



The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club

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Your Writers' Club will be
On Saturday, June 6th at 1 PM



Topic: How to Develop Your Characters' Presence

For our first Zoom meeting, CWC-SFV member, Anat Golan, will speak to us about:

- The functions of character types in a story
- Enhancing characters' roles to create a more complex story
- How to insert information in a manuscript to create multi-dimensional characters



Anat Golan

Anat Golan is a professional freelance story analyst who worked with companies such as Amazon Studios, Atlanta Film Festival Screenplay Competition, Crispy Twig Productions and others. She's an optioned screenwriter with a screenplay that won the pitch-to-script Family Friendly Screenplay contest, a script that placed at the top 20 at Sundance Table Read My Script contest. In addition, she wrote scripts that placed in contests like Story Pros and Page Awards. She holds a BA in Film/Television and English Literature from Tel Aviv University, and has worked for Keshet Productions, the Israel Educational Channel, and on various independent film productions.

The first CWC-SFV Zoom meeting will take place on June 6th at 1 PM. Lawrence Linick will host the meeting. Join us by clicking on:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7052040689?pwd=VoRMUU1yWlNRZHVhKzJPcmJKcHM4dz09>

If you've not used Zoom before, please allow time to get on board with the website. Once you click on the above link you'll be instructed to download the free Zoom application. Download it onto the device you plan on using for the meeting. Open the application and familiarize yourself with the features. You should be able to access Zoom on your computer, smart phone or tablet. Feeling nervous about it? Go to zoom.us for more information or watch a uTube Zoom training. If you continue to have difficulties, email me, Pat Avery, or Bob Okowitz at apthealth@gmail.com .

Pat Avery

President's Message June 2020



It's been a difficult three months. The virus has forced us to be shut-ins, cut off from fun and freedom. A number of members have confided to me that they've lost interest in writing. I get it. I don't feel creative either stuck here at home, 24/7.

and belongs to the Central Coast Chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. In her early years with us, she worked with Rita Brown with setting up programs. Rita encouraged Karen to publish her first book. Karen helped the club in many other ways, like being our representative to the So-Cal Coordinating Committee. Whew, that's a mouthful of memberships! Karen may be retired but she's still working hard!

And she's written things in many genres: children's books, a YA novel (still in process), articles, plays, and several articles for *The Valley Scribe*. One of her memoirs has been featured in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Another memoir will soon be seen in the publication.

As the SFV Prez, I enjoy chatting with my fellow club members. I like to hear about your hobbies and interests. And past interests, I guess. So I asked Karen

This glum pandemic situation makes me feel really cheered to bring all of you some really good news: Karen Gorback has agreed to be our new Program Chair! Wow!! We really someone like Karen.

Lori Hamilton has retired from Speaker Chair due to medical problems. She's done a wonderful job, carefully researching and selecting interesting speakers in 2019 – 20, even when she was at home recuperating from surgery. Our club has benefited from her hard work. Thank you, Lori Hamilton!

Karen Gorback has been a member of our club for 13 years and brings tons of writing experience and know-how to the job. She has a B.A. in English, an M.A. in Counseling and a Ph.D. in Education. She taught grad school at CLU and CSUN in the field of career counseling. Currently, she's Ventura County's volunteer Senior Senator for the California Senior Legislature.



what TV program she enjoyed growing up (I love quirky questions) and she listed *All in the Family*, *Laugh In.*, *Smothers Brothers* and *Star Trek*. We could be twins !!! I love all those shows. And ... she loves the Dodgers! That's good to know when we all have a chance to watch sports again.

In the coming year, Karen will research and select interesting speakers for our meetings. I mean, she must know a slew of good writers in every genre! And I hope that in the near future, when the pandemic

Karen is no stranger to our club. She's been a member since 2007. She's also been a longtime member of the Ventura County Writers Club,

is tamed, members will thank her for acting as our Speaker Chair. Write on, Karen! Bob Okowitz

Karen Gorback's Books

Freshman Mom
A Novel
Karen Gorback

Nathan and Nana Cassandra Superheroes

Nathan and Nana Cassandra Take the Lead

Read Karen's essay "The Jackpot" in *Chicken Soup for the Soul -- My Amazing Mom*

Jenny Got An Offer She Couldn't Refuse



Jenny mugs with her mutt, Charlie.

