February Speaker: Freelance Editor Dr. Barbara Ardinger

We all think we’re really good writers. Well, maybe not all of us. Dr. Barbara Ardinger, who has edited more than 300 books and written more blogs and book reviews than she can remember, has worked as a freelance editor since the turn of the century. She’s edited books in many genres, even a book written by a committee.

What does an author need to know about editing? Barbara will share a dozen tips, from “don’t ask your best friend to edit your book” (our friends love us and tend not to correct our writing enough) to “keep in mind that your readers don’t live in your head with you” (so you need to show and tell them stuff).

The last part of the speech is a handout of really bad writing—a house built of troglodyte, demons with vacillating tails. The lesson? Be careful with word choice!

The Valley Scribe Editorial Change

For many of you, I’m a new face in the Katzenberg Pavilion, but I’m really not a stranger to the SFV-CWC. I was a founding member of the club when we were known as the West Valley Branch of the CWC. I served on the Board and edited the West Valley newsletter - In Focus. Eventually I became editor of The Valley Scribe when our West Valley branch merged with the San Fernando Valley CWC Branch.

I edited the newsletter for several years, then resigned and spent time working on other projects. For over a decade, I have also been a member of the Internet Writing Workshop, one of the first virtual writing clubs. Two years ago, I agreed to become a co-administrator of their Practice List. (short fiction) Now I’m back in my comfort zone at the Movie Home and I look forward to making new acquaintances and listening to interesting speakers. Write on, SFV members. And I hope to see you in the Katzenberg Room on February 3rd.

— Kathy Highcove
Greetings Everyone!

I hope you all had fun over the holidays. We have so much great news that I hardly know where to start! I have several really important things to tell you about.

If you are reading this then you know the Scribe is Back! The wonderful Kathy Highcove is now our editor. She has a lot of experience and some outstanding ideas! Please let her know how much you appreciate her volunteering to take on such a big job!

I am very excited to announce that we (CWC-SFV) will have a table in a shared booth at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books! The festival is Saturday, April 21st 9:00-6:00 and Sunday, April 22nd 9:00-5:00. We will set up a schedule for members to staff the table. (Members staffing the table may bring a few copies of their books.) Sign up sheets will be at the next few meetings. We will have handouts at the Festival listing all our members books - using the book list that is on our website. If you have books that are not on the CWC-SFV website, please email your book cover to Andi Polk, andipolk4@gmail.com.

Another project that I am thrilled to have moving forward is the CWC-SFV hosting a one-day workshop or conference. Lori Hamilton, our Program Chair, has volunteered to Chair the Workshop / Conference Committee. If you can help, please let her know. We’re hoping to have a one day workshop either in June or in the early Fall. Lori has several very interesting instructors in mind!

As you’ll read in Yolanda’s story in this issue, our branch has its roots at Pierce College. So, I’m happy to tell you that CWC-SFV, in partnership with the CWC State Organization, will provide a $500 scholarship to a student in Pierce College’s English Department. This is just one more way we are trying to connect with and support aspiring writers.

I’m so proud to be part of CWC-SFV! Together we can achieve so many great things!

— Gabriella Owens
One of the first things a budding writer learns in Creative Writing 101 is to “Show, don’t tell.”

And so we writers dutifully strive to avoid telling a reader what they learn about a scene, a character, a conversation, a situation, a confrontation, and then we attempt to show them.

But artful and awesome showing is not so easy, is it? Vivid imagery is the foundation of our craft, and must be learned with practice and by example.

In the writing trade we can find plenty of inspiration for effective description from our favorite writers. If you love books, and most writers read volumes in their spare time, then you’ve probably found hundreds of favorite authors. And why do you enjoy their work? Possibly, it’s their ability to enable us to see the character, imagine the action, and feel drawn into the plot or story.

In her January presentation in the Katzenberg Pavilion, speaker Laina Villeneuve showed us four ways that spot-on description enhances a story.

