



The Valley Scribe

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Note: A proxy page is attached to accommodate absentee voters in our proposed bylaws election.



“The world’s favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May.”

Edwin Way Teale

Sometimes Talk is Weak - Show the Action!



Edward S. Blythe

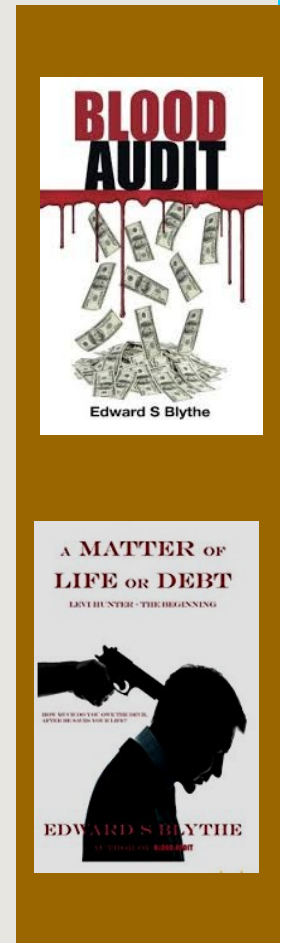
Edward S. Blythe, our May guest speaker, spent his early years in a dusty cow town in southeastern Arizona. Growing up without the distractions of TV, he became a voracious reader and writer. In 2013 he completed his first successful novel, *BLOOD AUDIT*.

At our May 5th meeting he will suggest ways to enrich your writing through body language. Here’s an outline of his upcoming talk:

- Painting a picture with words with body language layering
- Tips and tricks to writing body language
- Words writers should use to SHOW, not just TELL
- Body language writing don’ts
- Body language examples
- The power of body language from Cormac McCarthy
- Meet Ed Blythe
- The backstory of *Blood Audit*
- The backstory of *A Matter of Life or Debt*
- What Ed’s working on now

A forensic accountant by trade, Ed lives and works in southern California with his wife and children. In his spare time, he enjoys writing, surfing, and travel.

Come meet Edward Blythe at our next meeting.



—Kathy Highcove

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SFV President Gabriella Owens at the 2018 L.A. Times Festival of Books

Books for sale! Step right up!

What a weekend! The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books is one of the largest book events in the U.S. with attendance estimated at 150,000 people.

Our SFV volunteers and authors were there to meet and greet all comers in Davida's WordSmith Productions (a literacy non-profit) booth.

So many of our members helped put this together! My thanks to Davida, Victoria, Andi, Ilan, Paula, Sherry, Norm and Sylvia, Diana, Gary, Kathy and so

many others who gave us a hand!

Our club banner was secured next to a front table where every passer-by could see it. We had the big foldouts hoisted up with a large display of our authors' book covers. Our table contained an impressive array of our members' books and handouts. Our wonderful volunteers handed out hundreds (maybe even thousands!) of things – CWC brochures, SFV newsletters, bookmarks, (Paula's handmade ones went like hotcakes), SFV author catalogs, flyers, book cards, recipe cards, license plate frames, Sherry's squeezable "brains" (went through all 150), business cards (gave out more than forty to the visitors who expressed interest in attending an CWC-SFV meeting).

Many folks asked me about joining our branch and some expressed interest in several sister CWC branches. Hopefully, our club's participation at the Festival of Books will help our branch gain new members in the near future!

The branch volunteers and authors who participated in the event sold a few of their books. However, it was difficult to sell anything when there were vendors—our competitors—selling books for only \$5 or breezily giving their books away.

Here's hoping that our published authors will see more Internet sales in the weeks to come!

—Gabriella Owens



Change in CWC-SFV Fall Schedule

Due to a holiday weekend, the September Workshop has been moved back a week to September 8th.

—Bob Okowitz

"Trying to Sort Your Stack of Great Ideas? Try my Sewall Recycling System!"

Have you ever witnessed a scene that caught your eye, or overheard an interesting conversation, and thought, *Gotta write that down before I forget it!* And if you *did* write it down, what happened to that hasty note? Most likely, it languished in a dusty shoebox or was stashed in a deep dark desk drawer, never to be seen again.