Dear SFV members; In the fall of 2018, I discovered CWC via MeetUp. I purchased *Cascade of Pearls*, (an anthology of CWC-SFV members' work) and after reading two stories, I knew I wanted to join the club. Without thinking twice, you all took me in, under your collective wings. I joined not one, but two critique groups, and became Critique Group Coordinator in 2019. In many different ways, you've told me: *Yes, Jenny Jordan, you have something interesting to say. Your stories matter to us!* And even though those critique meetings sometimes had me sweating bullets, the groups' helpful feedback helped me tap into my long-lost joy of writing.

A few months ago, I learned that my company sponsors an all-expenses-paid continuing education program. My boss encouraged me to check it out, saying it doesn't have to be job related. Out of 50-75 post-graduate degree programs, there was ONE writing program. The needle in my proverbial haystack. I applied. Wonder of wonders, I was accepted! I am officially in the Professional Creative Writing program at University of Denver, University College.

The downside: I must resign as the SFV Critique Group Coordinator. I'm hoping someone will step in to fill this position - it's more fun than work, I promise you that.

My critique group members, the CWC board and, in particular, Geri Jabara and my Critique Group Coordinator partner-in-crime, Rita Brown, all inspired me to return to school. But really, I've been influenced by all SFV members and the energy you bring to this club. You've all changed my life, and I am forever grateful.

CWC-SFV Members Need Beta Readers

At the present time, our club has only one official beta reader. The CWC-SFV Board hopes to find several more beta reader volunteers. If you're a SFV member and would like to be a beta reader, please send your name and address to my email address, kghighcove@gmail.com, and I'll add you to our Beta Reader list. And If you're not clear on the definition or duties of a beta reader, please read the article below provided by **wiseGeek**.

A beta reader is someone who agrees to look over a piece of fiction for spelling, grammar, characterization, and continuity errors. Unlike a true editor, a beta reader is typically unpaid, and he or she sees the work at a very rough state. Many authors like to use betas to improve the quality of their work before they submit it for professional editing and critique, and betas are usually profusely thanked in acknowledgments, in recognition of the time and energy which they invested in the work.

The term is borrowed from the software industry, which uses "beta" to describe an imperfect release. This release is used by beta testers, who try to identify problems with the software before it is used by the general public. These beta testers often try to deliberately break the software, looking for

any points of weakness which could pose problems, and a good beta reader, or beta, does the same.

The duties of a beta are myriad. In addition to acting as a general proofreader looking for typographical errors, the beta also looks for flaws in characterization and plot. The beta may question why a character does or does not do something, or how someone ends up in France with no apparent explanation halfway through the third chapter. Authors sometimes miss these flaws as they are caught up in the greater whole, so a beta reader is especially valuable.

Any author who imagines that he or she does not need a beta is sadly mistaken. Beta readers will only improve the quality of a written work, although they may sometimes offer very severe criticism. Many authors like to use multiple betas to solicit wider opinions, making their work even better. In rare cases, a beta reader may be excessively harsh or even mean, but these betas are highly unusual. Most are supportive critics who offer meaningful and thoughtful commentary on the work.

wiseGEEK__clear answers for common questions
<https://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-wisegeek.htm>

Say what?

**Shrieks from room to room
Not budging to talk face to face
With a shrug I give up
What, what, what did you say?**

**My hearing is getting worse
Words turn into something else
Grandchildren's secrets
Answered with say it again**

**You saw an elephant swim?
No, grandma – I climbed on a limb
Oh, how high did you go?
Grandma, no, I went for a swim**

**No whispering, please
Muttering is such a tease
Tell your secrets loud
Where no one will hear**

**How to communicate?
Each word a puzzle to solve
Gate becomes mate and
Bread becomes bed**

**No telling the slander
That pops into my head
Mundane becomes wild
Mix-ups fill my day**

**Shouting jolts me alert
Concentrate on the lips
No, don't cover your mouth!
Talk clearly so I can see**

**Days filled with frustration
Giving meaning to nonsense
Tempted to quit, instead I yell
What, what, what did you say?**

