



The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club

CONTENTS

SFV August Potluck Social
Thousand Oaks Writer
Fest
PG/ 2

Meet Jenny Jordan'
PG/ 3

Jack London Award
PG/ 4

Member Focus
Kay Henden
PG/ 5

Lillian Rodich and
Paula Diggs' New Book
Caught
PG/ 6

Voice of the Sea
PG/ 7

Choices
Roasting Larry
PG/ 8

Typo Toony and Alexa
In *Ken's Peeves*
PG/ 9

Let's Shake On It
It's True
I'm A Lucky Me
PG/ 10

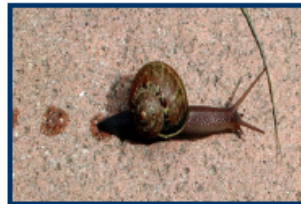
Potluck and Location
Information
PG/ 11

What's Your Summer Style?

Busy As A Bee



Don't Rush Me



Feeling Carefree



The last month of summer has arrived in the San Fernando Valley. In August, we expect to swelter in three digit heat and feel the dry Santa Ana winds blow across the Valley. But summer weather has its perks, doesn't it? In the last days of summer, Angelenos flock to the beach, take in a Dodger or Angel baseball game, or enjoy a leisurely barbecue with friends and family. Community pools are full of active swimmers.

How do you spend August? Do you take a vacation? Energetically multi-task and address projects on your to-do list? Do you slow down and methodically take one thing at a time? Or do you kick back and take it easy when the thermostat climbs?

What ever your August activities, don't forget our club's August Potluck Social the Saturday. We'll meet, greet and eat on August 3rd, in the Saban Community Room. Please drop in, have a nosh, chat with fellow members and stay a spell.

Our CWC-SFV Fall schedule looks like it's approaching bee hive level. We will host a very popular guest speaker in

September: Anne Perry, author of many historical detective fiction books, best known for her Thomas Pitt and William Monk series. Google her name and look over her collection of best selling novels.

Our next guest speaker in October will be John Loesing, Managing Editor of the Acorn. He'll talk about his experiences dealing with and hiring innumerable writers for his newspaper.

This month I have a special request for my Scribe readers: if you recall the moon landing, please send me your memories of that event. What was your reaction when Neil Armstrong took his first step on the surface of the moon? Did you watch it?

Good news from our Board: CWC-SFV ended this past year with record high membership, increased attendance at our meetings and ... in our POV, good fellowship. We anticipate an equally successful 2019-20.

I hope to see you on Saturday!

- Kathy Highcove
kghighcove@gmail.com

This Saturday - Meet, Eat and Greet!

**CWC-SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
WRITERS' CLUB POTLUCK SOCIAL
SATURDAY, AUGUST 3 AT 1 PM
SABAN COMMUNITY ROOM**



Members and Spouses only!*

* Includes significant other

**What can you bring?
Contact →**

**RSVP by Friday, July 26
Alan Wills, Hospitality Chair
awills@harter.net**

Thousand Oaks Library and VCWC join forces for WriteFest '19

Two of Ventura County's word-smithing powerhouses have joined together for WriteFest '19. The Ventura County Writers Club and the Thousand Oaks Library invite anyone interested in writing to attend this inspiring event on **September 21, from 9:00 AM until noon. Advance registration is required.**

The Saturday conference at the Brimhall Library, 1401 E. Janss Rd., will feature speakers Rebecca Langston-George and Bruce Hale. Langston-George will demonstrate how to amp your draft through purposeful revision. Hale will speak on sinking the depth charge of suspense in all genres.

VCWC President Rhonda Noda says, "The world of writing is very competitive right now. Over a million books a year are self-published. Writers need all the tools they can muster to be in the running. This is one way we try to make that possible."

Langston-George is the author of 12 books including *For the Right to Learn: Malala Yousafzai's Story*, and *The Booth Brothers: Drama, Fame, and the Death of President Lincoln*. She received the Armin R. Schulz Literacy Award from the California Reading Association in 2016 for writing that promotes social justice. Hale has written and or illustrated more than 50 books for kids including *Clark the Shark* series and *Chet Gecko Mysteries* series. A performer and member of the National Speakers Association, Hale has presented at colleges, universities, and conferences, both nationally and internationally.

Admission is free. Go to venturacountywriters.com to sign-up.