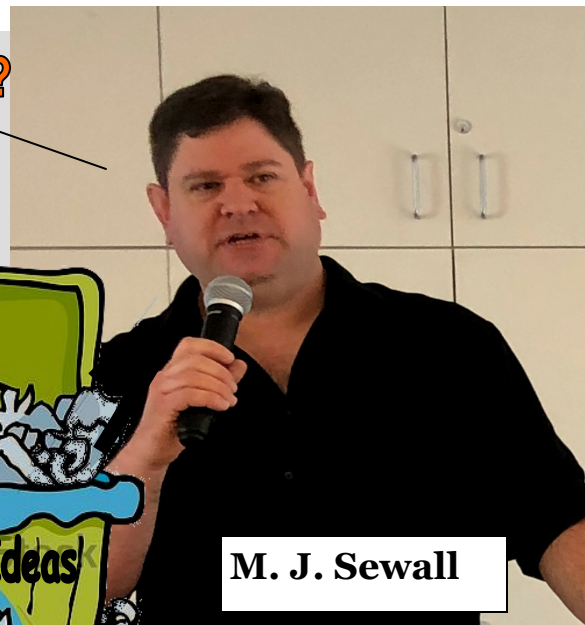
Most writers have played this hide-and-seek game. Our May speaker, M.J. Sewall, revealed to our SFV gathering that back in the day, he often caught a glimmer of a great idea, quickly wrote it down, but couldn't find his inspiration when he was finally ready to use it in a story.

This lapse happened time and again in Sewall's early writing career. He struggled to organize his thoughts and build a story. But task was tedious and soon overwhelmed the busy young man with a day job and a growing family.

A sad event spurred him to find a solution. After a close friend died, his widow asked Sewall to decipher and organize his friend's large collection of scrawled notes and half-finished stories. Sewall looked around his friends' man cave and found a page here, a paragraph there, a phrase, a scene, a few lines of verse.

Looking at the pile of disorganized thoughts and quotes, Sewall was reminded of his own clutter of Great Ideas. But this time, he knew he couldn't let himself be distracted. A widow was waiting for him to fulfill his promise. *Gotta find a way*, he told himself.

He looked through the piles of notes and typed the



M. J. Sewall

photo by Ester Shifren

contents onto a glowing computer screen. A list began to grow. As he typed and studied the long lists of phrases, he realized that some things in the lists had relevance—they belonged together. He began to re-classify items into multiple lists and separate folders. Slowly a plot outline took shape. Voila! Sewall was startled to discover that he had built an outline for an entire story.

"The completion of this book was like a gift from my friend," Sewall told us. "Thanks to his clutter, I'd learned how to organize my own pile of notes into a complete story."

And that success marked the beginning of Sewall's popular young adult adventure series. Soon other books followed. He now thinks of his multi-folder method as his private store—a place with shelves of ideas that he can fit into his latest plot.

His collection of completed books brings us to the happy ending of M.J. Sewall's Great Ideas Adventure. And perhaps our guest speaker's story will inspire you to sort out your own stash of Great Ideas.

—Kathy Highcove

Needed: Your Vote on Proposed Bylaw Changes

Below are the proposed revised Bylaws for CWC-SFV which the membership must vote on at our May meeting. Please read the Bylaws and be prepared to vote on them in May. If you cannot attend the May meeting PLEASE print out the attached proxy form and give it to a member who will be attending the meeting.

Articles and sections added or expanded. The Articles were renumbered due to additions and expansions.

Article II **DEFINITION OF TERMS**. Defines members' rights, clarifies ambiguities and achieves consistency.

Article V **MANAGEMENT**. Incorporates the intent of the temporary amendments adopted last year. Specifies the minimum and maximum numbers on the board, allows the conduct of the board to follow Robert's Rules of Order for a small board.

Sections 2 & 3. Clarifies the president's options to appoint directors and officers pro-temp.

Article VII. **OFFICERS**. Sections 2 and 3. Outlines the terms of elected officers; and provides for an additional one-year term beyond the maximum three years to prevent failing to secure the minimum number of officers.

Article IX **CHAIRPERSONS**. Expanded to include possible members whose functions may be appointed or elected to the Board.

Article X **ELECTIONS**. Section 4. Introduces the right of members to vote by proxy.

Article XI **REPRESENTATIVES TO THE CENTRAL BOARD AND REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**. Clarifies the process and member qualifications necessary to be appointed or elected for such representation.

Article XII **MEETINGS**. Clarifies the four types of meetings. Section 2. Outlines the option for conducting a board meeting by teleconference or videoconference. Allows board members to be away and still attend a board meeting.