Patricia Avery



Member Focus: The Other Worldly Interests of Lawrence Linick



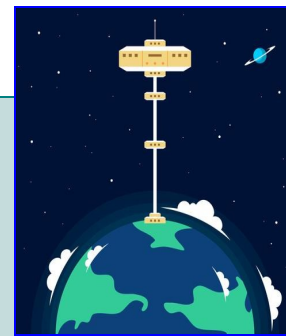
Robot Armies

He has worked in southern California's defense and aerospace industry

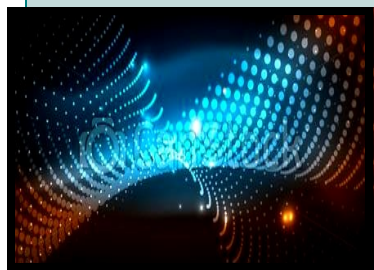
Lawrence Linick grew up in Tampa, Florida, the youngest of three boys. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering.



poems, short stories, and a few novellas that capture his interests in fiction. He also enjoys blogging and speaking on a wide range of non-fiction subjects, spanning history, art, the sciences, religion, economics, tech-



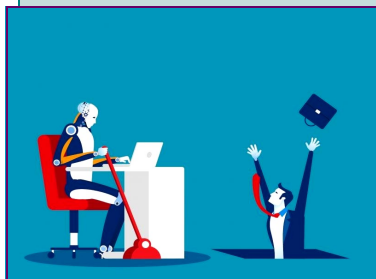
Space-Elevators



Particle-Wave Duality

Lawrence is an avid sportsman, musician, and chef.

His passion for the sciences and technology has led him inevitably toward the science-fiction genre.



A.I. Singularity

for nearly thirty years. His career highlights include leading the guidance and navigation teams on the Deep Impact and MESSENGER space missions. Besides enjoying his reading and writing pursuits, Lawrence loves to explore the realms of pure thought and ideas, seeking the intersection and fusion of art and technology.

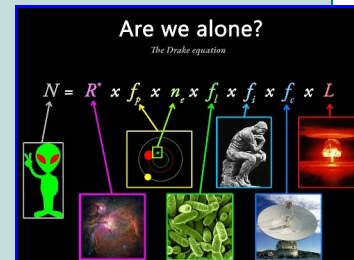
Lawrence has written

nology, ethics, and politics.

His writing topics also include robotic armies, the AI singularity, terrorism, crypto-currencies, the viability of a space-elevator, particle-wave duality, and Drake's equation – just to name a few.

Linick joined the CWC-SFV in order to hone his craft and learn how to sharpen his writing skills. And it's evident that his keen interest in science and technology enriches the plots of his sci-fi writing.

He hopes to edit his first novel, *MAKARA THONTIS*, with the help of his new SFV critique group. Below, you'll find a summary of the book's plot.



Drake's Equation

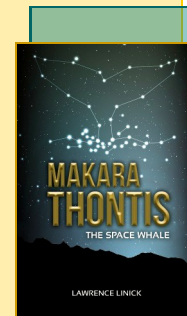


Crypto-Currencies

A Sampling of Lawrence Linick's Books



The plot of *Makara Thontis* revolves around a long kept secret that reveals the origins of life in our galaxy. The central character, Ishko Alvarez, is a promising young man adapted through provolution to live on a distant planet orbiting another star, far from Earth in the 50th century. Ishko is on a mission to learn the truth about life's origins. But his discovery threatens everything he cares about – friends, family, fiancé, and academic standing. Should he affirm a great untruth, or face his own flaws and find peace?



Connecting in the Time of Coronavirus

CWC-SFV Members Use Technology to Review and Critique Each Other's Writings

By Stephanie Dufner, M.A.

COVID-19 has prompted California Writers Club San Fernando Valley Branch to cease its monthly in-person meetings as well as its critique groups' frequent get-togethers. Fortunately, members of these critique groups have used modern technology to "convene" and evaluate each other's works. These technologies include conference calls as well as Google Hangouts and Zoom meetings.

