



The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club

How to Make Your Audience Sit Up and Listen

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 CEC-SFV meeting on April 6, at 1 pm, in the Saban Community Room.



Ester Benjamin-Shifren

The internationally-known Shifren, who is also an artist, a frequent critic for *LA Splash Magazine Worldwide*, and a speaker and entertainer, does not rely on Facebook, LinkedIn, 'Tweets and all the new ways 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 see you and hear you," she continued. "As the saying goes, it's all about the presenta-

tion, 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."

—Gary Wosk

Before Shifren's presentation, author Rita Keeley-Brown ("Good Luck Mrs. Brown") will lead a 20-minute workshop entitled "Just Write." Writers will choose from a series of prompts and—within 7 minutes write a short story or poetry. Finally, writers will voluntarily share their work with a nearby person or the SFV audience.



President's Message

Recently, an old friend, Daniel, came to visit me. While chatting about the old days, he reminded me of the time that he and I and another friend, Scott, had a very unusual experience. We were doing an ocean swim together and after twenty minutes of active swimming, we took a break and started talking while treading water. Gradually, we realized that we were surrounded by six dolphins! The animals circled us for several minutes. Dan, Scott and I were astounded and initially felt nervous.

When are these guys going to 'set us free'?, I thought Are they trying to tell us something?

But after a while, we relaxed and totally enjoyed the moment. After all, we three humans were sharing a great ocean swim with six delightful dolphins. Twenty years later, Dan and I both remembered this ocean swim as a very special experience.

Henry David Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, *If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*

Not too many people still take part in

ocean swims. Thirty years ago, there could be 120 people participating in an ocean swim. L.A. County ran out of funds to sponsor the swims, so Scott and I occasionally go out on our own swims. It's still a remarkable and challenging experience to deal with nature on its own terms.

Writing is also very challenging. A whole new world with lots of rules and I need to 'go deep' to make my story or poem feel real to my listeners.

This type of 'going deep' is very meaningful to me. My circle of fellow critiquers and I bond and assist each other on our creative journey. Their contributions have helped me make meaningful progress on my novel.

—Bob Okowitz



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Lyricist K.A. Parker Spun Her Story

Last month, we welcomed speaker K.A. Parker, a lyricist who has composed many hit songs in partnership with composers, songwriters and performers. A list of her hits would easily take up half the space in this review.

A lyricist, like artists in other genres, has an inborn talent for this work.

Even as a very young child, Parker loved music. She heard popular music playing at home and sang and danced happily to the tunes. Of course, most young children love music and rhythmic beats, and many are given music or dance lessons to enrich their early musical experiences. But in K.A. Parker's home, no adult thought little Katherine needed that encouragement, and so her musical talent was neglected. But as she grew older, she became increasingly focused on music, especially song lyrics. As she matured, she began to write down snatches of phrases and verse. She determinedly developed her talent for creating song lyrics.

Parker's first day jobs were not related to her musical interests. But in her free time she wrote lyrics nearly every day and stayed alert for some way to make a connection with the music industry. She met other young lyricists and with these new acquaintances, entered contests. Finally, she was a \$10,000 first prize contest winner and used her success to meet more and movers and shakers in the music business—a lucrative business that is very discerning about lyricists.

A modern lyricist is a skilled wordsmith. He/she is usually given a new tune that needs a story. The lyricist listens and then begins to search for the words that match the music's genre, theme and rhythm. A story slowly takes shape. After



photo by Ester Shifren

all, a song is basically a story. It has a storyline—a beginning, middle and end. And every song/story needs a theme, characters, conflict or contrast, and a fitting conclusion. But song lyricists have a special challenge: they create a story that will be sung.

The lyrics must interpret the music, deepen the emotion and emphasize the

message. Then the lyricist's interpretation must pass muster with the composer and others who involved with the song's production. Collaboration is another key skill of the best lyricists.

The song writing process is similar to an author working with an editor to prepare a book for publication. A lyricist works with a team to make word and line adjustments. After this editing, the lyricist and production partners work with a singer and musicians to make the song a marketable product, and a story that folks want to sing.

Parker shared content samplings from her UCLA songwriting course. For example, there are **eye songs** which pay tribute to people, places and events, **head songs** that are political, spiritual, philosophical views usually sung by the composer, **ear songs** that are personal stories written by the singer/songwriter, and **heart songs** which are traditional love songs that make up 75 percent of songs heard on the radio.

