

THE VALLEY SCRIBE

EDITORS' NOTE

A NEW ERA OF NEWSLETTER

Greetings, writers' of the desert far and wide! Before we dive into this newsletter I thought it would be appropriate to have a preface. As you all know, the last official issue of The Valley Scribe was all the way back in March, and whether it be naivety or arrogance, this editor has stepped up to the plate.

Naturally, there are going to be many changes but I hope to bring you information that will be both relevant and useful. For example, I would like to try and showcase a member of the clubs' writing each month; give them a small space in this newsletter to circulate their works. I will also be taking submissions: fiction no more than 800 words, non-fiction 500, and for poetry no more than 40 lines. The e-mail for the newsletter is cwcsfvnewsletter@gmail.com.

Many of you don't know me yet, as I am not only a new editor, but a relatively new member to the club itself. This month I thought it would be appropriate to begin the showcases with me, as a sort of introduction to everyone in the club. You have all made me feel extremely welcome and I am glad to be a member of this publication.

Your newest sycophant,

MAX DAWSON

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Special Ceremony Kicks Off October Meeting

By Gary Wosk

Be sure not to miss the next monthly meeting on Saturday, October 7. The pride that members have in the branch could reach an all-time high. Los Angeles City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield (Third District) and Motion Picture and Television Fund (MPTF) CEO Bob Beitcher will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the branch in special ceremony that will take place during the first half of the meeting. The CWC-

SFV will also express its gratitude to MPTF for providing the branch with a home.

“We are very grateful for the support of these two distinguished individuals,” said CWC-SFV President Gabriella Owens. “My hope is that our members will come

out in great numbers to show them how devoted we are to ensuring that generations of future writers will have a place to gather, make friends and develop their craft.” Blumenfield will affirm the significant role that the branch has played for three decades in supporting and educating the community and its writers, as well as the publication earlier this year of *Cascade of Pearls*, an anthology of short stories, imaginings and poems written by its members. He will also present the branch with a colorful proclamation.

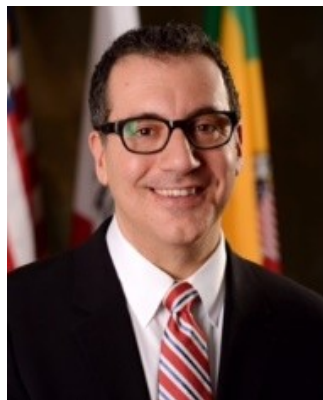
“I am so proud to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club and the release of the

anthology *Cascade of Pearls*,” said Blumenfield. “It is great to have the club right here in the West Valley helping writers hone their skills while creating a wonderful community.” The proclamation by Blumenfield is symbolic of the fact that “this is an acknowledgement on the part

by the City of Los Angeles that the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club has made a big difference in so many people’s lives,” Owens said.



Beitcher was equally magnanimous in his comments about the relationship between MPTF and CWC-SFV. “We feel privileged to have been able to host the California Writer Club on the Wasserman Campus in Woodland Hills for the past 10 years,” said MPTF CEO Bob Beitcher. “The mission of the club is truly compatible with our own in helping navigate life with a purpose and living with dignity; in fact, over the years various residents from our campus have participated in and benefited from the club. And the club has been wonderfully generous in supporting our own Grey Quill Society — residents on our campus who gather weekly to share their own writing projects and encourage each other in various forms of written expression. It’s really been a blessed partnership.”



ANNOUNCEMENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over the years this club has helped so many people with their writing. We have improved and polished our writing, especially through our wonderful critique groups. We have had so many expert speakers on all facets of writing and publishing. Month after month we have all learned more about the craft, many times just from visiting with each other.

When I set out to publish my first book, there were so many club members who pitched in to help. Valuable advice on organization, editing, formatting and publishing was available to me just for the asking. Every meeting I see members helping other members move closer to their next writing goal. A bit of advice here: a website to check out there, and most important of all, encouragement to keep going. This is why together we have accomplished so much more than would have been possible alone.

