



The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club



How to be a Winning Speaker



Ester Benjamin Shifren, author of the memoir, *Hiding in a Cave of Trunks: A Prominent Jewish Family's Century in Shanghai and Internment in a WWII POW Camp*, will present "How to be a Winning Speaker," at the next CWC-SFV meeting on February 2, at 1 pm, in the Katzenberg Room.

The internationally-known Shifren is also an artist, a frequent critic for LA Splash Magazine Worldwide, and a speaker and entertainer. She also relies on Facebook, LinkedIn, Tweets and all the important new ways that are used to attract an online audience.

Shifren goes back to basics: she uses her voice. Ever since her book was published, she has accepted countless speaking engagements to promote her book. And these speeches given to interested audiences have resulted in many sales.

"Social media is important, but it's insufficient for your new book's promotion," she contends. "Anyone who writes a book and doesn't develop a theme to speak about can say goodbye to their best marketing opportunity. Just depending on the Internet to get the word out is a myth. People want to



Ester Shifren

see you and hear you," she continued. "As the saying goes, it's all about the presentation, and that especially holds true for authors who are trying to publish, sell and publicize their books. Without effective verbal presentation skills, authors will be at a definite disadvantage."

As part of Shifren's program, she may ask audience members to write a brief presentation about their book that they can then read aloud to those in attendance.

"A brief opening statement should immediately engage the audience and hold their attention. It should be practiced ahead of time—it doesn't happen by accident! Your pitch should be practiced until your voice sounds natural and confident."

In addition to her talk on Feb. 2nd, Shifren will provide a list of speaking opportunities for authors offered by local organizations.

—Gary Wosk



President's Message on Plastic Waste

This month's column will be a change of pace from my usual fare. I want to address a growing global problem.

Recently, I learned about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a floating island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, two times bigger than the state of Texas. This "isle" is made of plastic packing material, bottles and bags. Broken plastic fishing nets help to bind smaller plastic items to the giant bobbing blob.



All over the world, beautiful natural sites are being ruined by plastic trash. Recently, volunteers collected 3 tons of garbage, mostly plastic, from the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, an island off the coast of Iceland. A similar clean-up took place on an island 500 miles southwest of Hawaii.

It's so easy for a thirsty consumer to buy a plastic water or soda bottle. Most fast food restaurants use plastic packaging to wrap their products. Only 9% of plastic waste in the US gets recycled. That leaves 91% that ends up in garbage dumps or in rivers and streams

and then the ocean.

Part of the problem is "single use" items, like soda bottles, food packages, or straws. Recently, I learned that the city of Calabasas—where our MPTF meetings are held—banned

the use of plastic straws in local restaurants.

When I first heard of this new law, I thought, what a strange thing to do. Big Brother is taking over again. Then I remembered the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and I thought, what a

great thing to do. Using paper straws, or even better, no straws, is a small price to pay for a clean ocean.

There are many ways a consumer can use less plastic. Reusable water bottles are eco-smart. Real silverware can replace plastic implements on a picnic or outing. Change starts with small steps. It's my hope that the members of our club will think of future generations and find ways to make a difference.

—Bob Okowitz

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Working With Her New Illustrator Was like Learning a New Dance

—Kathy Highcove



On a rainy afternoon in the San Fernando Valley, storybook author April Halprin Wayland visited the Saban Community Room. Taking the microphone, she delivered a fast-paced informative talk, with accompanying colorful slides, on the latest trends in children’s literature like those discussed in the Kidlitosphere—the popular blog used by kids’ lit circles.

Her SFV audience was comprised of three main groups: people who mainly wrote adult fiction and nonfiction but who listened attentively to her talk; people who wrote kids lit, and clearly appreciated hearing Wayland’s insider information; people who’d written a storybook, then perhaps received a multitude of rejections from publishers and realized ... this is hard work!

Wayland addressed this “awakening” in her talk: It’s not child’s play to write a storybook and then attract a publisher. It’s not a light-hearted romp through one’s imagination, making up and jotting down up simplistic plots filled with colorful characters. Storybook writing is a special skill that must be learned and perfected. It’s work.

