



# The Valley Scribe



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

## CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2023-24 SPEAKERS

MPTF CANPUS MAP

CWC-SFV MEETING

ETIQUETTE REMINDERS

INTRODUCTION TO A

MEMOIR GROUP

JACK LONDON

AWARDS

REMINDER TO PAY

YOUR DUES

CWC-SFV CRITIQUE

GROUP NEWS

EXIT WOUNDS PLAY

REVIEW

SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

FOR THE CWC-HIGH

DESERT BRANCH

PETER PAN PLAY

REVIEW

AUTUMN POEM

CLUB INFORMATION

## ON SEPTEMBER 9, HIRAM SIMS EXPLAINS WHY A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



Welcome back everyone! Hope you had a great summer! For this first meeting of the San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club we are pleased to welcome poet, photographer, professor, and essayist, Hiram Sims, as our keynote speaker on Saturday, September 9 at 1:00 pm. This presentation will be an in-person meeting in The Saban Center for Health and Wellness, which is located at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Wasserman Campus in Woodland Hills. **Hiram's presentation is titled, "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words."** If you enjoy looking at art, this talk will inspire you!

Born and raised in various parts of Los Angeles, Hiram Sims is a Creative Writing Professor teaching with The Community Literature Initiative. He graduated from University of Southern California and received a B.A. in English: Creative Writing, and a Masters of Professional Writing in Poetry.

In addition to teaching essay writing, creative writing, and literature, Hiram has published three collections of poetry, including *Poems of a Young, Troubled Mind* (2007), *Write or Die: An Anthology of Poetry from the Urban Poet's Workshop* (2008), and *PHOTOETRY: Poetry and Photography from South Central* (2013), and his creative writing textbook, *These Pages Speak* (2015). He is the co-founder of World Stage Press, and founder of The Sims Library of Poetry, boasting the largest collection of poetry in Los Angeles.

That Saturday afternoon, September 9, please join the CWC-SFV hybrid audience as we explore the power, history, and significance of the Ekphrastic poetry, which has come to be defined as poems written about works of art; paintings, photographs, and sculptures. Yeat's *Ode to a Grecian Urn* is an example of art piquing the interest of the poet.

In this presentation, we will identify homemade images and artwork that will be the basis of writing new poems. And while Ekphrastic writing has traditionally been associated with poetry and poetic imagery, it has begun to find a new home in prose. So whether you write poetry or prose, please support your club and Hiram by attending this special presentation in the Saban Room.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

---

*All members of the CWC-SFV receive a Zoom invitation to this presentation. Members of other CWC branches should contact Zoom host, Anat Wenick, by noon on September 8th at [SFV.CWC@gmail.com](mailto:SFV.CWC@gmail.com) for an invitation to register. Guests may purchase admission at [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org) by noon on September 8th. After purchasing admission, guests will receive a Zoom invitation. We regret we cannot accommodate late requests.*

# Karen's Corner

BY KAREN GORBACK, Ph. D., CWC-SFV PRESIDENT

Every Single  
Character



Welcome to the new program year! Special thanks to CWC-SFV Program Chair Heather Bradshaw for spending the last several months developing a year of remarkable programming. And thanks to our webmaster and technology guru Anat Golan-Wenick, along with our MPTF liaison Phyllis Butcher, for facilitating in-person meetings at the beautiful MPTF, as well as Zoom access for those who prefer online attendance. The choice is yours, but we hope you'll join us in person – to renew old friendships and make new ones! And don't forget that professional networking is one of the many benefits of club membership. Networking with club members led directly to the publication of my novel. It's worth your time to "meet and greet" at club meetings.

But on a recent Sunday morning, I found another fount of inspiration during early morning television. I have been a devotee of CBS Sunday Morning for many years and think it's the smartest, most interesting program on television. The televised news magazine begins by covering the hard news of the week and concludes with a "moment of nature." Between the bookends lies a variety of fascinating features, covering the liberal arts and sciences, politics and economics, and notable personalities – individuals we recognize and those we don't. These personal exposés are my favorite segments, as each person is unique, with a wonderful story to tell.

On this particular Sunday morning, the program featured author Tess Gunty, whose debut novel *The Rabbit Hutch* won the National Book Award for Fiction in 2022. As she answered a variety of interview questions, one made me smile. The reporter asked if her novel's protagonist was really her. Gunty answered, "I don't think you can write without putting much of your emotional experience into every single character." Wow. I feel exactly the same when I'm writing. That's cool.

Readers often ask if my protagonist in *Freshman Mom* is really me. "No," I respond. "The book is a novel." But when I'm teaching writing classes, I further explain to my students that all stories begin with a trace of something we know, something we feel in our guts. Then, like an oyster spinning nacre around a tiny irritant to create a pearl, storytellers spin a story around that trace of something to create a piece of literature. If we're successful, we transport our readers into the world we've spun. Maybe I'm on the same wave length as debut author Tess Gunty. Maybe you are, too.

So now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to my WIP. And if I'm successful, in the next year or so, you'll see me at a club meeting and ask about my new novel. "Is that protagonist really you?"



