



# The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club

## Hear How To Perk Up Your Prose

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*During the day,  
I don't believe in  
ghosts. At night,  
I'm a little more  
open-minded.*

Unknown



ON Saturday, October 3, at 1pm, join your fellow SFV members in our Zoom Room. Carla Bass, the author of several books on successful writing, will be our speaker. Bass's most recent award-winning book is *Write to Influence!*

She will share her techniques to transform dull, longwinded text into prose that will keep the reader hanging on each word from that all-important opening hook to the story's conclusion with her presentation, "Spin That Captivating Tale"

Her simple process requires more than an intriguing plot, captivating characters, and exquisite settings. "It's about Powerful writing," she says. "Make each word count and every second of the *reader's* time play to *your* advantage!" Central to her success—writing with focused precision. Less is more.

Powerful writing often tips the balance between success and failure. And, as a lieutenant colonel, Bass proved it! She transformed her unit from the most losing in statewide quarterly and annual professional awards into the one to beat! How? She taught her troops to compose winning nominations! By popular demand, she taught thousands of Air Force members for next 15 years — to rave reviews.

An avid reader, herself, Bass delights in demonstrating how her writing secrets infuse sparkle into fiction. She teaches writing workshops to government agencies, corporations, private businesses, academia, and organized book clubs.

Bass retired as Colonel after 30 years in the Air Force, working with generals, ambassadors, congressional delegations, and for-



Carla Bass

eign dignitaries. As a 1st lieutenant, she composed and presented daily briefings to the Director, National Security Agency. She wrote hundreds of personnel reviews; award nominations and other competitive packages; and letters for executive signature, many of which were sent to Congress. In all instances, every word and every second of the audience's time

counted. Bass developed a handbook on professional writing, transformed it into an acclaimed course, and taught thousands of people for 15 years, as a labor of love.

Find out more about Carla Bass at <https://writetoinfluence.net>

NOTE: Our programs are free for club members who will receive an email invitation to attend this presentation via Zoom. Guest admission may be purchased at: [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org)

### What Others Say

*Carla Bass brilliantly captured in one entertaining, easily read document the nuances of writing that infuse products with clarity, focus, and direction. If effective writing is your goal, put this book in your tool kit! – Dr. Lani Kass, Senior VP, Corporate Strategic Advisor, CACI*

*Carla Bass knows her stuff! People wanting to further their skills or their careers would do well to read and re-read Write to Influence! Even as an experienced writer and reader I found useful tips and it's joined my favorite desktop resources. – Shari Stauch, CEO and Creator of Where Writers Win.\**

Monte Swann

# Introducing: The 2020-21 CWC-SFV Board Members and Officers



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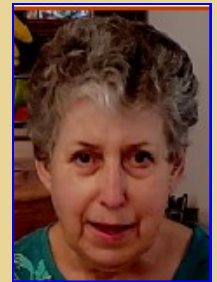
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## Election 2020 Results

Last month we conducted our virtual election for the 2020-21 Board. In total 46 members voted for the slate of officers, there were no dissenting votes. The new Board has been unanimously elected. Karen Gorback is president, Monte Swann is vice president, Anat Golan is secretary and Pat Avery will be continuing as treasurer.

**We all hope to see  
you on in the gallery  
on October 3, at 1 pm,  
in our Zoom Room.**



# Karen's Corner

I have always cherished my association with writers' clubs. My novel, *Freshman Mom*, was born as a short story, winning second place in a contest sponsored by the Ventura County Writers Club. While the prize money was great, allowing me to purchase my first laptop, the best part about placing in that contest was the night I read the story out loud at a club meeting.

A man in the front row was the guest speaker that night – a Hollywood scriptwriter. I remember his looking up at me, smiling throughout, and laughing in all the right places as I read my story. What a rush. It was almost magic. But without the CWC-SFV, that novel would have never seen the light of day.

