



The Valley Scribe



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

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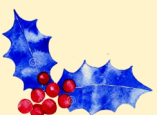
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INFORMATION



Stoker on Stoker: The Mysteries Behind the Writing of Dracula

By Heather Bradshaw, CWC-SFV Speaker Chair

The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is pleased to welcome bestselling author Dacre Stoker as the keynote speaker on Saturday December 3rd at 1:00 pm via Zoom, with a presentation titled "Stoker on Stoker: The Mysteries Behind the Writing of Dracula."

Dacre Stoker is the great grand-nephew of Bram Stoker and the international best-selling co-author of *Dracula the Un-Dead*, the official Stoker family endorsed sequel to *Dracula*. Dacre is also the co-editor (with Elizabeth Miller) of *The Lost Journal of Bram Stoker: The Dublin Years*. Released in October of 2018, *Dracul*, a prequel to *Dracula*, co-authored with JD Barker, was the UK's # 1 Bestselling Hardcover Novel in Horror and Supernatural in 2018, and a top 5 finalist by the Horror Writers Association for the Bram Stoker Award® for Superior Achievement in a Novel. Film rights for *Dracul* have been optioned by Paramount Studios.

Dacre's recent work includes *Dracula's Bedlam* (2021) with Chris McAuley and John Peel and *The Virgins Embrace* (2021) with Chris McAuley, a graphic novel adaptation of Bram Stoker's short story *The Squaw* (1893). Additionally, short stories with Leverett Butts, *Last Days*, appeared in *Weird Tales Magazine* January 2021, *The Tired Captain*, featured in *FX Sherlock Holmes Anthology*, and *Enter the Dragon* in *Classic Monsters Unleashed Anthology* January 2022 and upcoming *The Lost Warrior*, in *Dracula UnFanged Anthology* coming out in the Fall of 2022. Dacre has consulted and appeared in many recent film documentaries about vampires in literature and popular culture.



He hosts tours to the U.K. to visit places where Bram Stoker lived, was educated, worked, researched, and wrote *Dracula*. He also leads groups to Transylvania to explore both the life and times of the historic Vlad Dracula III and also the locations where Bram Stoker set his famous novel.

Dacre Stoker's compelling and informative Keynote presentation weaves together

the details of *Dracula's* history with Stoker family lore, and Bram Stoker's life in Dublin and London, then separates fact from popular fiction, revealing the truth about all things Stoker and *Dracula*. *Stoker on Stoker* has fascinated audiences around the world, exploring the issues behind the mysteries that have baffled *Dracula* scholars and fans since the book's publication in 1897.

Illustrated with Dacre's collection of never before published, and seldom-seen historic images, *Stoker on Stoker* is a glimpse behind the scenes of the life and the writing of one of the least known authors and one of the world's most famous books.

This presentation will be from 60-80 minutes with a Q & A to follow, and will not be recorded.

Please note that all members of the CWC-SFV will receive a Zoom invitation to this presentation. Members of other CWC branches and guests should contact VP/Zoom host Pat Avery by noon on Dec. 2nd at cwcsanfernandovalley@gmail.com for an invitation to register for this event. We regret we cannot accommodate late requests.

Editorial: Zooming Along

As we come to the end of 2022, let's briefly review our club's past twelve months. As in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the CWC-SFV must continue to meet in our Zoom room. We are still "seeing" each other on the first Saturday in each month. We share our club news and announcements with ease, but we're unable to chat one-on-one and share our lives and experiences face-to-face.



Understandably, remote gatherings have been a challenge to our group's esprit de corps. In 2020, our Board was confident that we would be back in the Saban Room in a few months. And as the months have passed, members have often asked Board members when we would be able to return to the MPTF. Truth be told, we're not sure and we also feel some frustration at continuing to meet in the Zoom room. But let's stop and consider the advantages of Zooming and the positive outcomes of our current situation.

We know that other CWC branches have happily returned to their pre-pandemic in-person meetings, but, my friends, our Saban meeting room is special. It's part of Motion Picture and Television Fund, a campus that contains both residence and hospital facilities for film and television industry retirees. Like the healthy residents of the MPTF, CWC-SFV members must be mindful of the residents who might easily contract COVID or other viruses from visitors.



Our monthly speakers, thanks to the efforts of Karen Gorback in 2020-22 and our 2022-2023 Speaker Chair, Heather Bradshaw, have given us many savvy writer, marketing and publishing tips. Through the months, our Gallery members have avidly taken notes and signaled questions for our guest writers. And after the meetings, many members have gone online to check out the new info or, learn more about the speaker, and, as I can attest, order a book written by a visiting author.

Another big benefit—members who have moved far away from Los Angeles, SFV members who are unable to physically attend a meeting and CWC members who wanted to check out our guest speakers – were able to join us with a just a couple clicks of their mouse.

Finally, a fourth benefit: Board members have learned how to Zoom! The significance of our new tech abilities? When the CWC-SFV returns to the Saban Room, anyone, anywhere, will still be able to Zoom and enjoy hybrid meetings. A camera will be trained on all our proceedings.



