



# The Valley Scribe



Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club

## CWC-SFV MEMBERS!

REMEMBER:

**NO CWC-SFV ZOOM MEETING  
IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY!**

**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!**

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AND SFV SITE INFO

# Assist The CWC-SFV 2021-22 Membership Drive

**D**o you know someone who loves to write and wants to join a community of fellow writers? If so, here's an offer that might intrigue you and a friend: why not refer him or her to our club? Tell your friend about our monthly speakers, activities and very helpful critique groups.

**If this friend should join our SFV roster, you'll receive \$20 dollars off your membership renewal.**

Win/win situation.

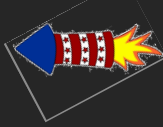
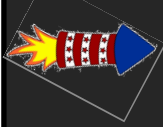
**Interested? Just follow these guidelines:**

- Inform Pat Avery at [rpavery@mac.com](mailto:rpavery@mac.com) (our new Membership Chair) who you referred.
- Once your referral joins CWC-SFV you will receive a \$20 check from CWC-SFV. The check will be sent to you after we receive your own membership renewal.
- Only one referral from each current member is eligible for reimbursement. But of course, you can refer more than member.

This offer ends September 27, 2021.

## Your Local Library is a Great Summer Resource!





**ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS OF THE CWC-SFV!  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE NOW  
THROUGH  
SEPTEMBER 27TH!**



**HOW TO PAY YOUR 2020-2121 DUES:**

- Send a \$45 check, money order or PayPal\* via our Website— <https://cwc-sfv.org/>
- Make your check payable to: CWC-SFV
- Mail to: Pat Avery, Membership Chair  
P.O. Box 9023  
Calabasas, CA 91372



**DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL**



**DO NOT MISS THE DEADLINE! HERE'S WHY:  
IF YOU MISS THE SEPTEMBER 27 DEADLINE  
YOU'LL BE DROPPED FROM THE ACTIVE  
CWC-SFV MEMBERSHIP ROLLS. OY!**



**REINSTATEMENT IS \$65.**



# Meet Our New Board Secretary: Heather Bradshaw

A few months ago, I joined the California Writers' Club to meet other writers, get focused and be accountable via a critique group. I was feeling rudderless, as far as writing goes, knowing that I needed to embark on a major rewrite of a novel. Also, my life felt very small during the pandemic quarantine. Writing can be a lonely business, can't it?

A lifetime ago, I was born and bred in Kingston Upon Hull, Yorkshire, England. Hull is a port city, primarily working class, and was once the largest cod fishery in the world. The city has a long history of fighting for social reform and my interests often lie with the struggles of every day people. I began writing stories very young after reading the books by children's author, Enid Blyton, and attempting with much frustration to write my own versions.

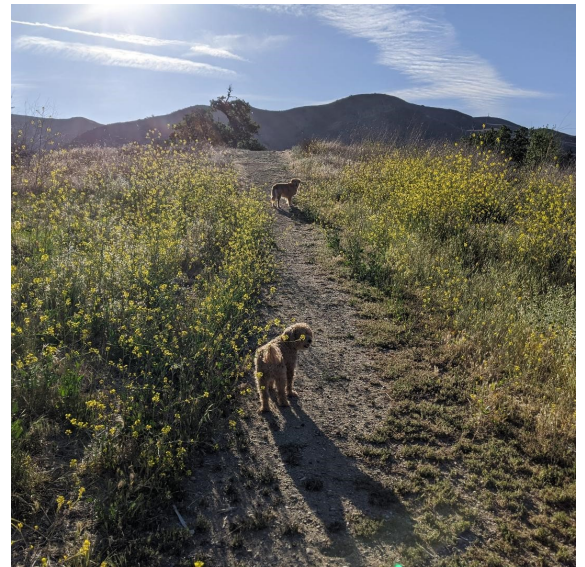
Upon earning a BTEC in computing, I left home and found work with a tech company installing the first IBM PCs. In those days, if you knew how to turn on a computer you were considered a genius. At twenty-three, I handed in my notice and sold my flat to fund a trip to the USA. For months, I travelled around the States, eventually settling in San Francisco where I became involved with the local spoken word community as well as writing and performing with a comedy troupe. A few years later, however, I became desirous of another change and moved to Los Angeles, which is where I met my husband.