Call Sheli Ellsworth at [805.300.1365](tel:805.300.1365) with questions.

Meet Our New Critique Group Coordinator



Jenny Jordan

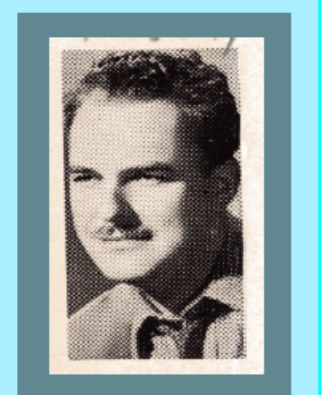
My name is Jenny Jordan, and I'm your next Critique Group Coordinator. I'm excited and honored to take on this position with the assistance of fellow member, Rita Brown.

A little over a year ago, I went to my first CWC-SFV meeting. I felt welcomed and instantly at home the moment I walked into the Saban Community Room. Since then, I've joined two of our club's critique groups. Within those gatherings, I've grown as a writer. I truly believe our critique groups are the most valuable service our branch has to offer its members.

About me: I'm a native Los Angeleno and have happily lived in the West Valley for the last 16 years. Next year I'll celebrate my 25th year working as an assistant picture editor with Disney TV Animation, and my 30th

year as an IATSE (**I**nternational **A**lliance of **T**heatrical **S**tage **E**mplees) member. I work in post-production, helping to get the show up and running after it's been animated. Teamwork is of prime importance in my work and I'm sure these skills will also be useful in my SFV coordinator job.

I've always enjoyed writing but slowly stopped finding time for it in my busy daily schedule. Life seemed to take over, as it does ... Then, a couple of years ago, I inherited a collection of writings from my paternal grandparents that inspired me to find a writing group. These writings are in three broad categories. The first is a Hollywood gossip column written by my grandfather, Paul Harrison. His column, "Harrison in Hollywood," was published in the years 1936-1940. My grandparents lived in the Hollywood Hills and made a very comfortable living writing about the film industry. Grandfather's dream was to be a war correspondent but was turned down because he had a family. To scratch his itch to serve his country, he often traveled with the USO, giving Grandmother an opportunity to write in his absence.



**Hollywood Columnist
Paul Harrison**



The Jordan family - Mike, Jenny and daughter, Amelia, pose for a Sequoia forest selfie.

The second category is a series of family history stories written by A.W. Neville, my great-grandfather. He was the editor of the Paris, Texas newspaper for fifty-plus years. I find his writings fascinating because they're well-written family history. He's my biggest inspiration for my writing. My stories may not be front-page news, but a well-written common childhood story is better than an unwritten story.

Finally, I have a large stack of letters written in the 1800's by various ancestors as they traveled to and from Texas and other parts of the country. I don't know who many of them are, but a newly discovered cousin has been key in helping me research this correspondence.

I knew my dad's side of the genealogy chart had writers scattered here and there. I also knew his dad wrote for "the newspapers." When I was three or so, my grandparents retired and moved to Eureka, California. My parents divorced shortly afterward and I rarely saw my grandparents in the following years.

My dad didn't talk about his parents very often, but I do recall him mentioning his childhood memories of driving with my grandfather to the Burbank Airport when he had a tight deadline. My dad said it was very exciting as a little boy to walk onto the tarmac and handing over the precious envelope of typewritten pages to the pilot before taking off for the main office in San Francisco, where the articles were distributed for publishing.

It wasn't until after my dad's death, and my inheriting these writings, did I discover how deeply my ancestors valued their writings. Writing, it seems, is clearly in my genome. I'm ready to join the group and WRITE ON!

- Jenny Jordan

The CWC Thanks Rita Keeley Brown For Her Years of Service



**CWC Co-founder
Jack London**

Every other year, each CWC branch is asked to nominate one member to receive the Jack London Award in recognition of outstanding service to the organization. The merit of the award is in the service, independent of writing accomplishments. It is not mandatory that a branch designate a recipient simply because the opportunity exists but only if the branch board thinks someone truly deserves the honor. The CWC president bestows the awards at the annual corporate meeting.

This year, our CWC branch chose Rita Keeley Brown to be a recipient of this award. Below you'll see photos taken at the recent Jack London Awards dinner in Oakland hosted by the State CWC Board members.