You know by now that the late Dave Wetterberg, club president, edited an early copy of that manuscript. I had never seen so much red ink—all well deserved. Rita Brown read it too, with additional edits and recommendations, including a publishing house to contact.

I have also been a member of the CenCal chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators for many years and often volunteered at their annual conferences. This year, the SCBWI events are all virtual, but I still attend as many as possible. Their *Zoom Summer Spectacular* was amazing! I'll tell you more about it in future columns.

While our own virtual meetings cannot replace the camaraderie of sharing an afternoon at the lovely campus of the Motion Picture and Television Fund Residential Community, your board is going to provide you with a year of terrific Zoom lectures to motivate and support you on your writing journey.

Please invite your friends and relatives from throughout the country and around the world to join us! With Zoom, distance is no longer a factor. The full schedule of lectures is available for everyone to see at [cwc-sfv.org](http://cwc-sfv.org). (Also on page 12 of this publication.) Print it out and stick it up on the fridge! People may join our club for the year and enjoy all the programs, including virtual critique groups, or purchase admis-



sion to individual lectures. Thanks to Michael Rains for updating our website to provide these options.

In closing, please consider volunteering for a club leadership position this year. If you enjoy crunching numbers, please volunteer to work with our amaz-

ing treasurer, Pat Avery, to learn the position. If you're a people person, who can also get along with a database, train with Andrea Polk, our membership chair, who can run the club with one hand tied behind her back! Want to learn about websites? Begin by assisting our webmaster Michael Rains.

Finally, if you're a born organizer, we need you to coordinate our critique groups. Andi and Pat will help you get you started.

Special thanks to Monte Swann, VP/Program Chair, and Anat Golan, Secretary, who stepped up early! We are already a better club because of their excellent work.

How do you become a volunteer? Contact me at [karen.gorback@gmail.com](mailto:karen.gorback@gmail.com) to let me know which position you'd like to learn. You'll have lots of support and the gratitude of the best CWC branch in the state.

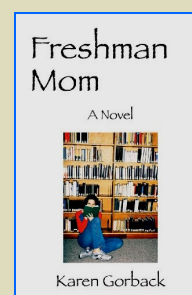
Meanwhile, keep writing. It's almost magic.

**Karen Gorback**

## Take a look at Karen's Novel

Meredith Lieberman has been wanting to go to college for a long time, but without encouragement or support, she settles into the life of a wife and mother—until one day, 18 years into her marriage, her husband leaves her for a more “spiritual life” in Sedona.

Determined to be independent and follow her dreams, the newly single mom decides to go back to school. But when she announces her decision to her family, Meredith's mother tells her to “grow



up,” and her teenage daughter figures she's probably going through a midlife crisis and says, “Don't they have hormones for that sort of thing?”

Disappointed but desperate to pursue her education and make a better life for her family,

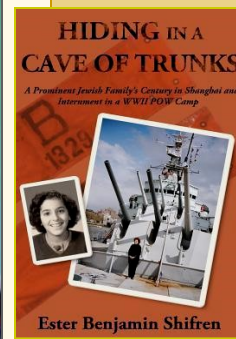
Meredith enrolls at the local community college.

This book is available on Amazon.com

Kathy Highcove

## Author Ester Shifren Spoke on Successful Self-publishing

Our September speaker, Ester Shifren, is a long-time member of our San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club. She's also a prime example of a well-informed, creative and versatile self-published author who uses every opportunity and marketing method to promote her story. And her diligence has paid off.



talks to a variety of adult audiences—and trying to sell your product: your new book.

If you're a self-published author, or even if you have an agent and a publish-

ing house backer, you must still go forth to meet and greet an audience of potential book buyers. People you don't know.

During her years in our SFV writing community, Ester has written and self-published a best-seller and marketed her book to countless audiences. She has flown around the world to innumerable speaking engagements, workshops and special book group gatherings. She's been interviewed on international networks and traveled all over the globe to make speeches and give interviews about her book. With this marketing experience, she entered our September Zoom Room and delivered an in-depth talk on the challenges of self-publishing.