Once upon a time, Wayland decided to follow her heart and write a children’s storybook. She worked hard to learn the craft. Eventually, she wrote a story that caught the eye of a children’s lit publisher ... and that’s when her real work began. As in other writing genres, many changes are usually required after a creative work is sold. After the sale of her first book, Wayland was asked to work with a copy editor who immediately began to take the author’s creation apart and rebuild it from top to bottom.

Wayland spent weeks and months in rewrite mode with her new editor. And after the

text passed muster, she then spent many more hours working with an art director and an illustrator—an artist she’d never imagined illustrating her story. But, she reports, working with the art director and the artist enabled her to see her characters and their adventures in new ways. And she had fun working with the new team! This process has repeated with all of her published work.

She’s learned to let go of her story, sit back while an editor combed through its text, counted words, set up pages, selected the desired font and blocked out page space for illustrations. Interestingly, she found that sometimes an illustration needs no text. It can “speak” to a child in a visual way. And a young reader instinctively “hears” the message.

Today’s juvenile lit publishers are practical business people who are attuned to their market and what their buyers want. In this era of social media, Wayland reports, children’s lit has become much more colorful and visually oriented.

Wayland admits that the marketing process can be a daunting time for an author. But she’s often found that her stories were much improved in the free-spirited exchange of ideas with her creative team.

“Brainstorming with kids’ lit experts is like learning a lovely new dance.” Wayland told us. “The process can be a rewarding experience for an author. Have the discipline to work with a team, and watch your book improve in ways you’d never dreamed of.”

Wayland’s epiphany brings this story to a happy conclusion. More info on Wayland, take a look at her website.

<http://www.aprilwayland.com/>



An Invitation from April: "Join Me in the Kidlitosphere."



The KidLitosphere Central strives to provide a passage to the wonderful variety of resources available from the society of bloggers in children's and young adult literature. Go to <http://kidlitosphere.org/>

Some of the best books being published today are children's and young adult titles, well-written and engaging books that capture the imagination. Many of us can enjoy them as adults, but more importantly, can pass along our appreciation for books to the next generation by helping parents, teachers, librarians and others to find wonderful books, promote lifelong reading, and present literacy ideas.

The "KidLitosphere" is a community of reviewers, librarians, teachers, authors, illustrators, publishers, parents, and other book enthusiasts who blog about children's and young adult literature. In writing about books for children and teens, we've connected with others who share our love of books. With this website, we hope to spread the wealth of our reading and writing experience more broadly.

What started as individuals blogging independently about children's and young adult books became a collective of like-minded people.

While maintaining our own sites and unique perspectives, shared activities made us a thriving community. Now — with weekly celebrations of poetry and nonfiction, discussion groups, contests, social networks, an annual conference, and our own book awards — we've become a *society*.

This thing that Melissa Wiley dubbed the "KidLitosphere" has become a valuable resource that celebrates fiction and nonfiction, poetry and prose, authors and illustrators, writing and reading. Bloggers cover everything from picture books to young adult titles, writing process to publishing success, personal news to national events.

KidLitosphere Central strives to provide an avenue to good books and useful literary resources; to support authors and publishers by connecting them with readers and book reviewers; and to continue the growth of the society of bloggers in children's and young adult literature. Welcome to our world.

—Kidlitosphere Central

Thank you, Lillian Rodich!

For months I searched for an author of children's books to speak to our members. Lillian Rodich referred me to the highly-regarded Ruth Bornstein, but she was unable to come. Graciously, she referred me to another writer, April Halprin Wayland.

April listened to my pitch, and agreed to speak on January 12. I knew she was accomplished with numerous gorgeous books in verse but, even so, the dynamic, entertaining, informative program she did was one of the best we've had. April had members keeping her with endless

questions to find out more. And she gave generously.

I learned two things from this presentation. One, children's books are of great interest to writers. We had fourteen guests in attendance for this presentation. Two, our members can be great resources. This month, for example, our speaker is our very own Ester Shifren. The title of her talk: *How To Be A Winning Speaker*.

So I invite **all members** and guests to inform me about potential speakers or even ideas for programs. In other words, your input would be much appreciated.