I look forward to seeing my SFV friends and fellow writers, once more, in our Zoom Gallery at our December 3, 2022 meeting. And stay tuned, because the CWC-SFV will continue to Zoom along in 2023. But remember, our club's face to face meetings will return in the near future. CWC-SFV Board members are working with MPTF to reinstate in-person meetings as soon as possible.

Write on! Kathy Highcove,



The Value of Volunteerism

By Bob Isbill, CWC Vice President
Director of Publicity and Public Relations

Experts generally agree that the best way to succeed is to surround yourself with great people. How best can we— member of the CWC State Board —do that?

You may think you know someone at the office (whatever “office” may mean in this context) or in your branch of the California Writers Club. Whether you are considering forming a business partnership, developing a professional project, or just contemplating the thought of hanging out together more often, one way to find out more about people is to work with them. Immersing yourself in a temporary project can reveal flaws as well as talents you otherwise would never encounter in a relationship.

The simple act of working together to complete a goal can be beneficial in many ways. We bond (or not) in a more meaningful way with the mutual joy of accomplishment. When I have related with others to achieve something together, I have been astounded several times to discover they knew something or knew how to do something that I otherwise would never would have been aware. Discovering the abilities of others is just one byproduct of volunteering. Another obvious reason to “show up” is for our own personal development. It is a safe way to explore your own abilities. Giving time to do something for the general good of a project can be fulfilling in many ways.

I remember a dozen years ago when our High Desert CWC had enormous growth. We went from 14 to 100 members in 26 months. The reasons? Determination not to fail, but to excel was one reason. Another was not caring about who got the credit. Another key factor was establishing to visitors that we were looking for members, not dues payers. We expected them to contribute to our growth and achievement. It was something of a rite of passage. Newbies were expected to join in our success story by sharing their talents and abilities. The outcome was outstanding relationship building. Even today, years later, the close bonding that took place through massive volunteering is present now. Friendships formed are solid and growing stronger. And our branch is still thriving.

One of the things I love about the CWC is the concept of Jack London Awards. They are something of a barometer of how well a branch is doing. For example, if there is a year where no Jack London is given, it is a red flag that either nobody is doing anything or that people are doing a lot without recognition. The Jack London is awarded only once per lifetime, but have you noticed that JL Award winners just keep doing exceptional things over and over again? I recently contacted one of our former members who was a Jack London Award winner. I was not surprised to learn that years later, while working for an internationally famous company, she has been awarded that organization’s equivalent to our Jack London Award. She knows the value of volunteering and it has paid off all her life.

I find myself writing this on the anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, who is famous for his challenge, “Ask not what your country can do for you but ask what you can do for your country.”

Please find a need in your branch and fill it. You will discover the value of volunteerism.



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 for membership information and single lecture admission prices. This series is free for CWC-SFV members.

CWC-SFV SPEAKERS 2023

ANGIE CHATMAN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7TH 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)

“The First Drafts Club.”

As with any product, your story needs beta testing. Having a carefully chosen critique group is necessary to iron out any wrinkles in your text. Pushcart prize nominated writer and WEBBY award winning storyteller, Angie Chatman, will discuss the criteria to use so that you can get help to polish your piece for publication.

LAURA JENSEN WALKER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)

“Writing by the Seat of my Pants: From Memoir to Mysteries.”

A Self-described ‘pantser’, Agatha-nominated and bestselling Amazon author, Laura Jensen Walker, will share her journey (including mistakes) of writing memoirs and mysteries by the seat of her pants. Visit laurajensenwalker.com for more information on this sought-after speaker and her work.

MANDY JACKSON-BEVERLY

SATURDAY, MARCH 4TH 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)

“Getting Your Book Published in the Modern World.”

This workshop by author, teacher and podcast host, Mandy Jackson-Beverly, explores traditional, hybrid, and independent (self) publishing and gives you the knowledge you need to decide which style works best for you and your books. Visit mandyjacksonbeverly.com for more info on this popular speaker.

LUZMARIA ESPINOSA

SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST 2023 @ 1PM (INPERSON / HYBRID IF AVAILABLE)

“POETRY: A Method of Reflection, Reconsideration, and Revision of Your Thoughts, Beliefs, and Actions.”

Ventura County’s Poet Laureate, Luzmaria Espinosa, will read some of her poetry and share how her own life experiences, culture and community activism have shaped her work.

ADAM PLANTINGA

SATURDAY, MAY 5TH 2023 @ 1PM

“Writing Realistic Police Procedures.”

Writing a crime novel? 21-year police veteran and Agatha-nominated author Sgt. Adam Plantinga will talk about various aspects of real-life police work crucial to writing a crime-related novel or screenplay.

Visit adamplantinga.com for more information on Adam and his work.

MYTH IS A VIVID VISCERAL TELLING OF TRUTH

A Review by Elaine Mura

On 11/5/22, CWC was fortunate to have Vincent Virom Coppola, a novelist, screen writer, and philosopher extraordinaire, as guest speaker. Vincent spoke on “The Power of Myth in Story Telling.”

