



The Valley Scribe

President's Connections

&

Interim Editor, Andi Polk



I feel we are entering a revival of sorts. The San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club was chartered in July 1986. This year is our thirtieth anniversary. What ho! And our new webmaster, Kay Henden, asked our charter members, Mary Freeman and Yolanda Fintor, to share with her their early memories of the beginning of the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club. Kay, who is a lover of history and a retired lawyer, understands the value of sharing the evolution of an organization of creative people engaged in all the literary genres. We will honor our thirty years with a review in the coming months.

If you have squirreled away memorabilia, photographs and memories, share them digitally with Kay at cwc@henden.com.

Where do we go from here? We are focusing on an outreach campaign into our community colleges, universities and libraries that offer extension and adult classes in creative writing and literature.

In order to expand our literary activities and benefits, we need to grow. We will be developing new literature and business cards to promote the benefits of associating with fellow writers, literary agents, editors and publishers, and successful authors.

Last year Geri Jabara began distributing our current literature to locations for potential writers. If you are interested in assisting in our outreach project, please contact Geri at geri.jabara@att.net



The Art of Public Speaking:

An Interactive Program

Speaker: Toastmaster, Joey Okowitz

We welcome Joey Okowitz, a member, leader and mentor of Toastmasters, for an interesting and interactive presentation on the art of effective public speaking. He speaks, we speak, he comments and helps us improve.

Bring something you are working on to read for one or two minutes. Joey can help you improve by just hearing your short recitation. Don't let this unique opportunity for professional assistance pass you by.

We recognize the new world of publishing requires active author participation in the promotion of our book or story idea. If we want our books to be read, we have to promote, and read our books in public places to our audiences. Come Saturday, October 8 and maximize your presentation skills.

Many authors, even in their mature years, are nervous, lack confidence; are embarrassed and avoid public speaking. You can overcome these fears and common pitfalls nervousness creates. Learn tips and techniques to become a more effective speaker and promoter of your books. You can be more engaged at your readings, presentations and enlarge your audience. No, not in one hour, but it's a start.

Joey understands nervousness and embarrassment. He has been there. He will share his story. After he failed he took action and joined Toastmaster's. He practiced and mastered effective public speaking. He's president and mentor at his local Toastmaster's club. He will share these skills with us. Now is not the time to be shy.

Come prepared, be an example to others. Don't miss this! See you there.

Andi Polk, Program Chair

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It was practically SRO for fellow CWC-SFV member Ester Benjamin Shifren's presentation, "You've Published Your Book, Now What?" Attendees were rewarded with a multitude of pointers (too many to list here) that helped Ester promote and sell her unique memoir, *Hiding in a Cave of Trunks*, about her family's pre-WWII life in China and their subsequent interment by the Japanese.

Ms. Shifren began her presentation by saying that it's important to 'Believe in yourself'. She emphasized how crucial it is to make contacts, both on-line and in person. Establishing a 'Platform', the central subject of interest around which your book revolves, will draw in buyers. Becoming an expert in this and related subjects will provide opportunities for speaking engagements and conversations in blogs, social media and other on-line contacts.

Put yourself out there by volunteering at conferences and seminars, exchanging business cards with speakers, honing your 'elevator pitch' (a one or two sentence summary of your work that will grab the listener's attention), following internet sites such as 'Indies Unlimited' and 'Goodreads', and signing up with HARO (Help a Reporter Out) where reporters needing a story can contact you. Take every opportunity to speak before groups, tailoring your platform to match that organization's focus.

Ester has been very successful in her endeavors. Although for most of us it would require two lines and a straw to achieve her energy level, she assures us that we can be successful too.

Ester (left) her book and new CWC tote bag with President Andi Polk



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Opportunities: Contests, Marketing, Publishing and Conferences

Mary Freeman (Please do your own research.)

BLACK FOX LITERARY MAGAZINE is a print and online biannual publication featuring quality fiction of all styles and genres, poetry and nonfiction. Our Summer issue is published the last week in July, and the Winter issue is published the last week in January. We accept submissions on an ongoing basis, but do keep in mind that we have cut off dates for each issue.

Winter (2017) Issue Submission Period:
September 5, 2016–November 28, 2016.

Submissions received after the last day of the submission period will not be considered.