—Lori Hamilton

CWC-SFV Saturday Poetry Group



Sylvia Molesko



Pirhiya Goldstein Nance Crawford Pat Avery Stephany Spencer



Scot Struman

On the second Saturday of each month, a group of six eccentric, open-minded and fun-loving poets meet for two hours to critique each other's poetry. One of the newest CWC-SFV critique groups, we have met for just over a year. We share hosting duties, meeting in rotation at each member's home. Our eclectic work includes poetry for children, poetry describing dream states, explorations of life challenges, and songwriting.

We have embarked on a unique learning experience. In working together, we have embarked on paths that the solitary poet might never encounter. We have learned to focus on increasing the power in our words, to reach across the barrier of language into deeply personal revelation, to share intimate, yet universal, insights.

Free to uniquely express emotion in mutual safety, we are enjoying learning and supporting each other as we develop our work.

Valentine's Day Chocolate Roulette

by Sheila Moss

Valentine's Day is right around the corner. The mention of that heart-filled day can send shockwaves of anxiety and consternation through, yes, the hearts of boyfriends, significant others and relatives; hopeful the boxes of chocolates they send to their loved ones will be appreciated.

I recall my husband saying "You can't go wrong with chocolates." But wait; can you?

And Forest Gump's Mother told him true. "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." Well, that holds true as well for an actual box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get, and this can cause much angst in those who receive such sweet goodies.

Consuming a piece of chocolate, however, should be one of life's most calming experiences, and it has been for me, but not always.

Here is how my love affair with chocolate began in the Midwest. I was born in Madison, Wisconsin, to be exact. In Madison, Whitman's Sampler reigned supreme. Under its distinctive yellow cover is a map identifying what flavor candy resides in its paper nest. Now that the San Fernando Valley is my home; however, I have become an ardent fan of See's candy. My cousin Carol introduced me to my first box of See's candy almost thirty years ago. She was not exaggerating when she said "The candy is rich, smooth and velvety." I agreed but added, "It smells good."

At first I practiced identifying the candy by shapes—wrong. The round ones could be mint (which I detest) or caramel which I love. Then my theory became one of practice and intuition. The toffee was always the same shape. And, of course, the nut clusters were a dead giveaway. I never missed picking out my beloved Bordeaux.

In the meantime I yearn for See's to introduce a candy map. Of course nowadays I guess it would be called an "app." We have apps for many things, why not for picking out candy?



Am I the only one who makes mistakes and strikes out? How do other aficionados cope? I decided to conduct a survey. The first man I interviewed was Tyrell who like me was waiting for a China King carry out. He studied my assorted box of candy and selected a round shaped sample. "This should be a caramel. Noooo," he said disappointed. "It's a chocolate cream."

When I asked the restaurant owner Linda to participate in my survey, she took one look at the possibilities and waved her hand. "I only like the almond nut clusters and they are all gone."

My cousin Lynn in San Francisco said quite frankly, "I keep taking nibbles until I get one I like." She admitted that this method doesn't go over very well unless it's your box of candy.

My friend Kathy uses a more devious approach. Her technique is to scratch the bottom of the candy. Along similar lines my friend Terry who doesn't like the soft centers presses the bottom of the candy to see if it squishes.

The most scientific method was employed by my neighbor Iris who takes a knife and cuts the piece of candy neatly in half. If she scores, she eats the whole piece. If not, there's still an edible half of piece available. Plus the guess work is eliminated for the next person!

Maybe my nephew Lee has the right idea. As a gambler, he suggests "Take a chance. It's only 160 calories for two pieces."

But for me, I still want a See's map.

How difficult would it be to label each piece of candy? Perhaps they could have a contest. Contestants would have to draw a diagram locating where each candy lived. Hmm ... would you put all the soft centers in the top left corner? The caramels marching right next to them? Maybe that's too organized? Appearance is important. I'd like to see the sprinkled ones randomly arranged.

And what do you think the top winners would receive? For sure—a life time supply of See's.

