



The Valley Scribe



April 2018

Volume 11 Issue 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Judy Reeves' Talk	3
Pub. Successes	4
Review and Refresh	5
Second Chance	6
Star Man's Silent Journey	7
Astronaut's POV	7
Painted Spring	8
Going Home	8
Those Who Are Poets	9
Forever Springtime	9
Raising Grandma Sheila	10
I Love Holidays	11
Open Mic Photos	12
Gorback Publication	12
Redwood CWC Conf.	12
Meeting Information	13



M.J. Sewall

Come Learn the Sewall Spring Cleaning System

In his April talk, "Cleaning the Mental Closet," author M.J. Sewall will speak about the art of getting those idea shards out of the scrap-paper phase and into a finished novel.

Being a diligent note-taker, he'll explain his "mash-up" method that helps a writer get his manuscript across the finish line. Practicality and creativity do go together using methods that "clear the decks" of a writer's mind.

A large part of writing is determination and discipline, and Mr. Sewall will discuss the techniques that have helped him publish five novels and numerous short stories. Join the discussion on April 7th to learn how to clear out the mental closet and get your writing finished, read, and published.

M.J. Sewall is the Vice President of the Coastal Dunes branch of the CWC on the Central California Coast. He has a background in business, acting and creative writing. He's the author of four Fantasy novels, a traditionally published Contemporary Fiction, and Short Story Collection.

According to my sources

You've been missed. And I think I know why we don't see you at our monthly meetings. How do I know? Because I recognize the pattern.

You/me joined the CWC because we wanted to get into a good critique group. You and I had been writing and wanted to take that forward step—feedback from other writers.

So—you/me attended the prerequisite meetings to find a good group. We did and it was fabulous: great people and excellent



Someone is missing!

feedback from other SFV members. But—how about the meetings? They were okay but you/me wondered, Are they worth giving up a Saturday afternoon? After all, you/me were already satisfied with what we got out of

our critique groups.

Well, here's the latest news for you, missing members. There's a new game in town!

When I was asked to take over as Program Chair, I was reluctant to take on the responsibility. But after due consideration, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to take advantage of the many conferences I had attended and make contact with interesting speakers to see if they'd be available for our club. So I accepted and started with a sharp

(Continued on page 3)

SFV-CWC Board

President
Gabriella Owens

spoiledgrrrapes@att.net

Vice-President
Bob Okowitz
& Central Board Rep.
apthealth@gmail.com

Treasurer and Secretary
Patricia Avery
rpavery@me.com

DIRECTORS

Membership
Andrea Polk
andipolk4@gmail.com

Programs
Lori Hamilton
lorecaha@verizon.net

Critique Group Coordinator
Geraldine Jabara
geri.jabara@att.net

Publicity/ Public Relations
Currently unfilled

Pre-Session Leader
Nance Crawford
Nance@NanceCrawford.com

Webmaster
Michael Rains
opie_rains@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor
Katherine Highcove
kghighcove@gmail.com



President's Message:

Learn all about our club's preparations for the LA Times Festival of Books —April 21st and 22nd.



Gabriella Owens
SFV-CWC President

Victoria King is assembling a list of all our members' published works for our SFV-CWC Festival handouts.

If you have published books or stories in an anthology that are available now, or will soon be available for sale on the Internet - please send an email with title, author, cover in a jpeg image, and a one line pitch (maximum 30 words) to VictoriaAndreKing@gmail.com.

CWC-SFV has one table and two chairs in the Wordsmith Productions booth - booth #168. This literary non-profit booth will be run by SFV member Davida Siwisa James and shared by other CWC authors.

To make room for browsing buyers, we'll have just two people at a time at the booth. If you want to be added to the list of table volunteers, please email me or sign up at our April meeting.

CWC-SFV will start setting up the booth at 7:30 a.m. and must finish by 8:30 a.m. per Festival regulations. The festival officially starts at 10:00 a.m., but many people arrive and browse early. There are no restrictions on early sales.

You do NOT need to be a volunteer at the Festival to have your book displayed or your marketing material given away.

There can be no breakdown of booths until festival closing time - Saturday at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday at 5:00 p.m. The festival is officially over at 5 :00 p.m. on Sunday.