Our CWC-SFV Jack London Award nominee receives her plaque from California Writers Club President Joyce Krieg.



Rita gets ready to tuck in at the awards dinner. She sits between her sons, Paul Brown and Steve Brown.



Rita's Invitation to the Dinner.



From every part of California, CWC branches came to receive their Jack London Award .

Our nominee, Rita Keeley Brown, is standing near the top row, just visible to the left of the white hat.

Rita tells us, "It is a distinct honor to receive the Jack London Service Award and I deeply thank CWC-SFV for allowing me to be a recipient."

MEMBER FOCUS: Kay Henden

It was first grade, I think, or maybe kindergarten. I'd learned to print my letters, and then words, and then of course I had to string them all together into a story. It was about a small fairy-like creature called a brownie as I recall, though there isn't the remotest possibility I could spell that then.

On to cursive (much faster to get words down), then a typewriter, then a prototype word-processor, and ultimately a computer. In between I volunteered at the library and read stories to kids, occasionally making up endings when I didn't like those in the book. I studied creative writing in college, refining my techniques ("No, Miss Henden, you may not use 28 adjectives in a single sentence.") I hung around with other wannabe writers, and we'd trade off giving tips on our respective specialties. Mine was description—still is. Plot and characters—not so much. But I'm improving.

I went to law school, primarily because the main course material is case law—stories again. When I graduated I went into trust work, dealing with families in the chaos surrounding death of a loved one. It gave me insight into the human condition and a great deal more empathy for people in emotional pain. Throughout that time I wrote prolifically in the non-fiction field, but it was a long dry spell for fiction writing. I produced a handful of stories and most of a first draft of a novel, but that was it.

When I retired I started a historical novel, then got bogged down in researching the

background. I assembled a prodigious amount of what was to me fascinating historical

detail, but was it a readable

novel? Again, not so much.

In desperation I joined CWC, and at long last saw my creative side emerge. I didn't throw away the historical research (visit www.StreetsOfSilver.com to see what I did with it) but learned to form the writing around the characters and story, with the factual underpinnings just thrown in for atmosphere. I will

forever be grateful to my critique groups (I've been in three now, all of them invaluable in different ways) for their help and support, and for the friendships I have made there.

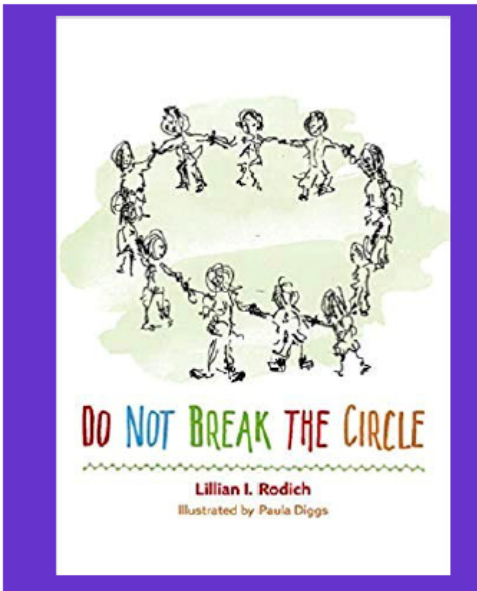
On July 4, I published my debut novel on Amazon, under the pen name "Ellen Keigh." "Streets of Silver," is set in the turbulent West in 1865 and follows young Louisa Kane as she pursues her ne'er-do-well husband to the Comstock Lode. There she joins an unlicensed female attorney's firm in order to pay her legal bills. That connection forces her to the forefront of the wild and violent silver-mining boomtown, protecting victims of domestic abuse and offering comfort and aid to the orphans and misfits of the town. But when her husband reappears, bent on larceny and revenge...

As you can tell, my love of story has now come full circle. It's where I've always wanted to be.



- Kay Henden

A Poet and An Artist Combine Their Talents



Paula Diggs and I decided to collaborate on a book combining poetry and art over a year and a half ago. In looking at the poetry I had written inspired by my young students, we realized that many needed a voice to withstand and understand bullying. To combine our talents and bring to light the subject was a "labor of love" for both of us.

Lillian Rodich

Do Not Break The Circle brings to life a powerful collection of voices through poetry and illustration that are intended to confront the effects of bullying on primary age children.