Looking back on our hour with K.A. Parker, I especially recall listening to recordings of past hit songs—some with her own lyrics—that she played for us. And I smile thinking of our audience happily singing “Pretty Woman” along with Ray Orbison. That was like good day sunshine on a rainy March morning.

—Kathy Highcove

More About Prompts

How many times have you thought, That reminds me of ... and you wanted to tell someone about it. Memory of a life experience or a new idea can be triggered by art, words, scents, sounds and many other types of stimuli. That's what happens in prompt writing, one of my favorite creative writing exercises.

A prompt exercise should be presented in a nonjudgmental atmosphere where your ideas can come pouring out. The exercise isn't a competition. What you write is understood by your peers that the reaction is a rough draft—a quick print of what popped into your mind after hearing that prompt.

Reading aloud what you have written to another person helps clarify your story and encourages you to develop it further. It's inspiring to hear what others have written and the positive experience builds your self-confidence.

For me, the first time I experienced prompt writing, I said to myself, "I didn't know I could do that!" You might have felt the same way.

After presenting the prompt selections, I love watching the group choose their prompt and enthusiastically start writing. When the ten minutes are up, I ask if anyone would like to read their piece aloud to the group, and the hands fly up! The stories and poems are fascinating and a great stimulant for all—especially for me. It's so interesting to see the wide varieties of material that are inspired by the same prompt.

After assigning written prompts, usually in unfinished sentences, I give the group at least

four choices to insure that there's one prompt that will connect with each person.

I try to bring new prompts to our meetings. For our last two CWC-SFV meetings—February and March—the prompts were first lines from best-selling books by famous authors. The names of the author and titles of the book were my "secret." When the time was up, volunteers revealed their prompt choice and read their stories to the whole group.

After they read their story, I said, "The author, _____, would have liked your story as well as his/her book titled, _____." When the audience heard the source of the prompt, they broke into excited chatter and laughter. I've found that this exercise is often a creative writing

group favorite.

For example, after completing a six week creative writing class I taught at the Calabasas Library, the class members said they didn't want the class to end. They loved writing from prompts so I gave them some resources to start their own group .

I am thrilled to say that they are in their fifth year of meeting every week on the library patio to write from prompts. Many participants continue to develop the story they began in that timed writing.

Some completed stories that had their start in my writing classes have been published in several magazines, and other prompt responses became the core of a book.

—Rita Keeley Brown



During our March meeting in the Saban Community Room, Rita Brown led our group in a prompt writing exercise. Each author had just ten minutes to complete the work. A few of the members read their compositions. After the meeting, I selected a sampling to illustrate the prompt exercise. Below is a short piece and a poem that both were inspired by this opening sentence from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C. S. Lewis: **There was a boy called Eustace Clarence Stubb, and he almost deserved it.**

On page 6, I've shown two stories that were written after the authors reacted to: **"My mother did not tell me they were coming."** — the opening sentence of *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chivalier.

—Kathy Highcove

There was a boy called Eustace Clarence Stubb and he almost deserved it. But hell he weren't no killer. Killers don't piss their pants and his eyes were like a deer's kinda dopey, kinda trusting, and scared.

You never approach a killer head-on. You're always moving, always watching and your gun sight never leaves his or her chest. Yep, my Glock doesn't play favorites and everyone's an ax murderer until I've got the situation under control.

My x-ray vision is on. Usually, crooks have a partner, is he wronged or wrongdoer, I don't know, I don't care there's a gun in his hand and a body at his feet. It's his big moment, but he's shaking. I'm twenty feet away. The only thing going closer are my 9mm bullets if he doesn't obey.

I yell, "Mr. Stubb, this is the LAPD. Drop the gun!"

He looks confused. And then ... Mr. Stubb put down the gun. Damn, why'd he do that?

—Michael Savage



Hey! Who took my back scrubber?



Eustace Clarence Stubb

Spent most of his time in a tub

**Scrub, scrub, scrub,
Like an addiction**

**Made sores on his arms,
Like an affliction**

—Diane Laux

Editor's note: poem was shortened due to lack of space



My Mother and Four Dinner Guests



My mother brought in four unexpected guests for dinner. I found it annoying but my mother had begun to show early signs of dementia. She kept on mistaking total strangers as her old friends. So I accepted this situation without any complaints.

I'd been cooking a big pot roast beef, along with steamed vegetables, garlic bread, baked potatoes and a key lime pie--more than enough to feed my family of five plus the four guests. I always cooked extra to have leftovers for the next few days and save money on our limited budget.