Our table needs display stands for our books and marketing material. If you have something useful for display purpose, please send me an email at

SpoiledGrrrapes@att.net

CALIFORNIA STATE SELLER'S PERMIT: The LAT Festival requires that each book seller must have a current copy of your California State

Seller's Permit with you at the Festival. This permit can be obtained in minutes at www.boe.ca.gov.

Authors who plan to sell their books need a permit. Email the copy of your permit to Davida Siwisa James at Victor Valley Arts and Education Center [VicArtsED@gmail.com] by April 10th.

Note that CWC-SFV authors can sell their own books ONLY while they are at our table, but we will have display copies out all the time.

If you want to display and promote your book, whether or not you are volunteering or attending the festival, bring ONE copy of your book(s) to the April meeting - marked "for display only" (you can use a removable sticker) for the festival.

If you plan to sell additional copies, you must tote them yourself to and from the booth during your time at the Festival.

In addition to one copy of any books you want to display, you can bring any book-related merchandise; marketing materials - posters, business cards, bookmarks, rack cards, etc. to the April General Meeting. We will collect them after the meeting (around 3:30 p.m.) and box them for transport to the festival by the Saturday volunteers.

If you're attending the festival, remember to bring water as you'll be doing lots of walking!

There are campus eateries and an area with a variety of food trucks. Please don't eat in the booth while you're handling books.

—Gabriella Owens

Ya-hooooo

Get Your Howl On!



I feel off-leash when I write my free verse!

Judy Reeves introduced herself to our group this way: “I’m a writer, teacher, and your writing workshop provocateur.” And her SFV audience mused on that word, provocateur. Huh?

Reeves explained: “When I visit a group of writers, people like you who love to write and want to improve their writing, I become a provocateur. A provocateur stirs it up, like a cook making soup. I stir it up and help a group like you make literary soup. I help you find your voice.”

We soon learned that our guest speaker believes that many writers feel an inner need to go rogue and shed the inhibitions that blight their writing. She blames early instructors who were overly intent on correct punctuation and less on creative inspiration. As a result, she suspects that many writers are afraid of their “wild voice.”

Reeves feels that many writers repress their natural instincts and muffle their muse. She encourages writers to center, be in the moment, and let their imaginations go off the reservation.

Our speaker directed us to resist the inner critic, censor, speller and editor and just take



**SFV Speaker
Judy Reeves**

Louder!

Ah-woooooo



I go ape wrting about anthropology!

up a pen—or sit down at the computer keyboard— and write! Write for fun, without a destination, just write in any direction that pops into your mind. Listen to the world around you – try to eavesdrop on strangers’ conversations and quietly take notes.

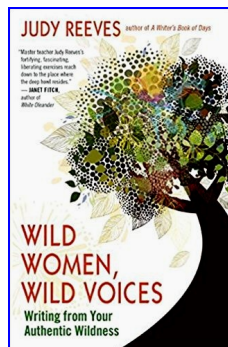
“Sometimes the most surprising things,” she assured us, “can come to mind if a writer will stop, listen and quickly record thoughts and inspirations.”

Finally, our group was led in a workshop exercise favored by Reeves. “Listen to the sound of your voice. What do you hear?” she asked. The room grew quiet as we mused on our own voice and then wrote our thoughts. She asked several people to share their notes. I found this exercise very intriguing. I reread my own notes and noted some surprising revelations that came from nowhere ... or were that whispered by my inner voice? Did I hear the echo of a howl? Hm.

I suggest that you explore Reeves’ website at <http://judyreeveswriter.com/upcoming-events-and-workshops/>

And you may want to check out Judy Reeves’ book, *Wild Women, Wild Voices*. You too can become a provocateur and stir up some literary soup.

—Kathy Highcove



Someone's Missing Continued ...

focus on speakers who could help improve our writing skills. It is a craft, of course, and there are so many things to learn that make writing easier and better.

We’ve heard from a publisher, editors, established writers, and even a writer/director/producer with many awesome credits. And I continue to search for speakers who will offer new, exciting ideas.