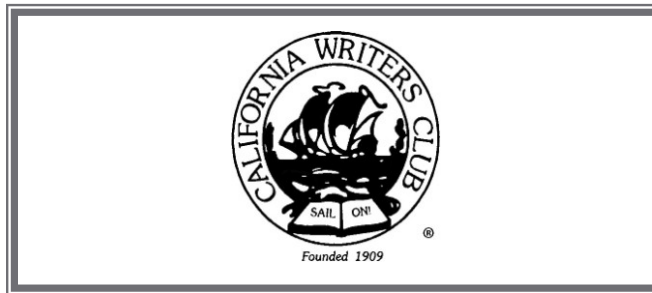
Our board wants to keep this progress going. To continue to do the things that make this club so valuable to our members. We need your help.

Our program chair Lori Hamilton has lined up several interesting speakers for the next months. In October, we will have Annette Rodgers from Poison Pen Publishing which publishes mysteries. Editor Helga Schier will speak in November. Lori could use someone to help follow up with

scheduled speakers (i.e. make sure we have their bios...) and handle details (Does the speaker need a projector...?). Could you help send a couple of emails each month?

Kay Henden has done a terrific job on our website.

She stepped down many months ago, but has continued to maintain it. We need a volunteer to take over the website. Kay will teach you all you need to know. (You will learn WordPress!)



Please let us know if you can help.

Alan could use help on hospitality. Set up and clean-up is a lot of work. Could you help one month?

Max has taken on the huge job of resurrecting our newsletter. He could use people to write articles on the speakers, interesting events etc. Could you help write an article for one month? Let Max know at cwcsfvnewsletter@gmail.com.

Several people have had great ideas of things that would be nice for the branch to do. BUT special projects need someone to do them. Please let us know if you can take on a big project.

We are all in this together. We'll get by with a little help from our friends.

The CWC Literary Review is Under New Management

You may have heard that Dave LaRoche who started the CWC Literary Review at least six years ago has retired from that post. The best compliment to him is that a team of six has agreed to produce the next Lit Rev! Imagine the work Dave did if it now takes six of us! Big shoes to follow in. Dave now has a well-deserved opportunity to work on his own pursuits. Thank you for everything, Dave.

So, members, polish up a story, poem, essay, or memoir piece, check out the guidelines at <http://calwriters.org/publications/#submit>, follow the guidelines, and submit, submit! Submissions will be accepted Sept 1 – Nov 30!

We have a few submissions in already but need MANY! As a statewide writing club, we want to be able to choose quality. Last year we were able to expand the publication and hope to even more this year.

There has been some controversy about sending feedback to authors, so this year we are only saying we **may** be able to return feedback. After all, we're only human and we are volunteers.

Dust off those ideas you've been toying with, write, rewrite, share with other good writers, edit, rewrite and submit. (Writing is hard work isn't it? But so satisfying.)

Elisabeth Tuck, Mt. Diablo

Scott Evans, San Joaquin Valley

CWC Literary Review Editors

The CWC-SFV Board is also interested in Volunteer Liaisons to work with the English and/or Journalism Departments in the local colleges, such as CSUN, Pierce, Valley, Pepperdine, etc. We think graduates of the schools would be great Liaisons. The goal would be to encourage students to join our CWC-SFV Club. In the future, there may be a \$500.00 scholarship we can offer to a student.

PLEASE CONTACT A BOARD MEMBER IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

OCTOBER 7TH SPEAKER

ANNETTE ROGERS



Editor, Poison Pen Publishing

At our next meeting, the speaker will be the wonderful Annette Rogers, an editor from Poison Pen Publishing! She will be speaking on how to get a publisher's attention.

In her own words:

"We'll talk about mastering seven steps to help you succeed in publishing your work. Getting a publisher's attention is the most significant task a writer faces in bringing work to the market. Once the editor starts to read your submission, your words must immediately grip her interest—not after a few paragraphs or pages or chapters. Be a storyteller. Show the reader what's going on 'right now.' Use the moment to capture the reader and make her turn the page, asking, 'What happens next?'"

"**Annette Rogers** became addicted to reading during dark childhood winters in Juneau, Alaska, when she read the city library from one side to the other. Now she edits mysteries, corresponds with writers and agents, judges writing contests, and evaluates new submissions.

She speaks nationally to professional conventions, university seminars, writers' groups, and book clubs. Poisoned Pen Press is an independent publisher founded in 1997, based in Scottsdale, and is one of the largest publishers of hardcover mysteries in the world.