In the mid-90s, I worked as a freelance writer for various websites but, out of necessity, found more gainful employment writing business plans for start-ups. When our twins were born, I chose to be a stay-at-home mom. I volunteered a lot at the school, coached soccer for years, and was on the board for a charity,

Juniors of Social Service. I am a three times cancer survivor.

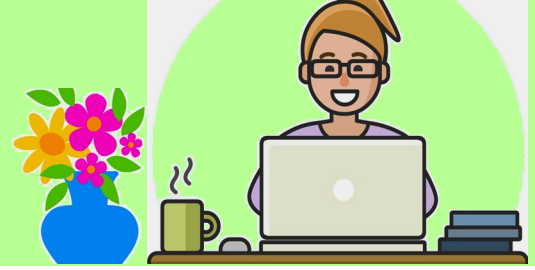
When it comes to reading, I particularly love the Russian authors. My favourite book is Anna Karenina. Other classic authors I admire are D.H. Lawrence, Hemmingway and Faulkner. Faulkner is the writer of whom I am the most jealous.

Almost every morning, I hike with my dogs at Paramount Ranch. For me, being in nature is a great way to start the day, clear my mind for writing and pursue my hobby as a novice birder.



# Have a Creative (and Profitable) Writing Summer

By Anat Golan Wenick



Summer is upon us and as you have already heard, the club has no meeting scheduled for July. However, that doesn't mean we are not thinking about all our fabulous members and how we would love to see your work published for all to enjoy. So roll up your sleeves, write your next masterpiece and look through the following list of resources that are actively seeking submissions:

## Website Publishing

As more and more people take a laptop or a tablet to read on during their summer vacation. Instead erecting a stack of books, explore a list of sites that might be interested in publishing your work. Other than a free outlet to publish your work, you can usually receive honest feedback from readers and make changes to your work before trying to earn money by self-publishing on Amazon and Barnes and Noble, or see what market there is out there for your material before sending it to literary agents. Sounds interesting? Head over to Self-publishing Hub (<https://selfpublishinghub.com/websites-to-share-your-writing/>) to learn the top seven websites to test your writing. And bonus, sites like WattPad are growing fast and getting into production (independently or as partnership with established entertainment companies). And you guessed it, they go to their own sites for material.

## Short Story Publishing

Have some great short stories you want to profit from? Then Kate Sullivan's article "Get Paid to Write Short Stories: 22 Places That Publish Short Fiction" (<https://www.tckpublishing.com/get-paid-to-write-short-stories/>) is where you will find some great links to magazines that pay to publish your work. A little more comprehensive list has been compiled by Farrah Daniel and Kelly Gurnett: "Where to Submit Short Stories: 30 Magazines and Websites That Want Your Work" (<https://thewritelife.com/where-to-submit-short-stories/>)

## Essay Publishing

If you heard the club's May speaker, Dr. Karen Gorback, on writing memoirs, and wish to try your hand at some personal essays, you may want to consult Farrah Daniel's and Lisa Rowan's "22 Web-

*(Continued on page 6)*

sites and Magazines That Want to Publish Your Personal Essay” (<https://thewritelife.com/personal-essay/>). It is a great way to test the market and see if there is an audience to your life story.