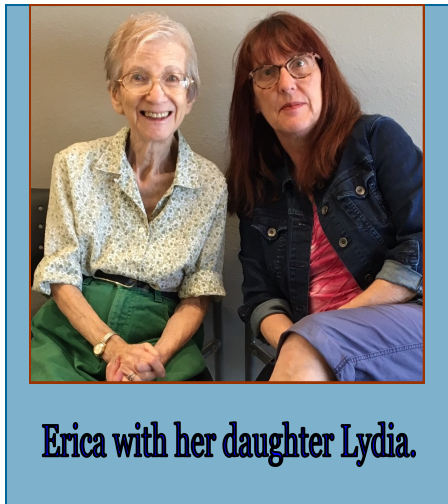
My Mom

Erica was born in 1929 in Cologne, Germany, the second daughter of a physician and art historian. The family had an English teenage au pair to teach the girls English. As the noose of Nazism tightened, it was the Catholic parish of this au pair which sponsored the family and enabled them to leave Germany. Upon leaving Germany, Mom never uttered another word of German, although she understood it well. She spoke Ohioan...like a native.

The family made their way from Germany to England to Ohio, eventually settling in Cincinnati where my grandfather opened his medical practice. He died two years later, leaving my grandmother with two young girls. Our grandmother's response was to expedite their education, so my mother graduated from high school at 15 and earned her master's degree in chemistry at 21. In addition to German and English, my mother also knew French and Russian and did some scientific translation work early in her career.

After University, Mom met another German-speaking refugee scientist. They were married in 1955 and came to Akron in 1959 when my dad, Paul, took a job with PPG Industries.

After my father died in 1984, mom met another European refugee scientist. Bill Shore was a Czech survivor of Auschwitz from Cleveland. They dated on and off, and



when Bill retired and moved to Los Angeles, Mom declared that she had no interest in marrying again and stayed in Akron. Imagine our surprise when she announced to all three of us two years later, "I am getting married to Bill, moving to LA and selling the house. You

kids come and get your stuff." They were like newlyweds until Bill's death in 2011.

So you see that a major theme in Erica's life is dislocation and dramatic reversals of fortune. Yet, we never heard her complain or lament. She did not ever talk about the past. Another major theme is, to use a cliché, marching to her own drumbeat. Mom was, first and foremost, a pragmatist and a scientist, with a special interest in biology, nature, ecology and conservation. She enjoyed related, other "left brain" activities: light verse, writing and performing music, history, crossword puzzles and playing bridge.

Mom's hobbies and passions were wholesome, if not, unabashedly nerdy. I submit as examples, accordion playing (which she started in the 1930s and was still playing in a klezmer band until a few years ago) and bird-watching.

Her life list of birds began when she was 15. When I was little, the Audubon Society outings were agonizing to me.

Mom was by decades the youngest

(Continued on page 8)

Audubon member, but, as in all things, she didn't care a whit. In adulthood, as I traveled, I thought, "I wish Mom were here. I bet she doesn't have blue-footed booby on her life list." Occasionally, I would describe to her a bird I had seen but didn't recognize, and she would reply something like, "That's a juvenile rosy-breasted nuthatch in its winter plumage!" Of course.

There were many things that didn't concern Mom. Both strange and somewhat laudable, she had no interest in consumerism, haute cuisine, fashion, popular culture, TV, politics, sports, political correctness, technology beyond the typewriter and the microwave, religion, metaphor, symbolism or word play. She felt strongly enough to rail against things she "just couldn't stand." That's also an odd list, including car commercials, spoiled chil-

dren, overt displays of piety or religiosity, bralessness, smoking and dishwashers.

However passionately she might have felt about any of those things, I never heard her say an unkind thing about another person. Bill Shore once said to me, "I dated better cooks, better dressers, better housekeepers, but intellectually there was no one equal to your mother." That about says it all. I'll end this memoir with one of Mom's poems.

A Wish

***The headboard lamp projects
my magnified image, covering
the closet door.***

***If only my life would cast
such a magnificent shadow
once I'm gone.***

Short-Cut to Drama by Erica Stux

Moths have their sex attractants. I have a child attractant. It's called shaving cream, and the smell of it seems to attract them from all over the house, no matter what they are doing at the moment. This wouldn't be so bad if it weren't that I am an old-fashioned guy when it comes to shaving, in that I like a safety razor, and a new-fashioned guy in child-rearing, in that I don't like to interfere with childish pleasures. So, whenever I get ready to shave, I find a juvenile audience quickly assembled in the bathroom.

"If you want to watch, no arguments," I warn them. "In fact, no talking."

I lift the razor to one cheek

"Susie's pushing me," says Tim, age five. "Quit it!"