Simultaneous Conversations Yielding Mixed Results

Public relations practitioner and writer Gary Wosk belongs to a Friday critique group that meets on the second and fourth Friday of the month. The group consists of six members. Andi Polk, CWC-SFV's Membership Chair, is the group leader. Wosk noted varied results of his group's initial meetings via conference call.



Gary Wosk

"We've had two teleconferences since the lockdown began. The results have been mixed, but it's better than having no meeting at all, which was the case for about two months. It was nice to hear everyone's voices again, to provide feedback, socialize, and laugh," says Wosk. "One of the challenges of meeting via conference call — varied audio quality.

"Depending on the type of cell phones we have, the quality of the audio ranged from poor to excellent. There were instances where I couldn't understand what the other person was saying.

"Following these calls, participants sent their feedback to one another either via email or the postal service."

Using Zoom and Google Hangouts

Wosk added that his group recently used Zoom, a video conferencing platform that provides multiple users a way to appear together, as a virtual group, on a computer, tablet, or smartphone screen. Participants are able to speak simultaneously and listen together to a speaker. Zoom functions include screen sharing, a chat option and offers its users both free and paid accounts. The former provides multiple users with an opportunity to meet for up to 40 minutes with up to 100 participants, while paid options can provide advanced features like unlimited time, meeting recording or technical support.



Tune in. Social media is here to stay.

To connect to Zoom, users must first download the platform's software on their preferred home computer or digital devices. Participants then cut and paste meeting ID and a password onto Zoom so they can access the video meeting link when its sent from the meeting's host.

Since the pandemic started in March, businesses, governments, organizations, and civic groups around the globe have pivoted to using Zoom instead of physically meeting together in one room.

Similar to Zoom is Google Hangouts. It's offered at no charge to people with a Google/Gmail account. Through Hangouts, users can talk via video or text on a computer screen or an Android device or iPhone. Like Zoom, people virtually connect using Hangouts dedicated link. CWC-SFV President and Dug IN author, Bob Okowitz, currently uses Google Hangouts for his own critique group,

Pitfalls & Benefits of Virtual Meetings

Like teleconference assemblies, video conferencing has some drawbacks. Depending on a person's internet service, meeting via Zoom or Google Hangouts can be inconsistent or "spotty." Some users may have problems connecting or remaining on these platforms during a meeting's duration.

"Zoombombing" is yet another potential consequence of large video gatherings on a platform. One participant will hijack or hack into a Zoom meeting, often forcing offensive or controversial content onto the unwitting target virtual group. This action occurred recently when the Conejo School District publicly published a link to a virtual meeting. One subversive participant suddenly sent images of swastikas and pornography to the unwitting meeting participants.

According to Zoom, meeting leaders have a variety of ways to deter these online antics: limit participant access, mute attendees' audio, disable their video, and add a "waiting room" feature that allows the meeting's host to "admit" each person who wants to attend the virtual video meeting.

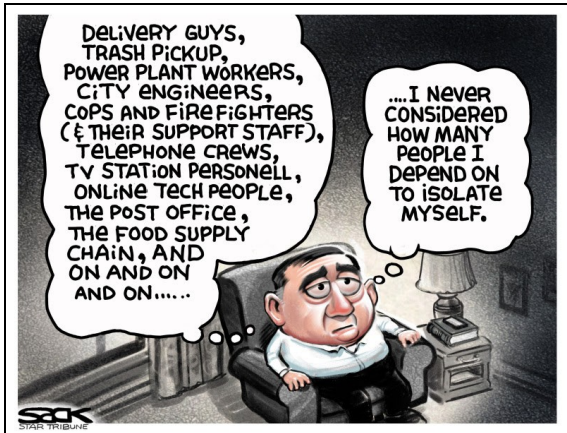
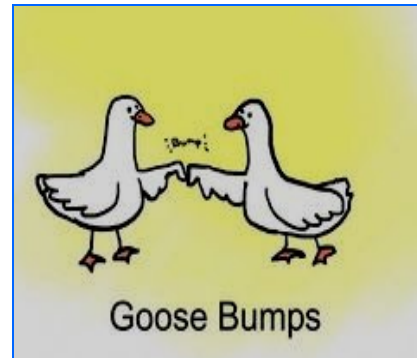
In spite of these possible challenges, CWC-SFV members should experience major benefits from virtual gatherings, like seeing and interacting with their friends again.