*All stories begin with a trace of something we know, something we feel in our guts. Then, like an oyster spinning nacre around a tiny irritant to create a pearl, storytellers spin a story around that trace of something to create a piece of literature.*

Karen Gorback  
September 2023



Whether you're a published author or "have always wanted to write," please join the CWC-SFV for monthly meetings at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Wasserman Campus in Woodland Hills. Meetings begin at 1 pm. Presenters will join us either in person or via Zoom on the huge screen in The Saban Center for Health and Wellness. You'll enjoy networking with other writers while learning more about the craft and business of writing. For more information and single lecture prices, visit <https://www.cwc-sfv.org>. Presentations are free for CWC members.

## CWC-SFV GUEST SPEAKERS FOR 2023-2024

September 9, 2023

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



Join poet, author, and photographer Hiram Sims as we explore the power, history and significance of the Ekphrastic poetry. We will identify homemade images and artwork that will be the basis of writing new poems. (In-person)

October 7, 2023

A LONG STRANGE TRIP - A WRITER'S JOURNEY



NY Times bestselling author, Jonathan Maberry, will discuss how writing horror got him started in his writing career, share insider tips, fresh perspectives on the changes in the publishing trade, and strategies for getting in gear and getting in print. (Zoom)

November 4, 2023

YOU CAN BE A WINNING WRITER



Award-winning poet and author of seven books, Joan Gelfand, will talk to us about various strategies to getting published. Her book, *You Can Be a Winning Writer: the 4c's of Successful Authors* was an Amazon #1 best seller. (Zoom)

December 2, 2023

BEATING REJECTION



Best-selling author Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, (aka crime writer Sam Blake), will discuss exactly what the industry is looking for and how best to submit your work. She will show you how to improve your pitch and build your author platform. (Zoom)

January 6, 2024

A COMPLICATED LIFE



Author, lecturer and BBC presenter, Paul Lewis, will talk to us about prolific Victorian author Wilkie Collins's incredible work ethic and his colorful private life. (Zoom)

February 3, 2024

BLACK AND IN LOVE



Romance author, Synithia Williams, will talk about why she started writing romance novels and why she likes to focus on black love in her award-nominated stories. (Zoom)

March 2, 2024

THE HERO'S JOURNEY



Inspired by mythologist. Joseph Campbell, screenwriter, author and educator Christopher Vogler, will show us how to use the hero's journey to improve our creative writing. (In-person)

April 6, 2024

PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO WRITING



Kirsten Casey is a California Poet in the Schools, creative writing teacher, and the current Nevada County Poet Laureate. She wants you to enjoy writing, even if you feel undisciplined and blocked. (Zoom)

May 4, 2024

WRITING TRANSFORMED MY LIFE



Poet, writer, and activist, Luis Rodriguez, will share his poetry and discuss the transformative experience of writing his memoir: *Always Running, La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.* (Zoom)

