JANUARY 2019 VOLUME 12 ISSUE 5



The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club



In January, Come Take a Peek Over April's Garden Wall

pril Halprin Wayland, an American awardwinning author and teacher whose children's books and young adult novels have been widely acclaimed, will present "How Many Books Do You Write in a Week? – The Adventures of a Chil-

dren's Author," at 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 12 in the Saban Community Room.

The author of seven picture books, poetry and a young adult novel in poems, Wayland will reveal the behind-the-scenes stories of some of her books and how she motivates herself to continue writing.

"If you've always wanted to write for children, this could be your golden ticket to this genre," said Wayland, who has taught at the UCLA Extension Writers' Program for twenty years and was presented with the Outstanding Instructor of the Year Award. "And if you haven't ever wanted to write for children, come peek over the garden wall anyway. Find out what it's like to live in the 'Kidlosphere."

The author's books include "It's Not My Turn to Look for Grandma!" (Kropf), and "New Year at the Pier, A Rosh Hashanah Story" (Dial), which was named Best Jewish Picture Book and winner of the Sydney Taylor Gold Book Award and "More Than Enough – A Passover Story." She also won the Myra Cohn Livingston Award for "Girl Coming in for a Landing: A Novel in Poems" (Knopf) and has won seven poetry awards from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She also blogs with five children's authors at TeachingAuthors.com.

A self-described peace activist and animal lover, and the daughter of a mom who was a concert pianist and a dad who was a farmer, Wayland has run in a marathon, played the fiddle, founded folk music clubs and a hiking club, and started a non-profit tutoring agency, Positive Agency. When not teaching or writing, she is either walking along the beach, hiking, meditating or traveling to other countries and giving workshops.

After four years of working for a Fortune 500 corporation, she made a wonderful discovery. "The hardest thing I've ever done was learning who I am and who I want to be in this world," Wayland said. "Writing helped me learn this." She left her job to write full-time.

For more information about this author, visit (www.aprilwayland.com).

-Gary Wosk

CWC-SFV 1 JANUARY 2019

Don't forget: The January CWC/SFV meeting has been moved to January 12th.

President's Message

The December 2018 calendar page has flipped and it's really 2019, and I'm ready to honor a few New Year traditions.

For example, I've made an important New Year Resolution: this year I resolve to get my novel, *Dug In*, finished and published. To this end, I've already hired an editor who's given me some terrific suggestions. Yes, SFV members, I'm resolved to write and publish the final edition. Watch for it.

And here's another New Year tradition that I happily honor: reflecting on what I'm grateful for in 2018. Let's see ... I'm very grateful for all the writing tips and inspirations from the CWC-SFV, especially Lori Hamilton's Saturday meetings. I'm also grateful for my critique group peers: Kay Henden, Bob Bunes, Lori Hamilton, and our newest member, Joan Zerrien.

I'm grateful to my Board members: Pat Avery who is both Treasurer and Secretary of the Board; Andi Polk, Member Chair, who has done more jobs than I can count; Editor Kathy Highcove who gets the *Scribe* out every month, not an easy task; Stacie Hammes, who with the help of

Alan Wills. has managed the many tasks of Hospitality;
Nance Crawford, who stepped up to fill the Vice
President spot; Speaker
Chair Lori Hamilton, who finds great speakers for our meetings, and Critique
Group Coordinator Geri



Jabara, who, assisted by Lillian Rodich, keeps track or all our critique groups. Currently, Geri and Kay Henden are laying plans for an evening critique group.

On a more personal level, I'm thankful for my family -- my wife, Rita, and my great kids, Joey and Heidi. Rita and I will be celebrating Christmas with our children in Oakland this year.

Many things are looking good for our CWCSFV branch in 2019. I've been very pleased to welcome several new SFV members who are all experienced and dedicated writers. Their enthusiasm helps me feel enthusiastic about getting my own novel done this year.

To the whole CWC-SFV family, Happy Holidays and ... get writing everybody!

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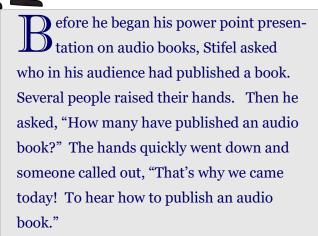
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In December Packed Power Point Presentation on Audio Books



And with no further preamble, Stifel began his talk. He first endorsed social media marketing and advised published authors to remain active on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, start a book blog, look into podcasts, and beseech your friends to review your book on Amazon. A canny author, Stifel implied, will also devise a system to keep track of the best public response to each online marketing tool. His listeners busily made notes.