Cover Art; Fiction; Creative Nonfiction; Poetry; Fiction Contest

GO TO WEBSITE:
<http://www.blackfoxlitmag.com/submit/>

BOOTH A JOURNAL was established in 2009. BOOTH A JOURNAL publishes one new piece or author every Friday, square on our home page. Also, we publish two print issues yearly, usually in winter and summer. Our staff is comprised of MFA faculty and students in the Butler University graduate writing program. Any submissions sent to our email will be deleted. To submit work, please visit our [website](http://www.blackfoxlitmag.com/submit/). We are now open to new submissions in all genres. All accepted work will appear on our website and may appear in our

BOOTH A JOURNAL continued from page 2

website and may appear in our subsequent print issues. We will close the submission portal on March 31, 2017.

GO TO WEBSITE: <http://booth.butler.edu/submit/>

The **NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW** is the oldest literary magazine in America (founded in 1815) and one of the most respected. We are interested in high-quality poetry, fiction, and nonfiction on any subject; however, we are especially interested in work that addresses contemporary North American concerns and issues, particularly with the environment, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class. We read during the academic year. We close during university breaks.

We like stories that start quickly and have a strong narrative arc. Poems that are passionate about subject, language, and image are welcome, whether they are traditional or experimental, whether in formal or free verse (closed or open form). Nonfiction should combine art and fact with the finest writing.

Please submit no more than five poems, one short story, two short-short stories, or one essay (no more than 30 pages typically). We do allow simultaneous submissions, but please access your submission and withdraw it if it is accepted elsewhere. We do not consider previously published material or work currently in press elsewhere. Please do not submit entire novels, collections of poems or stories, or nonfiction books.

The status of your submission can be checked by logging back into the submission system. We try to report on submissions within five months, but we have a very small staff to read more than ten thousand pieces each year.

We ask for first North American serial rights only. Copyright reverts to the author upon publication. Acceptance may be in our print or online issues. Contact us at nar@uni.edu with questions.

Please note that while a contest is open, that genre for general submissions is closed. While the James Hearst Poetry Prize is open, general poetry submissions are closed.

GO TO WEBSITE: <http://northamericanreview.org/>
(Submissions Through Submittable)

SUBMITTABLE at Submittable.com. an online resource for all literary genres and creative arts contests, publications and events seeking entrants. Free to use, submission fees may be required.

WRITERS DIGEST CWC member discount. The CWC has arranged a \$25 discount with the Writers Digest Novel Writing Conference October 28-30 in Los Angeles. To apply for the discount, sign up online at novel.writersdigestconference.com and then enter promo code CWC16.

DUOTROPE an online resource for publishing and contest (paid and non-paid) opportunities. Several of our members have been successfully published through this service, Nominal \$5/month or \$50/yr subscription. First trial month free. What is offered?

- A robust market search feature.
- The index of market listings.
- The calendar of upcoming themes and deadlines.
- Interviews with editors.
- Full market listings, including response statistics.
- Statistical reports.
- Your personal control panel including your submissions tracker, etc.

If you have opted-in to receive our newsletter, you will receive our info-packed weekly issues via email.

ANTHOLOGY ANNOUNCEMENT

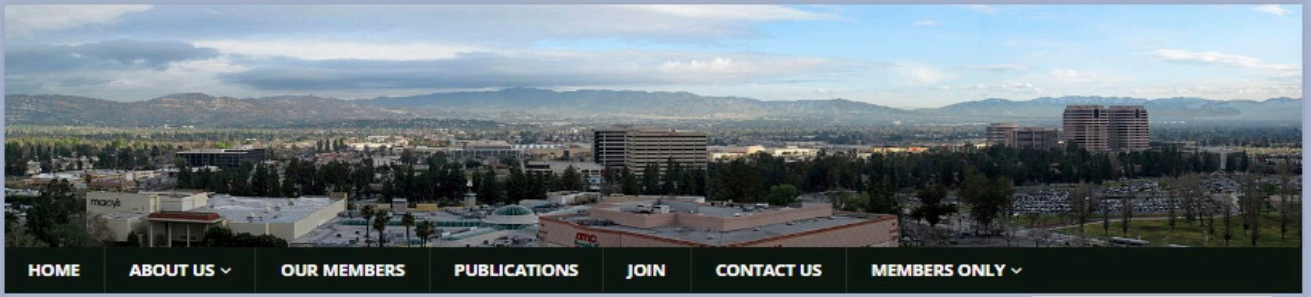
The Anthology Committee met September 26 and Chair Rita Brown will send an announcement of progress to all members as well update members attending the October 8th general meeting.