June 1, 2024

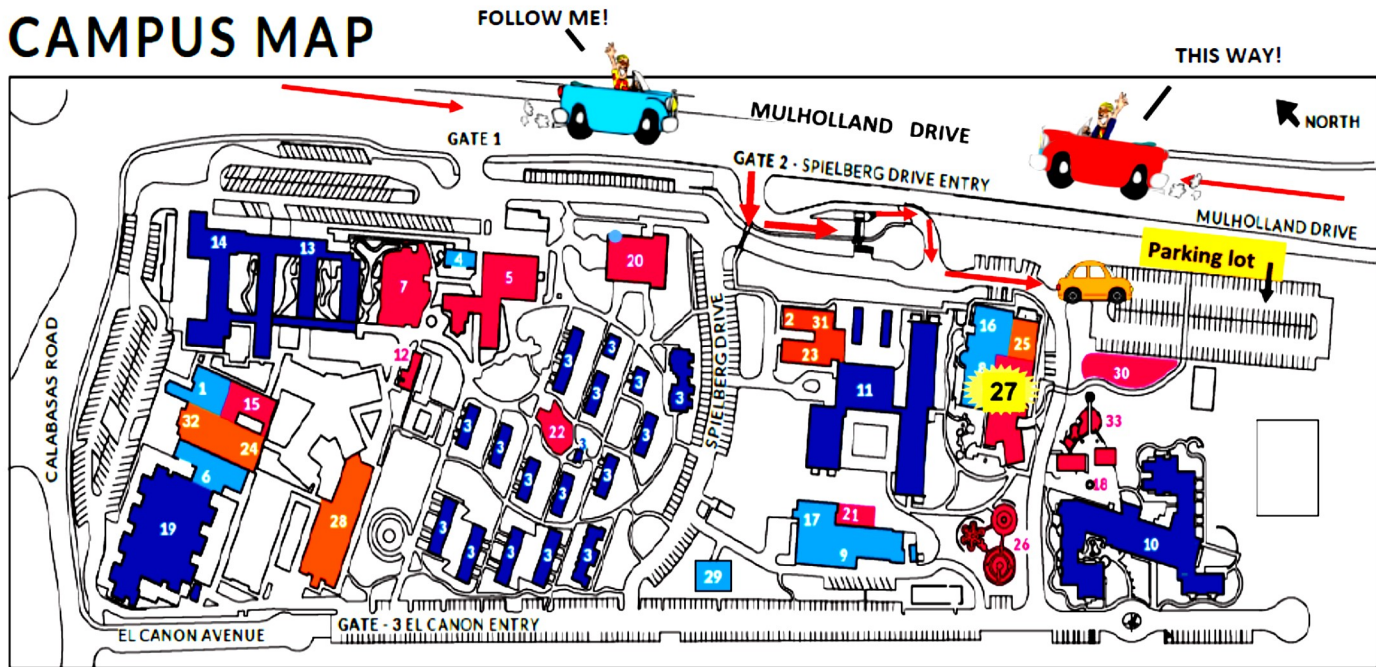
COACH WOODEN AND ME



Author and award-winning columnist, Woody Woodburn, will discuss what we can learn from his memoir, *WOODEN & ME: Life Lessons from My Two-Decade Friendship with the Legendary Coach and Humanitarian.* (In-person)



# CAMPUS MAP



- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 1 Administrative Offices                   | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 12 Guild Volunteer Cottage                 | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 23 Palliative Care  |
| <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 2 Age Well                               | <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 13 Hersholt Place                         | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 24 Pharmacy   |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 3 Cottages                                 | <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 14 D-Wing/Prod Kit                        | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 25 Physical Therapy (in Saban Center)                           |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 4 Country House Office                | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 15 Heartbeat Café                          | <span style="color: pink;">■</span> 26 Roddy McDowall Rose Garden                                     |
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> 5 Country House, Dining, Library and Lounge | <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 16 Human Resources (in Saban Center) | <span style="border: 1px solid red; color: red;">■</span> 27 The Saban Center for Health and Wellness |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 6 Customer Service/PBX                | <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 17 Information Technology            | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 28 The Samuel Goldwyn, Jr. Behavioral Health Center             |
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> 7 Edith Head Plaza                          | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 18 Katzenberg Pavilion/Outtakes Café       | <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 29 Security/Mailroom/Transportation                          |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 8 Executive Offices (in Saban Center) | <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 19 Mary Pickford House & Harry's Haven    | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 30 Segal Family Dog Park   |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> 9 Facilities                          | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 20 Louis B. Mayer Theatre                  | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 31 Social Services, Elder Connection/Palliative Care            |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 10 Fran and Ray Stark Villa                | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 21 MPTF Studios                            | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> 32 Social Services, LTC/HH                                      |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> 11 Frances Goldwyn Lodge                   | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 22 Milchan Green Room                      | <span style="color: red;">■</span> 33 Wasserman Koi Pond  |

## MAP LEGEND

- Residential Areas
- Administrative Offices
- Health Care / Social Services
- Common / Recreational Areas



**MPTF Directions and Campus Map**

If you are driving from Los Angeles, San Gabriel Valley, Glendale, Pasadena, etc.

- Take the 101 Freeway (North)
- Exit Valley Circle/Mulholland Drive and turn left at the end of the exit ramp
- Go straight through the first intersection, you will see our campus on the right
- Proceed to Spielberg Drive (Gate 2) and make a right onto the campus



Turn left and follow the campus road to the parking lot that's located directly across the street from the Saban Center for Health and Wellness.



# Welcome to Our 2023-24 Program Year!

## Meeting Etiquette Reminders

By Karen Gorback, Ph.D. — CWC-SFV President



Dear CWC Members:

We hope you are as excited as we are about our schedule of speakers this year! Humongous thanks to Program Chair Extraordinaire Heather Bradshaw for developing a terrific program! Please help us keep our meetings enjoyable and safe for everyone by remembering the following:

When you attend in person at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Saban Center for Health and Wellness, please:

Wear an N-95 mask while you're in the meeting room with MPTF residents present.

Use the restrooms in the lobby of the Saban Center (located behind the desk). Please don't wander around campus.

Step into the lobby if you'd like to chat with someone or answer a phone call during the presentation.

Move to a different chair if you are having trouble seeing the screen or speaker, as we are not able to change the lighting, window shades, position of podium, etc.

When you attend via Zoom, please:

Never share your Zoom invitation or meeting link. This is for your online protection by helping to prevent "Zoom bombing."

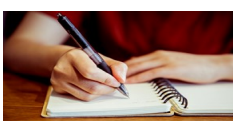
Remember that if you're having audio problems with your computer, you can call in using one of the phone numbers listed on the Zoom invitation to hear the meeting over your phone while viewing the video on your computer. You may also call in if you do not have access to a computer but want to listen to the meeting.

Please keep your microphone muted and your camera on. Also, please add your name to your picture by clicking the three dots in the corner of your picture and adding your name.

If you're having a problem with Zoom, or if you feel we are not providing a good Zoom experience for you, please explain the problem in the chat, which we will be monitoring. Please do not turn on your microphone and shout out the problem.