"I am not! Now don't talk or he'll cut himself."

After a moment, "Did you cut yourself yet, Daddy?"

I grunt in a negative sort of way, as I round the corner of my chin and head into the straight away.

"I'd better get some tissues," says my little candidate for Future Nurses of America. She reaches over and

yanks off a sizable strip of toilet tissue.

"You haven't cut yourself yet," she says in a tone in which I detect a distinct feeling of disappointment.

I'm now on the upper lip. Someone hiccups.

"I need a drink of water," says Tim.

I lift the razor just as he jostles me reaching for the faucet.

Whew! A close one! As I return to my upper lip, now a little stiffer, I feel something soft at my ankles. It is Mitten, the family cat, who has come to join the fun.

"I'll get her. Come here, Mitten." Tim scoops her up, and at that moment I draw blood.

"You cut yourself, Daddy! This from Susie, a little too gleeful, I think. "Here's a tissue."

The doorbell rings.

"That must be Betsy. I'll get it."

Susie departs with a hop, skip and a jump. In a moment she's back with a blond child I've never seen before.

"We're just watching Daddy shave. Wanna watch too? Oh, Daddy, you cut yourself again!"

"Now get out, all of you!" I bellow as the blood trickles down my chin. "Watch Betsy's father shave!"

Tomorrow I think I'll charge admission.

While looking through The Valley Scribe archives, I recently discovered this interview with Erica Stux that was first published by a Valley paper in 2006. Erica had been chosen to write a musical for the dedication of Balboa Park. The interview was written by a writer for a local newsletter and, as I remember, Erica asked me to reprint the interview in our paper. After her passing, I decided to run it again because the piece tells the reader so much about Erica's writing and reading interests. She had such a versatile creative mind! —Kathy Highcove

2006 Interview With Erica

In 2006 the community of Lake Balboa was named after its manmade lake. Perfect for fishing, the lake also has pedal boating and smooth, curving walking pathways. Erica Stux's new musical revue *Lake Balboa*, uses song to tell the story of the lake and the people who go there.

This world premiere musical is about life, love and heartbreak, bird watching, fishing, meeting lovers and friends, or just enjoying the scenery. The show features Skeeter Mann, a real singing cowboy, plus a cast of eight professional singers. After the show, there is encore music-making just for the sheer fun of it at no extra charge.

Lake Balboa was written by Erica Stux, a published author of children's and young adult books, songs and plays. She moved to Chatsworth 12 years ago from Ohio where she majored in chemistry at the University of Cincinnati. "I first began to write when my children were young," she said. "I used to read to them and one day I got the idea that I could write what I was reading." Her poems were published in children's magazines. She moved on to short nonfiction, eventually giving up on the

chemistry and continuing as a fulltime writer. "I enjoy writing about nature and the envi-

ronment for children, and I also write poetry, both serious and light verse, and occasionally I write a humorous essay that is prompted by a funny experience," said Stux. "I realized living with a husband and children leads to humorous situations, so I started writing about them. The result is my latest published book ti-

tled *Who, Me? Paranoid?* I also have a booklet of humorous verse."

After she had been writing a while, she turned to biographies. Erica Stux says, "I always felt girls need to have more role models in the literature available to them. So I have two books to fill that need: *Eight Who Made a Difference: Pioneer Women in the Arts* and *The Achievers: Great Women in the Biological Sciences*. Another of my books is *Sequins and Sorrow*, a memoir of my co-author, a black dancer raising an autistic son while searching for a true love for herself."



Erica and a collection of her published works.



Samantha Berley

Member Focus

Born in sunny California, Samantha has a passion for three things: food, dogs, and writing. After graduating with honors from California State University, Northridge, Samantha set off to change the world with her writing. While she enjoys writing her blog “That Food Allergy Girl,” Samantha has found her greatest joy is multitasking. This means baking, crafting, all while working as founder and chair of her non-profit organization, Allies Everywhere. In her spare time, Samantha enjoys volunteering as the Social Media Director for the California Writers Club, San Fernando Valley. For more information, or if you’re curious about social media, you can message her online at our club’s Meetup.com or Facebook page.