- Describes appearance
- Provides voice
- Continues the action
- Foreshadows dramatic events

Let’s delve deeper into the first and second Powerpoints: Describes appearance and provides character or narrator voice.

Laina showed us several very potent descriptive passages by her favorite authors using an example from one of her own novels. But, alas, PowerPoint can’t be copied very nimbly into another publication so I will work up my own attempt to enhance a scene with vivid description.

I’ll start with: The little girl danced into the room and came to a stop by the buffet table. Then she reached for a cookie shaped like a Christmas tree. Out of nowhere, her brother appeared and said, “I’m gonna tell.”

Thinking about Laina’s list of look, movement, voice, drama, and action, I’ll attempt to descriptively enrich this low-key scene:

A rhinestone tiara perched on her upswept blonde curls, a small girl in a raspberry-pink tutu pirouetted across the room and stopped to stare at the wide cookie dish on the dessert table. She glanced over her shoulder, observed her mother busily caught up in adult conversation, and then stealthily reached for a Christmas tree cookie that sparkled with sugar crystals on swirls of rich green butter icing. Just as her small fingers almost grasped its cinnamon-scented goodness, her older brother sidled up behind her and hissed in her ear, “If you take that cookie, Mary Kate, I’m gonna go tell Mom. Oh, you’re such a stupid cry-baby!”

Yes, I believe that addition of visual detail and an acerbic sample of dialogue added color and life to my initial plain vanilla scenario. (And now I feel like breaking open a pack of Oreos.)

On behalf of the SFV-CWC membership, I thank our guest speaker, Laina Villeneuve, for sharing her helpful suggestions on how to enliven and enrich our writing.

If you’d like to learn more about Ms. Villeneuve, and her published romantic novels, simply Google websites that review the work of this prolific author.

— Kathy Highcove

Three of Laina Villeneuve’s Books
Last year we celebrated our branch’s 30th anniversary with the publication of an anthology, *Cascade of Pearls*. The Writers Club’s state history dates back to the early 1900s when informal gatherings of novelists, poets and short story writers met. Eventually, they formed the Press Club of Alameda. In 1909, a faction of the membership broke off and under the leadership of Dr. William S. Morgan, the California Writers Club became incorporated in 1913. They chose the motto “Sail On!” from Joaquin Miller’s poem, “Columbus.” We continue to use this as our rallying call today.

For many years the California Writers Club claimed Jack London as its founder. After more judicious research, it was found that Jack London was part of the above group that included George Sterling, John Muir, Joaquin Miller and the first California poet laureate, Ina Coolbrith. They became honorary members after the California Writers club was incorporated in 1913.

Today, we have grown to 22 branches throughout the state. Each branch sends a representative to central board meetings biannually to report on its activities and to learn what other branches are doing to promote the mission of the club. The mission as stated in the bylaws is “to provide a forum for educating both members and the public in the craft of writing and in marketing their works.”

In 2012, the CWC published its first literary magazine, naming it *Literary Review*. A Review has been published every year since. The stories and poems showcased the writings of members of the various branches. Submissions are now being accepted until November 30, for the 2018 issue. Guidelines are on the state website: www.calwriters.org

Two coveted awards are given every other year to members who are recognized for outstanding service. The Ina Coolbrith Award is given to a member that has contributed most to the state organization. In the past, two of our members, who sadly, are no longer with us, have had the honor of receiving this prestigious award: Betty Freeman, for her outstanding continued work with the state organization and Ray Malus, our branch’s computer genius, for simplifying record keeping by creating a system called MRMS (Membership Record Management System) which became the official digital recording instrument used by all branches. The system has been in use since July, 2012. Branch presidents, treasurers and membership chairs are most grateful for all the time and workload this system has saved them.

The Jack London Award is given to a branch member who best exemplifies service to the branch. The Board of Directors of each branch chooses the recipient of this award. The recipients are all recognized at a Central Board meeting held in northern California.