It is a reminder to those who mentor children that both our words and actions have meaning, and that bullying behavior, whether intended or not, can leave lasting scars that often become the child's burden for years to come.

This book seeks to heighten awareness of such behavior and its consequences. The words and pen and ink sketches are intended to be a powerful medium to drive

My new video game screams "Spectacular!" whenever I get a point. Spectacular? The word has lost its meaning with overuse. Congratulations abound for my non-spectacular feats, but still, I play on.

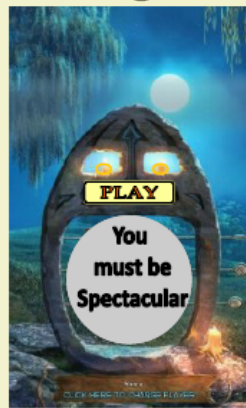
Where did the idea come from that we need rewards for every step? Did it have its start in the Pavlovian experiments? In a moment of clarity, I know the game maker cynically placed awards for each level to hook me into returning to play again and again and again.

It's getting dark. My screen glows as night falls. I look up to see a multicolored sunset, but the game goes on. Cannot look, must not stop or rewards will cease. Onward into the night I play. Sleep is sporadic and comes only when exhaustion overcomes me. Stirring in the middle of the night, I reach for the phone. Play on. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, but what do I care?

My telephone pulses in my hand as I sit down to the Thanksgiving feast, my eyes on the screen. Friends and family pale next to the gratification of a well-placed move. Politics, gossip and arguments swirl around the table, but I am insulated from emotional impact except the joy of hitting the next level.

Suddenly I yell, "Yes!" as I make a particularly clever move. Conversation stops, my mother looks at me and slowly shakes her head. Red-faced, I look down at my screen and keep playing. As I leave the table, my phone

Caught



By Patricia Avery

gives a pathetic whimper. Low battery. Have I used it that much?

"Mom, do you have a charging cord for an iPhone?"

"No, sorry."

The useless phone sits in my hand, now cool. My blurry eyes take in the family scene. Fidgeting, with fingers continuing to try to make brilliant plays on a dead phone, I cannot sit still.

"Gotta go, mom."

"Already? You haven't had dessert."

"Yeah, well, I gotta go."

Rushing to my car, I breathe a sigh of relief as my phone is plugged into the vehicle and beeps gratefully. Charging, announces the phone. Driving home, my eyes barely on the road, I glance at the screen as the battery refills. Back in business! Never again will I allow it to die. I must carry a cord and make sure there are outlets wherever I go. It is not too big a sacrifice to make.

I grab my phone, now warm to the touch, and stroke the display. I obtain another level at 4 a.m. My phone, like a jealous lover, punishes me if I'm unresponsive.

Cell Phone Abuse Syndrome takes hold. Try as I might to move away from my addiction, it reaches out and holds me in its congratulatory embrace. No escape.

Spectacular!



Voice of the Sea
Lil Rodich

*the sea speaks to me in twilight
a red sun painting beach sands
my love and I sitting close
wrapped in a blanket of silence
savoring the drama of sky and surf
wave echoes whispering of eternal love*

*the sea speaks to me in noon's warmth
singing of childhood's laughter
racing along the shore
taunting wave giants
dancing in the ripples
building sand castles
watching sea life bubbles in foam*

*the sea speaks to me in morning's tranquility
seagulls' cries far off and muted
where I walk silently and alone
water lapping at my ankles
depression eased into fog*

*the sea speaks to me in my dreams
speaks of the mystery and constancy of life
speaks with words that ebb and flow
with the tides*



CHOICES

By Sylvia Molesko

You either get older or not.
That's not even a choice that you've got.
Well, I'd rather get older than not,
...given the alternative!

How I get older is up to me.
I can do, I can go, I can see.
It's basically up to me
How active, or not, I want to be.

I can sit at home or get out.
I can laugh, whimper, or shout,
I can whine, argue, or pout.
Which options do I take?

Some choices I need to make.
How do I come over to others?
Do they respect me, and
Love me as their mother?

Pamper me, humor me,
Treat me as contemporary?
Or as just here, temporarily?
Do they care? do they share?

Am I included in their prayer?
As I get older, some things are still up to me.
I can decide the person I want others to see.
Basically, that will be up to me.

So this is the choice I choose to make:
To live life fully for everyone's sake.
Do all I can still do,
Be all that I still can be.
To expect the very best from me.