"Meeting on Zoom has given my critique group an impetus to write even more," said Wosk. "It was great to see everyone's faces again."

Let's LOL!

Homeschooling Day 3:
They all graduated.
#Done

Remember when we were little and had underwear with the days of the week on them? Yah. Those would be helpful right now.

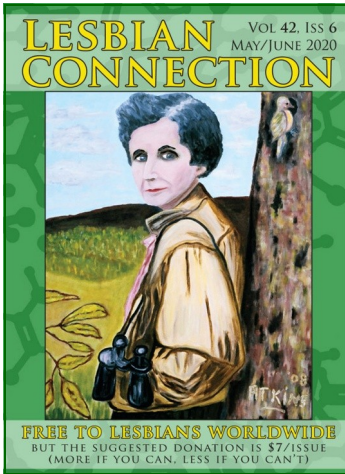


Paranoia has reached absurd stages...

I sneezed in front of my laptop and the anti-virus started a scan on its own



A Personal Best: Her Painting Makes the Cover of a Magazine



CWC-SFV member, Mary Jane Atkins, has realized a huge personal triumph: her painting of Rachel Carson is on the cover of the May/June 2020 *Lesbian Connection* magazine. Atkins recently said, “I’ve been soliciting LC for years to put one of my paintings on their cover and finally, it happened. I contacted them in January with the idea that my Carson portrait would be perfect for their May/June

issue (Earth Day and Carson’s birthday). They answered immediately: my Rachel Carson portrait would be published on the cover of their May/June issue! Also, my bio will also be featured in the magazine.”

Like most of the CWC-SFV members, writing is not her only interest. For most of her adult life, Atkins has nurtured her painting abilities. She dabbled in painting as a child and took two art classes in her freshman year in college in the early 60s.

“I didn’t think I was that good,” Atkins remarked during our interview, “so I didn’t pursue painting until decades later, around 1984, when I started painting large abstracts (still thinking I wasn’t that good). Then I went back to school to get my degree (having dropped out of college in 1965). I majored in English because I wanted to read novels I didn’t read when I was younger, and I thought I’d like to do some writing. Working and going to school kept me busy, so painting took a back seat. I earned my BA and later MA in 1991.”

After school, graduate Atkins needed work, but she didn’t want a 9 to 5 office job. She was back in the mood to work on her painting. What to do? Instructing young people had always interested Atkins. When she confided to her favorite English instructor, Mrs. Potter, her yen to teach, Potter said, “Mary Jane, con-

sider teaching in community college! Adult student populations badly need skill building.”

Thus, in 1991, Atkins began teaching at several SFV community colleges while painting in her leisure hours at home.

In time, English teacher Atkins realized that she needed classes herself—painting lessons!

“In 2001, I noted Valley College Extension art classes (near my apt. in Sherman Oaks) and signed up for a class with Margo Graville. After two semesters with Margo, I graduated to private instruction at Graville’s art studio in Granada Hills. I’ve been there ever since, going almost every week for the last nineteen years. Under Margo’s tutelage, I’ve grown as an artist. She’s my mentor!”

Graville initiated her artists into group gallery showings all around the San Fernando Valley at different venues - small galleries, restaurants, malls and outdoor fairs. Currently, Atkins has six paintings on display at Pierce College in the two English department buildings. She recently had three paintings on display at the Granada Hills Center for Spiritual Living - a group showing.

“Through the years,” Atkins says, “I’ve had many showings, but not lately. Right now, the book I’m writing has my full attention.”

Write on, Mary Jane Atkins!