She has published a bestselling international book on Egypt; written for *O, the Oprah Magazine*; served as managing editor of *Utah Holiday Magazine*; and reported for *Time/Life* on court hearings during the Mormon Bomber case. She holds a Master's Degree in History and English. "

Her website is www.poisonedpenpress.com.

Kathleen Kaiser

5 Mistakes Indie Authors Make When Launching a Book

At last month's meeting we had the sagacious Kathleen Kaiser; an exemplary author and editor with a background in journalism from <http://www.kathleenkaiserandassociates.com/>.

In her lecture; she presented the five biggest mistakes authors make when launching a new book. An important observation to note is that all five of these mistakes revolve around Impatience.

In order, the five mistakes that she has found most authors make are:

1. **Rushed or no editing-** when beginning the editing process, do not seek out your neighbor or English teacher friend to be your editor. Find a pro whose worked in publishing- the syntax and grammar of creative writing in the publishing world is completely different, often up to interpretation, and does adhere to the standards of "proper English."
2. **Rushed release date-** Kaiser has found that many authors rush to get their books on Amazon, without first getting professional critiques or editorial reviews. Get the word out on social media to build pre-orders, otherwise the only people who will know about your work are your immediate family and friends.
3. **No Advanced reviews-** Advanced reviews are KEY to getting published! Services like Kirkus (\$425 for 250 words or \$575 for 500 words) and Foreward (\$499) are crucial in getting reviews that will be able to support the validity of your work. Remember: these services can take up to 7-9 weeks.
4. **No Advanced market building or social media-** Know your genre(s) and know the books and authors that are the tenants of that genre. You must find and know your market before you can enter it! A great way to gain prestige is through writing contest. Kaiser recommends taking a look at SPAWN's list of contests at <http://spawn.org/category/opps/contestsawards/>.
5. **Unrealistic Budget for publishing, marketing, and your time-** This is a costly and time consuming process. Editing should take 3 to 6 months. The cost of a professional editor ranges from \$1500 for up to 300 pages, and a proof reader or copy editor will cost around \$750-\$1500. Anything out of those ranges is probably a scam. An author website can cost \$120 a year is you self-publish on Weebly, Wix, or other similar platforms. Look at other author sites for ideas and guidance. Web designers range from \$500-\$750 if you want a custom and private domain. The cost of production of a book, taking into consideration the cover, layout, design, and e-book formats can range from \$1295 to \$2000.

Kaiser has found that the idea of holding a printed copy of their own book can be overwhelming, to the point of rushing into publication. Another way this impatience manifests is in the neglecting of marketing; Kaiser highly recommends that you look into marketing BEFORE you even begin the editing process on your work. Look into the genre(s) that you feel your writing fits into on Amazon. How are other authors marketing their products? Remember: you must be able to switch from a creative mindset into business mode during the marketing stage or otherwise, you won't have very much luck at all.

For those of us who attended the last meeting, we also know that Kaiser had a minor health problem during her lecture. While worrisome in appearance, this editor is happy to say that she is doing much better. Thank you to Gary Wosk and his quick action in alerting the doctors on site at the Motion Picture and Television Fund. Kaiser is feeling much better and has even sent a note to assuage our anxieties about the situation:

“Hi Everyone,

First, I am fine. My doctor believes it was from the heat though we are doing some long put off stress tests over the next few weeks. I want to thank everyone who was so kind to me. You all stepped up, helped out a stranger and I greatly appreciate your wonderful efforts.

Thank you for inviting me to speak and I hope I can return next year in a less dramatic manner!

Kathleen Kaiser

KathleenKaiserAndAssociates.com”

Let this be a reminder to us all to beat the heat! Stay hydrated, stay cool, and don’t over exert yourself.

NaNoWriMo



National Novel Writing Month is almost upon us! Bunker down or run in terror, as the year’s most intense writing challenge will soon begin! There are many sources that will become available to you via the NaNoWriMo website, so please make sure to register at **nanowrimo.org**. Here is a list of upcoming events to help your writing become the best version of itself:

Thursday, September 28

7:00pm

[Author Event: Grant Faulkner & NaNoWriMo Meetup](#)

Sunday, October 1

[Forums Wipe](#)

Tuesday, October 3

1:00pm

NaNo Prep Webcast: Get Ready to Write this November!