"First of all," she told us, "believe in yourself. Resolve to achieve excellence. Polish your product Write, rewrite and edit, edit, edit. Format using programs such as MS Word, Scrivener or pay for any professional tech help you might need. Join writing clubs, a good critique group, and thoroughly research your facts. Read your work aloud to ferret out typos, repeats and boring lame phrases."

The experienced public speaker advised us to work on a good short elevator speech about your book, whether published or not!

Enter writing competitions and publish short stories in free publications, she advised. And write Amazon book reviews, adding "Author" to your name. When you've finally finished and published your book, it's time for marketing challenges.

Unless you're an actor, teacher, preacher, news reporter, merchant, politician or stand-up comic, you've probably have much to learn about giving

ing house backer, you must still go forth to meet and greet an audience of potential book buyers. People you don't know.

"Before marketing your book, you must decide," she said, "Why did you write the book? Who is your audience and what is your message? You're going to be asked, hundreds of times, 'What's your book about?' How will you answer the question?"

Ester reminded us that the Internet contains a plethora of helpful information for the self-published author. Google any topic, any challenge, and pages of helpful info blooms on your computer screen, including marketing advice.

One should know, before standing in front of a room of strangers, why they asked you to speak to them. What element of your story will interest them? And is there a topic you should research before speaking to this amiable group?

Ester strongly advised an author to find something in your story to develop as a lecture subject. And not a stodgy boring topic—write a lively talk and try to entertain the folks while showcasing your book. Never done that before? Then practice in front of a mirror, your tolerant friends and family members or perhaps ... Toastmasters!

Promote yourself at every opportunity, Ester emphasized. Let people know that you're available as a speaker and lecturer, Google groups who might be interested in your lectures. You can easily network with likely listeners by attending writing conferences and seminars. Or by volunteering

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(Continued from page 4)

to help with a conference or workshop. Ester advises a new author to sit in the front row of a gathering, smile, nod, make eye contact, ask questions, and make yourself stand out from the crowd. At the end of a talk, pass out your business cards to anyone who chats with you. Yes, business cards are a tool of a book marketer and that's YOU, new author! Be sure that the card has your photo!

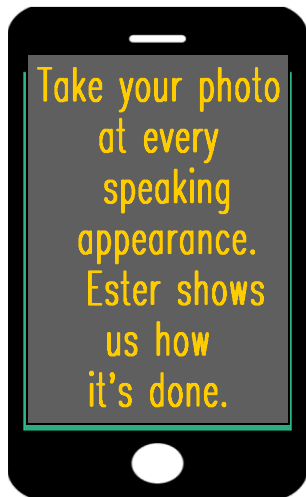
Also, when you listen to a lecture, try to chat with the speaker afterward. Compliment them, ask questions and find an opening to mention your own book. You'll find that a fellow author/speaker can

be a source for your own future audiences.

Remember, writing is a business and an industry of sorts, so note industry leaders! Subscribe to their blogs, webinars, seminars, and podcasts. Interact with webinar and media producers so they get to know and acknowledge you publicly. Comment intelligently and often—whenever possible.

"It always worked for me!" Ester told us. By the looks of the photos below, which I googled online, her marketing efforts have certainly paid off for self-published author, Ester Shifren,

Kathy Highcove



**The WRITERS TRICKS OF THE TRADE SHOW - Episode 25  
USING HISTORY IN A FASCINATING WAY**

**Co-Hosts**

**Tonight's Guest Author**

**MORGAN ST. JAMES**

**ESTER BENJAMIN SHIFREN**

**DENNIS N. GRIFFIN**

**HIDING IN A CAVE OF TRUNKS**  
*A Personal Jewish Family's Century in Shanghai and Resurgence in 20th Century China*  
Ester Benjamin Shifren

Ester's memoir, "Hiding in a Cave of Trunks," details all facets of Shanghai's colorful multi-ethnic population while relating the sage of her family's century-long existence in China. Writers, learn the technique of using history in a fascinating way.