Mary Jane Atkins



Self Portrait

Atkins’ website: maryjaneatkins.com

To view the *Lesbian Connection* website:

<https://www.lconline.org/inside-the-issue-may-june-2020/>

Running in the Park with Corona

by Anne W. Lee

I've only been doing it for eight months now but today I'm starting to understand how running feels. The power of the earth pushing back at me and my ankles trying to stay loose and flexible in their response. The pounding thunders up my knees, pulls through my hips and reaches up to squeeze my shoulders. Not unlike a bully pushing the unfit kid up against a metal school locker. It feels hard at first but then you get familiar with the brutal repetition and you lean into it and finally befriend it as you get stronger.

In my head I hear the echo of a drill sergeant barking out the count to keep up the pace as I run on a worn narrow path on the grassy edge next to the pavement. There is an alternating echo of my grandmother's voice that says, *Let's just stroll a while on the sidewalk and watch what's around you.* So, I do both.

This square-shaped city park measures two-thirds of a mile in its perimeter. I walk sides one and three of this park and run sides two and four. One man's run is another man's jog, but my pace is ambitious for me as I cover six laps around the park. On the walking side I'm slowly recovering but still eyeing the change to run-mode corner which is fast approaching *again*. The drill sergeant and grandmother are arguing who is in charge in this moment. My heavy breathing is trapped as it sucks in and pulses out, playing the fabric of my face mask like a harmonica.

Everyone in nearby neighborhoods is drawn to this green space and have pre-Covid-19 memories of the city's grand July 4th fireworks show and summer musical concerts in the park's amphitheater. Luckily it is a free space, easily accessible and has not been shut down yet. Except for the playground equipment that has recently been taped off and locked down. My heart breaks when I see the slides and swings and all things safe to climb, denied to children who need to let their energy loose to fall and get back up amid a ton of



friendly sand. I think of the hundreds of young families who have no backyard or available play equipment in their apartment and townhome complexes that fringe this park. Children banned from schools and day-care are sequestered 24/7 at home. They have only their tired parent's bodies and living room couches as jungle gyms.

Now amid the shutdown, shut-offs and shut-in rules of the pandemic we citizens show up alone, or with our dogs on a leash or with a couple friends trying to keep our allotted distance while wearing some form of creative masking. We behave ourselves not only for the sake of each other, but for the mayor or governor or whomever takes the fear of the spread of Covid -19 into their own hands. Will they kick us off the park's grassy acres, picnic benches and bordering sidewalks, as they have already made our peaceful nature trails and scenic beaches forbidden? But I know we all are grateful for this remaining communal place as it feels like the bell has rung for recess and we're escaping from biology, statistics and government history classes for a brief respite.

I always attempt to initiate a muffled but cheery 'Hello!' greeting through my mask to everyone I pass while I walk sides one and three. I believe Covid-19 germs aren't strong enough to crush the strength of a world-wide stance acknowledging that we will face this together. We are all continuously making vast adjustments while we define *endurance* in our own way.

On sides two and four, I run and pump my arms so all I can manage is simply to lift my hand to chest level and wave at the latest newcomer on my route. Some see my smiling eyes above my mask line and respond in kind. Others are oblivious and locked into their earbuds. A few cautiously turn their heads away assuming that a simple greeting exchange could spread deadly germs. But I'm not discouraged or detoured. People I pass never fail to create interesting and unique narratives in my mind.



Temporarily Closed due to COVID-19 virus.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

The thirty-something mother is walking briskly. A vibe of sweet relief from her four walls and too many Zoom meetings emanates from her body. Lagging a few feet behind is her pre-teen daughter, who looks like she was brought to the park kicking and screaming because she was forced to leave her smartphone behind. I laugh as she calls out with her eye-rolling attitude, “We’re *not* going to make a habit of this park thing Mom, are we?” The Latina mom grins her response, *Yes Mija!*

A bit further I come upon an elderly couple who I imagine are longtime marriage companions. He paces himself according to how capable she is feeling today manipulating her two supportive walking poles. With a full head of white curly Einstein hair, he leans toward her, gazing at her soft face with its pressed powder – a face that still holds the beauty he fell in love with. I want to follow them home and hear their courtship story and make sure they have someone who goes to the market for them.

