



The Valley Scribe

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch
of the California Writers Club
Serving Los Angeles and Ventura Counties

SPEAKER DANA MARKS KNOWS HOW TO CATCH A READER'S EYE

By CWD-SFV Speaker Chair Heather Bradshaw

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Dara Marks was scheduled to be the CWC-SFV keynote speaker on Saturday, January 11. Due to the fire emergencies impacting our area, this presentation has been canceled and will be rescheduled for next year. Below you'll find an introduct to a published writer, educator and respected consultant, Dara Marks. For more information on this presenter, go to dara@goinsidestory.com

Even the best stories can be overlooked, buried in the mountains of manuscripts that publishing and film industry readers tirelessly sift through. So, how do you ensure your work rises to the top heap?



As an educator, Dara is committed to the ideal that a culture speaks through its stories and that every writer's voice matters.

Her unique method of story analysis has earned her top ratings by [Creative](#)

To grab and hold a reader's attention beyond the second page requires more than a good story; it demands mastery of key techniques that transform your manuscript into a can't-put-it-down read.

[Screenwriting Magazine](#) as the best consultant in the business – with her advice sought-after by major Hollywood studios as well as countless independent film and television writers, producers, and directors. Dara holds a doctorate degree in Mythological Studies and lives in Ojai, California with her husband.

With over 30 years of experience, Dara Marks will share actionable strategies to enhance readability and create unforgettable stories that get noticed—and remembered.

Currently, Dara Marks is working on her new book, [Engaging the Feminine Heroic](#), and has just released a comprehensive online writing course: [The Inside Story Writer's Training Program](#) through March 2025. Interested CWC members are eligible for a 50% discount using the code WRITER50.

Dara is the author of the bestseller, [Inside Story: The Power of the Transformational Arc](#), which has inspired screenwriters, novelists, and playwrights around the world to engage more deeply and effectively in the creative writing process.

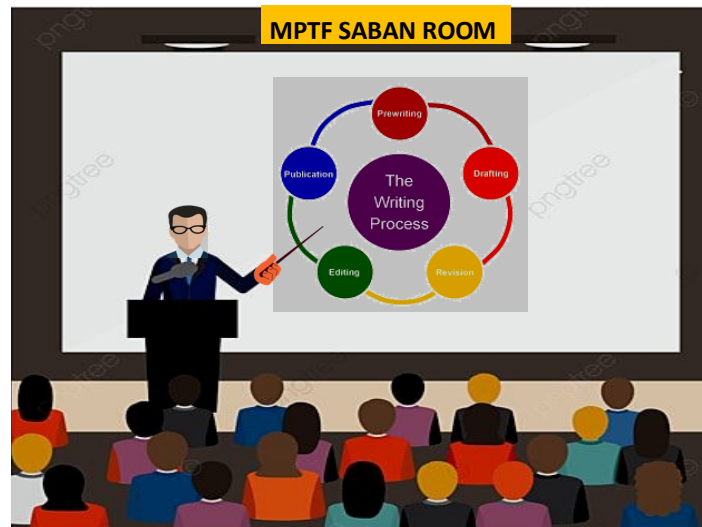
Six P's of Fire Officials

Contributed by CWC-SFV Webmaster Anat Golan Wenick

- 1) **People and pets:** All the living creatures in your house.
- 2) **Papers and phone numbers:** This includes vital documents like birth certificates, passports, vaccination records and insurance information, as well as a list of essential phone numbers. Your phone battery could die or cell service may be unavailable when you're on the road — a lousy time to realize you don't know the phone number of the place you're headed. Have phone numbers for family members, friends, a boss or co-worker, your doctor, your veterinarian or pediatrician if applicable, an out-of-state contact, your lawyer, your insurance agent, your landlord and whatever destination you'll have in mind when you evacuate, like a hotel or a designated evacuation site.
- 3) **Prescriptions:** Your pill bottles, yes, but also things like eyeglasses, contact lenses and other health-related items you might need — think vitamins, toothbrush and toothpaste, feminine hygiene supplies, contact-lens solution. If you're evacuating with infants or toddlers, make sure to include diapers and wipes. The first-aid kit in your "go-bag" should have standard supplies, but double-check that you've got bandages and gauze, medical tape, antibiotic cream, antacids, anti-diarrhea medications, antihistamines and over-the-counter pain relievers.
- 4) **Pictures and personal items:** This category includes all the things you couldn't stand to lose. Pack up photo albums, framed photos, memorabilia and heirlooms, video game consoles, musical instruments, plants and jewelry. Anything is OK as long as packing them won't delay your evacuation or take up space in the car that you need for more vital supplies.
- 5) **Personal computers:** Most of our lives are on computers, so make sure yours goes into the car. If you don't want to haul a whole desktop PC with you, store copies of vital documents in the cloud or on a flash drive.
- 6) **Plastics:** This includes your ID, credit and debit cards, and cash.