He began his discussion by clarifying that he does not use myth in its colloquial sense, which defines myth as a tall tale which is untrue, a fantasy, but rather as a story about a truth which moves us, the telling of a truth about the human condition within a story full of passion and life. Vincent recounted some of the history of story-telling beginning with “Gilgamesh,” the oldest story we are aware of, which is about love and loss. When Gilgamesh begs the gods to bring his dead friend back to life, he is told that “You are mortal and will die.” Quite a rational if unwelcome message for the reader.

Then there is “Mahabharata,” the longest poem ever written. When the holiest man in India goes to Brahma at the end of his life, he is told that he may enter Paradise, but not his faithful dog. His refusal to enter Paradise and leave his beloved pet behind passes “the Final Test;” and both are admitted into Paradise – for love is essential to all. Vincent emphasized again that myth brings out key factors in the human condition.

Vincent also cited Sophocles’ trilogy about Oedipus, which asks whether, considering Oedipus’ suffering, it would be better to never have been born. After all, when Oedipus insists on finding out the truth, he discovers that he murdered his father and married his mother. The truth shatters him, and he blinds himself and leaves his life behind. Vincent also mentioned Homer’s “Iliad” and “Odyssey,” with an emphasis on his favorite “Odyssey,” the traveler who must face years of impossible tasks in order to return home.

Vincent then delved into how stage and films exhibit mythic drama, focusing on characters: “the flesh and blood of drama...who move us...capture the essence of each with his own specific voice.” In “Streetcar Named Desire,” main character Stanley holds everything in, is suspicious of others, and is not eloquent. He must yell simple epithets at others because he lacks the ability to use words effectively: “His soul decimates Blanche, who has ‘always

relied on the kindness of strangers.” In “A Long Day’s Journey into Night,” Tennessee Williams studies the difference between illusion and reality, as does Arthur

Miller in “Death of a Salesman.” In “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Wolf,” “a great myth maker shatters you...there’s a sense of transcendence, catharsis... great writing stays with us...you have to talk about great art.”

Our guest speaker clearly enjoyed analyzing “The Godfather,” which pits family values against success. He noted that “The Godfather” was written as a Greek tragedy “with Italian opera overtones.” The story ends when the winner “has all the power but no love.” Vincent appeared to enjoy writing about the Mafia, citing his friendship with “Joe Beans...he really compartmentalized his life...I had lunch with him and found him to be well read and fascinating...I liked the guy...later, I found out he was the head of Murder Inc.” He also recounted his impressions of “the real Godfather... he was very sophisticated...the Mafia had strict rules and regulations...for example, you couldn’t kill civilians...it was a unique culture.

Towards the end of the presentation, Vincent spoke about his personal background: “I always loved theater...when I saw Richard Burton doing ‘Hamlet,’ I saw the best interpretation of ‘To be or not to be’ I ever saw...he captured Hamlet in that soliloquy.” In a message to all writers, he added, “To be a writer is an extraordinary thing.” He also lamented that, very often in today’s world, “the audience has not been prepared for critical thinking... even ten years ago, they could have met the challenge.” Given that striking change, he encouraged the study of liberal arts.

When asked if he preferred fact or fiction, he quickly acknowledged, “I prefer the freedom of fiction...with fact, you have to demonstrate and prove what you say...with fiction, you have latitude...you can make things happen.” He strongly urged writers “to put aside fear when writing... writing should be exciting...but also philosophic and literary.”

Currently, Vincent continues to write screenplays and novels. His passion has not dimmed over the years.



Gilgamesh asked:

Can my dog enter heaven?



Hamlet pondered:

***To be or not to be?
That is the question.***



A Writer's (Holiday) Present is Truly a Gift

By Anat Golan-Wenick

"Oh, the weather outside is frightful" which is exactly what a writer needs to stay inside and... well... write. But wouldn't it be much nicer to write, knowing that you already took care of all your fellow writers' gifts for this coming holiday season? So let's explore fun stocking stuffers and under-the-tree surprises for those who enjoy the art of writing.

Let's start with the obvious. Writers love to write. We can sit hours in front of the computer just conjuring words on page. And when one is in the zone, they may not wish to get up to warm that cup of coffee they made hours ago. So why not invest in an Ember Temperature Control Smart Mug that can keep your beverage at a designated temperature?



Ember Ceramic Smart Mugs

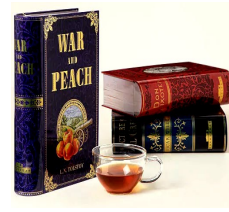
Though not on the cheap side (price range about \$125-150), they come in a variety of colors with both regular and travel types available. Just head to the [Ember website](#) or find them on Amazon.