SAN FERNANDO

Valley Writers

A BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB



HOME

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OUR MEMBERS

PUBLICATIONS

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MEMBERS ONLY ▾



The image above is of our new website. It went live last weekend and we're really excited about it. It has a fresh, clean look; navigation has been vastly simplified; and best of all, we've added new sections and content to

showcase our club and its members.

In honor of our club's 30th anniversary this year, we have expanded the "About Our Branch" history of the club and in the near future will be adding a new section devoted to just the first 30 years of the club. There are members who have been with us for 10, 20, and yes, even the full 30 years — way to go, Mary Freeman and Yolanda Fintor!

We are asking anyone who has memorabilia of the "old days" to send them to us (electronically, please!) — copies of the early newsletters, cover photos and publication information for the previous anthologies, photos and bios for past officers and members, whatever you have. I've been amazed and delighted to learn about the club's activities and achievements over the last three decades — we definitely want to preserve all of that and give it a very special place on our website.

Our "Publications" area has been consolidated onto a single page and we have added the book covers of the club's prior anthologies. (Did you know we've published a number of anthologies over the years? I didn't.) We are still missing some of them, though — as mentioned above, please send us photos and publication information if you have copies we don't have. And note that this page is still under construction — hyperlinks to the individual *Scribe* and *In Focus* newsletter issues are being added as time permits, but all issues will be accessible soon.

We have also added new ways to provide public visibility for our members and their works. The "Our Members" page lists club awards given our members, and features book covers from those who have publicly available works. Again, I know we are missing many covers here — if yours is one of those, please send me a photo of the book you want to showcase (only one to a customer, please!) and I'll get it up on the site.

We are also adding prominent "Website" and "Email" entries next to each bio, to help send interested readers your way. Don't forget to update your bio and send us a headshot (minimum 2" x 3") if you haven't already. We will soon have an electronic submission form for those, but in the meantime just email them to CWC@henden.com.

There is a new "Members Only" section for entering the MRMS portal, submitting requests for press releases, and other housekeeping items. The password for this section is going out in a separate email; watch your inbox for it. And let us know if there is anything else you may want to see there; we want the site to be as comprehensive and helpful as possible.

The new user-friendly site also has a lot of features you've come to expect in a modern website— proper display on small screens like tablets or smartphones; a site-wide search function; enhanced website security; and search engine optimization. Take the site for a test drive at cwc-sfv.org, and let us know if we missed anything. You'll find wondrous things there I promise.

Kay Henden, CWC-SFV Webmaster

Announcements

CALENDER through 2016

Wednesday, October 5, 10 AM Board Meeting,
MPTF Villa Conference Rm 3rd Floor.

Saturday, October 8, "The Art of Public Speaking"
Toastmaster, Joey Okowitz

Wednesday, November 2, Board Meeting MPTF
Hospital Admin Conf Rm 10 AM.

Saturday, November 5, "The Craft of Writing: A
Mini Workshop" Barbara Abercrombie, author and
writing teacher UCLA Extension.

Saturday, December 5, "The Many Ways Creative
Ideas May Be Expressed," Victoria Zackheim,
anthologist, playwright, author, teacher.

Wednesday, December 7, Board Meeting MPTF
Hospital Admin Conf. Rm. 10 AM.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Events

Please notify the editor of upcoming literary
readings, speaking, presentations you are making.
The Scribe will print your events and contact
websites and/or email addresses.

Awards

Please notify the webmaster of literary awards and
achievements you have earned at cwc@henden.com.

MEMBER News

Alan Wills, new member joined September 3,
author of three books and a new publishing website.

Robert Nagayama member, poet, docent at the
Getty Museum died in an auto accident last year.

Georgina Tagliere is in Florida for six months and
will rejoin when she returns.

Judy Presnall has joined the Sacramento branch of
CWC. We wish her well and continued success.

Bill Sorrells renewed his membership even though
he moved to Laguna Beach. Hope to see him here.

Members' Submissions

A Breakthrough

Now I know God loves us all the same,
And we all partake of joy and pain,
Free will and choice, loss and gain;
And a chance to journey to the waters main,
Drink up and make a memorable name,
Plus an understanding of all things attain.