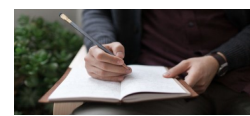
If you'd like to follow along with Closed Captioning, click on the "CC" at the bottom of your screen.

Finally, remember that as a member of CWC, you have access to the meetings of the other 21 CWC branches! Such a deal! To find learn about the programs at the other branches, go to <https://calwriters.org>. Click on "Events Calendar" and/or "Branches."



# MEMORIES TO MEMOIRS

By Phyllis Butcher



The Motion Picture and Television Fund supports working and retired members of the entertainment community. The residents on the Wasserman campus in Woodland Hills are represented by a multitude of careers in the industry, and their memories of times past are an incredibly rich source for storytelling. This is why every Thursday morning very Thursday morning, no later than 9:30, The Katzenberg Villa at the Motion Picture and Television Fund opens its doors. Victoria Bullock, facilitator of the upcoming workshop, finalizes configuring the tables and chairs to accommodate 15 to 20 people. The MPTF Hospitality crew has already been there: coffee, tea, water and pastries await the guests. Soon the chatter of arrivals and the clatter of walkers, canes and an occasional wheelchair fill the room. The residents pause for fortification at the refreshments counter and then head for a seat, some assisting others with less mobility. At the stroke of ten, with a few resounding whacks of her gavel, Victoria calls the session to order. Cellphones are ordered silenced; failure to do so risks an embarrassing scolding and/or threat of a hefty fine. Our facilitator runs a tight ship. Welcome to The Grey Quill Society!

In 2012, MPTF resident Richard “Duke” Anderson started Grey Quill as a four-week memoir writing class. Incredibly, the Society will celebrate its **tenth** anniversary this September, having stubbornly survived the pandemic by bravely hopping aboard the Zoom platform. The members are dedicated to memorializing their recollections and lifetime experiences, and in doing so they have provided hours of incomparable entertainment and enlightenment for their colleagues. They will readily admit that revisiting and documenting these personal accounts can unquestionably be therapeutic. And while some dissertations may be joyous or laugh-out-loud hilarious, others are painful and subject to unanticipated emotional moments. Oh, so many poignant tributes to the loss of the loves of their lives—those now many years gone, others achingly recent. Expressing their undying love and commitment is more often than not interrupted by pauses and tears... from those who are reading and those who are listening.

The stories are fascinating, inspirational, jaw-dropping, and so many downright side-splitting. The almost total recall and recollection

of their first-hand accounts is amazing. As they read their stories, they toss out names of people, places, dates, occasions and details from decades past with aplomb. (Please don’t even think of asking me what I had for lunch yesterday). This can result in some interesting surprises. For example, a resident listening to the speaker may realize that they had both worked together on the same film decades ago, but until now had never met. Or perhaps the most recent member of the group turns out to be the agent who secured the lady sitting across the table her first big job! And there you have two brand-new stories

Victoria is an MPTF Volunteer who followed in the footsteps of the Society’s original leader, Peter Dunne, including editing the Annual Reviews. Never lacking in accolades for the work of her charges, she is humbled by the courage, bravery, and honesty that the residents demonstrate in sharing their stories. An accomplished writer in her own, she has been welcomed as an honorary member of the Society

The Grey Quill Society has published four Annual Reviews, and the fifth is in progress. These are collections of the residents’ wonderful stories, essays and poetry that emanate from those weekly gatherings, and their content is something to behold...the pretty little Jewish girl from Burbank who was destined—no, determined—to become a leading member of the famous Jose Greco Spanish dancers...the six year-old stutterer who overcame his handicap by becoming an acclaimed writer and television producer and author of thirteen novels...the two who met on the campus in their twilight years, became a couple, fell in love, fell into the closet, and fell into disgrace when caught ‘flagrante delicto’ by the unsuspecting soul delivering the laundry...and the boy (our own former CWC member, Ray DeTournay) who at age fourteen moved into a home for unmarried pregnant girls... and the list goes on, for which we are all immensely grateful.

I’ve been invited to the Thursday meetings to assist as needed, and to fill in for Victoria if and when she is unable to attend. Just to be in the room, in the presence of these marvelous indefatigable storytellers, is a privilege, an honor and a blessing.

## RECIPIENTS OF A CWC GRANT: THE GREY QUILL SOCIETY

By Phyllis Butcher

First published in the Spotlight



*Pictured: MPTF Volunteer Phyllis Butcher, MPTF Outreach Chair of the California Writers Club-SVF, CEO Bob Beitcher, and Victoria Bullock, MPTF Volunteer, Facilitator of The Grey Quill Society.*

The Grey Quill Society, MPTF’s Memoir Writing Class, is the recent recipient of a grant from the San Fernando Branch of the California Writers Club. Prior to the pandemic, the Club held their monthly meetings at the Saban’s Jim Gianopoulos Community Room, and invited MPTF residents to join. Having been relegated to conducting their meetings via Zoom since 2020, the Club was finally able to return to the campus on June 3, 2023.