Sources: [how to prepare for a fire emergency - Search Videos](#)
[House Beautiful](#)
[Linked In](#) Discussions

An Announcement from CWC-SFV Member Chair Andrea Polk Effective January 1, 2025 through June 30: Discounted Membership



In 2025, new members may join our club online at our website cwc-sfv.org or at our upcoming Saban Room in-person meetings. Anyone who joins the CWC-SFV from January through June, will be charged \$42.50, not the usual membership fee of \$65 that pays for participation in ten meetings and speakers.

For the curious, here's how the \$65 normal membership becomes \$42.50: right now, the normal CWC-SFV membership fee of \$45 is reduced to \$22.50. With the addition of the mandatory \$20 enrollment fee, the total fee comes to a modest \$42.50!

Current members are encouraged to recommend our club to friends, relatives and acquaintances. After all, the cost of a new membership is so little for such a big bargain. Are you acquainted with a new writer who's looking for help and guidance to improve their writing or market a new book? He or she could buy a book or an on-line one day workshop for \$42.50, but look what a membership in the CWC-SFV offers for the same cost:

A new member will be eligible to hear presentations by several 2025 speakers on writing skills, publication, books agents and all forms of publication. New members also qualify for a free SFV critique group and access to CWC news. They can attend Zoom speaker presentations in Northern and Southern California CWC clubs. New members make new friends and contacts who are writers, authors and experienced published authors.

What a deal! If you have questions, contact Membership Chair Andi Polk at andipolk4@gmail.com or text her at 818-800-5596.

SPEAKER SHAWNA KENNEY SHOWED US HOW TO HOOK AN AGENT

By CWC-SFV Member Dr. Elaine L. Mura

On 12/7/24, CWC hosted author, story teller, editor and writing coach Shawna Kenney, who spoke on “How to Write a Winning Book Hook, Query an Agent, and Find Your Place in the Publishing World.” Shawna earned an MFA in creative writing and penned four books, including the award-winning [I was a Teenage Dominatrix](#). Her arts journalism and personal essays have appeared in multiple publications, including the [New York Times](#) and [Playboy](#). She teaches creative writing at [UCLA Extension](#).

Shawna began her presentation by offering some details about her early life. She was born in a small town in southern Maryland, got into punk rock in high school, and created her own magazine, [Zines](#). She wrote record reviews and published poetry and photos. She also worked on the school newspaper in high school and college, where she studied at the American University in Washington DC. Later, she moved to San Diego and still later to Los Angeles. She had multiple short-term temporary jobs before she got an editorial position in [Fetish Magazine](#).

In Larry Flint’s magazine, she wrote using a pseudonym. She would write from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. every morning before she left for work. She gathered an email list of 2000 subscribers, went on reading and book tours - including in Los Angeles - and wrote her own press releases. Eventually, she started [Last Gasp Publishing](#) to reach a bigger audience and released the second edition of *I was a Teenage Dominatrix*.

For 13 years, she wrote and published without an agent. Then. “somebody introduced me to an agent. I sent a copy of my book, and I was in. Three months later, I did a standard book tour in Europe and sold copies in the UK. I got the foreign rights in Italy and Portugal. Those things that came because I had an agent.”

“At this time, I was working on an oral history of a punk venue in DC. I interviewed everybody who worked there. It’s clearly for a niche audience. I send in a book proposal and talked with different publishers. I sent a query letter to [Rare Bird Books](#), who published another of my books in 2017. You can go with the four big Publishers ([Harper Collins](#), [Hachette/Little Brown](#), [Penguin Random House](#), or [Simon and Schuster](#)). To deal with them, you MUST have an agent. Each of the four has about 50 imprints specializing in their own thing. Your agent will present a manuscript or a proposal, deal with contracts, and advise you if you need to reshape the manuscript. He gets a 15% commission on any advance and royalties. There are no charges up front. How to find an agent? There are numerous trade magazines, a website called [Manuscript Wish List](#) (#MSWI), [Publishers Weekly](#) (pw.org), and [Tik Tok](#). You can also attend writing conferences and events like [AWP](#), [LATFOB](#), [BEA](#), and [PEN USA](#).