**FEBRUARY 10, 2016 6:00 PST / 9:00 EST**  
**Direct Link: <http://tobtr.com/828887>**  
Visit [writerstricksofthetraderadio.blogspot.com](http://writerstricksofthetraderadio.blogspot.com)  
**SHOW DIRECTORY PAGE**

**Reflections of Our Isolation**

**Ester Shifren**

**Sara Troy**

**Self-Discovery media.com**

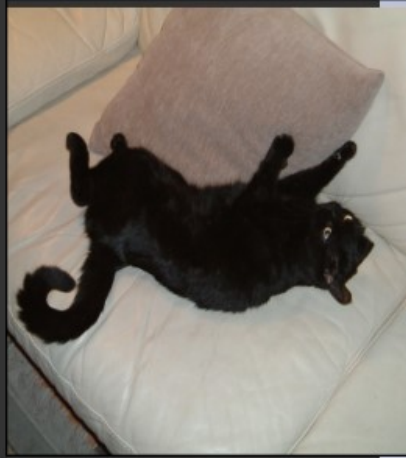


# From "The Valley Scribe" archives - October 2011

## Black Cat

A cat as black  
As blackest coal  
Is out upon  
His midnight stroll,  
His steps are soft,  
His walk is slow,  
His eyes are gold,  
They flash and glow.  
And so I run  
And so I duck,  
I do not need  
His black-cat luck.

Author Unknown



The cat is domestic only as far as suits its own ends.

~Saki

The problem with cats is that they get the exact same look on their face whether they see a moth or an axe-murderer.

~Paula Poundstone

Cats are dangerous companions for writers because cat watching is a near-perfect method of writing avoidance.

~Dan Greenburg

Dogs have owners, cats have staff.

~Author Unknown

# KIT WIT



A house is never still in darkness to those who listen intently; there is a whispering in distant chambers, an unearthly hand presses the snib of the window, the latch rises. Ghosts were created when the first man awoke in the night. ~

J.M. Barrie



How like a queen comes forth the lonely Moon  
From the slow opening curtains of the clouds  
Walking in beauty to her midnight throne!

~George Croly

One need not be a chamber to be haunted;  
One need not be a house;  
The brain has corridors surpassing  
Material place.

~Emily Dickinson



There is something haunting in the light of the moon; it has all the dispassionateness of a disembodied soul, and something of its inconceivable mystery.

~Joseph Conrad

# Review and Refresh

**Modifiers** (call them adjectives and adverbs if you will) alter the view of nouns and verbs. With a modifier, a dog can become a vicious dog. A cat meows, but with a modifier she can meow *plaintively*. And modifiers come in larger sizes—call them phrases and clauses, if you wish—but they alter the view the same way.

*Growling viciously at the salesman, the dog leaped at the screen door.*

*The cat meowed as if she had lost her best friend.*

Use care in the placement of modifiers. Otherwise confusion and sometimes unintended humor can result. Grammarians classify the most rampant errors of this kind as *misplaced modifiers*, *squinting modifiers* and *dangling modifiers*.

## Misplaced Modifiers

A misplaced modifier gives the impression that it modifies something other than what was intended.

*We have some new bicycles for serious riders with adjustable seats.*

(Adjustable tushes? Try ... *We have some new bicycles with adjustable seats for serious riders.*)

*Bobby continues teasing the goat with a smile of satisfaction on his face.*

(A goat with a smirk? Try ... *With a smirk of satisfaction on his face, Bobby etc.*)



## Squinting Modifiers

When a modifier "squints," it might be taken to modify either of two words.

*Mr. Holburn said on the first day of class he would ask us to keep a journal.*

Did Mr. Holburn say it on the first day or did he want the journal on the first day?

(Try ... *On my first day of class, Mr. Holburn etc.*)

*I thought all this time you were in Grand Forks.*

Did I think it all this time or were you in Grand Forks all this time?