Friday, October 6

10:00am

NaNoWriMo at LitQuake: KidQuake Upper Elementary Program

Saturday, October 7

4:00pm

Grant Faulkner at LitQuake: Art of the Novel

Tuesday, October 10

6:00pm

NaNoWriMo at LitQuake: Barely Published (Teen Edition)

“Stick to freedom, destroy fear, let the light in, let your limbs go loose: NaNoWriMo is not about making something that perfectly fits a mold, it’s about unlocking your creative mind ... Whatever you are about to write in your first draft will be the skin of your story, but in the process of writing it, you’ll discover that you want to go underneath the surface...”

-Ayfer Simms, Municipal Liason at NaNoWriMo

Editor’s Choice

Books to Consider

Greetings and salutations Writers! As the summer winds down and we find ourselves slowly moving into fall, I thought I’d recommend a book that really sets the mood. *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury is the first book in his Green Town series, falling a boy’s adolescence in the summer of ’28. “*A summer of green apple trees, mowed lawns, and new sneakers. Of half-burnt firecrackers, of gathering dandelions, of Grandma’s belly-busting dinner. It was a summer of sorrows and marvels and gold-fuzzed bees. A magical, timeless summer in the life of a twelve-year-old boy named Douglas Spaulding* (from the back of the book)”. It is a novel that encompasses the essence of bucolic life in America with an imaginative twist; a man creating a miracle machine from inside his garage, the underlying fears of the townsfolk as a murderer stalks the streets at night, children traveling in packs around the countryside

on endless adventure. It is sure to inspire and invigorate its readers as they themselves feel time rewinding and age reversing.

“It was the face of spring, it was the face of summer, it was the warmth of clover breath. Pomegranate glowed in her lips, and the noon sky in her eyes. To touch her face was that always new experience of opening your window one December morning, early, and putting out your hand to the first white cool powdering of snow that had come, silently, with no announcement, in the night. And all of this, this breath-warmness and plum-tenderness was held forever in one miracle of photographic chemistry which no clock winds could blow upon to change one hour or one second; this fine first cool white snow would never melt, but live a thousand summers.”

— Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*

Writer Showcase

Maxwell Dawson

Maxwell Dawson is a writer fascinated with academic and fictional capacity. When it comes of Haruki Murakami and Neil Gaiman while mid-century science fiction. From masked men primordial gods singing their starsongs on there to dazzle readers' and send their minds on means to be a human and humanity's place in academics, Dawson writes mainly on topics of conference at UC Berkeley representing the paper on the authorial body and gender: discussing the ancient poet Catullus and science fiction writer James Tiptree Jr. and how their gender and sexuality affected both their authorial persona and the body of their works.



every facet of the field; writing both in and to fiction, his works chase the ephemeral dreams enforcing the adrenaline and military rigor of out to steal your most treasured thoughts to ancient far-off worlds, his stories will always be a journey that has them considering what it such an infinite universe. When it comes to gender and sexuality. In 2016, he attended a American University of Paris and presented a

To end this first edition, I thought I'd share the story that I published in the magazine Paris/Atlantic. It has a very Halloween-oriented tone so I hope you enjoy!

“You think Hell is among the Fallen angels?”

Listen, numbskull. You think Hell is among the Fallen angels, the first of God's living things to disappoint him in the line of many? You think Hell is rumbling away under your feet, the Earth's hungry stomach, digesting the souls of our dearly departed, like your uncle who committed tax fraud and even dear old Sparky, who pooped on the rug when you were ten. Comical really, that you think our torment starts only *after* you are put to rest.

I know how you fidget. I know you've seen it, your eyes darting side to side, hands crumpled up around your wallet in the pocket of that jacket you bought for five euros and are damn proud of it. What a find. What are your beady little eyes seeing exactly? Hell of course! It's in the everyday things you do and see with that suit of mortal folly that you call your flesh. Little known statistical factoid: over 10,000 people a year commit suicide in France, and a good portion of those do it on the railways.