Through its branches, and in keeping with its mission, CWC offers scholarships, conferences, community outreach programs involving libraries and bookstores, in addition to member critique groups and regular monthly meetings.
Birth of the SFV

We can be proud that the SFV was the first CWC branch chartered in Southern California. Betty Freeman was at the helm of the launch in 1986 when she and Joan Jones, organized a gathering of writers and would-be writers.

Jones, a creative writing teacher, was our first president. Under her leadership, our club held its first Writers Conference at Pierce College that attracted many new members.

The photo shows the 1989 board of directors when Mary Freeman was president and Betty Freeman was vice-president. Shown in the photo are: Susan Weiner, Kitty O’Conner King, Mary Freeman, Betty Freeman Back row: Ruth Theodus, and Esther Perea

1989—The first SFV Board members. Front: row: Yolanda Fintor, Susan Weiner, Kitty O’Conner King, Mary Freeman, Betty Freeman Back row: Ruth Theodus, and Esther Perea

Because of Betty Freeman’s tireless energy and constant involvement with every detail of an event, our conferences always ran smoothly.

Betty was not only a mentor to many of us, she became our club benefactor when she obtained a free meeting room at the comfortable Motion Picture and Television Home.

We are proud of the ten anthologies. SFV has produced in the past decades. The 2017 edition is titled, “Cascade of Pearls”

We believe in community outreach. To this end, we’ve offered classes in libraries and colleges and conducted writing contests in high schools.

In the course of our thirty years as a writing club, we have endeavored to encourage members to constantly improve their writing as they work toward the goal of publication.

We have stayed on course by holding workshops, forming critique groups, offering speakers on all aspects of the writing world; editing, marketing, writing query letters, submitting proposals— even on handling rejections. Sail On!

– Yolanda Fintor
Imagine a county fair with individual booths that are set up for different games, people walking around, talking, eating, and enjoying a beautiful day. But every single person at this festival is there because they love books—because they love to read and/or to write. This is the setting for the 23rd Annual L.A. Times Festival of Books, which was held at UCLA for the first sixteen years and is now hosted on the USC campus. The weekend boasts 125,000 people in attendance.

I am the executive director of a small 501c3 nonprofit – Wordsmith Productions – and we have a 10x20 booth this year. The good news is that we still have room for individual authors to have a table with us. Your own 10x10 booth would be about $1300 at this point, with a limit of two authors a booth. Many other organizations charge members $125 for two hours at a table with other authors. Our nonprofit has half-day segments for $125 or a full day for $250 at your own table.

As a new member of the San Fernando branch of CWC, I am so pleased that we will have a table each day. This will allow for a great opportunity to market our club to potential new members, network for possible speakers at our meetings and hopefully sell a few anthologies. Please contact our club president Gabriella concerning volunteer opportunities to staff the table over the weekend, which would also allow for you to have your books available for sale.

The festival generally has panels by literary agents, and book publishers. There are live music stages, lots of food, and an endless array of new and seasoned authors giving lectures. Look for the book festival supplement in the Sunday L.A. Times the week before the festival.

There is something magical about being around thousands of people who love books as much as you do. This is two days of everything and anything that has to do with books and book gifts and writers and readers. For me, it is simply the best two days of the year, second only to the Oscars. Even if you don’t come to staff the club’s table or arrange a table of your own with us, I hope you will attend, bring your favorite book, find a place to sit and read. It is a wonderful event.

Please contact me at hdbookfest@gmail.com or call me on my personal cell 310-435-5270 if you would like to get the application for a table. There are only a few spaces left!

www.wordsmithproductions.org
Volunteers needed for the CWC-South Booth at the Riverside Dickens Festival

Saturday and Sunday, February 24 – 25th. Last year Andi Polk and Mary Freeman volunteered to help staff the booth. Our CWC-South booth promotes our Southern California CWC branches and offers a workshop for high school attendees. You may also attend the author reenactments and lectures by author actors presenting the writing lives of Victorian writers of all genres.

