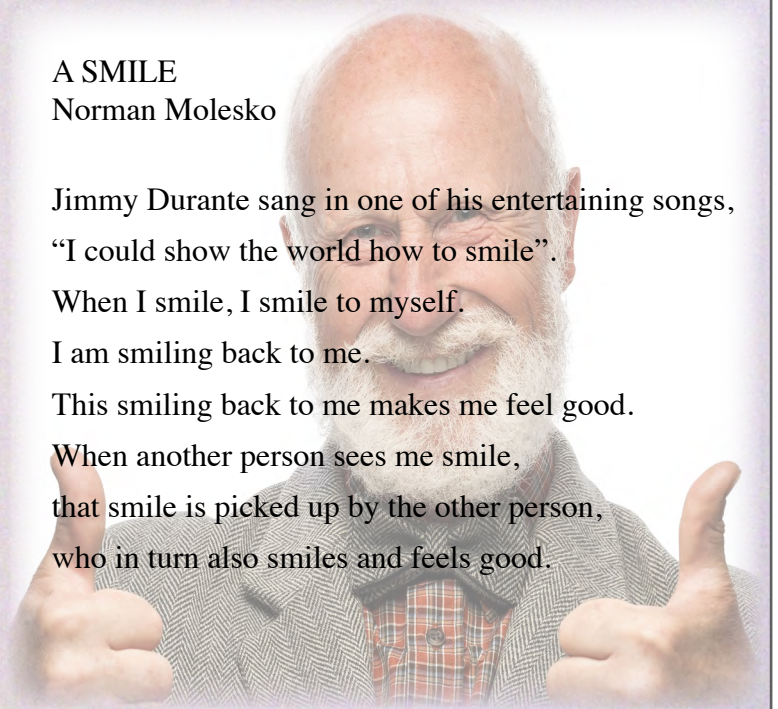
Jimmy Durante sang in one of his entertaining songs,
 "I could show the world how to smile".

When I smile, I smile to myself.

I am smiling back to me.

This smiling back to me makes me feel good.

When another person sees me smile,
 that smile is picked up by the other person,
 who in turn also smiles and feels good.



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
June 4th, 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!

Larry Levine
Sylvia Molesko

May 5
May 23

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:
- 150 words or fewer + front cover
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.

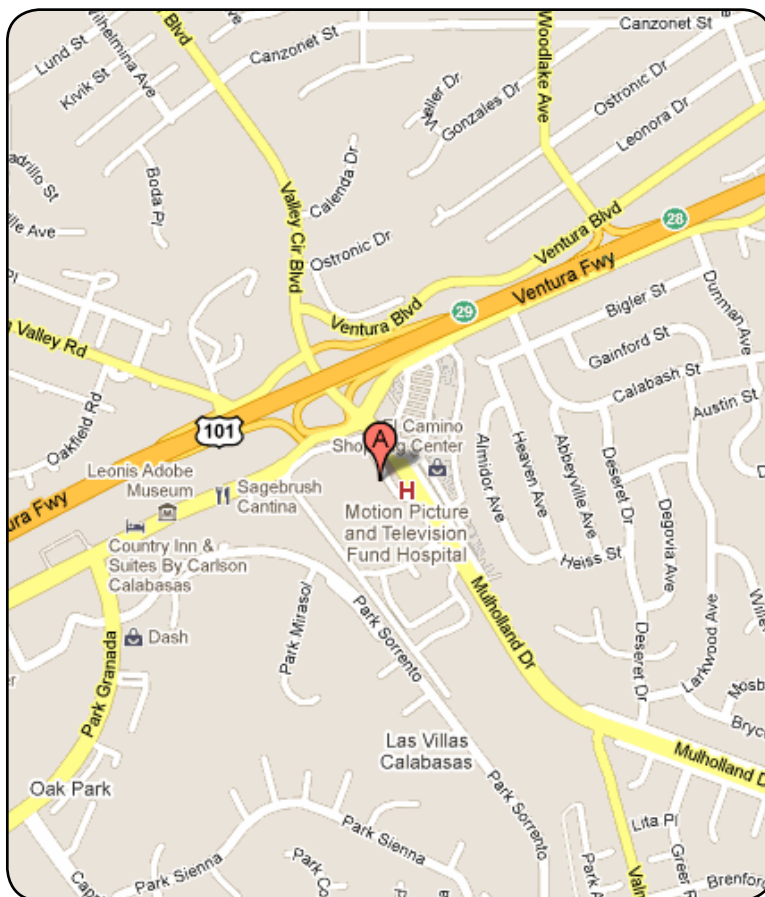
Parking is free in any of the lots.

(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](#)

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

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LOTS of great information at our

Website:

www.cwc-sfv.org