Article XIII **QUORUM**. Section 1. Clarifies the minimum officers required to conduct a board meeting. Section 5. Stipulates the board members may not vote by proxy during a board meeting.

Article XIV **AMENDMENTS**. All sections and sub sections. Further clarifies the proxy requirements to amend the bylaws.

Article XV **DISSOLUTION**. Describes the process by which the branch dissolves its charter voluntarily or involuntarily and disposes of any and all assets.

Article XVI. **PRECEDENCE**. Clarifies that the branch is bound by the Central Board's Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation and/or Policies and Procedures. When the documents are in conflict the Board refers to the Central Board's latest interpretation.

—Gabriella Owens

The Mayfly flies only o'er water
 Although certain of danger, it's fraughter.
 What appears to us frantic,
 Is to Mayflies romantic,
 In this season of courtship and dating.
 Though they spend all their time in midair,
 Their lives are essentially square;
 Other bugs are out biting
 But Mayflies are fighting
 In a pattern peculiar to mating.
 Over water she flits left and right
 At all times horizontal in flight
 Weaving back and across
 As if searching for lost
 Children or sailors at sea.
 You may wonder by now, where is he,
 The debonair courtly May-flea?
 How do they connect
 Do their lives intersect?
 Does he woo her, pursue her, and win?
 Where is this prince charming of May time?
 Does he sing to her sweetly in gay rhyme?
 Is it romantic love,
 Or none of above?
 Church wedding, or bedding and sin?
 For some reason, known only to God,
 In a twist that's exceedingly odd,
 He flies up and down,
 One to two feet 'bove ground zero,
 Over water, right angled to she.
 They are fated, of course, to collide.
 And her prince stays aboard for the ride.
 It's a very small pond;
 They become very fond
 Of each other, and briefly, they show it.
 It's natural, not at all spurious.
 So in the event you were curious,
 I thought I might tell you the reason
 There'll be Mayflies aplenty next season.
 On the off-chance you wanted to know.

Mayflies: A Love Story

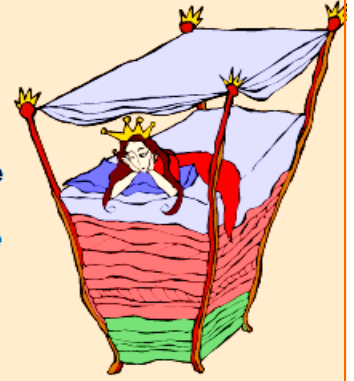


— Howard Goldstein

Review and Refresh

Little Things Can Mean a Lot

Little things mean a lot, like... making the verb agree with the subject, not with the noun closest to it. Not ... *One of the children were missing*. *One* is the subject. So it's *One of the children was missing*.



... pronouncing the word "mischievous" right. It's pronounced miss-cha-vuss, not miss-cheeve-ee-uss.

...not misusing the reflexive pronoun *myself*. Don't say *That Toyota barely missed Sally and myself* instead of saying *That Toyota barely missed Sally and me*. Don't say *Mildred, Sammy, and myself saw that movie*. Say *Mildred, Sammy, and I saw that movie*. *Myself* is not somehow magically correct in every grammatical situation.

... remembering that combinations connected by *or*, or *either ... or*, or *neither... nor* are considered singular. *Either Mr. Gordon or his wife Norma opens the store each morning*. Not ... *open the store*. *Neither Martin nor Bruno knows what happened Saturday night*. Not ... *know what happened*.

... not putting the word *however* at the beginning of a sentence. (Okay! If you insist, go ahead. However, I think there's always a better place for it within the sentence.) *Later in life, however, he thought differently about this ...* has a better ring to it than *However, he thought differently about this later in life*.

... using the word *fewer* with items that can be counted, like *fewer pencils, fewer students, fewer bricks*. Use the word *less* with items that can't (or wouldn't normally) be counted, like *less sand, less milk, less booze*. And in spite of the beer commercials, *less calories* is wrong, as is the *ten items or less* you see at the checkout stand in the supermarket.

... using *him, her, us, or them* after prepositions ... and not using their counterparts *he, she, we, they*. The expressions *between you and I ... for he and Sheila ... with he and she ...* are all wrong. They should be *between you and me ... for Sheila and him ... and with him and her*.