Little known factoid, but I'm sure you knew that. There's something about public transportation that makes people, plain and simple, just want to *die*.

Did you ever stop and think *why*? Of course you didn't.

The answer is pretty basic. Take your local metropolitan railway system for example. The one that you take three to four times a day you ask? Of course that one, numbskull! Like a modern day Taenarus, you go down into those little caverns, those antiquated little Hellmouths that tourists fawn over and take pictures of, exclaiming how quaint the Paris metro is with a sigh and swoon, barely conscious atop buckling knees at the sight of them. Call yourself Aeneas or Orpheus, because congratulations kiddo! You can add your name to the prestigious list of VIP members who have visited Hell itself! In my opinion though, you are much better than those other con artists. They went, what, once? You continually subject yourself to that odyssey multiple times a day! What a masochist you are, my dear numbskull.

I know you love to pretend to play dumb, so hear me out. Think about it. Whenever you descend those stairs, pushed by a gust of freezing wind from Lucifer's tired wings, you are in another world. As you wait for that train, your Sybil in this dangerous world, your lighthouse guiding you through the dark miasma of the tunnels. If you look close enough out its windows into those labyrinths, I know you see the shades of our tragically deceased in the graffiti that stains the walls and their shadows moving about behind the barred gateways to the Kingdom of the Dead. I know the anxiety you feel waiting for that glorious angel with its flaming sword to come and swoop you away to safety, as you sit helpless and alone, staring at the outlines of Cerberus and the Furies that shift and dwell in the shadows of the tunnels.

Monsters and ghouls aside, that's not what makes this highway particularly tormenting. No, no we have plenty of monsters roaming around surface side. That's not what's important. If all that was important was ripping flesh with scraping claws and entrails on the floor, we'd have that covered on the check list, wouldn't we my, sweet numbskull? Even on a sunny spring day, carnations a-bloom and filling the world with the innocence of a cherub's rosy behind, you will always find devils lurking around, stopping and smelling the flowers.

What makes Hell *Hell* if you get rid of all the fire and pitchforks? Make no mistakes, the fire and pitchforks are just there for fun, really. In the same way that God chose flowing white robes and circlets made of light, the Devil chose small intestines as boas and the blood of the fallen as a nice eye shadow. It's a statement, just like the length of your skirt and how much black you wear. When you strip Hell down, to her barest nude self, you start to see the graffiti of the metro tattooed on her ass and the loneliness of the people going to nowhere in particular, like freckles on her skin.

You know the shades of the metro as familiar as a cup of coffee, those sad little men and women with only half a soul, getting ready for their nine to five in their business casual. Super chic! They aren't just the creepy ghosties lurking around the corner, maws unhinged and waiting to bite. They are all around you. You can see it not just in the darkness, or behind ancient bars, but on the faces of the people all around you. The

way their wrinkles and creases look so defined and famine, the way they look at nothing but the floor, daring not to touch each other, lest they burn in lakes of boiling blood or spend eternity on a pike.

Hell, my friend, is nothing but loneliness dressed up in various shades of red with a pair of cheap horns stuck on top. You walk these hallowed passageways, waiting to see a Minotaur, and you wonder why I call it Hell! Hell is in the mind, and it is in this labyrinth where there is nothing but our minds to look at, we start to see the devils that torment us emerge from the shadows.

Hell, my friend, is a dominatrix, and we pay her a hefty fee.

Membership in one or more critique groups is open to any member of the San Fernando Valley Writers, subject to group size limitations. For more information, including whether a group is accepting new members, contact Critique Group Coordinator: Geraldine Jabara at geri.jabara@att.net.

California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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Pre-Session Leader, Nance Crawford Nance@NanceCrawford.com

Webmaster, Currently unfilled

Newsletter Editor, Max Dawson cwcsfvnewsletter@gmail.com

LOTS of great information at our Website: www.cwc-sfv.org

San Fernando Valley Branch of California Writers Club meets at:

Motion Picture & Television Fund

Katzenberg Pavillion

23388 Mulholland Drive

Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Freeway Directions from east

Take 101 Freeway to the west end of the San Fernando Valley. Exit Valley Circle/Mulholland Dr. Go south over the 101 Freeway. Pass Calabasas 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.

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