(Try ... *All this time I thought you were in Grand Forks or*

*I thought you were in Grand Forks all this time.*)



## Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a modifier with nothing in the sentence for it to modify.

*Driving across the range, some buffalo came into view. Buffalo at the wheel?*

(Try ... *As we drove across the range, some etc.*)

*Cleaning the garage, the shelf collapsed. Who's cleaning the garage?*

(Try ... *When I was cleaning the garage, the shelf collapsed.*)

— Dave Wetterberg

What to do on a Saturday night with nowhere to go thanks to the lockdown? There were no options except to hunker down and turn to whatever screen activities dictated our everyday lives. Then, one fine day in early May, daughter Dawn shared with me a notion that had been floating around in her head. She wanted to give free music concerts for friends and neighbors during the coming summer months. She felt it could be done safely because it would be outdoors.

Dawn plays guitar, sings and writes her own music and lyrics. Until the pandemic, she was a member of several bands and part of a women's choral group. She truly missed being out there performing. This kind of outlet seemed like the perfect solution.

She just needed a venue, which, by chance, I could provide. I had the driveway she needed to set up her sound system. She had the talent and equipment to put on a show. And I live next door to her and my grandson.

Upon my enthusiastic agreement to her plan, Dawn posted notices on her website and Facebook page, that opening night was scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Her first performance attracted about a dozen neighbors. With each succeeding performance, her audience grew until she was entertaining more than 30 people of all age groups: couples with strollers and/or toddlers in tow; teenagers on bicycles; middle-aged folks and a significant number of seniors who seemed to be



*Dawn Fintor serenades her hood.*

especially happy to be anywhere but home. Many brought their own chairs or stood on the parkway. Some even brought drinks and snacks. We all wore masks and kept our prescribed distances while Dawn performed.

For a brief time, the groups that gathered each Saturday night could put worries and cares aside and pretend it was a date or club night. Dawn's music had a beat that made one want to get up and dance. In fact, with Dawn's encouragement, the less inhibited souls did just that, especially when she swayed the crowd with romantic Latin rhythms.

Dawn's nine-year-old son, Hudson, joined in the spirit of the occasion one Saturday and set

up a lemonade stand using fresh lemons a neighbor donated from her tree. He did charge for it, but I was so proud when he announced the money would be donated to an animal rescue organization.

After the last chord for each evening was struck, Dawn thanked all for attending. In return she received comments of gratitude for the entertainment she offered so generously. We then safely mingled with enough

people to make the night feel almost like a party all the while observing safe distances.

Alas, in August Dawn's day-job boss called her back to work and the concerts came to a halt. Dawn confided to me that what she did "was good for my soul." That feeling, I'm sure, was shared by all our neighbors. Dawn provided our hood a brief respite from boredom on those summer Saturday nights.



*Hudson Lunsford takes care of the refreshments.*



# A Bird of Stunning Brilliance

By Rita Keeley Brown



**A bird of stunning brilliance visited us today  
and stayed for quite some time  
we, family and friends talking on the patio  
he, atop a fence wound thick with trumpet vine.**

**We sat spellbound as he began a lively dance.**

**Costumed in darkest ebony and dazzling golden orange  
hopping around his stage of rich green leaves  
savoring nectar in each lavender bloom  
he eyed us as if saying,**

***Are you paying attention?***

**We dared not applaud and interrupt his message  
it was meant for all to observe and absorb  
all are struggling through a dark ebony time  
he trumpets out,**

***Dazzling bright days will soon be rising!***

**Rita Keeley Brown**

**T**hree young people in my family, cousins in their twenties, were recently the latest in need of Hope, along with every person in this world today, the year 2020-AD

Cameron had just turned 21 and was prepping for hip surgery in the coming week. A phone call told us that other two cousins, Blade and Kayla, both in their mid-20s, were taken to different hospitals in seriously condition. They were both in vehicle accidents on the same night in different cities. Blade was in an accident on his motorcycle and Kayla was somehow run over by a friend's truck.