Soon I pass a woman walking very slowly wearing a bright silk headscarf, a face mask and yellow dishwashing gloves. Her small dirty-blond dog pulls on the leash as she clutches her large black leather purse. She is speaking on her phone to someone she deeply cares about, yet must argue with – connecting in a dialect rooted somewhere in her Middle East origins. I can’t guess her age, but her prime years have outdistanced her. I can guess the wisdom she is giving on the phone call is timeless.

I make it through lap three of my route when an altercation occurs in front of me. A homeless resident of the park has picked up a jacket left behind on a tree branch by an athletically built high-schooler who has been running shirtless around the park. The runner sees this and yells, “Hey dude, that’s my jacket!” The tattered man gives it back after the briefest hesitation and closes their encounter with, “You’ll want that tonight when it gets colder.” I wonder if the irony of that comment will land

on the teen.

Before long a little girl in a pink helmet and a pink sparkly sweater and untied tennis shoes roars toward me on her pink Big Wheel. She squeals with delight at the slightest downward incline, gathering speed as her little legs wildly pump the pedals. I jump to the other side of the pavement, glad to make room for this tiny Joan of Arc plowing into battle. Her sole mission of *Freedom to Play for All!* Is proclaimed on her rosy pudgy face. Pink plastic streamers fly off the ends of her handlebars like

battle flags with their insig-
nia of determination. Her
face mask has long since
flown off. I am inspired!

Now an endorphin level
within me begins to churn.
I’m surging from fatigue
into renewed locomotion. A
window between lap four
and six is filled with my

natural exercise high. Here any fears of those spiky red protrusions off the round Corona virus cell are filed flat. The disease’s public torment is rendered unimportant for a short while.

But by the end of lap six and four miles are completed, my right hip abdicates its allegiance to me causing my right leg to become floppy and un-coordinated. I risk at this point, not being able to lift my right foot up high enough to clear its toes from raised tree roots, divots in the ground or cracks in the sidewalk. Depth perception and visual clarity is compromised as my optic nerves succumb to the physical exertion. My Multiple Sclerosis symptoms remind me it is time to call it quits. The central nervous system has become over-heated and neuron signals may start to fritz out. I respectfully heed that warning, salute my internal drill sergeant and head home before I end my run with an embarrassing face plant!

I thank my body for its service and grandmother for her advice. These park goers have unknowingly invited me into their lives for just a few passing moments to peer into their humanity. I am very grateful for their social service. Returning home, I’m a bit healthier in mind, body and spirit – and for now, holding my own in the midst of this pandemic.



Safer At Home

We're trapped in the miasma of war
Wearing PPE's
A war of words
Against a virus
Of all things
Smaller than a coccus
Even smaller than a Washington synapse
Around us, sticking to us, on us
Like surprise spider webs
Or Aunt Sonia's hugs
And wet smooches
Lipstick splotching everywhere
The media are frenzied
Though none can claim
The insight of a medium's, boyfriend's
cousin
Clairvoyance , let alone knowledge
Full of conflicting advice
Countering the government's
Mumbling, stumbling, bumbling
Corona virus, a Mexican beer
Chinese virus, a kind of food
Sars-CoV2
Which sounds like Russian
In the shadows
Of the NKVD
Rolling out of the Kremlin
A present from Putin
To our omniscient President
Covid-19 for taxonomy

Perhaps a relative
Of Stalag 17
Or Catch 22
We hide in our homes
Condos, houses, caves
Homo habilis
Led by the unknowing
Trembling before the unknown
Epitomizing
Millennial individuation
Hunkered in our storm cellars
From tornado danger
Along "The alley"
Cowering in our atom proof
Bomb shelters
Heads tucked beneath pelves
As underdesk children
Hiding from the cold war
Like kids playing hide- and- seek
We sequester ourselves
Peeking, but unventuring
Hoarding toilet paper
To wipe our frightened asses
Stockpiling newspapers
In case the quilted version
Is exhausted
Storing rice, beans and dehydrates
Aping armed forces
Living on MRE's
Awaiting invasion
We are frightened, demoralized, shaken