At dinnertime, I was surprised to discover that Mom's unexpected guests were actually secret service agents, the same guys who take care of the President of the United States. The four men had come to our house because they thought my mother was one of the Big Seven gang, notorious for their counterfeiting and drug smuggling operations.

Instead, when they came to home, they found out that Mom was an old woman in the early stages of dementia, and--by mistake-- she'd misspelled her name on one of government papers. That mistake matched the name of the Big Seven gang leader.

But since they'd worked hard to find the gang leader, I

offered them dinner as an apology for this misunderstanding and they jumped at a chance to eat our multi-course homemade meal.

After dinner, one of the agents spoke to me privately, "Please be careful and protect your mother. We just received a message from an undercover agent in the underworld that the Big Seven gang is planning to use her as a fall guy for their leader. Unfortunately, your mother even looks like the real leader."

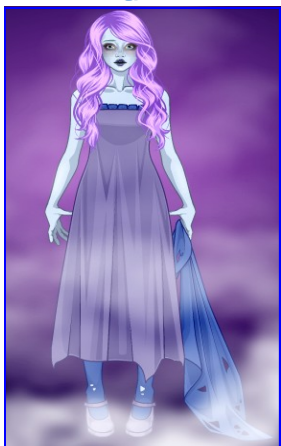
I felt my stomach clenching, a sick feeling. I asked them, "How did they find out about my mother?"

The agent nodded. "A good question. For a long while, we've suspected there might be a mole somewhere in the FBI. That's why we think your mother may be a perfect bait to flush that guy out."

The idea of putting my mother in such grave danger made me feel more sick. I shook my head. "No, No. Mother is too elderly and forgetful to be of any help."

The agent raised his hand as a peace offering. "We understand your concerns but we have ways of protecting her while we send our men in to arrest the bad folks."

—Anne Hansell



CWC-SFV

My mother did not tell me the police were coming. When I heard them at the door, I slipped into the cupboard under the house stairs—a cramped space filled with a vast array of stuff. I squeezed under the stairs and pulled over a dressmaker's dummy to hide me.

Several years later, Riquette, the French beauty I'd just started dating, told me she is clairvoyant.

To which I replied, "Sure you are!"

"I was just speaking to your mother."

"That's impossible, Riquette! My mother died when I was 15!"

She then repeated the story about me

hiding under the stairs when I was 10.

"You couldn't know that! I 'T've never told anyone in America that story!"

"Your mother told me to repeat the story back to you, so you would believe I had spoken to her. She also said your bookkeeper is stealing from you."

My CPA checked my bookkeeper's figures. She'd written herself five vacation checks. How did she get away with it? She'd asked me to include her as a signature for when I was out of town.

—Alan Wells

Friday Critique Group



Andrea Polk

Colin Gallagher

Gary Wosk

Sheila Moss



Rich Peter

Andi Polk

Friday Critique Group Leader

Critique groups – good ones – are the most valuable action plan you can use as a writer. They are indispensable if you hope to improve your work. If you're writing, join one. It just might be your best writing experience. You'll meet the most fantastic people with stories that are thrilling.

September 2010, I joined the club and soon afterward Dave Wetterberg began organizing critique groups. I was asked to join a critique group by long-time member, Claude Baxter. Why me? because after reading the first volume of his memoir, I said, "You need a proofreader." Trained as a proofreader in the publications department of the then California State Colleges' system I was hired because I excelled in the *Chicago Manual of Style* – very strict, dull stuff. Our history department required its students to use it for citations. In publications I also learned off-set printing and the use of the first IBM's word processing equipment for publishing. I was there at the very beginning of the self-publishing era.

As a university's human resource manager I analyzed employee contracts and classification and compensation programs. I wrote the facts. Not creative writing at all. After I retired I started writing about my first ten years on horseback – my memoir. But I was ignorant of creative writing. I wrote like a reporter, or an analyst not as a kid learning to ride a horse.

Entering the critique group environment was a new world for me. An exciting world, but I had lots

to learn. Wetterberg hammered in the five senses. "Use them all," he said. "Show, don't tell!" And that was his critique of just my first page. I replied, "Got it! Thanks, Dave."

Eager, I've written short stories, poetry and now a novel. Without the critique group's feedback, constructive criticism and encouragement, I would have either quit writing or published a very poor memoir—then quit. Of course I've learned enough to know that I have to rewrite my memoir so it sits in a trunk.