-- Dave Wetterberg

Scary, Scary Night

When I come near a comfy bed pillow I can be half-asleep by the time hair touches pillowcase. Of the few things that will rouse me from deep sleep, the most important are a child crying or someone in need.

Another sleep disturber occurred one night as I was approaching REM sleep: my own snoring woke me. I no longer insist that “I do NOT snore!” Sleeping alone means there are no more jabs in the ribs to bring me out of my somnolent concerto.

One recent morning as I sloughed my way into the kitchen, my daughter asked me how I survived the helicopter last night.

“What helicopter?” I replied.

“You didn’t hear that annoying helicopter with the bull horn going full blast last night? It kept circling right over the house for what seemed like half an hour!”

“Really? Hmm, I didn’t hear anything. Maybe my subconscious just knew it wasn’t about us,” I said, a little embarrassed and disappointed to have missed the excitement.

New homes are going up all around our neighborhood, bringing in many new people. All this new construction also pushes all local wildlife farther back into the hills, shrinking the animals’ hunting grounds.

Consequently, we frequently have coyotes walking up our driveway. We also have many cute, quiet, little jack rabbits who now reside all over our hillside. Obviously, coyotes and jack rabbits are not exactly com-



-Rita Keeley Brown

patible neighbors. More like consumable than compatible.

A few weeks ago I woke up in the middle of the night after hearing what sounded like a woman screaming outside my window. I was immediately wide awake. I looked out the window but couldn’t see anyone or anything out there.

As I was about to tiptoe outside to investigate, I recalled a story one of my sons told me. Two of his friends were hiking on a trail in a national park when they thought they heard a woman screaming.

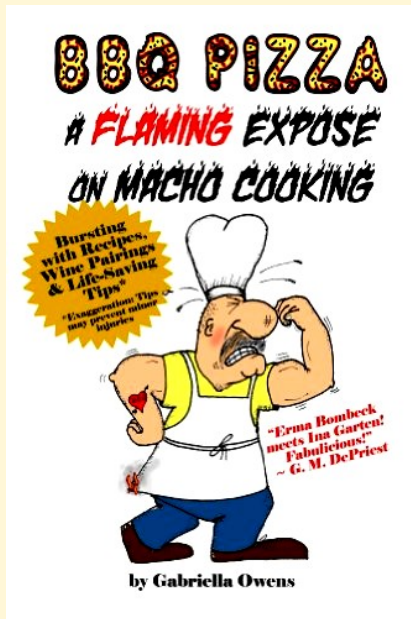
They rushed toward the sound of the screams but the sound kept changing direction.

They saw a park warden and called to him. The warden listened to the sound and then told them, “We hear that a lot. A coyote has caught a jack rabbit. Everyone thinks rabbits don’t make any sound, but when in peril they actually shriek and it sounds much like a woman’s scream. Sometimes coyotes take rabbits and small animals back to their nest to teach their pups how to hunt—so the screaming continues.”

No longer hearing anything outside my window, I went back to bed, but couldn’t sleep. There may have been silence outside, but inside my head was a continual video of what I imagined as the murder scene of the helpless little bunny.

Now, whenever I hear coyotes howling at night, up pops that mental re-run in my head. Poor little bunnies. Maybe I should always keep a set of earplugs next to my pillow.

Spicy Pizza Lore and Earthy Humor



I couldn't believe that a book about cooking could keep me so engrossed. I HATE to cook! But by the time I finished reading and laughing my way through *BBQ Pizza: Flaming Exposé on Macho Cooking*, a book chock full of humor, impressive information, and pizza recipes, and more, Gabriella Owens had made a believer out of me!

I actually considered becoming a barbecued-pizza specialist and party host myself. But after reading her “exposé” and learning what “pizza peels” are for, I decided to write this “sizzling” review instead.

Gabriella Owens is not only an expert on gourmet barbecue pizza parties, fine wines, wineries, and more, but she's also a comedian. While reading *BBQ Pizzas*, I was so thoroughly engaged and entertained that I easily picked up several pointers on how to appreciate and appraise wines

and started to think about putting together my own pizza parties.

If you read this book and watch Gabriella's *BBQ Pizza* YouTube film, you'll also discover Gabriella's hidden talent for comedy. I urge you to put *BBQ Pizza: A Flaming Exposé of Macho Cooking* on your reading list today.