Though the journey is far from easy,
The lessons learned affect us deeply.
And I've found God gives us things free,
And carries us when we're too weak to be.
And those that are free eventually may see
The meaning behind it all, hopefully.

By Stephany Spencer, 7/16

Madigan and Gaffigan

What a brilliant comedian is Jim Gaffigan!
He makes me laugh, then laugh again.
His moniker is "Mr. Universe,"
And he's earned this name.

To make up for ad-libbing that's lame,
Many Standup Comedians' now aim
To shock the audience with filth and worse —
Thus they employee dirty scripts and curse.

But Gaffigan's humor is satire clean —
At least any of it that I've seen.
If only there were more so funny,
Without being dirty and mean.

Another comic like Gaffigan,
Is hilarious Kathleen Madigan.
She makes me laugh and laugh again.
Both have lines filled with humor and wit,
Sans obscenities and words like *#%!
And I sure do love it!

By Stephany Spencer C 2013

Dust Black-Days

The nightmare appears again tonight. The door of a black car makes a swishing noise as it slams closed behind me. Everything is black. Rows of black cars are going somewhere. Groups of people stiff like penguins wearing black with a sliver of white around the neck march behind. Dozens of black birds with iridescent green plumage and yellow blinking eyes called (*'pajaros de mala suerte'*) bad luck birds go around the trees like weightless-black-burned-tissue paper.

The ringing of the telephone wakes me from a deep restless stupor. The overseas operator says: You have a long distance person-to-person call from Quito.

“Dad died today.” Abe, my younger brother’s soft voice whispers, cracking like the scratch-scratch of a match intermingled with heavy static noises—sounding like Oceans licking the wavy edges of verdant jungles and far away snow-caped Andean noises.

The call came limping broken in pieces staining my feelings with anguish, despair and unbelievable grief. If I can hear Abe’s voice muffled sounding nasal as if heavily congested, dispersing into the quiet night? Then it must be true. Tears slip down my cheeks like a waterfall and I know I have to return Home.

I can’t remember much of the night flight. The plane is gliding in silence into the dark blue velvet sky, hundred stars almost touching the silver wings. The small oval window is sweating rain-like tears in the quiet of the night. I shake my tears loose, than the full glare of the sun climbs up to the sky and disappears. I blink shaking my tears loose.

The old chauffeur Luchio waits at the airport in Quito in a car I don’t recognize. After clearing customs he rushes into the traffic to get me HOME. He opens the rusty black wrought curly-cue iron gates and I see the colorless garden looking a lot different than I remembered. Dry dead plants with no heads once alive with beautiful flowers, line up like soldiers on both sides of the space.

In the center cobble-stoned area leading to the garage in the back of the house, I see the old Opel still waiting for imported parts. I can’t control the sobs—realizing that not only Dad had died but everything

around his life as well.

Inside, the house is semi-dark, windows closed, mirrors covered with shawls-like in black coarse material. I take my shoes off and walk in stocking-feet. In the center of the big living room is a coffin covered with a black cloth, a Jewish star in the center.

DAD with his incredible adventures looking for gold dust in the Amazon jungles, his contagious laughter inventing funny stories making us all laugh and hammering to a wall a giant chocolate heart, aiming darts to the center and allowing us kids to nibble at the dark chocolate pieces scattered on the floor.

Now, DAD is inside a pine box and HE IS NOT coming back. I feel the shattered pieces of my heart drop to my feet. Mom and younger brother Abe wipe tears with their jacket’s sleeves. I don’t remember who are the people crying and whispering.

The chauffeur is back announcing rides for the people going to the cemetery. In a sudden flash we are by the black curly-cue massive black iron gates of the Jewish Cemetery.

Andean women squat outside the gates holding giant baskets with white flowers between their legs (*'por el dia de los muertos'*) DAY OF THE DEAD. Soon after the skies cloud over, the florists run for cover their baskets dripping water with fragrant smells.

“I will wait for you outside”, Luchio the chauffeur says, his voice cracking. Blowing his nose several times he walks away with his hands clasped behind his back. Always loyal and servile, waiting to take Dad everywhere he needed to go, because Emphysema took over his lungs and he couldn’t walk in the 10.000 high altitude of Quito anymore.