Roasting Larry



On His Big 7-0



Dear Larry,

By Leslie Kaplan

I can't believe you're seventy, you just look sixty nine,
You still have hair and muscles too, in fact you're looking fine,
Keep hiking up them winding hills, and practicing your strokes,
But please forget, it's not your style, for telling dirty jokes.

You cannot sing, you cannot dance, you cannot write a story,
But when it comes to politics you rise in all your glory,
You fight like hell and try to sell your total opposition,
To me who is so liberal and don't like your position.

So now that you're a senior, please broaden up your scope,
I know you really have a heart, so please don't be a dope,
We always get along so well except for politicians,
So from now on our subject's sex, or food by a dietitians.

I simply have to emphasize you're still my special friend,
We make each other laugh a lot and never do offend.,
To share this special day with you is really such a pleasure,
Like sharing lox and bagels too, our friendship is a treasure.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY LARRY!

Love, Leslie





Wow, look at me in action! Alexa, Ken musta thought I was a baseball star, right?

I note that Ken also portrayed you, Typo Tooney, as easily overwhelmed by large colored balls. Take another look.



Ken's Pet Peeves

THE WAVE



There is no water, yet I may drown
The WAVE at ball games has got me down.

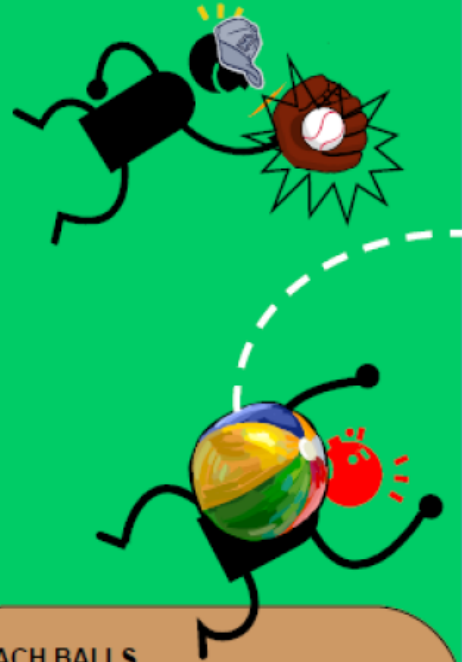
The crowd leaps up while blocking the view.
The team's best play is seen by a few.

The ticket says it's a Dodger game.
Yet now I'm watching with sea-sick shame.

"Please be seated," I shout to the crowd
To no avail, no matter how loud.

The best field action I cannot see
Only because I'm lost out at sea.

Ken Wilkins



BEACH BALLS

Beach balls, beach balls, they are everywhere.
Who has the breath to fill them with air?

Where did they hide when at the gate;
Unnoticed when starting to inflate?

Ushers chase them, but to no avail
A crowd-pleasing game they can't curtail?

Loud boos are heard when a ball is caught.
Sides are taken and feelings are taut.

Another beach ball quickly appears
Fans show they're happy shouting long cheers.

Ken Wilkins



Yikes!

Alexa,
delete
the
beach
ball
stuff!

Okay?



Let's Shake On It

By Monte Swann



The evening had just started
as normal as you please
The landscape through the window
was rolling by with ease.

My seat was rocking gently
as a ship that's being blown
And my glass of Irish whiskey
was moving on its own.

It felt like we were travelling
over hills that lift and rise
Then drop down very sharply
and take you by surprise.

I was not aboard a trolley
not a train nor city bus
But sitting in my own house
ignoring all the fuss.

The shaking you get used to
tho the dishes start to break
When you live in California
It's just another quake.

IT'S TRUE

A lot of nothing can become
much of something.

.....

I'M A LUCKY ME

When I sing these words,
I'm A Lucky Me,
I am able to give life to myself.

And you, I encourage you
to sing these words and
to give life to yourself, too.



By Norman Molesko

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siberley@gmail.com

Webmaster

Michael Rains

Opie_rains@yahoo.com

Critique Group Coordinator

Jenny Jordan

Jennyjordan2@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Katherine Highcove

kghighcove@gmail.com

COME TO THE CWC-SFV AUGUST SOCIAL

AUGUST 3rd, 3 p.m.



at the



Motion Picture and Television Fund
23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