The San Fermamdo Branch of the California Writers Club look forward to continuing their monthly meetings at the Saban. In appreciation, the California Writers Club—Southern Section has awarded the MPTF a grant in the amount of \$300, designated specifically to The Grey Quill Society.





**Jack London**

Every other year, each CWC branch may nominate one member to receive a Jack London Award in recognition outstanding service to the organization. It is not mandatory that a branch designate a recipient simply because the opportunity exists. The merit of the award is in the individual's service, independent of his or her writing skills or accomplishments. The California Writers Club president bestows the awards on the honorees at the annual corporate meeting.

On October 22, The CWC President, Roger Lubeck , will present the Jack London Awards at a luncheon and Central Board meetings in Oakland, CA. Karen has commented on the upcoming event: "I have known and admired many of our club's JL Award winners over the years. It is an honor and a privilege to join their ranks."

## THE CWC-SFV HONOEREE: KAREN GORBACK, A PERSON WHO GIVES BACK TO HER COMMUNITY



**Karen Gorback**

This year, 2023, CWC-SFV President Karen Gorback will be among the honorees. Karen has been a member of CWC-SFV since 2008, serving on the board as a member at large, publicity chair, program chair, CWC-SoCal representative, Zoom host, and president. This past year, the club approved the by-laws that Karen revised, reflecting the changes necessitated by operating throughout the pandemic.

Karen volunteered to serve on a CWC subcommittee to write a new policy encouraging greater attention to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She chairs another CWC subcommittee of all the branch presidents which meets quarterly to share best practices in club leadership. Further, she coordinated with the legal department of the Motion Picture and Television Fund to negotiate an agreement for the club to resume live meetings at MPTF's beautiful campus in June, 2023.

Karen is the chairperson of the Advisory Council of the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging and represents Ventura County as a Senior Senator in the California Senior Legislature. She is a past president of the Ventura County Writers Club and belongs to the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Her award-winning, debut novel is titled *Freshman Mom*. Two of her memoirs have been published by *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. A former college dean with a doctorate in education, Karen has four grown children and nine amazing grandchildren.

## PAST CWC-SFV WINNERS OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB JACK LONDON AWARD

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2021**

Patricia Avery

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2005**

Art Yuwiler

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1998**

Ken Wilkins

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2019**

Rita K. Brown

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2004**

Elaine Shevin

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1997**

Judith Presnall

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2017**

Mary Freeman

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2003**

Jo-ed Griffith

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1995**

Diana Johnson

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2013**

Andrea Polk

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2002**

Lenora Smalley

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1993**

Margie Davidson

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2011**

Ray Malus

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2001**

Dean Stewart

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1991**

Yolanda Fintor

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2009**

Kathy Highcove (West Valley Branch)

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2000**

Dave Wetterberg

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1989**

Betty Freeman

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 2007**

Cara Alson

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1999**

Ethelann Pemberton

**JACK LONDON AWARD, CWC – 1987**

Joan Jones

# Renew Your Membership



If you still need to pay this year's CWC-SFV membership dues of \$45.00, remember that September 28 is the renewal deadline. Most importantly, after September 28, all CWC-SFV members who plan to renew for the 2023-2024 year must reapply and pay the same fees as a new member, which is \$65.00.

## CWC-SFV DUES PAYMENT OPTIONS:



1. Payment by check made payable to CWC-SFV

Mail to: CWC-SFV  
Woodland Hills, PO Box 564  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

2. Pay with an online payment at [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org)

- Click on "Membership Dues Information"
- At the bottom of the left-hand column, click on "Membership Renewals." Pay with either a PayPal Account or your debit/credit card

## THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD REASONS TO BE A CWC MEMBER!

By Roger Lubeck,  
President of the California Writers Club

The California Writers Club (CWC) is one of the oldest and largest writers' clubs in America. We have a proud heritage going back to our founding in 1909. Organized into local branches, the club has over 1,900 members in 22 branches spread across our state.

Our mission is to provide education and support for writers in our communities. Our motto is "Writers Helping Writers." I believe that writers helping writers is more than a slogan. I expect it to be the culture a writer encounters when she/he attends a meeting.

Writing may be a solitary profession, but writers tend to be social. They want to talk about and read their work to others. They are excited to learn their craft and to understand the business of writing and publishing. They crave feedback and even criticism when constructive. They want outlets where they can publish new work without waiting years.

As president, I am committed to seeing that we meet and exceed the needs of our members. I want our

branches to be recognized as outstanding educational non-profits in their local creative communities.

Our branches conduct monthly meetings with professional speakers talking about craft, editing, publishing, and social media. We offer social meetings like salons and open mic nights, along with formal educational opportunities in our seminars, workshops, and conferences. In addition, many of the branches conduct writing contests and publish an annual collection of member poetry, memoir, non-fiction, and fiction.