I know I was there because someone said I was. But, I can’t remember the customary chants and prayers, the large group of penguin people, or walking up a hill where a mound of dirt waits next to an open grave. I hear the Rabbi tearing the collar of my blouse with his bare hands. A fine drizzle falls giving the dirt a-dark-coffee color. Small hills surrounding the cemetery are drenched with rain, and in a split second the snap of umbrellas follows covering Mom’s grief, siblings, close family mourners and friends. I feel numb like an observer.

All of Dad's Jewish as well as Ecuadorian friends who shared his Amazon's Jungle adventures are there. On one occasion only Dad had come back with cold shakes of Malaria, yellow eyes and jungle stink.

DAD, the modern Don Quixote De La Mancha who dared try challenges never explored by others before, is inside a plain wooden box and HE IS NOT COMING BACK.

Keyle Birberg
A MEMOIR

July Tankas

Day Lilies

Yesterday's Green Pods
Exploded in bright flowers
Gold and Purple Stripes
Painting slender white petals
Tomorrow you will be gone.

Watercolor

The full moon's glass eye
Stares down at me on my walk
In its slow ascent
Bleached white against a pale blue wash
Floating on twilight pink clouds.

Lantana Flowers

Lantana Flowers
Buttons red circling yellow
keep the bees busy
Gathering golden nectar
Soon there will be fresh honey.

By Michael Edelstein

Our River

Our river once wild, only seasonally dry
Rolled from the mountains so tall
Where black clouds darkened the sky
Never knew when the rains would fall

Never knew if the rains would fall
Never knew if the drought would call
Yet, birds and deer, bees and bears all recall
When our river rolled by.

When our wild river once rolled by
Only seasonally dry.

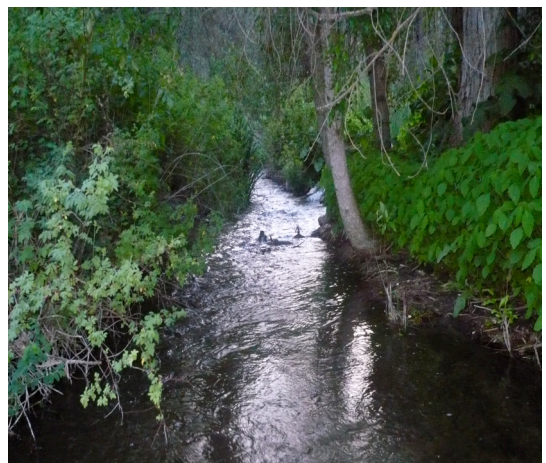
Our world still spins the same
As when each season came
The calendar marked the solstice
The season always told us

When our river rushed by
Only seasonally dry.

The wild river was forced to behave
Has been tamed; no longer brave
Walks its way down a channel man made
And Graffiti, not trees line its sides
Narrow, jacketed, not swollen and wide.

Never know if the rains will fall
When will the drought be recalled
Yet the birds and deer, bees and bears all
Remember when our river rolled by
And was only seasonally dry.

Andrea Polk, August 2016



Directions and Meeting Information

Location

**Motion Picture, Television Fund campus.
23388 Mulholland Dr.
Woodland Hills, CA
We meet in the Katzenberg Pavilion**

Freeway Directions

Take 101 Freeway to the west end of the San Fernando Valley. Exit Valley Circle/Mulholland Dr. Go south over the 101 Freeway. Pass Calabasa Rd., on your right enter Spielberg Dr. the second entrance. Parking is free. Ask the kiosk attendant for directions to the parking lot with the trombone player statue.

The Katzenberg Pavilion room is beyond the Dog Park. Take the winding path to the courtyard. We will set up for sign-in outside our room at 12:30 PM

Guests are asked to contribute a \$5 donation.

Program Schedule

Subject to change.

Meeting Dates: Normally the first Saturday of each month except July and August.

Registration: 12:30

Guests: Suggested donation \$5.00

Members only Open Mic: 1:00

Announcements: 1:30 – 1:40

Break, Meet & Mingle: 1:40

Feature Speaker: 2:00 – 3:00

Speaker Book sales and signing: 3:00

Clean up and doors closed: 3:30

The End

Happy Halloween

Time Change November 6 at 2 AM
Turn Clocks BACK 1 hour