We have plans for a fall workshop and have gotten some impressive commitments including the editor of the foremost literary journal in the world who will come from London. If I gave you a clue on his subject,

you might be the first in line.

But I believe that all our past speakers have had something special to offer our members. And every member has left knowing more about writing skills. They’ve been stimulated, inspired, encouraged to write-write-write with energy, and enthusiasm, making those Saturday afternoons at our meetings a valuable investment. I hope you come back soon!

— Lori Hamilton

SENIOR SERVICES FOR THE FINANCIALLY CHALLENGED

NAVIGATING MEDICAID SERVICES,
ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY
PLACEMENT AND SO MUCH MORE



BY
DAVIDA SIWISA JAMES

Senior Service Information from Davida

Announcing a new book by Davida Siwisa James that focuses on helping low-income seniors avail themselves of the many free social services available to them. *Senior Services for the Financially Challenged* is available on Amazon.com in both the print and Kindle versions, and is now available on barnesandnoble.com. The book guides readers through finding Assisted Living Facilities that can be paid for by Medicaid and getting free help in their homes from the Department of Aging. Please share on your own social networks to help get this important information into the hands of struggling families and caregivers.

Davida was a former board member with the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club and is a current member of CWC, San Fernando Valley Branch. The URL for info on her book:

https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=senior+services+for+the+financially+challenged

Gary's published and so is Colin

Gary Wosk continues to explore the world of the bizarre in one of his creepiest short stories yet, *Pearl*, is featured in a newly released anthology, *Furtive Dalliance*.

"*Furtive Dalliance* is a new literature magazine by writers, for writers," said Editor-in-Chief Roy Miller. "We look for stories that engage and surprise us. We look for brash, controversial, messy, depressing, romantic and hopeful stories."

"*Pearl*" is a fictional short story about a lonely middle-aged couple who're reeling from empty nest syndrome. Their lives are changed forever on a cold, rainy night when they hear scratching on their front door, open it, and discover the remedy for their sense of emptiness.

"The weirdness culminates with a mind-bending twist ending," said Gary. "*Pearl* is geared for readers who'll allow their imaginations to go wild as opposed to those who tend to over-analyze every detail of a make-believe story."

The *Furtive Dalliance* anthology can be purchased online at <https://furtivedalliance.com/> And at Amazon, https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Furtive+Dalliance+book

—Gary Wosk

I've long struggled to improve my writing and publish one of my stories. And now, success! My story, *The Day He Walked Away*, will soon be published in *Phenomenal Literature: a Global Journal Devoted to Language and Literature*.

This story is about a family whose eighteen-year-old son has left home after an argument with his father.

The bulk of the plot focuses on the father's grief about not hearing from his son for many years. He's in terrible pain and questions his decision to let his son walk out the door instead of forgetting his pride and hugging him.

After fifteen years, the family receives a letter from their son, and after reading it, the father sheds tears of joy.

If you'd like to learn the outcome of my story you'll need to wait until it's published in the journal. And while you're there, look around. Who knows? Maybe you'll also find a place to publish your work on *Duotrope*. Here's the URL: www.Duotrope.com

—Colin T. Gallagher

Review and Refresh

Music in Poetry

Rhythm

In poems, "the beat goes on" according to the words and the syllables in the various lines. For example *unique* has two syllables (*u-nique*) and the heavy beat is on the *-nique*. The word *reference* has three syllables (*ref-er-ence*) with the stress on the *ref*. *Traditional* has four syllables (*tra-di-tion-al*) with the heavy beat on the *-di* and so on. These syllabic beats occur in everyday speech and prose.



I can't imagine diving from that high.
... but in rhythmic poetry the beats take on definite, predictable patterns.

*Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village though ...*

Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of the same sound or of a similar sound.

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands
Ringed with the azure world he stands.
But usually poets alternate the rhymes
"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white,
And yet you incessantly stand on your head.
Do you think at your age, it is right?"*

A single word can also rhyme with the end of a longer word.
*Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives.*

Further on in the same poem, the last syllable of a three syllable word rhymes nicely with the last syllable of another three syllable word.

*Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent.*

When the rhyme is in the last syllable, as in the lines above, it is a masculine rhyme, generally a more forceful sound, whereas the agreement of sound in two consecutive syllables is a feminine rhyme, usually more light and delicate, as in *laden* and *maiden* below.