Passers-by interested in joining one or more branches sign-up for follow-up contacts and information. Meet fellow readers and writers, learn valuable information about Victorian authors. Attendees are welcome to dress up in period costumes. Bring your own food or eat at the food concessions. If you have books of the genre you may wish to donate for the table display and $1.00 sale to benefit CWC-South.

Google Riverside Dickens Festival for details. Contact Andi Polk, andipolk4@gmail.com to volunteer and possible carpooling.

-The SFV-CWC Board

Meeting Program Change

To get the full benefit of all that our monthly speaker has planned to tell us, we are moving refreshment time to the end of our general meetings. We hope this change will give our guests more time to deliver an unhurried presentation and to answer questions after the lecture.

Need Feedback? Try The Wills Plan

Are you a writer on the hunt for a forum? Have you written a story or article that needs a critique, preferably a free one? You’re not alone.

Alan and Norma Wills developed Authors Preview after discovering that some writers’ forums charge their members as much as $100 per year. However, there’s a catch: until you have critiqued 10 authors works, you cannot submit your writing.

Authors Preview is 100% FREE to all writers – Whether you submit a short story, a poem or a chapter from a book-in-progress, there is no charge. And you can direct the reader to the website where to purchase your book.

Interested? Submit a short bio, with a photo, if you wish. Plus your writing sample. Send your information to AuthorsPreview@gmail.com.

You will receive back an Author’s number which is all you need for every submission. There is no limit to how many submissions you can send. Under your submission you will receive feedback from readers. In return, you must agree to read other Author’s submissions and write a critique - positive or negative. You can also make a suggestion for improvement to the work. Your critique is the power of Authors Preview.

Note: make sure you spell Authors with an S on the end.

Alan and Norma Wills

— Alan Wills
Your February submissions for the CWC Literary Review. Check the guidelines at: http://calwriters.org/publications/#submit

Advertise in the Literary Review

The prestigious Literary Review offers advertisers an opportunity to reach hundreds of writers under one annual publication that every member of the California Writers Club receives as a perk of membership in the CWC.

That’s right. The 2018 Spring/Summer edition of the Literary Review can contain your ad! We are maintaining our low introductory rates for this upcoming issue. While these may change in future editions, we’ve gone as low as we can go to offer you and other writing-related advertisers a huge advertising opportunity at low rates. In fact, the larger the ad, the greater the discount. Everything above a 1” Column-Inch ad gets a 10% or greater discount.

Check out the ad rates on the rate sheet to see examples of space and advertising rates for this great chance to display your ad in the California Writers Club’s publication, the Literary Review.

Advertising may be submitted at any time, year-around, for the next issue as long as it is submitted prior to the deadline for the annual publication in which you want your ad placed.

Deadline for submitting your ad is March 31, 2018 for the 2018 edition.

All ads must be submitted via email to advertisingCWC@gmail.com with an attached jpg file.

Checks in the appropriate amounts are to be made out to CWC Central Treasury and mailed to:

HDCWC Advertising Department
20258 Hwy 18 Ste. 430 PMB 281
Apple Valley, CA 92307

Word Economy

Good writers don’t waste words. Mark Twain said a writer should eliminate one-third of everything he writes without losing any content. Here are some suggestions for learning this essential skill.

Combine sentences
Original: My friend’s name was Artimus. He ate half of my box of Valentine chocolates while I was busy making dinner. 20 wds
Revision: While I cooked dinner, Artimus ate half my box of Valentine chocolates. 12 wds

Use short openings
Original: Because she was so disappointed, she sulked all evening. 9 wds
Revision: Disappointed, she sulked all evening. 5 wds

Avoid There is/There are/ There was/There were in favor of the active
Original: In Starbucks there was a group of retirees who were noisily socializing. 12 wds
Revision: In Starbucks a noisy group of retirees socialized. 7 wds.

Be careful of which and who clauses
Original: The apples, which were finally ripe, begged to be picked. 10 wds
Revision: The newly ripened apples begged to be picked. 8 wds

Original: Sam, who was my best friend, moved to Seattle. 9 wds
Revision: My best friend Sam moved to Seattle. 7 wds

Delete meaningless modifiers
Original: I was very nervous before I was about to meet Dr. Lee. 12 wds
Revision: Before meeting Dr. Lee, I was extremely nervous. 9 wds.