Currently I'm writing a novel placed in southern California during the Great Depression. My story shows the impact of those lean years on a young man and his family. Fingers crossed, I hope to send it to an editor by the end of this year. Thank you to all who have journeyed with me!

Room for two more

We have room for two more members on approval. Our group meets on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, except for holiday season or summer travels. We submit works in all genres—except poetry. Submissions are emailed to all members by Wednesday noon of the meeting week. Submissions are limited to 10 pages 1.5 or double spaced. Prefer Times New Roman, 12 pt font, unless a publishing journal specifies otherwise. Critiques are written and shared aloud by each member. The author receives the critique notes on their work at the end of each round. There may be a five minute limit on critique time. The host determines the order of the critiques. We don't read our work aloud at the meeting.

—Andi Pope

Rich Peter

In the eighth grade my academic schedule had room for an elective, so I signed up for a creative writing class. When my parents found out they thought I was nuts. A year later I'd written my first sonnet which I gave my teacher. When I got it back, across the top of the page I saw a **B-** And in bold red letters the teacher had written: **ORIGINAL?** I was so humiliated that I never said a single word for the rest of the semester and barely squeaked by with a **C**.

My critique group is nothing like my first experience submitting written work. They're friendly, helpful and respectful—terrific people! We all have fun chatting together, but when it comes to talking about our writing, everyone is quite serious. But the critiques are kind and free of pressure, competitiveness or rebuke.

It's a safe place even though I feel vulnerable every time the

members begin to comment on my grammar, punctuation, story content, pace and timing. They spot mistakes and find where my work is confusing and repetitious. Happily, my friends' evaluations of my work, followed by my re-writes, have greatly improved my original drafts.

I am currently writing a fictional novel that follows a six year old boy, who often visits a Vietnam War vet who's had severe bouts of PTSD. The story follows the boy to adulthood as he learns about himself, and about close friends who have deceived him. He enlists as a Marine and returns from Desert Storm a different man. Then he finds family he never knew existed.



I strive to make my reader visualize my characters as vividly as when listeners imagine characters in a spooky stories told around a campfire.

Sheila Moss

Recipe for a Critique Group

Is there one recipe for a successful critique group you may well ask? Well, I would say that these qualities are very important:

Love the written word.

Be honest, but don't go out for blood. Nits are nits.

Be encouraging and be kind.

Do not take the critique personally.

Be serious: you want to learn, improve and be challenged.

Respect the submission deadline as well as the other requirements: font size and number of pages.



Critique what is on the page, there is no need to cross talk, to explain or defend.

How do I feel certain of the recipe for the best critique group interaction? I was lucky to have awesome writers and mentors in my first critique group: Dave Wetterberg, Art Yuwiler, Elaine Shevin and Max Schwartz. Dave was a thoughtful leader and impeccable grammarian.

My second group was again led by Dave with Claude Baxter an erudite scholar who matched wisdom and humor.

Our present day leader Andi Polk holds us to strict standards. She is exacting, thorough and kind.

Contrary to some gossip, the other critique groups do not have a contest as to which host has the best "snacks."

Gary Wosk

About seven years ago, I went through a dark period of my life. A lack of steady employment and the loss of a parent got me down. A close friend of mine recommended that instead of sulking, I should pick myself up and try to find activities to brighten up my days.

At this person's behest, I began to search for something to lift me out of the doldrums. First, I volunteered to read to elementary school children in their classrooms. Though it was gratifying, something was still missing. Then I came across a calendar section listing in the Los Angeles Daily News for the California Writers Club. A light went on in my head. This could be a very good match, after all, I had been a newspaper reporter and public relations person for years, and I had written short stories when I was a teenager.

As it turned out, joining the CWC, and soon after a critique group, were decisions that helped turn my life around. I soon felt comfortable meeting at different people's homes. I felt a certain camaraderie with the others that turned into friendships.

Thanks to Claude Baxter and David Wetter-



berg, both whom we miss very much, as well as Andrea Polk, Sheila Moss, Rich Peter, Kay Henden and Colin Gallagher, all whom I consider mentors, more than two dozen of my short stories, most which are rooted in science fiction, have been published. Without the terrific feedback I received from these people, who are all excellent writers, this would not have been possible. The rejection letters would have just piled up. I cannot thank them enough for putting up with my weird story plots.