## **And The Kitchen Sink**

Hopefully you are one of those multi-talented artistic type, who writes fiction, non-fiction, long and short forms, poems, essays, etc. but also dabbles in photography, comics and other art mediums. No worries, we did not forget about you. Here are a few resources to get your work out there:

*Narrative* (<https://www.narrativemagazine.com/submit-your-work>) will allow you to submit different types of work. Categories include subjects like General Submissions, Fiction and Nonfiction Contest, with \$5,000 in awards, Annual Poetry Contest, with \$3,300 in awards, \$4,000 Narrative Prize—for new and emerging poets and writers, Story of the Week, Poem of the Week, iStory, iPoem, Six-Word Stories, Cartoons and Graphic Stories, Photography and Readers’ Narratives.

New to the publishing game? “The Top 10 Best Free Online Publishing Platforms For All New Writers” (<https://justpublishingadvice.com/top-7-free-publishing-platforms-for-new-writers/>) is a good place to start to learn on sites that will publish your articles, stories and photography work.

Love to write, but want someone else to come up with the prompts to get your writing juices flowing? Take a peek at *New Pages* Call for Submission (<https://www.newpages.com/classifieds/calls-for-submissions>) for a full list of topic ideas they are interested in.

Have some time on your hands and really want to get your work out there? *Cultured Vultures* lists no less than “50 Awesome Websites For Writing Submissions” (<https://culturedvultures.com/where-to-submit-writing/>) you can check out.



## **Summing up the suggested summer projects :**

Whether you just want to get your work out there, or you want to get paid for your hard work (or both), choose a list, research to ensure the publishing outlet fits your writing style and content and get cracking, cause summer days may be long, but they do end — and don’t forget to join our CWC-SFV August Zoom meeting!





## **CELEBRATING CALIFORNIA**

**By Norman Molesko**

God bless California.

Flags of our California Brown Bear  
wave over the largest Older American population  
in our United States of America.

We are the third largest state in square miles,  
from Del Norte and Modoc counties  
in the far northern regions, down to  
San Diego and Imperial counties in  
the far southern regions of California.

Our Golden State embraces  
spectacular ocean, desert and mountain  
sceneries and land formations.

Our Golden State includes farms  
and small towns and large cities,  
cultural and ethnic diversity and richness,  
highways, bridges, unique flora and fauna.

Considering everything in our world,  
California is a great state for positive aging  
for this Older American.

God bless California.

# Merrily, Ester Benjamin Shifren rhymes along ...



**Ester tickles the keys ...**

that she confides that she has continued a daily composition in 2021 and now has written 400 daily poems, that includes her rhymed life story. The rhyming memoir will be contained in a future book. Below is a recent entry ... and you can be sure there are many more to come.

## **Below: Two verses from Ester's new collection of daily poems:**

I used to teach some children—techniques of pianoforte.  
Their parents never had it, and that is why they bought  
The piano lessons for their kids, who didn't want to play,  
But Mom and Dad insisted, so kids practiced every day  
An art that didn't suit them—which talent they had none—  
And piano is so hard to learn, for them, most everyone!  
Hours of dedication—to practice imperfection.  
Listeners have no respite, no rest or disconnection!  
No sooner had they finished any most imperfect piece,  
They started on a new one—listeners never had release!  
And so, I then decided to try a new approach...  
I taught them to play "chopsticks!" They loved me as their coach!  
We played duets and pop songs. I wracked my brains for more  
To keep the pupils interested, playing what they would adore.  
Those changes kept them happy. At end of year they played  
Their pop songs in recitals, and were really glad they'd stayed.  
The parents were quite happy—and really most impressed!  
We'd saved the day with "chopsticks!" And that's the part that's best!

Last April, you read a *Valley Scribe* article about Ester Benjamin's Shifren's upcoming 2020 book titled: *Rhymes in Covid Times*. She told us, "During the early days of Corona isolation an idea began taking shape in my head ...I began recalling the daily poems by the poet Patience Strong. I felt inspired and empowered! I googled her, and got detailed information--the internet is wonderful!

"I suddenly felt compelled to start a daily rhyming regime--that I thought would surely end when I reached one hundred! ... Well, year one ended without my skipping a single day of rhyming, and sometimes I added bonus poems. I have an amazing Muse who almost dictates the lines! My daily social media posting has brought people, with whom I lost touch years ago, back into my life."