Stifel waited a couple beats, then firmly told us, "Every published author must secure audio book rights!" Some of us nodded wisely, and others looked unsure. Our speaker then warmed to his theme.

"Over the decades," he said, "audio book sales have ballooned and now greatly surpass printed book sales. Why? It's easy. 'Mommy, tell me a story,' That basic need for a story."

Yes, this listener

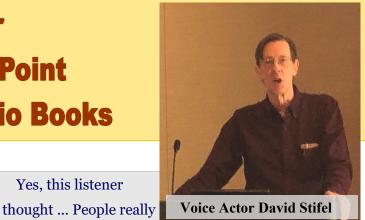


photo by Ester Shifren

like to hear a story, or learn a lesson, or get directions for a recipe, or learn a new language while stuck in traffic on the 405, or ... you name it, the reasons for listening to text are endless. New uses for audio are constantly being invented.

Stifel picked up his power point clicker and started a primer of the audio book genres and the corresponding rights and choices of prospective audio book authors.

And our guest speaker was an authority on this subject. For many years, he told us, he's been involved with audio books as an author, producer, marketer and narrative book actor. He records text at his home every week, at night, sealed up in his sound proofed recording studio.

At this point in his lecture, Stifel came to the topic of audio book rights. And that's a legal briar patch. Why? There are many, many audio streams-self help, erotica, business, how to, sci-fi, role playing games, academic works, romance novels-and each genre has its own set of rights. And in 2019, a multitude of AI apps are reading text, so robo-rights must be added to the list! Even AI Alexa wants her share of the bitcoins!

(Continued on page 4)

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But let's back up a bit ... right now, every new author should make sure that his/her audio rights are included in a publisher's contract. If an author published several years ago, a new contract that includes audio rights should be worked out with the publisher. It's worth your time, Stifel emphasized, to ensure that you, the author, reap a share of future audio profits.

The last part of Stifel's talk focused on whether an author should self-publish an audio book.

Let's think about the recording process: Producing an audio book consists of a narrator sitting in a recording booth and reading the text, while a studio engineer and a director record and direct the performance. If a mistake is made the recording is stopped and the narrator reads it again. Sounds a bit complicated. In an



David Stifel at work in his recording studio

echo of the self-publishing talks SFV writers heard a decade ago, Stifel explained that an audio recording is not an easy task. Remember the myriad of choices that had to be worked out to publish a hard-copy book? How easy was that process? Did you end up with a several hundred books whose text was marred by typos here and there?

"If that's your call," Stifel advised, "stay on the sidelines. Listen to the recording, and

make suggestions but refrain from micro-managing. If you've found a good team and you're paying them to do the job, give them space to work."

Too quickly, his talk came to an end.

Perhaps David Stifel might return in
2019 and give us pointers on marketing an audio book.

—Kathy Highcove



ave you heard of the National Library Service? NLS is a free library service available to U.S. residents and citizens living abroad whose low vision, blindness, or physical disability makes it difficult to read regular print. Local cooperating libraries throughout the United States mail NLS talking books, magazines, and playback equipment directly to enrollees at no cost. Braille books and magazines are also available at no cost. Braille and talking books and magazines also may be downloaded from the Internet through the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.

For more information or to register with the NLS, go to https://www.loc.gov/nls/

They Got the Message

If you read December's Valley Scribe issue, you recall Anne W. Lee's poem about the fire goddess, When I shared our newsletter with other CWC branches, Sacramento editors read the poem and strongly identified with the scenes of flames and chaos. The goddess spoke to them, I was told. And they asked for permission to reprint it in their January Sacramento Writer newsletter.

Anne gave her permission and so the verse has been republished and read by the members of our sister club. Congrats, Anne!

-KH



by Kathy Highcove

Twenty years ago, a sudden illness attacked my nervous system. For several weeks, I lost much of my sight. I couldn't drive my car and was house bound. Even worse, I could no longer read. Printed words were a grey blur. It took several months before my vision stabilized and I could be fitted with prescription glasses. In the meantime, I used a wide magnifying glass to enlarge print, and walked haltingly everywhere I went.

I relished one bright spot amid my days of squinting and staring at fuzzy images: a bright-yellow tape player provided by Braille's Books on Tape program.