Machines

Ill never forget the sound of sin-
Bald heads and bold face lies
tying people to tracks, mechanized to steal lofty perches on
Crumbling walls that only those tall sons can reach before their fall.

Doors close against
thoughtful discourse;
Hoarse voices boxing for quieter verse
Terse nods as they move their eyes
from the top of my head to the back of my skull,
Culling words,
carefully chosen
curt tongues.

Ill never forget the sound of silence-
Of wanton voices echoing into empty halls,
Worse for wear as voices quiet themselves to a whisper.

--Samantha Berley

A NARROW ESCAPE IN MOGADISHU

The following was taken from my Memoirs Collection entitled, *Serving God with The Somali People*.

—Ken Wilkins

In the late fall of 1957 we decided to take our vacation from our mission station in Kallafo Ethiopia and travel to Kenya. My wife, Mabel, and our two children, Kathy, age 4 and Timmy, age 3, were packed and ready to make the long trip long before I had filled all the Jerry Cans with gasoline. After Mogadishu there were no filling stations.

Our first day out of Kallafo took us to the border of Ethiopia and Somalia. There we met up with our old friend, the customs agent, who, we discovered, was still wearing his now famous sun glasses with the price sticker still stuck to the middle of his right lens. He wanted to show everyone he could afford something really expensive. It had likely been a bribe by someone.

We allowed ourselves time to briefly visit our Mennonite friends in Bilet, and then on to Mogadishu, the Capital of old Italian Somaliland.

We arrived at our mission headquarters very late in the evening. Our hosts, the Modrickers, put us up in the guest house. Both Kathy and Timmy were so sleepy we let them sleep in the clothes they were wearing.



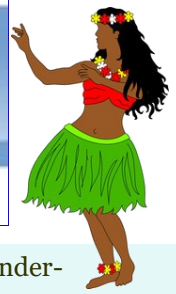
In the morning we slept as late as possible but were awakened by a knock on the door. It was the police asking if we had lost anything. We said we hadn't since we arrived late and went straight to bed. The police then showed us several items belonging to us including our passports, camera and billfold. What??? We had those things with us when we went to sleep.

The police then let us in with a very scary secret. Over in the corner was a broken wine bottle. If any of our family had awakened the broken bottle would have been pushed in their face and with a twist cause a life time of scars, if not death from bleeding.

Praise the Lord we had slept through it!

The Lord, in his Providence, had spared us a very nasty scenario that would have changed our lives forever.

—Ken Wilkins



I listen to the rhythm of the rain drops against the concrete patio. It makes music to my ears, like metal brushes scraping softly against brass cymbals. The timing is perfect. Opening the drapes, I watch the theater of the water ballet lit by lamp light. The rain dancers pirouette across the pool. Their costumes are silver, studded with diamonds. Beautiful to see and to hear. I have always loved rainy days here in Woodland Hills.

I snuggle up cozy and warm by the living room fire place. The warm glow of the gold and green flames licking at the logs in the fireplace create a paradox of moods. Both effects tranquilize me. I reach for one of my photo albums in the bookcase and ...

I OPEN AN ALBUM.

Sy and I are on vacation in tropical Tahiti. It's the first time that we're tagged as Genteel Members, or GM'S of Club Med. The counselors and entertainers are international and interracial who all speak French and English. Guests are GM'S and the counselors and entertainers are GO'S or Genteel Organizers.

The first day on the beach is an eye opener in more ways than one. The women are either topless or totally nude. The men are also sans trunks. I look at Sy and he looks at me. He says, "We look like voyeurs. This is a French island and I suppose it's second nature to be ... well ... natural." Then, to my surprise, off come his swim trunks.

Now if you knew Sy, you would think this is the last thing in the world that my soft-spoken, conservative, shy, quiet guy would be willing to do ... but he does. And me, the flirtatious one with a bit of a wild streak, could hardly get with it. But after a lot of coaxing, my top comes off ... but I quickly flip over on my stomach. That's the story of my "when in Rome" conversion.