Let's face it, after a few hours of writing, a writer can sure use a nice neck massage. But if the go-to-person is busy and no volunteers are around to land their fingers, at about \$50 on Amazon, the [Nekteck Shiatsu Neck and Back Massager with Soothing Heat, Electric Deep Tissue 3D Kneading Massage Pillow](#) can be the next best thing.



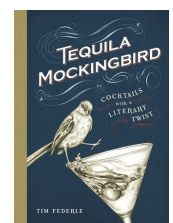
Nekteck Shiatsu Massager

Ahhhhhhh, those cold, rainy winter nights of writing just beg for a nice hot cup of tea. Luckily, there's quite a few for the author to choose from. There's War and Peach, Matcha Do About Nothing, Oliver Lemon Twist and more. Seek them out on the [Uncommon Goods website](#). The different sizes cost about \$35-39, but the inspiration they may give is priceless.



Uncommon Goods

If you need your tea with that little something, something extra, pair your gift with "[Tequila Mockingbird: Cocktails with a Literary Twist](#)" by Tim Federle. At about \$8 for the hardcover, it's cheaper than many of the cocktails you get in a bar, and this way, you don't even have to leave your house.



Tequila Mockingbird Cocktails

Yes, we have featured lap desks before, but the [HUANUO Laptop Desk](#) contains a cushioned pillow and a very convenient place for the phone. And though you may not want to have it around for distractions purposes, you'll need it to text a Thank You note to the person who gave you this present. After all, they did pay around \$45 for the one that fits 15.6 inches laptop and about \$50 for the [larger version](#) that can hold a 17 inches screen.



Huanuo Laptop Desk



Adjustable Lay Desk

If the writer on your list (or you – we don't judge), need a little more versatility, for about \$40, Huanuo also makes the [Adjustable Lap Desk](#) that comes with 6 Adjustable Angles, Detachable Mouse Pad, and Dual Cushions.



Book Nook Reading Valet

So you got a stand for your laptop, but a big part of writing is reading. And gosh-dang-it, you just got comfy in your recliner with a nice cup of War and Peach tea, ready to find out who the murderer is in that book you were reading when.... The phone or doorbell rings. Well, if you want to make sure all your stuff stays in one place while you attend to other matters, invest \$48.00 on this cute [Book Nook Reading Valet from Uncommon Goods](#)



And now that we've rested, it's back to writing. Yes, we featured cool typewriters before, but if you find it hard to concentrate on just writing because your eyes wander all over the screen (when using computers), or the page (when using typewriter), then [The Smart Typewriter](#) on Freewrite website, might be the way to go. Hey, if it does what it says on the website, it can eliminate "distraction – or temptation – of browsers, email, or notifications." Unfortunately, cool can be expensive and at \$649.00, this typewriter is no different.



The Smart Typewriter

Love the idea of the less-distractions typewriter, but you also do a lot of traveling? Well, Freewrite has a solution for that as well. Meet [the Traveler](#). Still on the high-budget side at \$499.00.



The Traveler

And what's a cool typewriter without a cool case to carry it around in? If you're going to invest a few hundred dollars on a typewriter, why not spend \$149.00 more and get the [Smart Typewriter Attaché Case](#)



Smart Typewriter Case

Want to inspire the young storytellers in your family? Why not invest about \$50 in a [Dixit Board Game](#); a Storytelling Game for Kids (and Adults – as we said before, we don't judge). **Dixit** is a French card game using a card deck illustrated with dreamlike images. Players select cards that match a title suggested by the "storyteller", and try to guess which card the "storyteller" selected.



Dixit Board Game

Of course, if the writer's goal is to stay away from the cell phone so they can write peacefully (or if they just need a good excuse not to talk to anyone – no judgment here), at around \$30 you can get the Cell Phone Lock Box with Timer, [Portable Phone Lock Box](#) that fits Android, Samsung, Google and iPhone— the perfect present for parents who need to take the phone away from their kids for some time.

[Storyworth.com](#) knows that everyone has a story worth sharing. And if you want to share more than a game with your children, or just want to put your stories in a nice keepsake that makes for a personal gift, consider heading to their website. The process is simple and costs \$99.00, but the memories can last for a lifetime.

Let's face it, sitting and writing for hours is not great for your back, which is exactly the reason to invest about \$70-75 in this [Cushion Lab Patented Pressure Relief Seat Cushion](#), designed for long sitting hours.

If you have a bigger comfort item in mind, and if you have the big bucks to spend, you can always opt for the [X-Chair](#). Ranging from about \$750 to \$2,000 (depending on model, color and seller), these chairs are sure to keep writers comfortably seated at their desks. And don't worry, savvy shoppers, the company offers an installment payment option.



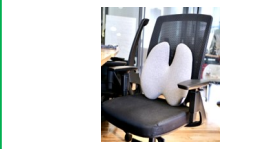
Portable Phone Lock Box

Step 1: Once a week, ask the child a question.

Step 2: The child emails to you a reply.

Step 3: After a year, all of the stories are published together in a bound book.