In our ranks, we have nonwriters, new writers, established authors, and best-selling authors. We have poets, memoirists, non-fiction writers, essayists, technical writers, and journalists. Our fiction writers have published in every genre from literary fiction to Steampunk. We welcome individuals who just want to support writers or members who provide a service to writers. For example, agents, editors, book designers, publishers, and media specialists.



# EVERY WRITER NEEDS FEEDBACK FROM AN INSIGHTFUL CRITIQUE GROUP

By Marlene Bumgarner, Ed. D.  
CWC-SFV Critique Group Coordinator

The opportunity to join a free critique group with like-minded San Fernando Valley writers is a valued perk of our club. Last January many people joined our club who are very interested in joining a free critique group.

Last year, Karen Gorback asked me to serve as the CWC-SFV Critique Group Coordinator. My duties would include assisting the six critique group leaders. I soon learned that the six groups were full and new members were not able to join a critique group. Clearly, our club needs more groups. Recently, I've also endeavored to help other club members organize new critique groups.

In the past months I've familiarized myself with the needs and interests of the current critique groups and communicated with everyone who has requested entrance into a group. There are currently six established critique groups. Most are not open to new members. This lack of space has frustrated new members who were very interested in joining a group.

We've looked for solutions to this problem and now six CWC-SFV members have notified me that they would be willing to join a new critique group or establish a new group. However, after several months of exchanging emails with me, they have decided that their writing projects are too disparate to form just one group. Each person would prefer to establish a new group for their particular genre or editing focus. Groups may decide the day, time, the frequency in which to meet and whether to meet in person or online.

Here are some examples of their separate interests:

- A small critique group consisting of people working on literary fiction.
- A group for people who have finished a full-length novel of publishable quality.
- A new critique group primarily for short fiction. It would most likely meet in person or on zoom on weekday afternoons twice a month. If any CWC-SFV member would like to join – or lead – a new group, or if any of these three options appeal to you, please contact me at [marlenebumgarner@gmail.com](mailto:marlenebumgarner@gmail.com).

Attending the next general chapter meeting at the Saban Room on the campus of the MPTF would be, in my opinion, the best way to meet other club members who are interested in forming a new CWC-SFV critique group. Please attend our first 2023-24 meeting on September 9.



*I started writing short stories. I tried writing horror, mystery, science fiction. I joined a little critique group here in town and ran my stories past them. After about three years, I tackled my first novel, Subterranean. It took me 11 months to write.*

—James Rollins

*I think I'm versatile. I take good critique, I have a positive attitude, and I am I'm not delusional.*

—Adore Delano

[Quote Topics - BrainyQuote](#)

# Exit Wounds Review – The Aftermath of Violence

By Elaine L. Mura

Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine



Suanne Spoke and Hayden Kharrazi in EXIT WOUNDS - Photo by Kayte Deimoa



Hayden Kharrazi and Suanne Spoke – Photo by Kayte Deimoa



Michael Polak and Suanne Spoke – Photo by Kayte Deimoa



Michael Polak and Hayden Kharrazi – Photo by Kayte Deimoa

How do you find redemption after someone you love has committed a heinous crime? When playwright Wendy Graf tackled this complex question, little did she know that her investigation would yield a powerful, heart-rending drama which would win the coveted Moss Hart & Kitty Carlisle Hart New Play Initiative Gold Medallion award, beating out 1,241 plays from five countries and 43 states. Graf describes EXIT WOUNDS as “...a story of a scarred family learning to heal...tragically, the play is as timely as when I wrote it in 2016...I hope it will start conversations about why...(so that) change will become possible (August 25, 2023).” In 2023, the International City Theatre is proud to present the world premiere of EXIT WOUNDS.

The time is 2017 and the place is Connecticut. A depressed and shopworn Linda (Suanne Spoke) has become a hoarder, and her home reflects the chaos and guilt in her soul. She has retreated from the world and has been living a hermit-like existence for 25 years following an earth-shattering event many years ago. Her younger son Ryan took a gun to his high school, murdering and wounding multiple victims – and subsequently committing suicide. When her estranged older son Matt (Michael Polak) shows up at her front door – a man Linda never thought she would see again – Linda is not ready for his unplanned visit. Matt has a strange request – even stranger after 25 years of silence. He asks Linda for her advice about his son Danny (Hayden Kharrazi). It seems that the rebellious and nonconforming teen has resisted every effort to help him – and, to Matt’s horror, may be exhibiting the same behaviors as Matt’s brother Ryan. Could this be in the family’s genes, a curse that will never end? Graf’s story slowly unfolds as Linda and Matt dredge up old secrets and Linda and Danny interact in a halting dance as they grow closer.

Kudos are in order for everyone involved in this production, beginning with ICT artistic director Caryn Desai, who does a superb job helming this complex and nuanced play. The talented cast – Spoke, Polak, and Kharrazi – succeed in bringing their tortured characters to life as they reach out to the deepest fears in the audience. In fact, the mark of their talent might be measured by tears in the eyes of many audience members when the play ended. Yuri Okahana-Benson’s scenic design was a perfect background for the eloquent and effective story. Donna Ruzika’s lighting, Dave Mickey’s sound, and Kim DeShazo’s costumes were equally effective in bringing the play to life.