—Stephany Spencer

Sala Finds A New Friend



illustration by Erika Lipkes

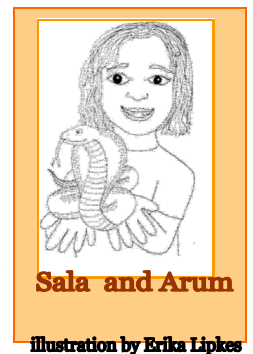
I recently read an entertaining children's book, *Sala and Her Pet*, written by Ilan Sendowski. I learned that Sendowski wrote the book for his young granddaughter who is an independent reader with a strong interest in the world around her. Her fond grandfather has written a book that feeds a child's need for interesting facts about the natural world. But, believe me, this book is not like a boring textbook.

In *Sala and her Pet* the action begins when our heroine discovers a soft-shelled egg nestled in her mother's newly purchased carton of eggs. She removes this small leathery egg and decides to care for it until it hatches. *What is hidden in that egg?* she wonders. One day a little hooded asp emerges from the egg. This creature has a magical ability to

talk and can easily answer all of Sala's questions about asps. Sala names him Arum, and learns how to hold, feed and safely tote her pet snake in a basket when they go for a walk.

Sala and Arum have several adventures that teach Sala many interesting facts about asps. Along with Sala, a young reader learns how an asp's venom is milked to make new medicines, and how a snake's thin supple body and unique sense of smell might also be used to assist rescue workers. Arum finds and saves a child trapped in a collapsed building.

I admired Sendowski's ability to keep the dialogue at a primary level, and still lure a young reader into learning all kinds of intriguing scientific facts about asps. I think this book should be in every elementary school library.



—Kathy Highcove

Team Efforts

Our nonprofit, Wordsmith Productions, is really honored to have had CWC-SFV share our booth at the 2018 L.A. Times Festival of Books. It's always a thrill being at the festival, and our club's commitment to having a presence at this important book festival shows its commitment to encouraging budding writers to join the club and supporting our current members.

--**Davida Siwisa James**

Sherry and Victoria on booth duty.



Prez Gabe works the crowd.

Davida shows her stuff.



--**Gary Wosk**

What has impressed me the most about our current Board and volunteers is their willingness to try new strategies. Placing an advertisement in the LA Times to publicize the chapter's participation at the Festival of Books is just one example of our chapter trying something new to sell books and increase membership. I was amazed at the synergy that flowed among everyone. This positive energy propelled our team's efforts. I predict that next year's L.A. Times Festival of Books will be an even bigger, fun-filled success.

Support From Stephany



--**Stephany Spencer**

I think we all know that Gabriella Owens helped save our CWC San Fernando Valley Branch from folding last June when she stepped up to be President. In the past year she helped put together our most recent anthology, postponed her world-class trip, and instead, spent both Saturday and Sunday in the CWC's Book Festival booth. In that spirit, I decided to put aside my own pressing writing projects to buy, read, and review Gabe's *BBQ Pizza: a Flaming Exposé of Macho Cooking*.

I feel it's the least we SFV writers can do to read and post reviews of our fellow SFV members-- especially the outstanding and dedicated CWC Board

members who keep our club going. We can accomplish much more if we all get behind our published authors and help them by posting reviews of their work. The possibilities are endless of what we writers can accomplish ... together.

Gabriella recently wrote me, *It is so important for authors to have fresh reviews – I think most people make buying decisions based on what the reviewers have to say. If we can help one of our members become a big-time selling author, think of how the prestige will reflect on our branch!*

I will be happy to tell you about my experience in this area should you wish to talk with me at the meetings or contact me. Till then, I wish many happy readings and reviewings of written works by our amazing CWC writers.

--**Stephany Spencer**

LIVING IN A WORLD OF GOODNESS

I wake up in the morning.
I realize that I'm alive. I'm aware.

And what about the world around me?
I generally see the world as good.
Not everyone can see the world as good,
the homeless, the very ill, the hurting and others.
The news media makes it hard to see goodness.

Goodness is a way of thinking, a way of feeling.
Looking back at my life, at your lives,
many of us grew up
with the idea of goodness.
Our parents said to us,
you are a good boy, you are a good girl.

The word good is a basic part of our language.
It is heard in common, everyday expressions.
Good morning. Good afternoon. Good night.
Good feelings. Good times.
Good friends. Good ideas. Good luck.