*With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.*

Meter

The following combinations of stressed and unstressed or accented and unaccented syllables are referred to as feet. The *iamb* (delay) - unaccented syllable, accented syllable
The *trochee* (only) - accented-unaccented
The *anapest* (in my heart) - two unaccented-one accented
The *dactyl* (happily) - one accented-two unaccented
Two feet in a line is called ... *dimeter*.

Three feet ... *trimeter*. Four feet ... *tetrameter*.

Five feet *pentameter*. Six feet ... *hexameter*.

And so on.

Thus ... *and the sheen on their spears was like stars on the sea* is *anapestic tetrameter* and ... *beside the lake beneath the trees* is *iambic tetrameter*.

The master poets were experts in combining words with rhythm and music. If you enter these waters and choose to follow a basic rhythm pattern, you must be consistent throughout. If you drop the pattern even slightly (without a good reason) the reader will spot it and the poem will be ruined in the same way a pin can destroy a balloon.

Some poets won't attempt rhythm and write free verse. If you attempt a rhythm pattern and you carry it off, however, the words of your poem can provide a beautiful musical background as it speaks, as Shakespeare did in this sonnet.

Sonnet 73

*That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed by that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.*

— Dave Wetterberg

Second Chance

By Yolanda Fintor

“The signs are all there,” Al said after a heated discussion about global warming.

“What signs?” Ray asked his friend and mentor.

“Witness the tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes.”

“But these natural phenomena have been with us for multiple millennia.”

“Ah yes, but add to that air pollution, water pollution, and species extinction. Everything humans do to hurt the earth ultimately affects our quality of life. Globally, extreme weather conditions are quickening with alarming frequency. There is no assurance of a safe haven.”

“And exactly what does it all mean?”

“Well, it means we haven’t been conscientious caretakers of our world. I tell you we’re headed for an apocalypse.”

“So, what’s the answer?” Ray asked.

Al closed his eyes as he ran his fingers through his unruly hair. Ray could almost hear his friend’s brilliant mind processing the problem to reach a solution. After some moments, he jabbed his finger into the air.

“Yes, that’s it! Explore the universe. We need to find a place in our galaxy that will give earthlings a second chance!”

Ray got caught up in his friend’s excitement. He thought about the realm of possibilities in such a galactic exploration. What it would mean to all humanity! If we can’t save the earth, we can save mankind!

“Let me think about this,” Ray told his friend.

After several days of calculating what such a journey would entail, he decided he had the technical knowledge, the support of friends with engineering backgrounds and the capital needed for such a journey.

He could hardly wait to get back to Al.

“I’ll do the exploration!”

So, being wealthy and altruistic, Ray leased Space Ship Six and filled it with enough supplies to last him several years. Using state-of-the-art technology, and with the help of his friends, Ray charted a course to the nearest planet.

Twelve weeks later his ship landed on terrain where scattered debris looked like remnants left behind by a lost civilization. He saw no sign of life, but he found the thin air breathable and the underground water pure.

After setting up a home base and adjusting to the thin atmosphere, Ray worked on contacting Al. It took him a while to find the correct frequency on his inter-stellar radio. Though the signal was weak, Ray was able to tell his friend he had landed safely on Mars.

Al was excited to hear from his friend.

“What did you find there?”

“There are scant traces of a culture that might have inhabited Mars at one time, but I haven’t seen a living thing so far. I’m still exploring.”

Ray did not mention his growing loneliness, but it crept into his voice when he said, “I believe humans could start over on Mars.” He continued to describe the planet’s potential for colonization.

“It sounds like your mission is a success. If feasible, I may wish to join you soon to test my

(Continued on page 7)

theories away from earth.”

Shortly after his talk with Al, Ray caught sight of golden-eyed inhabitants who cautiously came forth to meet him. They had all the physical attributes of humans and Ray found he could communicate telepathically with them. He wanted to know how many there were and where they lived. Once Ray gained their trust, they took him high into the hills. On the hidden side, a glistening city lay before him. Shallow pools and elaborate water fountains sprinkled the terrain. Houses appeared to be made of crystal prisms that reflected light in a rainbow of colors.