Every day I listened to a taped story. I closed my eyes, forgot my health problems and escaped into other times and climes. I rediscovered the pleasure of active listening and the heightened use of my imagination.

Do you remember the days before televisions were in every home? I do. As a small child, I often sat in front of a radio, listening to shows like "The Lone Ranger". I rediscovered that listening pleasure with cassettes from the Books on Tape program.

One day the Braille Institute announced a Books On Tape writing contest, I decided to enter the poetry division. I'll compose something short and sincere, I thought. I raised my computer's font size to 36 and began writing. I composed a free verse poem titled "The Touch of a Voice." I sent in my entry and waited.

Two weeks later, I received a phone call from the Braille Institute head librarian. "Your poem won first place! Unanimous choice! Please come to the awards ceremony with a guest to receive your prize. One of most popular readers of the Talking Books program will read the winners' poems and essays."

A month later, my husband and I traveled to the Los Angeles Braille Institute and were welcomed by a the library staff. An aide escorted my husband and me into a large meeting room and we took our seats in the front row with other prose and poetry winners. Seated around us was a large audience of blind or visually impaired adults—enthusiastic patrons of the Braille Library System.

Nothing in my life had prepared me for this poignant experience at the Braille Institute. The program that afternoon began with a choreographed tap dance

by young Braille staff members, and then a few short speeches from older staff members

Then the Big Moment arrived. A voice actor was introduced. A murmur went though the crowd. Someone behind me said, "He's my favorite!" I was seated close to the stage so I could see him fairly clearly. He smiled at me, pulled out a paper and proceeded to read my poem in his beautiful voice. The audience listened intently, and when he finished I noted that many people smiled in my direction as they applauded. I rose and received my gifts: A large basket full of goodies, a Braille Institute t-shirt, coffee mug and a framed copy of my poem. What joy I felt!

Over a period of months, my vision improved. Gradually, I saw colors again, and the world around me. With my new glasses, I could finally read text!

Today, when I glance at the framed poem on my wall, I remember the exultation I felt as my words were read aloud to that special audience. The reading by the voice actor showed me that people had heard and indentified with my verse. I may still be housebound, I thought, but my writing can help me communicate with the world.

Twenty years ago, I gave the Braille community a poem, but in return, I received the precious gifts of empowerment and self-worth.

THE TOUCH OF A VOICE

The touch of a voice Nurtures the mind, transports A listener to different worlds.

The touch of a voice Reaches through dark dreams, Smoothing the empty hours.

The touch of a voice Brings us a world that speaks The language of emotion.

The touch of a voice Gift of an open heart and mind, Sharing the visions of life.

-Kathy Highcove

An Interview With SFV Publicist Gary Wosk

Gary, what brought you to your first SFV meeting?

I was perusing the pages of Los Angeles Daily News when I came across a listing for the club in the community calendar section that touted a monthly meeting. An acquaintance of mine suggested that I become in-

volved in a group activity because I was still reeling and blue from the loss of my dad and a job. I also needed a creative outlet since I hadn't been writing too much. A light went off in my head. 'Maybe it's time I began writing science fiction stories again, like I did when I was a teenager.' It's ironic that years later as our SFV media relations representative that I'm placing the same listings in publications.

Why did you return ... and keep returning?

The people. It's as simple as that. As soon as I walked into the Katzenberg Pavilion I felt welcome. People came up to me and introduced themselves and asked what were my favorite genres. I immediately picked up on this nurturing atmosphere. And then, a few weeks later, I joined a critique group, where my writing steadily improved. Yet even more important than the published stories that would follow, was the camaraderie that I had discovered in our group. The SFV branch is my second home.

You are a freelance writer who works from home. Tell us about your writing assignments.

After I left the field of journalism as a newspaper reporter I fell into media relations, first at the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (now known as Metro) and then The ALS



Association. I currently work as an independent consultant in the same field. Berbay Marketing and PR and Valerie Martinez Communications. Fortunately, the jobs seem to follow me. I receive a steady stream of media relations projects. I primarily pitch stories about attorneys and schools. I love to work and see no reason to

stop at this time. It's also nice to receive a steady paycheck in the mail so that I can pay the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power bills.

At every meeting, we welcome visitors and ask where they read about our club or speaker.

Every month, visitors will name publications that you've contacted Do you network and keep in contact with local editors?