EXIT WOUNDS is a powerful and timely tale which is carefully and well written, superbly directed, and brilliantly acted – a play which clearly deserved its prestigious award for author Wendy Graf. This is a not-to-be-missed production which will appeal to audiences intrigued by family dynamics, individual’s reactions to unbearable stress, and whether or not change is possible.

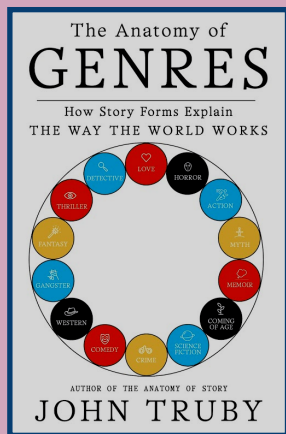
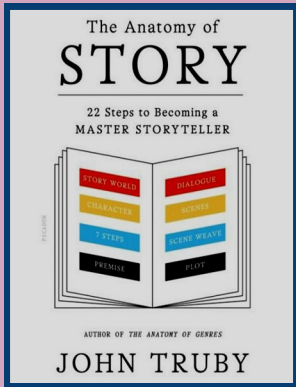
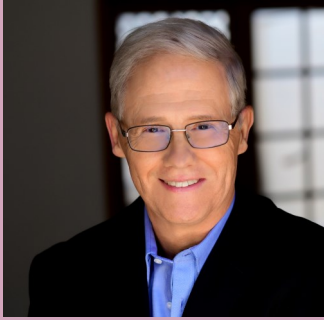
EXIT WOUNDS runs through October 10, 2023, with performances at 8 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. The International City Theatre is located in the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, 330 East Seaside Way, Long Beach, CA 90802. Tickets are \$49. For information and reservations, call 562-436-4610 or go [online](#)

# High Desert CWC Branch Offers a Free Zoom Meeting

## Author and Story Consultant John Truby Speaks on the Importance of Genres

By Bob Isbill

CWC-High Desert Chair For Outreach Programs



**“A story tracks what a person wants, what he’ll do to get it, and what costs he’ll have to pay along the way, “**

**John Trudy Quote from:  
*An Anatomy of a Story***

**I**t has been said that if you're ready to graduate from the boy-meets-girl league of story-telling, meet John Truby. His lessons draw epiphanies that make you see the contours of your psyche as sharply as your script.

On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 6 PM to 7 PM, the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club will present story master John Truby who will discuss his latest book *Anatomy of Genres*. This remarkable Zoom meeting is free to all members of the CWC and the link to the meeting may be found below.

Truby says, “What if I told you there was a secret to story that will increase your ability to sell your stories 100-fold?”

According to John Truby, GENRES have more to do with how your story works than any other element — any other idea, plot device, character archetype, beat sheet, methodology, or prescribed structure — by far. Whether you're writing for movies, TV, or novels, the game is won or lost in genres

John Truby is the founder and director of Truby’s Writers Studio. Over the past thirty years, he has taught more than fifty thousand students worldwide, including novelists, screenwriters, and TV writers. Together, these writers have generated more than fifteen billion dollars at the box office. He regularly applies his genre techniques in story consulting work with major studios including Disney, Sony Pictures, Fox, HBO, the BBC, Canal Plus, Globo, and AMC.

In this book club type meeting where the participants are encouraged to buy Truby’s latest book, *Anatomy of Genres*, they can submit written questions pertaining to genres in the book to Bob Isbill via email sent to [HDCWC@aol.com](mailto:HDCWC@aol.com). In the subject line, please put Genre Question. Include your name, your branch and of course the question you would like to have John Truby address.

*Anatomy of Genres* may be purchased through [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [www.anatomyofgenres.com](http://www.anatomyofgenres.com).

Truby’s first book, *The Anatomy of Story*, changed the way writers develop stories. *Anatomy of Genres* shows writers how to tell their best stories, and through the power of fiction, how audiences can live their best lives.

Join this exciting and informative Zoom Meeting at 6 PM on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. Here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86220784034?pwd=TThCMWhycOFYbjRid1JmUnZiWit6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 862 2078 4034

Passcode: 375034



# Peter Pan Goes Wrong Review – Who knew that Disaster could be Fun?

Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine

By Elaine L. Mura

A hilarious comedy by co-authors Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer, and Henry Shield, members of the aptly named Mischief Theatre Company, PETER PAN GOES WRONG follows on the heels of Tony-Award winning “The Play That Goes Wrong.” First presented in the UK in 2012, the earlier entertaining hit made its West Coast debut at the Ahmanson Theatre in 2019. Now comic mayhem and ridiculous slapstick have returned to Los Angeles with PETER PAN GOES WRONG.