Ray had never seen anything so dazzling. The more he came to know these people, the more he recognized the gentle nature of this highly developed Martian culture. It was time to chronicle his experiences.

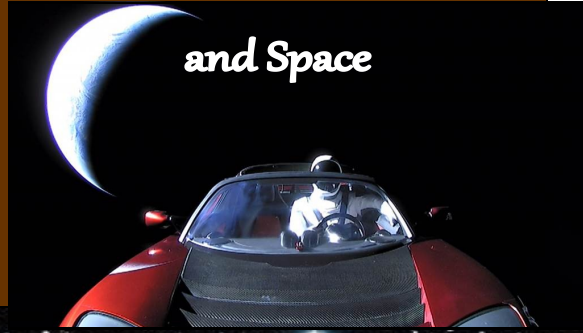
Because Ray had gained the Martians’ confidence, they gave him access to a sophisticated computer that enabled Ray to contact Al. In his communiqué he wrote, “Dear Albert, come if you wish, but on this planet, time, space and mass are greatly altered. Sorry, but your perception of relativity won’t apply here.”

Regards,

R. Bradbury

Travelers of Time

and Space



STAR MAN'S SILENT JOURNEY

The idea was unique, many say cute,
To launch a driver who shall remain mute.
No stops on the way saying, "Fill 'er up."
The "Joe" beside him still cold in the cup.
Much time to dream and much time to ponder
As our Tesla-friend soars way out yonder!

— Ken Wilkins

An Astronaut's Perspective

“Suddenly, from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth . . . home.”

— Edgar Mitchell



Lunar Module pilot for the
Apollo 14 lunar-landing mission.

Painted Spring

(To the tune of "De Colores")

In the springtime in the valleys
The countryside glistens with pallets of color;
In the springtime in the meadows
The birds fill the air with their beautiful color;
In the springtime comes the arch of the rainbow
And spreads its grand hues from afar!

Chorus:

So this is the reason I love the spring season:
There's splendorous color to see --
Yes, this is the reason this beautiful season
Brings such joy and pleasure to me!

In the barnyard in the morning
The red rooster crows, "How do you do?"
In the hen coop in the daytime
The white hens announce every egg that is new;
In the garden in the sunshine the yellow chicks
Scratch through the flowers and dew.

Back to Chorus:

Lyrics/Song by Stephany Spencer

Going Home



I flew across the country.
A death in the family.
A father gone, whose memory
Had departed a long time before.

His body racked by Parkinson's,
His mind in a grey haze.
He didn't know his wife or son.
Was his life too long?

At his wake, being with family,
A sister's hug, a brother's smile.
People that knew him, loved him.
Gathered to salute him and bring support.

My mother brought us all together,
To honor him, to bury him.
To say goodbye to a man
Who may have been too kind.

A good man who was hurt
By people's expectations and anger.
A man who looked for the humor in life
And took solace in the embrace of family.
We thank you, sir, for your kindness and grace.

— Bob Okowitz



Those Who Are Poets

those who are poets ---
often alone, never lonely
in a living breathing place

view their world
through unique glasses
listen to butterflies sing
savor a snow-field's crop
ponder a mountain's whisper
find their tears and laughter
in a basket of dreams

transfer verse to paper
like a brush to painting
like a wakeful dream
like imaginative artists
true to their own artistry

never feel at peace
their words
warring competing
melding intruding
painting perceiving
whispering
shouting at the sky
restless even after
they come to rest on paper

often wander away
from simple conversation
wake suddenly at dawn
looking for pen and paper
or someone to listen

those who are poets
light a candle whenever
pen touches paper

—Lillian Rodich

Forever Springtime

*Mom and I are having breakfast 'al fresco'
The rust patio-brick pattern
Reminds her of a dress she once had.
Her teary eyes slowly search
For the Argentinean swallows
In the California trees-*