Avoid trite phrasing
Original: Due to the fact that he was always late, he received a bad review. 14 wds
Revision: Always late, he received a bad review. 7 wds

Avoid clichés
Original: She’s a person who lies through her teeth and I’ll hate her ’till pigs can fly or ’till hell freezes over, or both. 23 wds
Revision: She can’t be trusted and I’ll always hate her. 9 wds.
Remembrance

Only a toy
In a glass door hutch
Incongruous among china cups
Tarnished lusterless silver
Dusty crystal
And chipped china plates
In the background
Like friendly smiles
Behind the clutter

Just a little red truck
Easily resting
In the palm of my hand
Shiny metal with black wheels
And doors that open
On miniature hinges

My tears are an ache
Behind my eyes
As fifty years later
I remember
A stormy April evening
Windshield wipers clicking
Bewitched. Bothered and Bewildered

Sitting close to him
In his big red truck when the words crept out
“I can’t think of any reason
why we shouldn’t get married,
So how about it?”

Then on our first anniversary
A miniature toy truck
on our dresser
next to a neatly printed note

HOW ABOUT ANOTHER RIDE?

— Lillian Rodich

After Fifty Years

Holding hands
Holding hearts
Humming old tunes
Together
Slow dancing
Without music

Mingling laughter
Mingling tears
Happy talk
Sad talk
Serious talk
Lovers’ talk
Re-discovering
Each other
At peace
Forever bonded

— Lillian Rodich
Attending a major league baseball game in Los Angeles is one of the best ways to chill out from the daily demands of ordinary life. We root for our heroes, some who annually earn in-excess of $30 million, vicariously experience the thrill of hitting a walk-off home run or striking out a batter. We can also eat and drink our troubles away.

Attending a game at Dodger Stadium, however, can be costly for the average family. Between the price of gasoline, parking, tickets, food, beverages and souvenirs, the tab can set a family back financially.

A Dodger Dog costs $6.50. For only $10 you can buy 18 Dodger Dogs at a local supermarket. Do the math. That’s about 55 cents per Dodger Dog. That’s some mark up.

So, it is understandable why struggling families would relish sitting in the all-you-can-eat right field bleachers. A family can save a lot of money if they bring along big appetites.

For an average admission of $30 (the prices fluctuate), which includes a ticket to the game, fans can engage in The Great American Pastime of gluttony until they’re sick. Of course, if they go overboard on Dodger Dogs, nachos, peanuts, popcorn and soda, they’ll wind up in the ER. In that case, they better make sure they have health insurance. It’s not cheap to have your stomach pumped.

Bringing a big appetite is fine, but there’s something else that should definitely be left at home: A social conscience. In the past, I had always resisted the idea of sitting in the all-you-can-eat right field bleachers. How could I live with myself shoving Dodger Dogs and other forms of unhealthy food into my face knowing that there were homeless people who were desperately searching for food. If you cannot prevent images of poor and starving homeless kids and adults from entering your mind, the all-you-can-eat right field bleachers is not the place for you.

I also worried that one Dodger Dog would lead to another and I’d wind up having gastronomical surgery on The Learning Channel show “My 600 Pound Life.” In a best-case scenario, my belt size would only increase by two notches before the ninth inning. At age 64, my metabolism wasn’t what it used to be.

So, what was I doing out there in the forbidden zone rubbing elbows with people who hadn’t eaten in years? Blame it all on my skinny nephew Evan. He wanted to catch baseballs hit into the bleachers during batting practice. He could not care less about the grub and probably went home lighter than when he arrived. Go figure. Boy, that kid can eat.

Completely satiated by the start of the game, the revolution in my gut had begun. My grumbling stomach seemed to be saying, “No mas, no mas.” The digestive system was about ready to blow. I could feel my intestines quivering.