Stoneworth Story Books



Cushion Lab Pressure Cushion



The X-Chair



Portable Writing Box



Apple Magic Keyboard



Prevention by Ottlite



CWC-SFV shopper Anat Golan-Wenick

Know a writer who doesn't have ample space to write? Consider gifting them the [Portable Writing Box](#). At \$149.00 it's a sturdy and elegant wood box with designated spaces for various writing tools.

Writing on an iPad but want the convenience of a keyboard? Willing to spend about \$300? Then the [Apple Magic Keyboard for iPad](#) is just the thing for you. It's not just magnetic, it doubles as a protective case Apple Magic Keyboard for iPad too .

Many writers love writing at night, when all is quiet and everyone else has gone to sleep. For around \$60 at Amazon you can get them [Prevention by OttLite](#). A LED Task Adjustable Lamp with Digital Display, 3 Color Modes and USB Charging that is backed by The Good Housekeeping Seal. Not a cheap present, but how can you put a price on maintain good eyesight?

And just in case you're wondering what we, CWC-SFV club members, want for the holidays: A kind word and referral of a fellow writer to our club will make our year. We promise, we've been very good writers in 2022!

SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME

This editor is always interested in the creative work I receive, every month, from CWC-SFV members. As you may have noted, every issue has a selection of work from our group. I publish short stories, fiction or non-fiction, poetry, memoirs, announcements and your kudos when you've self-published or had work accepted by a publication. I also welcome announcements and material from Stat CWC editors and officers.

However, I do have criteria for the submissions. First of all, a story should not take up more than two pages in our newsletter. How to know if your piece is too long? After you have finished editing the composition, send it to me and I can make an assessment. And BTW. I appreciate seasonal submissions ... like winter holiday stories in the winter and summer themed topics when temps are high.

Speaking of editing, if you are in a critique group or know someone who's a very good copy editor, please have your work proofed before sending it to me. Few writers can edit their own work, including this editor! Every writer needs a friend, relative or associate who has a sharp eye for errors and typos. I could not publish this newsletter without the help of several proofers.

I finish with a writers' prompt for the January issue: did the pandemic shutdown have any positive outcomes for you or your family? Did you develop new skills, hobbies, interests or note surprising changes in your life after several weeks of social isolation? If you have a brief comment or a few paragraphs on this topic, please sent them to me at kghighcove@gmail.com until January 21 in the New Year.

Kathy Highcove, *The Valley Scribe* editor

Clyde's Review – The Story of a Sublime Sandwich

By Elaine L. Mura

Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine



From L to R: Nedra Snipes, Garrett Young, Reza Salazar and Kevin Kenerly in the West Coast premiere of "Clyde's" at Center Theatre Group / Mark Taper Forum November 16 through December 18, 2022. Photo by Craig Schwartz Photography

Lynn Notage is a well-known living playwright who has already earned two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama (2009 for "Ruined" and 2017 for "Sweat"). Notage focuses on the working class black experience, a theme which she continues in CLYDE'S, Mark Taper Forum's 2022 dramatic offering. CLYDE'S first opened on Broadway in 2021 and won a fair share of awards, including a Tony Award in 2022 for outstanding featured actor and three Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding set design, outstanding costume design, and outstanding lighting design.

Clyde's is a truck stop sandwich shop – whose long lines and eager clientele have deemed the sandwiches sublime. But that is only part of the story. Clyde's is also owned by and staffed with ex-convicts and parolees, a sort of "last chance" for those who have reached the end of the line. Clyde is actually a shapely and vibrant black woman who manages her business

with a brutal power reminiscent of the overseer during the old plantation days. After all, where can these sandwich-makers go if they fail at Clyde's? And the world can be a very cold and unforgiving place for these working class undereducated folks.

But somehow making sandwiches has become an art – and a dream – for the lost souls who work there, including Montrellous (Kevin Kenerly), Letitia (Nedra Snipes), Rafael (Reza Salazar), and Jason (Garrett Young), the tatted-up newbie in the joint. For them, Clyde's is not only a job, but a calling which gives them pride in their accomplishments as each works on designing the perfect sandwich – or is it the perfect life? Even if Clyde is a devilish person who works hard at tearing down their newly-crafted self-esteem, they persist in the indomitable way that we've all been raised to believe is part of our essential makeup. Alternating between excitement and hopelessness, pride and nothingness, these branded denizens from hell try to create their own heaven.

Cleverly helmed of Director Kate Whoriskey, CLYDE'S manages to slip humor inside tragedy and laughs inside failure while maintaining a compassionate perception of these downtrodden individuals who just won't stay down. The performers each have a unique role in the tale which gives them time to shine and let their acting chops flow. Kudos to Perry (Clyde), the person you love to hate.

The production team does a bang-up job of creating an environment suitable to the



Tamberla Perry and Garrett Young – Photo by Craig Schwartz Photography

often metaphorical story. Takeshi Kata's scenic design sets the stage, while Jennifer Moeller's costumes are just right to define each character. Christopher Akerlind's lighting and Justin Ellington's sound are reminiscent of the gaudy – like crackling bright neon signs often found atop truck stops – and besides add a sort of topsy-turvy element to the goings-on in Clyde's kitchen.