*"Remember your favorite rust feather hat?" I ask
Her laughter, a melody of all seasons
Rings softly in my ears
"My favorite was a black and white plaid
With a red veil," she answers softly
As a faint smile curves her lips-
"Oh, yes...I remember now
It was my favorite too," I whisper-
My eyes follow hers trying
To see the beauty she finds in every tree-
Pale leaves like lettuce buds wave
At her rusty memory-
Mom remembers yesterday, tells me
Treasured family memories embroidered
With nostalgic secrets, her smile ready for me
When tears visit my eyes-
Her eternal youth floats around me
And I must admit that she is younger
Than I ever was-*

*Hers is no ordinary visit
It never is. Tomorrow she goes
Back to the very center of the world
Where all imaginary lines meet
At zero in Quito, half a hemisphere away-
In the garden she says good-bye once more
To daffodils, irises, roses and lady bugs,
Waves to birds and trees...closing her eyes to capture
For safekeeping the magic of all she sees-
With veiled anguished smiles
Holding back a million tears
I help Mom pack our memories
In her suitcase of forever springtime-*

—Keyle Birnberg



Raising Grandma Sheila

“Grandma, you’re not listening to COUNTRY MUSIC, are you?” asked twelve-year-old Ariana as she and her little sister Alyssa dumped their backpacks on the foyer and rushed to hug me.

“Why, yes. I have the stereo set to either country or classical—CC quite easy to remember.”

“No offense, Grandma, but we’re going to be here for four days and that’s not going to make the cut.” Pushing some buttons Ariana found FM 98.7 Alternative Rock from iHeart Radio.

To my ears the music was awful. But if music soothes a beast, it can also make my grandkids happy. I’ll just consider it Music Appreciation 2018.

“Let’s get you settled,” I said. “Ari, you get the sofa bed in the computer room.”

“Alyssa, you have Uncle Dave’s old room.”

Alyssa was sporting a bright pink cast on her left foot, having broken her toe while doing a cartwheel in the family room. She would need the extra room the double bed would provide. No, I didn’t ask why she was doing a cartwheel in the family room. There are some questions which Grandmas know not to ask.

“What do you want to do?” I asked.

“Make banana muffins, of course,” chorused the girls. Whenever the grandchildren visited, we baked. While we were waiting for the muffins to be done, nine-year-old Alyssa pondered the math. “If we want to take home four muffins for our family, how many can we eat during our stay here?”

“Well, start with the twelve and subtract four ...,”

“That’s old school, Grandma,” Ari interrupted.

“Now we use the new math. We need to set up an equation.”

Wonders! We did come up with the same answer.

What to do next? “Let’s play a board game. Your father liked Monopoly and now I had an updated version, the Wizard of Oz. It features Evil Witches, an

enchanted forest, flying monkeys and a popup of the city of Oz.”

Alyssa became engrossed but after half an hour, Ari begged out, “Candy Crunch is more fun. We can teach you.”

I shook my head. “Those techie games don’t interest me.”

Luckily it was almost time for my nap.

Their parents had warned them that

Grandma got grouchy if she didn’t have her afternoon nap. “I’m setting the timer for forty minutes. You can read or watch TV.”

Ari looked down at me and said, “Doctors say that a thirty minute nap is sufficient; otherwise you won’t sleep at night.”

“It takes me ten minutes to fall asleep so that’s not a problem.”

Back in the bedroom I dreamed of pink casts dancing in my mind. It wasn’t long before I felt a presence. Startled, I woke up to see

Alyssa beaming.

“It’s time to wake up.”

Just then my cell phone rang. “I’ll bet it’s our Dad,” cried Ari as I fumbled to unearth my phone.

“Yes, we’re doing fine. Here, let them tell you all about it,” I said.

“Your connection is bad, Grandma. We’ll have to text,” explained Ari.

Before I knew it, the girls were texting, thumbs flying. Ari noticed that I looked lost.

“It’s easy. We’ll bring you into our world.”

“My thumbs are too fat; I can’t type anything.”

“Use my stylus, Grandma,” said Ari.

Dinner time and we were doing linguini and clams. As I was struggling with the garlic press, Ari said her mom gets frozen garlic pods from Trader Joe’s and just defrosts them.

“Now that’s a twentieth-first century innovation I can embrace.”

Four days later, as we hugged our good-byes, I thought I heard Ari whisper to Alyssa, “Our work is done.”