Ester's rhymes have proved so popular on social media,

Every day I write a rhyme—  
No, pressure—no specific time  
By which I have to pick up pen,  
No editor to tell me when  
Is the deadline I have to meet,  
Or which subject to rinse, repeat.  
Since I'm not ruled by anyone,  
All my writing has been fun.  
Sometimes my choices have been tough—  
When having fun was not enough.  
With certain thoughts that I expressed,  
I realized, as writers we are blessed.  
We get attention with the written word...  
It's read, re-read, repeated, heard.  
Remember, writers simply can't afford  
To forget—the pen is mightier than the sword!

**Ester Benjamin Shifren**



## Laguna's Shore

shoreline's fringe  
wide lacy arcs  
sand islands  
smoothed into wet mirrors

pewter sky  
overlaid with silver stripes  
miles of surf  
so tender  
gulls skid along easily  
before ascending

surfers like black sea birds  
balance on wave crests  
pose in silhouette  
before they tumble  
rolling like lost children  
in ocean swirls

sand bars  
long searching arms  
reach into the sea  
calmly with no motion  
in their tenacity

the sea  
wrinkled landscape  
silver satin spread over miles  
floats in waning light  
and covers a sleeping giant

Lillian Rodich



# Was It Really You, Daddy?

By Michael Edelstein

"He wanted to know if you'd be by,"

She said,

'Will you?'

Her question a request

And I wondered

That he had asked

Not that a father shouldn't ask

But that habit

Had eluded him

And he had never asked before

Even in the quiet nights

Of lonely riding

He would never say he cared

"If you want to, come,"

He'd say

As if

I might prove

An intrusion in his silence

(Or was that where

The problem really lay?)

"If you want to come ..."

All right."

And I'd trail, puppy fashion

In his footsteps

To the waiting car

Seated

I would watch him

Stare at the street's horizon

In the orange glow

Of the radio dial

Through the smoke

Of a Lucky Strike

In the sealed auto

We would listen

Simultaneously

To the Lone Ranger

Or the Green Hornet

Fraternal twins

Wrapped in separate amnions

Within the same rolling womb

The years shaped my query

And the ache of filial love

Uncertain, unanswered

Did he really tell her?

My father

Unable to tell me?

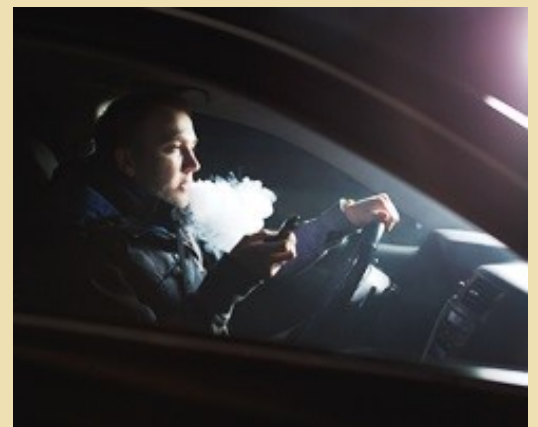
Or had she spun it herself,

"Of course he loves you,"

So that I would

Go with him

On that last ride?



# Two Stories Written During the June 5th Prompt Exercise

**Prompt: What was the strangest thing you've ever seen in public?**

## Their Last Resort

by Anne Hansell



The most bizarre thing I've ever seen was in an old medieval church, somewhere in England.

I traveled to Europe five times during the 1970's and 1980's. I attended summer school in the 1980's at the University of London. My fellow students and I toured many medieval cathedrals, historical places and the like.

One summer day in 1980's, I went with my school group to see a very old medieval church. Inside, we saw an array of coffins resting on thick railings of high balconies, on the floor and other places. I saw a decaying skeleton inside a niche somewhere in a wall. Speaking through our university's American sign language interpreters, our tour guide explained that all these coffins dated far back to early Middle Ages. In those days, people believed that if they entered that church and prayed to one of these coffins, they'd get answers to their problems.