CLYDE'S is an entertaining, often comic perspective on lives existing in the underbelly of our culture. It is also highly allegorical, telling its story in different layers which must slowly be pulled away in expose the core. It is a fascinating peek at what life may look like to the discarded in our society – but it also demonstrates that there may be a positive side to almost anything if we only seek it out. And remember that you're not out until you give up.

CLYDE'S runs through December 18, 2022, with performances at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturdays, and at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays (no 2 p.m. performance on 11/19/22). The Mark



Nedra Snipes, Reza Salazar (center) and Garrett Young – Photo by Craig Schwartz Photography

Taper Forum is located at the Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tickets range from \$35 to \$120. For information and reservations, call 213-628-2772 or go [online](#).



The mailman fears me. It is that time of the year when I once again assume the undisputed title of Catalog Queen of Tarzana. Every day my sad, bulging mailbox, stuffed to the gunwales, disgorges reams of unsolicited suggestions and recommendations that will make my holiday gift buying creative and effortless. I can choose from page after page of ideas for every person on my list. Gifts for her, for him,

for both, for kids, for people we love, for people we don't particularly like, unisex, ethnic, religious, naughty, ad infinitum. Tsk. Such a waste, because most of these colorful catalogs will go straight to my blue recycle bin. Why, you may ask?

For starters, I no longer have a gift list, per se. As a "person of a certain age" I find myself less interested in acquiring or accumulating new things, and more intent upon getting rid of anything and everything that is no longer of any use or has no sentimental value. And I cannot help but think that most of my friends of that certain age share these feelings, even though some are loathe to acknowledge the age definition and do not appreciate being reminded of it. That said, care and consideration should be exercised in selecting their presents, focusing on practical, useful, and discreetly age-appropriate items. Following are a few suggestions, certainly not all-inclusive.

For the ladies, you might try putting together your own personalized gift basket. Selected beauty products are always welcome but avoid any age-defining labels, such as "BODY LOTION FOR MATURE SKIN". What, pray tell, is "mature skin"? Is there also such a thing as "immature skin"? I believe we used to call that "acne". Another no-no is that popular come-on, "Age Defying". "AGE DEFYING BODY WASH", for example, evidently washes away unsightly wrinkles, sags and folds with a few swipes of the loofa. "AGE DEFYING SHAMPOO" promises to fortify, amplify, stimulate and nourish each and every follicle for healthy hair from root to tip. And despite some positive reviews, I would stay away from this one: "AGE DEFYING DARK SPOT CORRECTOR". There have been some very unpleasant results when applied to a genuine freckle or two.

In all honesty, one or two catalogs do have some enticing suggestions for sports-minded persons of a certain age. For the male gender, here's a unique little stocking stuffer from the Arnold Palmer generation: "AGE DEFYING GOLF'S INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO". This exclusive visual course touts the following:

IF YOU ARE A GOLFER OVER 50, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO:

- Drive the ball **Further** than you did 10 years ago!
- Make **Clean, Consistent** contact every time!
- Finally **Outplay** that pesky son-in-law!
- Dominate your foursome!
- Feel **Young** on the golf course again!

And there are even tempting teasers for the female golfer:

- Outdrive** and **Outplay** those guys with unwanted golf tips!
- Putt for more **Birdies** by hitting greens!
- Feel the **Gratification** of really hammering the *driver!*
(I think that's a golf club, not the Uber guy)
- Finally **Break** into the 90's or even 80's!
(I'm not sure if this refers to the golf score or my age)

Well-meaning friends also love to inundate us of a certain age with gifts that fall into the category of gadgets and gizmos. Many of these are so-called self-help items, designed to make us navigate and enjoy our remaining years to the fullest. There are dozens of catalogs with tantalizing possibilities:

There are many choices for both men and women. How about "VIBRATING ARTHRITIS GLOVES"? Small motors around the finger joints increase circulation and warm aching hands. Or you may want to consider battery-powered HEATED SOCKS with three heat levels to warm the tootsies for up to ten hours! And here's a personal favorite to ponder: "THE ULTIMATE FAT FREEZER". Simply apply the fat freezer pads onto problem areas (thighs, waist, back and buttocks) and select a 30-or 60-minute session. The unit will destroy and dissolve those annoying fat cells and eliminate them from your body. They don't say where they exit or where they go. Hopefully they don't relocate in some other area

I would exercise caution before investing in any of those wondrous life-enhancing devices. Bear in mind that the recipients will most likely be in the "de-clutter" stages rather than the "clutter" stages of their lives. Chances are your well-intentioned gadgets and gizmos will go straight to garage sales

Stay away from gifts of gourmet edibles--candies, nuts, cookies, cheese, crackers, sausages and exotic oils and vinegars. How could you know, for example, someone has gone vegan since last year? Or gluten-free? And do you really think anyone is hoping for another jar of those tasty fig preserves from the Azores? A tin of peanut brittle or a bag of saltwater taffy for an octogenarian? Sadistic!