The Mischief Theatre Company have gone way over the top with J.M. Barrie’s classic “Peter Pan,” an exuberant and uproarious comic caper which is at the same time magical and mindless. When the fictitious Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society decides to produce – on a shoestring budget, of course – “Peter and Wendy,” the bumbling amateurs have definitely overstepped their limits. As everything that could possibly go wrong does just that, the riotous shenanigans and disorganized chaos will propel the audience into gales of laughter. From the bumbling flights of an airborne Peter Pan to collapsing beds and daring stunts, the company members display finely-tuned and inspired slapstick whose timing will boggle the mind.

Adding an extra ounce of mirth, the role of narrator is taken on by special guest stars Bradley Whitford (to August 27) and Daniel Dae Kim (August 30 to September 10), funny gentlemen indeed. One can’t help but chuckle at Whitford’s comment that he wouldn’t be there but for a certain strike. Kudos are also in order for director Adam Meggido (who proved that he is fully capable of herding cats) and the ambitious ensemble cast, including Greg Tannahill, Brenann Stacker, Chris Leask, and Nancy Zamit – to name but a few of the mischievous Mischief Theatre crowd populating the Cornley Drama Society. Roles are flexible, and actors shift and change with the tide. Yet the total effect is, to put it quite simply, perfect.

Kudos are also in order for Simon Scullion’s carefully planned and executed scenic design which harbors all the monkeyshines, including a bedroom where the Darling brood may occasionally sleep and where a certain Peter misplaced his shadow, a rocking and swaying pirate ship housing the notorious Captain Hook, and – definitely to be expected – a truly fantastic Neverland. Overall, the production team has done a bang-up job of creating Peter Pan’s world, including Roberto Surace’s costumes, Tommy Kurzman’s wigs and make-up, Matthew Haskins’ lighting, and Ella Wahlstrom’s sound. PETER PAN GOES WRONG is definitely an exquisitely well-coordinated group effort.



(L-R) Nancy Zamit and Greg Tannahill  
– Photo by Jeremy Daniel

PETER PAN GOES WRONG runs through September 17, 2023, with performances at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays through Fridays, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturdays, and at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays. The Ahmanson Theatre is located in the Music Center, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tickets begin at \$40. For information and reservations, call 213-628-2772 or go [online](#).



(L-R) Charlie Russell, Greg Tannahill, Henry Lewis, Henry Shields, Bartley Booz, and Nancy Zamit in PETER PAN GOES WRONG - Photo by Jeremy Daniel



Nancy Zamit (center) with the cast – Photo by Jeremy Daniel



Front: (L-R) Harry Kershaw, Chris Leask, Henry Shields, Nancy Zamit, and Greg Tannahill.  
Back: (L-R) Charlie Russell, Henry Lewis, and Bartley Booz – Photo by Jeremy Daniel



Matthew Cavendish (front) with (L-R) Harry Kershaw, Charlie Russell, Greg Tannahill, Henry Shields, Bartley Booz, and Henry Lewis–Photo by Jeremy Daniel



# AUTUMN MUSIC

Autumn's chilled stillness  
whispers through the streets  
while violins and clarinets  
echo from distant pavilions

dried leaves slowly drift  
away from barren branches  
like old dance cards lost  
in a flutter to the floor  
crystal memories remain  
where first chill winds  
invade naked dawn  
and deserted ballrooms

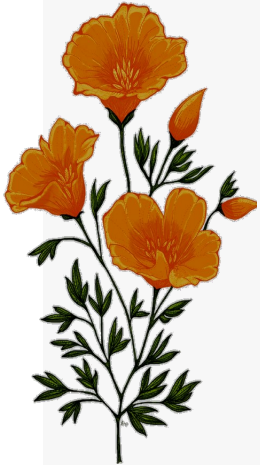
Autumn evenings decorated  
with frost painted leaves  
and reflective dreams  
illusive music, dancing shadows

familiar melodies played  
on long forgotten stages  
horns' and strings' voices  
lost among the rustling leaves

Lillian Rodich



# CWC-SFV CLUB INFORMATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES



**T**he 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 meetings at the Saban Health and Wellness Center at the Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF) in Woodland Hills 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.

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 information and reviews on prior monthly speakers please go to [monthly editions of the Scribe at PUBLICATIONS | San Fernando Valley Writers \(cwc-sfv.org\)](#)

For further information about the CWC-SFV critique groups, contact Marlene Bumgarner at:

[marlenebumgarner@gmail.com](mailto:marlenebumgarner@gmail.com)

If you are interested in additional information about our San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club, please check out our website at:

[CWC-SFV.org](http://CWC-SFV.org)

## CWC-SFV EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS AND CWC-SFV BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS

**President**  
Karen Gorback, Ph. D.

**Webmaster / Zoom Host**  
Anat Golan-Wenick

**SoCal Central Representative**  
Andi Polk

**Vice President/Secretary**  
Elaine L. Mura

**Critique Group Coordinator**  
Marlene Bumgarner, Ed. D.

**Program Chair**  
Heather Bradshaw

**Treasurer**  
Pat Avery

**Membership Chair**  
Andi Polk

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

**SoCal Representative**  
Karen Gorback

**MPTF Outreach Chair**  
Phyllis Butcher