Good and Goodness have always been around.
These are feelings, openly showing themselves, at times.
These are feelings, underlying who we are, as a people.

For me, I am living in a world of **goodness**.

© Norman Molesko, 2018

Pleasantville
City Park

Precious Mother

There is no other,
Like a mother
Her perpetual first face
At our first home place
She's always there,
Giving loving care

If she's gifted God bless
To have a mother no less
Who will walk with you a mile,
Giving a wink or a smile
A little playfulness and a joke,
Along with popcorn and a coke

She works and bakes,
And makes great cakes
Perhaps dances, and sings
Her guidance gives us wings
Yes, there is no other,
Like a mother.

by Diane Laux



**When I climb out upon my high perch—my Zen perch
I gaze at dozens of three and five story trees
So close we only need to whisper
I peer into their knotty navels
Some I look right into their hazel eyes**

**Those sentinels have all pledged to shield me
from neighbors and voyeurs in nearby urban towers
The cool oxygen they release into my morning mask
is from their night's sleep
breathe exhale slow deep**

**A united nations of botanical specimens
whose common gods are sunlight and moisture
I hear and taste the green synesthesia
as it crashes and blends in a hundred embossed hues.
leaves pods vines mosses**

**I have always grabbed the green crayon first from my box of 64 crayolas
to color outside of lines
Like the way trees grow themselves
For me is the color of Peace
So it must be Divine**

**From this lumpy chaise, tucked into this simple wood framed deck
I am a silent witness to their day
Each morning birthed with no agenda
No prejudice or comparison of root systems
just ready just steady**

**The calm of trees is generous like a good parent
Soothing my what ifs
Whenever I look up—the trees are watching me too
Waiting for me to grow
They must be so alive to love**

(Continued on page 11)

**Such grand sanctuaries with open borders
to legions of bugs and squirrels
Immigrants seeking shelter and sustenance
Vantage points for observing and defending life
climb perch nest cling**

**Sensual winds arrive
Limbs dance, vines entwine with ballroom grace
rustling leaves of crinoline with sunlight sequins
Decorative pods hang like tassels across layers of organza
Sway lift pause turn**

**I take to the trees and rest in this peaceful alliance
My trunk rings now count 60
But exhume that first decade child-self
and see attempts to climb any one of those trees
impertinent nimble feckless ambitious**

**Wrapping lean arms and legs
thrusting and willing my innocent torso forward and upward
just one more branch just a bit higher
Scaling those castle towers with my inexhaustible spirit in sneakers
Their bark soaking up my laughter**

**But today when my maturity seems exhausted
I lean into this aerial habitat
grasping resiliency for the day
Then I climb back into my house
to be artificially protected from sun and rain**

**And the sentinels call out
Are you there Child?**



OPEN MIC



Norman Molesko

April
participants



Anne W. Lee



Ilan Sendowski

photos by Ester Shifren



and their attentive April audience.



A Long Tradition

For decades, Open Mic has been the opening act of a CWC-SFV meeting. I remember the first meeting I attended in the Fallbrook Mall, pre-Northridge Quake. I came in late—after a long search in the mall for the meeting room—and an Open Mic speaker was already in the middle of reading her humorous essay.

As I scrawled my name on the Visitor's List, I noted the bursts of laughter as the performance rolled on and the enthusiastic applause of the audience at its conclusion. Then another member came forth and the crowd hushed to listen to his verse.

I found a seat and observed the interactions and good cheer of this local writers' group. And soon, after my attendance at this initial SFV meeting, I became a member of a group that would influence and enrich my writing for years to come.

Today, in 2018, I still look forward to Open Mic and hearing the work of my friends. After the meeting, I often contemplate the spoken memoir, story or poem. In fact, I can still remember the readings I heard five, ten, fifteen years ago ... long before our club found a home at the MPTF. Why do these readings remain in my memory? Well, probably because the topic—combined with the live performance—made me laugh or touched my heart in some way.

For decades, Open Mic has continued to be a showcase of our members' creative talents.

Sail on, MPTF writers! Keep up the good work!

—Kathy Highcove

May 5th Meeting Agenda

- 12:30 p.m. Registration
- 1:00 p.m. Open Mic
- 1:30 p.m., Guest Speaker
- 2:00 p.m. Club Business
- 3:00 p.m. Refreshments
- 3:30 p.m. End of meeting

SFV-CWC Location

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



Driving Directions

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.