But when you absolutely run out of ideas and patience, there's always the little plastic gift card. Ah, the decisions. Who gets Target and who gets Nordstrom? How much do we load on them? Do these people know each other? Might they talk, do you think? Risky business. And should you have known that the See's Candies card was going to a diabetic? However, we of a certain age are no longer troubled by these dilemmas. Our wants and needs are not the same as they were in the past (read: Victoria's Secret). We dream of things like pharmacy gift cards, perhaps from Walgreen's, CVS or Rite Aide. They could be loaded for new prescriptions or 30, 60 or 90-day refills. How special would that be?

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY SHOPPING!

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Review – The Roots of Prejudice

Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine

By Elaine L. Mura

When the controversial film GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER was released in December 1967, only six months had elapsed since miscegenation was illegal in 17 Southern states. The movie starred Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn and was the first romantic comedy/drama produced and directed by famed Stanley Kramer. Surprisingly, the film became an overnight sensation – even in the South – and won Oscars for William Rose for Best Original Screenplay and Katherine Hepburn for Best Actress – amid multiple nominations in the U.S. and internationally. This was to be the last film role for Tracy, who died only 17 days after the motion picture was released.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER puts a progressive white couple on the spot when their daughter unexpectedly shows up at her parents' home with her fiancé, a world-renowned, brilliant, and relatively conservative older widowed physician – who just happens to be black. Blindsided by the couple's unexpected arrival and whirlwind ten-day courtship – and by Dr. John Prentice (Marc Antonio Pritchett), whose darker complexion remains at the forefront of their thoughts – newspaper publisher Matt Drayton (Larry Eisenberg) and his wife Christina (Diana Angelina) find that their liberal views are put to the test. The basic question? Whether their lifelong and open-minded opinions about race will transfer to the real-life dilemma posed by their daughter Joanna (Abigail Stewart) and her future husband. After all, as Matt Drayton so casually opines, there's a difference between accepting blacks in general and his daughter's decision to marry a black man. The other question to consider, for that matter, is how the good doctor's parents will deal with the couple's imminent marriage. Clearly, John Prentice Sr. (Frederick Dawson) and his wife Mary (Patricia A. Lewis), parents of the prospective groom, have their own strong feelings about the proposed merger. Even the Drayton's black maid Tillie (Crystal Yvonne Jackson), who Joanna was sure would be her strongest ally and advocate, throws in her own suspicious two-cents about John's motives.



Marc Antonio Pritchett and Frederick Dawson – Photo



David Hunt Stafford, Crystal Jackson, Marc Antonio Pritchett, Patricia A. Lewis, Abigail Stewart, Frederick Dawson, Diana Angelina, and Larry Eisenberg – Photo by Damien Tejada-Benitez

Yvonne Jackson), absolutely perfect as the suspicious “Down South” black maid, and the Prentices Sr. (Frederick Dawson and Patricia A. Lewis), who remind us that prejudice may work both ways. This is a tale with no easy answers – and the performers leave space for the audience to grapple with the difficult issues. Insight and humor co-exist and lend this story the thought and intensity it deserves. Congratulations are also in order for the creative team. Jeff G. Rack's scenic design brings us all back to the 1960s, as do Derrick McDaniel's lighting, Nick Foran's sound, and Michael Mullen's costumes. Songs of the era will evoke long-forgotten memories for older audience members. Remember the Beatles' hits of the 60s?



Marc Antonio Pritchett and Crystal Jackson – Photo by Damien Tejada-Benit

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER is as timely today as it was over 50 years ago. Today's society is still struggling with some of the same issues and problems. This is a fascinating play which offers some intriguing and entertaining views about a culture of prejudice which should have disappeared long ago. That it has not should lead to some thought-provoking questions which will continue after the curtain falls.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER runs through December 18, 2022, with performances at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays through Saturdays and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. On December 7 and 14, (Wednesdays) performances are added at 7:30 p.m. Theatre 40 performs in the Reuben Cordova theatre in Beverly Hills High School, located at 241 S. Moreno Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. Tickets are \$35. For information and reservations, call 310-364-0535 or go [online](#).

The 2022 CWC Literary Review is Available!



CWC-SFV Editor's Note:

A submission by Board member, Phyllis Butcher, CWC-SFV Outreach Chair to the MPTF, was accepted by the Literary Review editors. Her story, "Heroes," is included in the Memoir section, on page 45.

Congratulations,
Phyllis!



Welcome to the 2022 edition of the Literary Review, the best in prose and poetry by and for members of the California Writers Club. This juried collection includes short stories, essays, memoir, and humorous pieces, as well as a rich and varied selection of poetry.

Each published piece was chosen in a blind selection process from submissions by talented writers in the twenty-two branches.

From the crashing coastal waves to the vast agricultural resources of our great valleys...from teeming vibrant cities to the solitude of our deserts...California's deep vein of creative gold will never expire.