Today, the coffins are popular tourist attractions.

**Prompt: Write a story about an ex-superhero and a surprise party**

## Neighborhood Watch

by Pat Avery

He used to be a superhero. He wore a cape, did super deeds such as saving small animals, walking elderly folks across the street and keeping watch on the neighborhood. Then his neighbors started complaining about his cape and his grabbing their pets to save them from imagined threats. The police told him no more.

He hunkered down in his small cottage, watched endless hours of television in sweatpants and stopped shaving. The blinds on his windows were down so that he would not be tempted to intervene in events outside his door. Groceries were delivered, the mailman put mail through the slot and he was able to mail-order anything else he might need. Why venture forth when there was no role for him? His neighbors had spoken.

Slowly the neighborhood went to pot without his night and day surveillance. Litter decorated the street, coyotes picked off pets, graffiti popped up on fences and the el-

derly were left without a way to cross to the other side.

His neighbors met secretly and agreed that having an odd caped man was better than the current state of affairs. One morning he awoke to a loud pounding. Blurry eyed, he stood at his door, stunned. Sunlight blinded him and unexpected noises disoriented him.

There were shouts, balloons and cheers! Surprise – we need you! We miss you! Please come back!

That afternoon he washed and pressed his cape. In his superhero attire he strode down the street to greetings and high fives.

Within days peace returned to the neighborhood.





# Scenes From Bob's Two Remarkable Years

The following caricature is approved and apparently enjoyed by ocean swimmer and former CWC-SFV Prez, Bob Okowitz.

July, 2019: Bob headed for the beach with his ocean swimming posse.



Let's go over there!



Yahoo!! Honey! Can't believe my luck! I scored toilet paper this time!

July, 2020: Bob stocked up at Costco for his family's sheltering-in-place needs..



July 2021: Bob and his pals take their first ocean swimming trip in 21 months.

Hey, there's the Dolphin Resort!

Quick! Get out your VAX cards.



Buy my beach book!



Kathy Highcove



## OFFICERS

**Karen Gorback, Ph.D.**

**President  
Speaker Chair  
Program Chair**

**Monte Swann**

**Vice President  
Zoom Room Host**

**Anat Golan  
Treasurer**

**Heather Bradshaw  
Secretary**

## BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS

**Bob Okowitz Ph.D.  
Central Board Representative  
Former SFV President**

**Pat Avery**

**Membership Chair  
Critique Group Coordinator  
CWC SoCal Representative**

**Kathy Highcove  
Editor of *The Valley Scribe***

**Michael Rains  
CWC-SFV Webmaster**

## CWC-SFV CRITIQUE GROUPS

Membership in one or more critique groups is open to active members of the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club, subject to group size limitations. Each group has established general expectations for submissions and critique etiquette. Currently most groups are meeting via Zoom. Presently active groups are as follows:

### **Tuesday Poetry Critique Group**

Meetings held once a month on the 2nd Tuesday from 10:30 AM until 3 PM. Poetry only.

### **Wednesday Daytime Critique Group**

Meetings held 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 11:30 to 3 PM. Long and short fiction, memoirs and poetry.

### **Friday Daytime Critique Group**

Meetings held on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 1 to 4 PM. All genres except poetry.

### **Saturday Long Fiction Critique Group has changed days.**

This group now Zoom meets on Tuesdays, once a month, from 1 to 4 PM. Focus is on long fiction.

### **Saturday Critique Group**

.Meetings held 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 10 AM to 1 PM. Long and short fiction, memoirs and poetry.



## Our meeting place:

**The Saban Center for Health and Wellness**

## Our official location:

**Motion Picture &  
Television Fund Campus  
23388 Mulholland Drive  
Woodland Hills, 91364**