Defeated before we enter battle
We quake in uncertainty
While we fist bump, elbow touch
And eschew human personal contact
Social distancing
Is human dissociation
Loss of connection
Whilst we shit our pants
Our noses running
Losing sense of smell and taste
With fevers firing
Breath faltering
We yield all
In fear of failing
That ultimate test
Most accidents and fires
Suicides and deaths
Occur at home
Are we really
Harmlessly safer at home?
As we pay homage
To fatuous counsel
Whose bloviation
Fills our empty existences
We are flummoxed
By a caudillo of bollocks
And a congress of dumb oxen
While the masters
Of dumbfoolery
Mutter, sputter and butter their bread

Michael Edelstein

I Am Your Morning

A song composed by Michael Rains

I am what
is Eternal

I am the
fountain of all hopes and dreams

I am the
living source of all your life

I am the
cheerful light that never dies

I am the morning sun
I am the ever rising morning star
I am the fountain of all kindness
I am the light of joy for all the world

I am
what is pure

I am he
who you seek in all the world

I am all that
brings true courage to your heart
I am the
breath of life that holds your soul

I am the morning sun

I am the secret one that you have dreamed of

I am the fountain of all kindness

I am the giver of all deathless joy

I am what
is Eternal

I am the
one who stoops to find your tears

I am the
one who whispers in your dreams

I am the
Eternal light that cannot die

I am your morning sun

I am the one that waits here for you

I am the one who lives

I am the one who's searching for you

The music for this song may be heard at rainingday.bandcamp.com/track/i-am-your-morning

A Remarkable Two Years

It's been a challenging two years for all members of our CWC branch and especially for your SFV board members and coordinators. In 2019, local SFV members were affected by the firestorms that raged and raced along the edges of local communities. People were forced to leave their houses for a week or more, not sure whether their homes would still be standing when the fire had moved on. Some people were suddenly living in hotels. We all got through that emergency and carried on with our meetings at the MPTF.

Last year we lost several good friends, some of whom had been in the SFV for decades. You may have noted that, occasionally, I'll spotlight their writing in the newsletter. Those friends may be gone, but their influence, charismatic personalities and excellent writing should be remembered and honored.

This past year, our branch members welcomed Lori Hamilton's speakers and we added a new feature to our meeting schedule: a group writing exercise - responses to a prompt led by Rita Keeley Brown. This activity helped our attendance grow and we added several new members. We were pleased to note that guests were alerted to what we were offering on the first Saturday of the month by MeetUp and other social media. The addition of Stephanie B. Dufner as our

PR coordinator helped people find us and come to hear our speakers.

Jenny Jordan took over our critique groups in 2019 and the groups flourished under her guidance, assisted by Rita Keeley Brown. The Board introduced book sales as a promotion that raised funds for our activities. Alan Wills faithfully shopped for our treats and paper goods to feed the "troops" and satisfy a sweet tooth. Brits know their biscuits, that's for sure!

Yes, things were moving along. We were having a great year, and then ... a vicious virus invaded our city: COVID-19. This spring, the whole world changed in the most drastic ways. Two months ago we all obeyed the Shelter-in-Place command and as June begins we're still moored in our homes, uncomfortably aware that we'll probably wear masks for the rest of 2020 and beyond. Well, writers, take notes. Misadventures and stressful times are fodder for future fiction and non-fiction books and scripts.

In the coming months, please help your next Board keep the CWC-SFV intact by joining our Zoom meetings. Hope I'll soon be seeing you on my computer screen. Stay well.

Kathy Highcove, editor

For Diligent Prez Bob Okowitz, What a Difference a Year Makes!

June, 2019: Bob headed for the beach with his ocean swimming crew.



Yahoo! Can't believe it! I scored toilet paper this time!



June, 2020: Bob stocked up at Costco for sheltering-in-place!

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When the COVID-19 has ceased to be a threat, our San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club will meet once more at the MPTF!

Some Saturday, we CWC-SFV writers will once more gather and share our latest news, listen to a speaker and go home with food for thought.

You'll find us in the MPTF Health and Wellness Center, in the meeting room of the Saban Community Center.



**23388 Mulholland Drive
Woodland Hills, CA 91364**



**CWC-SFV Meeting Site
MPTF Health and Wellness Center**



CWC-SFV Meeting in the Saban Community Room



CWC-SFV