There will be pain, a long period of recovery, and a change of life for all three of these wonderful young people. Life is never simple for anyone but often those challenging periods are when we learn the most about ourselves and our lives.

That's what was going on when we were all talking on the patio and a bird of stunning brilliance came to visit in his deep black upper body and his brilliant lower body. We all were saying 'I have never seen a bird like that before!' It was such a privilege to experience that astounding bird of stunning brilliance, I could not get him out of my mind. I had to write the poem. Sources said that the people have believed that the oriole is a "messenger bird," a symbol of approaching summer or sunshine, an adept nest weaver, who helps us see how life is weaved together.

My soul says this bird's appearance was not just 'coincidence.' We all needed his message and since that afternoon visit in early July, 2020, all three young people are recovering very well.



I was fixing breakfast for my daughter, Maxine, who was sleeping upstairs, when I heard the expectant knock on the front door.

Mr. Eugene Beckers, our town's goodwill ambassador of Halloween, was standing outside on the front porch holding a large pumpkin. He'd been giving out free pumpkins since before I was born.

"Hello Gerty," he said in a raspy voice when I opened the door. "Long time no see. How are you?"

"I'm fine. And you?"

"Busy. Very busy. More people are moving here. I'll need to go back to Lombardo Farms to pick up some more pumpkins. To change the subject, does Maxine still go trick or treating?"

"Are you kidding me? Of course. That's all she talks about," I told him. "'Mom, what should I be for Halloween?' she begins asking in August."

"Well you never know these days. A lot of kids just want to sit around and play video games and talk on their cell phones. You've made my day, Gerty. Stories like that keep me going. You know, I try my best to keep the tradition of Halloween alive. I hope I'm succeeding."

"You are, Mr. Beckers."

"Calling on you and your family is always special for me. You and I go way back. as you know."

I could hear some whimpering in his voice, but no tears welled up in his eyes. He was very good at controlling his emotions.

"Here take this from me," he said with a grimace. "It's heavy. The pumpkins are bigger this year."

I immediately placed what felt to be a thirty-pound pumpkin down on the porch. "Are you okay?" I asked him. "You look like you're in pain."

"Oh, that. Wear and tear. Arthritis. Other than Halloween time, I'm sedentary for the rest of the year. If folks celebrated Halloween twice a year. I could stay in better shape!"

Noticing he appeared more dehydrated than usual I offered him a bottle of water.

"Thank you, but I'll be okay."

After bringing Mr. Beckers up to date on my family, he said, "Before I forget, Roy Lombardo and his people wanted me to ask you if you're planning to bring over your famous pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving?"

"Of course, that's a family's tradition my mom started."

"Your mom, Ester, what a woman!"



"You count can on a pumpkin pie as long as Gerty Reynolds can still bake."

"Wonderful. Make sure you teach Maxine how to bake too." We both laughed.

I was only six years old when I first met Mr. Beckers. He was slightly hunched over and rather scrawny, his face dry as leather and placid. And he was still wearing the same

outfit my mom and I bought him many years ago, a dusty, red wrinkled, long-sleeved, flannelled shirt that was slightly torn, blue jeans and a straw hat.

"How much longer are you going to be giving away free pumpkins?" I asked him.

"As long as Lombardo Farms will have me, which may not be too much longer. I've heard rumors that Roy is looking for a buyer who's interested in building condominiums."

"I pray that never happens. The community would lose interest in Halloween just like they did all those years ago. And on a personal note, I'd miss you. You're like family."

"Aw, shucks, Gerty. That's nice of you to say that, but let's stay positive."

Sleepy-head Maxine was now standing outside with us in her bathrobe.

"Hi, Maxine," said Mr. Beckers. "What are you going to be for Halloween?"

"Maybe Snow White."