As a member of the critique group, I have learned so much about different forms of writing including historical fiction, memoirs, and other genres. I look forward to reading about the other members' trips to far-off places, childhood reminiscences, ways of life that have vanished and Erma Bombeck-type essays. These funny, sad and serious subjects, delivered as short stories or novels, are always fascinating.

When my group members aren't talking shop, we just enjoy each other's company and discuss a wide range of subjects, the news headlines and what's happening in our personal lives. Our group feels like a family.

Our meetings are always invigorating, instructive, mentally cathartic, and are filled with lively banter, humor and fun.

Colin Gallagher

This year I continue my adventure into learning more about Eastern religions. In particular, meditation has given me the patience to keep searching for new writing ideas, clarity of word choice and overall, a desire to communicate effectively in my writing.

I've found that being a member of a SFV critique group has been a great help in fine tuning my writing ability.

My participation has revealed to me that there others besides myself struggle with ideas and technique skills.

I write short stories and poetry. The twice monthly comments from my Friday critique group have given me useful feedback and has become the key to better writing.

I have been published twice: in a magazine and a journal. This wouldn't have happened without the help of my critique group. Attending the Friday meetings have turned out to be a great experience for me.

I think the most effective forms of critique are ones that establish a common ground for people to occupy, and then appeal to the best nature of people on that common ground.

—Mohsin Hamid

**They Say...
Or...The Old Cronies**



They sit up in the attic
and laugh...

Then they ask,

"What'll we have them say tomorrow?"

"How about 'it's going to rain?' "

"Howz about 'He isn't very nice' "

"Let's try 'Climate change isn't real' "

"YES! That's a good one," they all agree,

"That one might even start a riot!"

"Teeee Heeeee" those old cronies giggle.

The next morning, they go out among the crowds
and whisper to lots of people,

"Climate change isn't real, you know"

Pretty soon many people are whispering,

"Climate change isn't real, you know!"

Next morning it's in several newspapers,

in headlines; "CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T REAL"

Next evening they are back in the attic ...

"What's it gonna be this time?"

And...that's how rumors get started.

—Sylvia Molesko

While K.A. Parker was speaking
at our March meeting, I wrote the
following lyrics:

I'm almost over you
Returning to the places
That we both knew

The radio plays our tune
Tears wet my cheek
I'll be over you soon

The phone rings on cue
Excited I pick it up
But it's not you

It was fight or flight
Now I'm lonely and blue
Are you alone tonight?

Our love was never true
Just a dream of love
For me and you

—Alan Wills



Catchin' Catfish A Family Remembrance

By Lillian Rodich

This is a true story embellished and changed into a family legend. The adult characters, except for Grandma, are exaggerated.
—LR



“Why are you cooking that awful fish?”

“Because it’s good and Davey will feel bad if we all don’t taste some. It was great fishing for a ten-year-old. He tried real hard and I’m very proud of him.” There is an

The sizzling sound and smell of onions are tantalizing. Grandma bends over the campfire and inspects the smoking cast-iron skillet. She reaches back to get a plastic bucket and pulls out a raggedly cut piece of fish carcass. With a deft twist of her wrist she tosses it, along with a few more scraps, into the fry pan. Then she adds generous portions of salt, pepper and paprika. Perspiration begins to bead on her nose and she wipes it off with the back of her hand.

Lon watches for a while. Then he scowls and marches over to his son, Peter, and nephew, David ... innocent ten-year-olds tossing pebbles into a nearby stream.

“Damn it David,” Lon growls, “Didn’t I tell you to throw that fish away? You’re making Grandma cook it and it’s inedible. Dirty and full of bones!”

David turns, his face in open-mouthed surprise. “But, Unc, I didn’t...”

Peter looks at his father. “David caught the fish and put it in the bucket. What’s wrong with that?”

“Well I threw it in the trash. It isn’t fit for human consumption. Don’t you kids know anything!”

“I thought it was a pretty big catch,” David explains. “But I wouldn’t take it out of the trash ... ugh! Besides it sure is ugly.”

Grandma doesn’t speak. She pokes at the fish she’s frying and smiles at her eldest grandson. Meanwhile Aunt Ginny seasons the trout caught that afternoon and glances toward Grandma, impatience written all over her face.

unusual edge to Grandma’s voice. She frowns and hunches over the fire.

Grandma is a familiar figure in her old blue sweater with its threadbare sleeves. Paired with polyester slacks and a wrinkled cotton blouse, her camping outfit is complete and never changes. And of course, she wears sturdy tennis shoes because she loves to walk.