Congratulations to the members whose works were selected for publication this year. And to all-happy reading!

The book is available on Amazon for the discounted price of \$10.00. The book will not be available for sale from your Branch.

[Order on Amazon \(CWC 2022 Literary Review\)](#)

If you have any questions, contact:
Roger Lubeck, President.

president@calwriters.org



CWC Mission Statement:

Our mission: to educate writers of all abilities in the craft of writing and the marketing of their work.

To Rhyme or Not To Rhyme

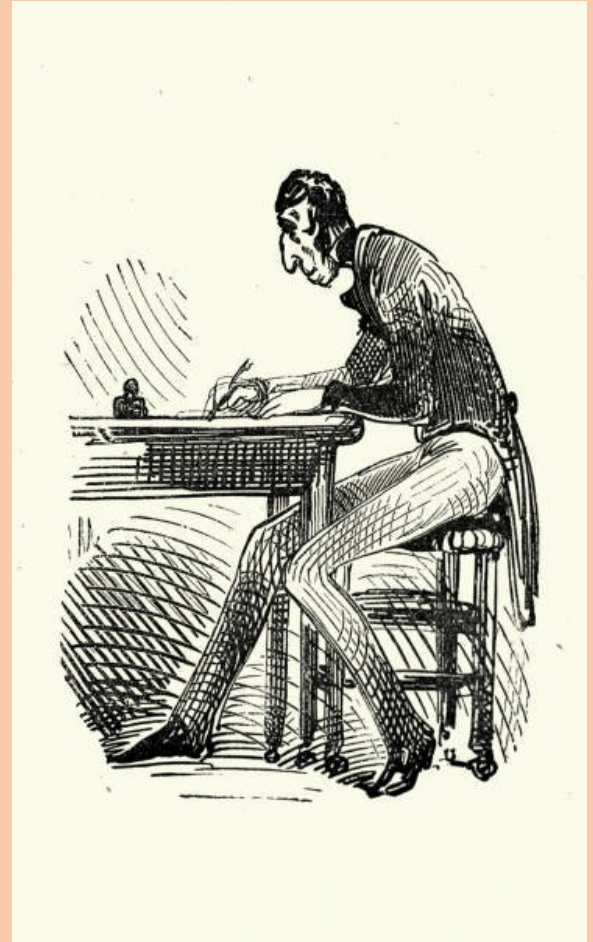
Rhyming is now out it's so old school
Homophones are gone you old fool
A synonym can be a jewel
But homonyms are totally uncool

Take your old weary labored words
Rhyming's become for ancient birds
Sibling vocables are for nerds
Don't versify it is absurd

Vers libre poems have lots of feeling
Rhymes are much less appealing
Echo repeat's unrevealing
Mirror images keep on stealing

Repetition is a weak tool
Alliteration's a tired rule
Sounds should battle as in a duel
Write free verse poems dear *chadool*

Michael Edelstein



Visiting Skirball Museum

By Lillian Isenberg Rodich

echoes
encased in glass shrine
or behind polished woods

Bubbie's babushka turned
smoothly over her forehead
doors and windows bolted in fear

Zayda's head covered
with a moth-eaten felt cap
he was a rabbi in Poland

echoes again in Skirball's halls
what once was
and always will remain

in centuries of tradition

voices I knew
my father's square stained finger
dipped in Passover wine
his prayer chanted in Hebrew



Art by [Sefira Lightstone](#). [Sefira Lightstone \(myportfolio.com\)](#)

Friday sundown
my mother bent over Sabbath candles
her bushy hair uncovered
her blessing whispered

voices I knew echoing

ornate Chanukah menorahs
in Skirball's simple cases
still speaking of childhood's innocence
frail voices singing
in celebration of faith
most sacred of artifacts
from humble to ornate
a history of my people

and in some forgotten corners
sometimes bare visible
sometimes a small stone in a vast mosaic
an echo of my own family's voice

Lillian Rodich

Source: *Voices From The Valley*
Memories of Childhood
2001 CWC-SFV Anthology



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The California Writers Club has been in existence for over 100 years, and the SFV Branch for over 20 years. Our mission is to encourage excellence in writing, fiction, non-fiction and poetry, as well as to reach out into our community and mentor writers at all stages of their writing journey. We hold Zoom meetings on the first Saturday of each month from 1 PM to 3 PM. Meetings are free for all members.

Our meetings feature presentations from published writers, editors and other writing industry experts speaking on topics ranging from how to improve our writing, overcome writer's block, get published, and promote our work.

For information and reviews on prior monthly speakers please go to:

[monthly editions of the Scribe](#)

To learn more about the CWC-SFV, check out our website for more information: CWC-SFV.org

In addition, we host six critique groups which meet monthly or bi-monthly to give CWC-SFV members feedback from their CWC-SFV peers. They meet in person, on Zoom, or in hybrid groups.

For further information about the several CWC-SFV critique groups, contact Pat Avery at:

cwcsanfernandovalley@gmail.com



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