—Sheila Moss



I Love Holidays

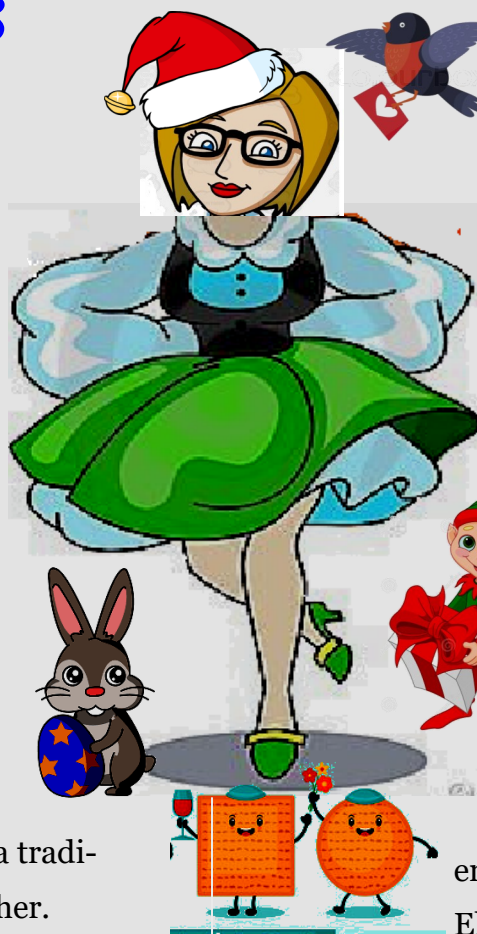
(It has nothing to do with religion.)

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

Easter ... it always meant new shoes and a stylish Easter outfit. It meant Judy Garland strolling down 5th Avenue looking beautiful and singing ... *In your Easter Bonnet*. I watched her in that movie every year. It meant bunny rabbits and painting eggs. My Jewish Grandma called Easter, "The Gentile Passover." Of course we didn't have a traditional ham dinner. It just wasn't kosher.

Passover ... my nickname for matzahs was "Stitched Cardboard." It was and still is ... hard matzahs ... fried matzahs ... matzah ball soup ... chocolate covered matzahs. Family dinners ... and more matzahs wet with gravy. Wash it all down with some sweet red Manischewitz Cherry wine. And we told stories about how matzahs came to be and why matzah was really bread. Kids played, "Hide and find the matzahs. The prize ... a box of ... you guessed it. CHOCOLATE COVERED MATZAH COOKIES. Enough already !!

Christmas ... shopping for presents to give and receive. Santa Claus ... snow ... beautiful Christmas trees all decorated with colorful balls and silver tinsel ... not in our house ... but I hung a stocking every Christmas Eve. Sometimes I found a toy and sometimes my brother put coal in my stocking ... and I cried. Watching old movies like seeing



Jimmy Stewart come alive and Bing Crosby singing *White Christmas*. I loved all the songs.

New Years ... out with a hot date ... paper hats and horns ... Kisses ... more kisses. The crystal ball coming down in New York at midnight ... more kisses ... lots of champagne ... more kisses and lots of resolutions ... only to be broken.

Valentines Day ... I become a kid again. It's not just about chocolates and flowers. It's about my first kiss at Elaine Moses' twelfth birthday

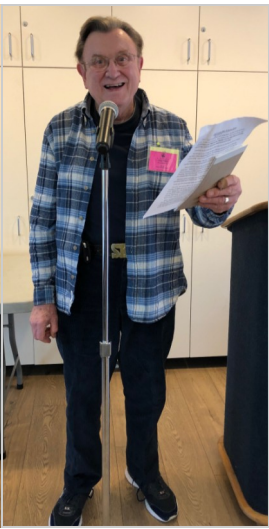
party where we sat in a circle on the floor and played Spin the Bottle. It pointed to Sammy Katz. We kissed. And that was unforgettable.

About fifty years later like out of the blue a letter arrived from Paris, France from a guy named Sammy Katz. He was coming to America and would like to see me. He wrote that he never stopped having a crush on me. There's more to this memory which I've written about in a separate story so I won't tell anymore now.