Newspapers are not what they used to be. A good percentage of the advertising has gone to the Internet, so there are fewer pages. It's not enough just to email a news release. It's imperative to make follow up phone calls. Today's reporters have full plates and a news release often falls through the cracks. Also, reporters tend to take these "pitches" more seriously when they hear a voice. This practice leads to an excellent working relationship which I enjoy.

Finally, why are you doing this work for the club?

I hope our branch will flourish and be there for future generations. Nothing makes me happier than to see newcomers who were drawn to our monthly meetings, in part, by the publicity. I cannot take full credit for the turnouts. Our increasing online presence managed by other members of the chapter is also pivotal.



Well, that was easy, I thought. Too easy. Did I really get it done? The cabbie isn't talking any-

more, but maybe he's a good actor. Can't leave 'til I'm sure.

And it all seemed so unreal.

I'd waited until I saw his cab pull into his usual spot in front of my hotel. I slid into the back seat, and said, "Hi, Eddie."

"Hey, bud," he said, " how'd you know my name?"

I leaned forward, raised my arm and answered his question in my own way. He shuddered and shut up. I looked around. No one had noticed. My silencer had muffled the shot.

So there I was, seated in a cab on Broadway and the streets were filled with excited theater patrons engaged in lively conversation. Neon lights flashed. Marquees were lit up. Hustlebustle everywhere. But Eddie was guiet.

Is he pretending? I thought.

Just to make sure it was lights out, I called out, "Hey, Eddie, what's the problem? I have an overseas flight to catch at LaGuardia. Let's get a move on."

No reply.

So I slid open the little plastic window between the front and back seats and shook his right shoulder.

No reaction, another positive indicator. Then out of the corner of my eye, I saw a cop strolling toward us. I sat back in my seat and began reading the New York Times. He glanced at me and moved on.

I took a deep breath and relaxed. But I need to make a fast exit, I thought. If this cab stays put, that cop will come over to investigate.

Time to find another ride.

I swiftly climbed out of the cab and stared down at Eddie, He looked straight ahead.

Small skull fragments and brain matter were scattered over the dash and the front

seat. A small bullet hole exited his forehead.

I smiled, proud of myself. It takes a professional like me to pull off a special job.

Just then another taxi pulled in ahead of Eddie's cab and I immediately noticed the back seat was empty. I got in.

"Take me to LaGuardia." I told the driver. "The faster you get me there, the bigger your tip."

We sped through the early evening traffic and soon arrived at the airport. I was confident that no one followed us.

Two hours later, here I am in a first class seat, sipping champagne, on my way to the mother country.

By the time the cops start looking for the guy who shot Eddie, I'll be somewhere far away, over the Atlantic. The incompetent CIA will never catch me. I even left them a clue, a calling card inscribed with a red hammer and sickle--just to rub it in. And even if they do find me, so what? I have a friend in the White House. And an even more powerful friend in Russia.

I'll be a hero in Moscow. After collecting my medals and rubles, I'll lay low until my next job. But this hit job should warn other agents that it's a fatal mistake to cooperate with the West. Perhaps I'll get a promotion and go to work in the French embassy.

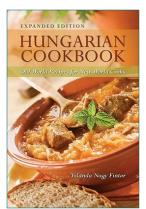
Wherever I go, I know that my very special skills will be needed ... and appreciated.



She Savored the Surprise

ast October, I found an unex-✓ pected surprise in my mailbox. In it was an envelope from the publisher of my Hungarian Cookbook; Old World Recipes for New

World Cooks. In the envelope was a four-figure royalty check reflecting the book's sales record for the last three years, that includes the first half of this year. It appears that in that time frame,



over two-thousand-five-hundred paper backs and 164 e-books were sold. While most sales happened in the United States, a few were made in the UK and in Canada.

What more satisfaction can a writer have than knowing that after 15 years of publication, her book still has a shelf life!

CABBAGE, STUFFED OR UNSTUFFED?

Here is a recipe from Yolanda's best selling cookbook.

his classic recipe of meat, rice and cabbage is an example of a dish that has been adapted by many cultures over hundreds of years. Food historians believe that the original recipe was perfected by the ancient Turks who incorporated ground lamb and rice with currants and pine nuts, then wrapped the mixture in grape or cabbage leaves. Through the centuries, variations of this recipe evolved until each Eastern and Central European country claimed its own version.