The catfish has blackened in the skillet and Grandma transfers it to a platter. In meantime Ginny trades skillets and begins her own fish fry with the trout caught earlier. Lon stretches out on his lounge chair in front of the tent trailer. He looks up at the red and gold stained sky and smiles contentedly. David and Peter are busy trading stones near the stream’s edge and joke quietly together. Meanwhile, Grandma sets the picnic table and calls the boys to bring some pebbles to keep the paper napkins from flying off in the early evening breeze.

Ginny yells, “Dinner’s on,” and the campers gather around the picnic table. A wonderful meal is served. No miracle, the camper is equipped with a camp stove and refrigerator. Baked beans steam in a crock and a large bowl of salad, still wet from rinsing, glistens in the dim light.

Lon starts dishing Ginny’s fried trout onto the plates. Grandma proceeds to add her catfish but only succeeds in loading her own and David’s.

“None for us,” Lon, Ginny and Peter chorus.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Grandma turns her full attention to the fish on her plate. She picks gently at the burnt flesh and carefully pushes bones and skin and odd-looking bits to the side of her plate.

“Delicious,” she murmurs from time to time. The others agree. But they are eating trout.

David pushes the catfish to the side of his plate and digs into the fried trout. Suddenly he stops, walks over to Grandma and gives her a big hug. “Thank you, Davey,” she says and her eyes shine with emotion.

The sky darkens as the family continues their meal. Lon and Ginny savor each bite and continue to compliment each other. Grandma chews carefully and deliberately. A little pile of debris grows on the side of her plate. Peter and David consume their food with gusto and tease under their breaths.

Soon the conversations float off into silence. Only the chirping crickets interrupt a golden moment. And the evening wraps its guests in a cloak of contentment.



REBIRTH

The Tree People
came to Morningside School,
presenting sparse spike,
baby trees,
cuddled in paper cones,
nested in a spoonful
of earth ... sustenance.
Six inches of promise,
fragile, boldly implying
importance.

A pedigree of care
clutched by
a child's curiosity:
A living symbol,
a quiet plea for life,
predicting growth
with nurturing,
Depending on inexperience,
And a child's love,
For the future.

—Lillian Rodich

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

by Davida Siwisa James

I'd like to invite members and friends to visit Booth #166 at the L.A. Times Fest next month. Our

nonprofit – Wordsmith Productions – will once again have a booth. I will also have my books available for sale.

If you have ever been to a county fair with individual booths that are set up for different games, people walking around, talking, eating, and enjoying a beautiful day, that's the vibe at the L.A. Times Festival of Books. But the visitors at this festival are there because they love books—because they love to read and/or to write. The festival was at UCLA for the first sixteen years and is now on the USC campus. The weekend boasts 125,000 people in attendance.

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

There is something magical about being around thousands of people who love books as much as you do. This is two days of everything to do with books, book gifts, writers and read-

Los Angeles Times FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Saturday and Sunday, April 13-14, 2019 at USC

ers. For me, it is simply the best two days of the year, second only to the Oscars.

I'd also like to give you a "teaser" that our nonprofit is in the planning stages for our 2019 High

Desert Book Festival. The adjoining cities of the High Desert (90 miles northeast of L.A. on the I-15 N) are Adelanto, Hesperia, Victorville and Apple Valley. This will be our fourth year, and we are very excited to be returning to another outdoor festival, like our inaugural one in 2016, at a large gorgeous park that is simply perfect for a book festival. While we can't divulge too much more than that now, the date will be October 12th from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.



Please stay tuned to our book festival website at www.highdesertbookfest.org for more updates in future. We will have exhibitor registration information in a month or so. Feel free to email me at hdbookfest@gmail.com.

Hope to see you next month!

www.AuthorsPreview.com is a **New FREE** website for you to preview your Writings and receive Critiques.

You can submit **Short Stories, Poems, or even Chapters from You Books!**

You will receive Critiques from readers! You may even include your Publisher's or Agent's email for readers to order your books. A bio, including a photo if you choose, is available for you to be listed under Writers. Don't be surprised if a Publisher, or Producer contacts you!

—Alan Wills AuthorsPreview@gmail.com

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Where We Meet

The Saban Center for Health and Wellness



The CWC/SFV Meeting
will be held on April 6 at 1 p.m.

in the

Katzenberg Room

located at the

Motion Picture and Television Fund

23388 Mulholland Drive

Woodland Hills, CA 91364