My guilty conscience was also erupting. I realized I may have eaten more food in two hours than many people around the globe eat in an entire week or longer. Who was I to criticize the pig fest? I had done a pretty good job of eating on automatic. I would not be the person who would be leading a boycott of Dodger Dogs in the all-you-can-eat right field bleachers. I was a hypocrite.

Later, in the fourth inning, my brother Lenny described the disgusting scene that was taking place underneath the bleachers near the food concessions: wobbling fans with bloated bellies were giving back the buffet (use your imagination to fill in the rest) while other fans, apparently blessed with cast iron stomachs and oblivious to the spectacle, dressed up their hot dogs with all the fixings.

Lenny’s account dissuaded me from going on a Dodger Dog run. It did occur to me, however, that if I became desperate, I could have reached down and helped myself to the tons of food that the fans in front of me had discarded underneath their seats. Why let “good” food go to waste? Anyway, I resisted the temptation. I didn’t want the coroner’s report to read that I succumbed to a contaminated Dodger Dog.

By the end of the game, by using sheer will power, I was able to limit my intake to two Dodger Dogs, one more than I usually consumed sitting elsewhere in the stadium.

Fans began filling plastic bags with as many Dodger Dogs as they could—probably for a late-night snack or to subsist on for a week. I must confess, it seemed like a good idea as long they had enough Tums on hand.
That Man
By Leslie Kaplan

Rain does a tap dance on my window pane. I remember those rainy days. We made love.
I sleep alone now, but the scent of my man still lingers on his pillow. It’s on the empty side of my bed. It smells of Old Spice after-shave and sweat.
Oh ...That Man! I still feel him beside me. The one who left his mark on this pillow. That man had a tenderness to his touch. A tenderness that moved across my breasts like a warm summer breeze, caressing my heart.
Kisses like chocolate ... chocolate kisses still linger on these lips. Although a thousand and one nights have passed since that man laid his head on his pillow ... still ... to me ... it is but yesterday.
Your scent still quickens me! I am wild and untamed as I follow your scent no matter where it may lead. I smell ... I feel ... I see ... I hear ... I touch ... and ... I TASTE that man coming home as he calls out in his baritone voice ... “Honey, I’m here.” I run to the door... but no one is there.
I sleep alone now, but the scent of my man still lingers on his pillow.

Red Roses

When she pictures the look on his face
As she dresses down to satin and lace
Though the glow of her youth has grown dimmer
Does he still view her younger and slimmer
As his finger retraces her face

Like a mellowed and fine tasting wine
Chocolate kisses still tasting divine
Does he yearn... as she does ... for romancing
Holding close ... as two pages ... while dancing
As he whispers to his Valentine

If he gifts her with roses of red
Will he carry her off to his bed
And though youth may forsake her
Will he always awake her
As he lays one red rose near her head

- Leslie Kaplan
Program Schedule

12:30 pm: Registration
1:00 pm: Open Mic
1:30 pm: Club Business
2:00 pm: Guest Speaker
3:00 pm: Refreshments, Conversation, Speaker ‘s Book Sales and Signings
3:30 pm: Clean Up and Farewells

Guest Fee: Suggested donation of $5.00

SFV-CWC Location

Motion Picture & Television Fund
Katzenberg Pavilion
23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Directions to the MPTF

Driving east on the 101 freeway to the Woodland Hills area, exit on the Valley Circle/Mulholland exit.

Go south over the 101 freeway you just exited, and drive straight on until you see Spielberg Drive on your right.

Turn right at the second entrance and drive along the narrow road, turning left at an intersection, and continue along the road to a kiosk with a gate across the road. Tell the attendant that you’ve come for the California Writers Club meeting and ask for parking directions.

The parking lot for our meeting is near a trombone playing statue. The Katzenberg Pavilion is at the end of a winding path leading into the campus. It faces the Grace Villa apartments.

Look for a table set up outside a doorway of the Pavilion. You’ll find friendly club members waiting to usher you into our gathering. Welcome to our club.