When these Europeans migrated to the New World in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they brought their favorite cabbage recipes with them.

I learned to make the stuffed cabbage dish that my mother and grandmother (both born in Hungary) had made for their families. Then my Hungarian mother-in-law gave me a shortcut recipe. It contains all the ingredients of stuffed cabbage but eliminates the need to roll the meat mixture into parboiled cabbage leaves. The rich flavor remains, but preparation time is reduced.

I tablespoon vegetable oil

1 large onion, chopped

1 1/2 pounds lean ground pork or beef

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon pepper

1 cup uncooked rice

1 can (27 ounces) sauerkraut, drained

1 ½ cups sour cream

2 cups chopped cabbage

2 cups tomato or V/8 juice

- 1. Heat oil in a large, heavy skillet; sauté onions until soft.
- 2. Place meat in a large bowl; season with salt and pepper. Mix in rice, add sautéed onions and mix well.
- 3. In the same skillet used for cooking onions, layer meat mixture, sauerkraut and sour cream, in that order, one third at a time. Spread chopped cabbage over the last layer of sour cream. Pour tomato juice over all.
- 4. Cover tightly and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook one hour, or until rice is tender.

I like to serve this with dense crusty bread and a glass of hearty wine.

-Yolanda Fintor



Yolanda Finto

MEMORIES OF GRANDFATHER
Keyle Birnberg

Sitting on my porch steps
Elbows propped on my knees
I look up to see the navy sky
Patches of white clouds
Are sailing by taking grandfather away...

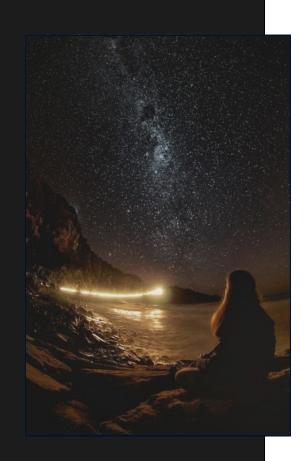
Contemplating the conspiracy
Of melting centuries
I visualize clear blue skies
Where volcanoes don't cough ashes
And hurricanes forget to blow

Time marches on
Rushing I open my empty jars
Filling them with scattered crystal dreams
Like sanctuaries of smells and sounds
Forever saved in my memory drawers

I want to keep the seas of water blue Reflecting the pale-yellow-moon Hiding under transparent clouds Teasing all stars to blush Crushing them like diamonds Deep into dark-velvet-nights

Nights, with pillows moist in tears
Push me to get up
Running to the window I see
White undulating clouds
With Grandfather's gray hair
Softly spilling over the ream
Of his old snowy white shirt

His fingertips touch his silent lips Blowing soft kisses With gallant mastery Reaching my cheek Before night ends





Nina Klein



Leslie's Critique Family







Lillian Rodich

Ed Rasky

Gabriella Owens

I've been a member of a SFV critique group for many years. My first group contained seven creative souls. As the years passed, the group size has fluctuated. Presently, five of us meet twice a month to critique our work.

In my very first critique group, Dave Wetterberg was our facilitator and short story person; Lillian Rodich became our poet and mentor; Ed Rasky wrote nonfiction family scenes; Lenora Smalley was our gentle poet; Professor Claude Baxter was the Brit who wrote the adventures of his truly fascinating life; Max Schwartz brought his WWII experiences to life and also wrote about his years as an army engineer, building roads and tunnels all over the world. Keyle Birnberg Goldstein is no longer able to attend our meetings but she's still part of my special family. She often writes in English about her colorful life in Ecuador while thinking in Spanish, so her memoirs are told with an accent.

Here's my 2019 family: Max's wonderful daughter, Nina, continues her father's literate legacy. She shares her father's "letters to Mom," and Max lives once more in our imagination. And then there's Leslie Kaplan—that's me—the memoir lady who tries to make you laugh or shed a tear. Lillian Rodich, our wonderful poet, came along later in the game but our family critique

group fell in love with her. OOPS! Nearly forgot Gabriella Owens, the witty humorous writer who lives in a plastic Pink Flamingo inhabited neighborhood. She makes us smile out loud.

I fondly recall another past member who recently passed away: Doug Douglas, the articulate one who wrote novels and stories. He was so bright ... above and beyond brightness. I needed a dictionary by my side when reading his literary works of art.