"Great choice. Hey, before I forget, if you need any more candy to give out, I have plenty in the bed of my pickup truck," he said. "Help yourself."

"Oh, that's so nice of you, Mr. Beckers," said my daughter. "We already have enough Milky Ways, Mars bars and Skittles. What do you have?"

"Candy corn, of course."

"Candy corn? I love candy corn. Can we, Mom, can we?"

"Sure, but don't take too much. Leave some for the other kids. Go inside and get your Halloween trick or treat bucket."

After Maxine had finished scooping up the candy corn from Mr. Beckers' red Ford pickup truck, he turned to me and said, "Well, I'll be going. I've more deliveries to make."

The three of us hugged, and then Mr. Beckers returned to his truck, picked up a pumpkin and headed for the house next door.

After Maxine and I went back inside the house to have breakfast, she noticed the photo album I'd placed on the

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 10)

kitchen table.

"I've never seen this photo album," she said.

"I was feeling a little nostalgic so I got it down from the attic."

"Can I take a look?"

"Sure. Be careful, though. Some of the pages are brittle."

I continued to speak as Maxine flipped through the pages. "At the time I didn't really know Mr. Beckers. He was just the man who came around every year and gave us a free pumpkin. I asked your grandma, 'Why does he give out free pumpkins?'"

"She said, 'Because he loves Halloween and making people happy.'"

I scrunched my face when I heard her answer. I had a feeling there was more to it than that. So, I asked her again. She frowned.

"I can tell you're going to grow up to be an investigative reporter. As I told you, he loves Halloween and making people happy. Isn't that enough for you?"

I asked her again. She remained silent for a moment and then came clean.

"Before you were born, Gerty, most people didn't care about Halloween anymore. They'd turn out their porch lights and hide in their back bedrooms."

"Why, Mom? Halloween is the best day of the year!"

"Well, it wasn't back then. So, Mr. Beckers started to deliver pumpkins, and that was that."

Maxine looked up at me. I could tell by the look on her face that she wasn't buying her grandma's explanation either.

"Yes, Maxine. I know. So, I said to your grandma, 'Ah, come on Mom. What happened?'"

"I don't want to scare you"

"Please, Mom, tell me," I pleaded. "I won't be scared."

"You're only six. I'm not sure I should tell you."

"You can tell me. I have to know!"

"Well, Maxine, your grandma realized I'd find out the truth from someone, so she figured it might as well be from her."

"Goodness, child," your grandma said.

"I pray this story doesn't give you nightmares ... but here goes ... on that Halloween night, some of the trick-or-treaters went missing."

"Missing?" I said. "What do you mean, they went missing"

"They were kidnapped," she answered in a hushed tone.

"Did they ever find the kids?"

"They did," she said. "Because Mr. Beckers, who no one had ever known

before, led the police to the kids' "

"Here's where it really gets scary," I told Maxine. "I asked your grandma, 'Who kidnapped the kids?'"

"'Monsters!' she said, 'Real honest-goodness monster.'"

"Monsters? Mom, you told me there weren't any such things as monsters."

"You're right, your grandmas said. 'Forgive me. I was going to tell you the truth someday. As it turns out, no harm done, thanks to Mr. Beckers. He told the monsters that trick-or-treaters weren't really going to play tricks on them. But HE would if they hurt them.'"

"What did these monsters look like?"

"Frankenstein's monster, Dracula and Wolf man."

"Why'd they come here?"

"The Lombardo family found them in England and convinced them to come and work for them. They planned to open *Monster Land* during Halloween, but first the monsters had to agree to be friendly. Unfortunately, things didn't work out."

"Of course, I was very frightened when my mom told me that story."

"Mom," I told her, "let's skip Halloween this year,"

"Don't worry," she replied. "*Monster Land* is long gone. And the monsters went back to England. They didn't want to have anything more to do with our Mr. Beckers. He scared the bejeebers out of them."

"I think we should do something special for Mr. Beckers."

"Good idea!"