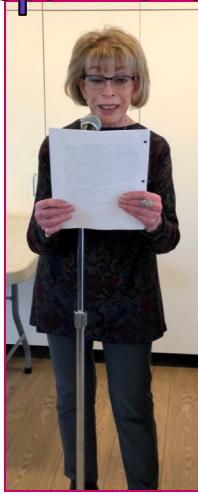
Valentine memories ... St. Patrick's Day ... That's the day this girl becomes Irish. ... singing Irish songs ... drinking green beer in an Irish pub ... going to a corned beef and cabbage house party at Jackie's ... and searching my closet for all the green things I can wear.

I LOVE HOLIDAYS !! —Leslie Kaplan

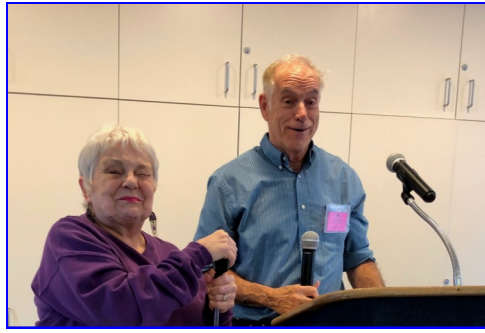
Open Mic Participants share their thoughts.



Alan Wills



Leslie Kaplan



**Pre-Session Leader Nance Crawford
adjusts the mic for Bob Okowitz.**



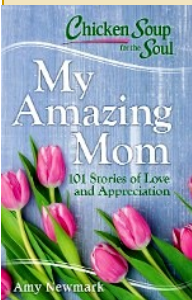
Stephany Spencer



March 2018 meeting

photos by Ester Benjamin Shifren

Published Memoir



Karen Gorback shares this publishing coup with her SFV friends, *One of my memoirs titled 'The Jackpot' has just been published in*

Chicken Soup for the Soul—My Amazing Mom.

The memoir tells the story of a summer road trip many years ago when I hitched along a desert highway with my grandmother.

I'll be signing copies of this book at Barnes and Noble in the Westlake Village Promenade on May 5 from 1 - 3 pm. Congrats to Karen!

Redwood Writers "Pen to Published" Writers Conference Scheduled April 21

Redwood Writers hosts its 10th biennial writers conference on Saturday, April 21 at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa. Registration for the full-day conference is open until April 18 at redwoodwriters.org. The price is \$135 for members and \$175 for non-members.

Keynote speakers are publisher, author and writing coach Brooke Warner with her topic "Why and How to Green-light Your Creative Life," and Ellen Sandler speaking about her experiences as a writer and producer of half-hour network television shows. Extended workshops and smaller sessions focus on many aspects of the writing and publishing world.

The Pen to Published Conference draws writers, poets and would-be novelists from all over California. For more information about Redwood Writers or this event, go to www.redwoodwriters.org.

Next Meeting:

12:30 pm—Registration

1:00 —Open Mic

1:30— Speaker

2:30—Club Business

3:00—Eat, Meet, & Greet

3:30—Adios



SFV-CWC Location

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



IF YOUR GPS GIVES UP, HERE'S HOW TO FIND US:

Driving west on the 101 freeway to the Woodland Hills area, exit at the Valley Circle/Mulholland off-ramp. Coming east, exit at Calabasas Rd./Mulholland off ramp and move left with traffic onto Calabasas Rd.

West bound travelers go south over the 101 freeway you just exited and drive straight on until you see Spielberg Drive on your right.

Eastbound motorists must be in the far right lane on Calabasas Rd. so they can easily turn right onto Mulholland road. Continue to Spielberg Drive.

Drive along Spielberg Drive, turn left at an intersection and continue along the road to a kiosk with a gate across the road. Inform the kiosk 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 statue of a trombone player. When you leave your car and look around, you should spot a group of building nearby. That's where the Katzenberg Pavilion is located. There's a large koi pond and small bridge over the pond right beside an entrance to our meeting room.

Another clue—if you're lost, wandering around the facility's campus, Katzenberg Pavilion is directly across from the Stark Villa. Look for our sign-in tables set up outside the Pavilion. Club members are waiting to welcome you into our gathering.