So ... the members of my critique family may have changed but not our meeting agenda. First, we have a social time. We share snacks and chat before the business at hand. Then we take a seat, and one by one, we read aloud our submissions. We hear how our work sounds as we read. It's very effective. As a member reads, the rest of us listen. We judge how the story flows and holds our imagination ... or not

Continuing the SFV critique tradition, my present group gives positive feedback and suggests ideas on how to improve a friend's poetry or prose. And, of course, we often respectfully disagree with a friend's critique.

Finally, I can confidently say that my critique family has been instrumental in helping all past and present members to improve their writing skills.

—Leslie Kaplan

New Year's Day

As I clean confetti from last night's party.

Take down lights from a drooping tree,
the smell of ham and yams cooking.

Coins hidden in the black eyed peas
to bring good luck to the one who finds them.
I think about what New Year's means.

It's a colorful, left-over holiday gift
labeled "Do Not Open 'Til January 1st,"
a white snowfall covering the past,
a date to remember for letters and checks,
a first blank page in a brand new journal.
A resolve to write as each day turns,
a new dance step,
a new song to sing,
a flame re-lit to burn all year,
a chance to start over,
a slate wiped clean,
a wave that breaks and washes the shore
waiting for footprints to mark the sand.
And new sand castles to be built again.



I can't wait to get started.

—Lenora Smalley

OPEN MIC REBOOT

There have been ongoing Board discussions regarding continuing Open Mic as a regular feature prior to the monthly general membership meeting. After spirited debate, it was agreed that musical performance is not appropriate for Open Mic. As a result, the Board has passed the following resolution: "Open Mic sessions are for members to read their prose and poetry within the guidelines set by the Board."

Nance Crawford has agreed to coach sessions on presentation, and the use of microphones when a member is reading before the group. There will be no Open Mic sessions until details of time and available space are worked out, hopefully by the February meeting. We will let everyone know when we've decided on a date.

CWC-SFV Board members

Erica Stux 1929-2018

e recently learned that Erica Stux passed away on December 22nd. Once more this year, we've lost a long-time member of our local writers club. Many



of us were unaware that Erica had been ill and so her passing came as sad news this holiday season.

Next month, in the *Scribe* will feature several examples of Erica's work. She was a very productive writer, comfortable in a wide range of genres, especially in many types of children's literature.

Here's an example of her poetry:

A PRISM

Here are colors in the order, red and violet at the border, just like in a rainbow's arching span.

It shows white is just a mixture; colors are the basic fixture, held together through some magic plan.

Much as splitting light asunder, leaving us awestruck in wonder, in relationship this rule applies.

We should be alert in seeing facets of a person's being, for his inner aspect may surprise.

Just ignore inconsequentials; look for traits that are essentials, showing what a person's like inside.

So just like the rainbow's hues, we should look for latent clues where one's finest qualities may hide.

- Erica Stux

Remembrances

Prica and I were in the same critique group (Saturday a.m.) for a number of years. We often rode together and had time to converse one on one. I learned how intelligent and quick witted she was, a unique and wonderful poet, a nature lover and an individual with a wonderful sense of humor and a natural humility about her accomplishments. I have a number of her books (autographed) and consider them a treasure.

Erica was a soft spoken. small in stature highly gifted woman with an optimistic and detailed, but down to earth way of looking at life. I'm glad I had the opportunity to know her.

—Lillian Rodich

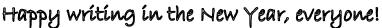
he was always a gentle lady, far more illuminating than her diminutive stature would suggest.

She will be missed.

-Andrea Polk

I would like to share that Erica was not only a loyal, longtime member and most productive member of CWC-SFV, she was also an active member of my Saturday a.m. Critique Group for almost ten years, rarely ever missing a meeting. She was a woman of few words, but always showed up with a new poem or another book she had just published, or an invitation to a play she had just published. I will miss her greatly.

-Geri Jabara





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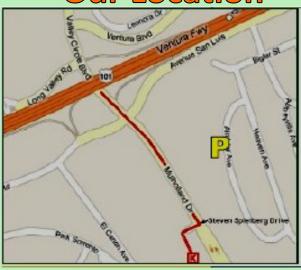
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Our Location



The CWC/SFV Meeting
will be held on January 12, at 1 p.m.
in the Saban Community Room
located at the
Motion Picture and Television Fund
23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364



The Saban Center for Health and Wellness

CWC-SFV 13 JANUARY 2019