"So, Maxine, your Grandma Essie and I went shopping and bought Mr. Beckers some new clothes. We drove over to Lombardo Farms and my mom went up to Jack Lombardo, working in the produce stand, and asked, 'Where's Mr. Beckers?'"

"Just down that path, about a quarter mile."

"we followed the path and there he was, Maxine, just standing there in the middle of the pumpkin patch with his head hanging down and his arms outstretched. Although he didn't say a word, we got a sign that he knew we were there ... he winked at us!"

"Grandma Ester said, 'Mr. Beckers, this gift is for you. We'll lay it down here. Before you know it'll be Halloween again and we'll hear you knocking on our door.'"

"Then, Maxine, Grandma Ester and I said 'goodbye' to the scarecrow."



# Presenting: our 2020-21 Speakers



Whether you have been published or have always wanted to write, please join us for monthly Saturday meetings via Zoom to learn more about the craft and business of writing.

See [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org) for membership information and single lecture admission prices.

This series is free for CWC-SFV members.

## **September 12, 2020 1 PM**

### **Self-Publishing – You Can Do It!**

Join author, artist, international speaker, and CWC-SFV member Ester Benjamin Shifren to learn the in's and out's of self-publishing. You can do it!

## **October 3, 2020 1 PM**

### **Spin That Captivating Tale**

Author, speaker, and retired Air Force Colonel Carla D. Bass teaches us how to keep our readers hanging on to each word, making our writing stand out from the crowd! We need this!

## **November 7, 2020 1 PM**

### **How Authors Go From Fingers on the Keyboard to Dollars in the Bank: Four Ways Authors Make Money from Publishers**

Attorney and Literary Agent Paul Levine gives us the answer to the age-old-question – how to make money as an author. Do not miss this presentation.

## **December 5, 2020 1 PM**

### **The Art of the Query**

Author Trey Dowell shows us how to write query letters that command attention! Whether you submit to publishers, editors, or agents, you need a well-crafted query. Learn how, now.

## **January 9, 2021 1 PM**

### **I Write Funny, and You Can Too!**

Author PJ Colando teaches us how to infuse comedy and satire into our manuscripts, with twenty-four tips for effective writing. Start the year with a smile in this interactive workshop.

*Revised 8/30/2020*

## **February 6, 2021 1 PM**

### **Going Deep Into Point of View**

*USA Today* bestselling author Beth Yarnall shows us how to choose the most effective POV for our work, immersing the reader into our character's head and heart. Wow!

## **March 6, 2021 1 PM**

### **Sticks and Stones and the Stories We Tell**

Author and/or illustrator of more than 40 books, Pat Cummings explains ways to turn negative experiences into art for compelling storytelling. We will learn from the writing of BIPOC storytellers (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). Don't miss this important lesson.

## **April 3, 2021 1 PM**

### **Does Poetry Matter?**

Los Angeles Poet Laureate (2014-2016) Luis Rodriguez helps us celebrate National Poetry Month with a lecture on the undeniable value of poetry in our lives. What a treat!

## **May 1, 2021 1 PM**

### **Memoir – Emotion Bracketed by Time**

Author and CWC-SFV President Karen Gorback provides steps to composing an engaging memoir – a small slice of life.

## **June 5, 2021 1 PM**

### **Market Yourself with an Easy-to-Crete Website**

Create your own media presence with a step-by-step guide for a website with Script Consultant and CWC-SFV Secretary Anat Wenick. It's definitely do-able!

*Programs subject to change*

**W**hen the COVID-19 has been vaccinated out of our lives, the San Fernando Branch of the California Writer's Club will meet again at the MPTF in Woodland Hills.

Some future Saturday in the coming year, our membership and guests will gather again in the Saban Community Room and share our news, listen to a speaker and return home with food for thought.

*Stay tuned and Write On!*



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



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



**A past CWC-SFV meeting in the Community Room.**



**Photo of the MPTF campus in Woodland Hills.**