I TURN THE PAGE

I'm now on board a 60-foot sail boat. The GO's are manning the sails. I strum a ukulele as I sing, "A Sailboat In The Moonlight." Sy doesn't like boat trips so he's on land playing tennis. When I get back onshore, I meet Sy at our hotel room so we shower and dress

for dinner. The nights are filled with wonderful entertainment, exquisite food, all the wine you can drink, dancing at the disco, romancing, *moonlight camp outs and more romancing.*

I TURN THE PAGE

Some of the GO'S are cross dressers and/or gay. I so enjoy their style and creativity. The make-up, the dress, and the nightly Broadway musical type of performances are an interesting contrast to the natural Tahitian life style. Sometimes I participate too because I love to sing and dance. It's easy for me, especially after two glasses of wine, to join the entertainment.

I TURN THE PAGE

It's dusk as we both board a sailboat and head for Bora Bora, which is even more primitive than Morea. Polynesian dancers greet us. The men grip fire lighted torches and wear only loin cloths, while the women sway sensuously in beautiful grass skirts and fresh flower leis on topm ... just the leis, nothing else. The beat of the bongo-like drums is contagious. I find myself swaying along with the dancers. Owning one of these lovely native outfits to take home is a must.

I approach one of the dancers and say, "If I give you my jeans, you give me what you wear. Okay?" She not only answers, "Okay," but includes a coconut skin bra and some shell jewelry in the swap!

I never ever want to leave this place. It lights everyone's fire. It's the sexiest place in the whole world! My quiet husband suddenly becomes a passionate seducer, like he's really seeing me for the first time. It's great!

I CLOSE THE BOOK.

Back in my living room again. The rain has stopped, the fire has dwindled down, and I'm back from my favorite vacation ... again. I get up and close the drapes, put the album back in the bookcase and make sure the fire is out.

I say out loud, "Thanks, Tahiti, for this lovely evening." As I climb the stairs to my bedroom, a crystal teardrop begins to trickle down my cheek.

SLAVES IN LOS ANGELES

By Alan Wills

Coiffured locks sleeping
restlessly tossing
the plush satin sheets
no haven from stress

Souls filled with yearning
but always distrusting
vacuous glass hearts
behind brick walls

Dawn shadows awakening
los niños are stirring
the withered grandmother
huddled on a dirt floor

From stooping to picking
father's body is aching
their wealth his love's arms
in their tiny wood shack

Long distance gear jamming
No-Doz white lining
night hauling truck driver
wife prisoner at home

Her mind vegetating
the four walls are caving
drying sick baby's tears
holding back her own



Tattooing and piercing
latch-key kids rebelling
their teenage adviser
a cold Internet-room

In ad's cultures are blending
with discrimination editing
equal opportunity, but
only whites need apply

Corporate ladder she's climbing
glass ceiling she's fighting
On backs she's walking
drugs and sex way to the top

Destroyed by their begging
the homeless fill missions
the Main Street parades
overcoats at mid-day

The Bag-Lady is rummaging
from trash cans she's dining
A drunk brown-bagging
develops the shakes

Tall cold buildings are releasing
paperwork prisoners'
body and soul selling
for the bills they must pay

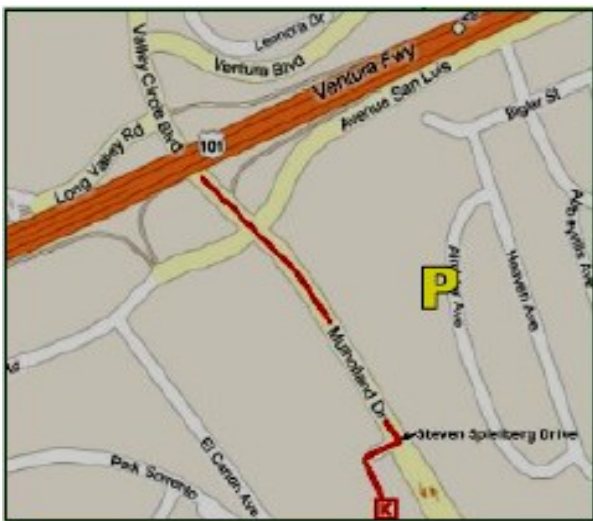
Rush-hour traffic reporting
freeway horns are locking
as a million strangers
are alone in L.A.

Our Location



**The Saban Center
for Health and Wellness**

The CWC/SFV Meeting
will be held on February 2, at 1 p.m.
in the
Katzenberg Room
located at the
Motion Picture and Television Fund
23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364



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