“If you want to publish independently (Indie Publishing), you can look at [Reedsy](#), who puts out a list of the best independent award-winning publishers. If you want to self-publish, you will need to use a variety of resources, including [Smashwords](#), [Ingram Lightning Source](#), [Lulu Press](#), and [Blurb](#). The advantage of self-publishing is that the author has full control – BUT HE PAYS FOR EVERYTHING. At the same time, he keeps 100% of any profit. However, distribution is often limited, and the book is not reviewed in mainstream media.

“What about hybrid publishing? A good hybrid publisher is [She Writes Press](#). Another good publisher is [Unbound](#). For self and hybrid publishing, you do not need an agent, and the author has more control. However, you must be careful, since there are predators out there ([Green Leaf](#)) who will drain your money with few if any results.”

Shawna next spoke about how to write a query letter, which is usually a writer’s first contact with an agent. She emphasized that an author will need a BOOK HOOK — similar to a [Log Line](#) for screen plays. It should be snappy and only one or two sentences. The entire query letter should be one page (400-450 words). An outline for a query letter should look like this:

- Personalized Salutation (to show you did your homework)
- Interesting hook
- Book Title
- Genre of book
- Synopsis of book
- Information about the size and structure of the book
- Author credentials (especially if book is nonfiction)
- Polite closing

After Shawna’s presentation, she took questions and was asked: If the query letter was different for fiction or nonfiction. Her reply: If NON-FICTION, you should site recent and successful comparable books. For FICTION, explain how it’s the same as popular fiction – but also different. Her last piece of advise:

“If you want to describe different books as friends (those with same topics, themes). At the same time, you need to show how you are filling a void – an area which has not been done before. If you are lucky enough to get an advance, major publishers want to get the advance back in sales. However, if you don’t earn any money, you don’t have to pay back the advance. After all, you’re not getting any royalties. Shawna was asked about making multiple submissions for one book at the same time. She suggested that it was a good idea to do simultaneous submissions: If they say no, send it and wait...if your agent says not to, you might have to ignore your agent.”

If you have any questions for Shawna Keeney, you can reach her at this website: <https://www.shawnakenney.com/>

THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB



PRESENTS OUR 2024-25 GUEST SPEAKERS



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 at 23388 Mulholland Drive, Woodland Hills, CA 91364. Meetings begin at 1 pm. All meetings are hybrid—available online, so you can join from anywhere. 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. Programs are free for all CWC members. Contact us at cwc-sfv.org. For guest admission, visit cwc-sfv.org.

CWC-SFV Program Chair Heather Bradshaw

September 7, 2024

Holly Watson

Book Publicity: The Basics and Beyond

<https://www.hollywatsonpr.com/>

(In-Person)



February 1, 2025

Lisa Teasley

The Art of the Short Story

<https://www.lisateasley.com/>

(Zoom)



October 5, 2024

CLAY STAFFORD

Incorporate Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, Romance and Action into Any Work <https://claystafford.com/>

(Zoom)



March 1, 2025

MANDY JACKSON-BEVERLY

Self Publishing and the Independent Bookstore

<https://mandyjacksonbeverly.com/>

(In-Person)



November 2, 2024

LEE BARNATHAN

All About Ghost Writing

<https://leebarathan.com/>

(In-Person)



April 5, 2025

MARCIE RENDON

Native American Poetry-Song Writing

<https://www.marcierendon.com/home>

(Zoom)



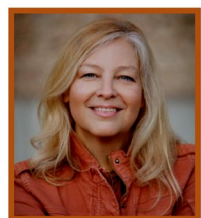
December 7, 2024

SHAWNA KEENEY

How to Write a Winning Book Hook, Query an Agent, and Find Your Place in the Publishing World

<https://www.shawnakenney.com/>

(Zoom)



May 3, 2025

MATTHEW FELIX

A Nontraditional Path to Self-Publishing

<https://www.matthewfelix.com/>

(Zoom)



January 11, 2025

DARA MARKS

Story Development

<http://www.daramarks.com/>

(Zoom)



June 7, 2025

THOM HARP

Writing A Low Budget Feature and Getting It Made

www.thomharp.com

(In-Person)





January 20, 2025: Dr Martin Luther King Day

By CWC-SFV Editor Kathy Highcove

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was a Baptist minister who became one of the most prominent leaders in the fifties and sixties civil rights movement. He advocated nonviolent demonstrations and civil rights disobedience against Jim Crow laws, segregated schools and other legalized forms of discrimination in Southern states.

He led marches, sit-ins and public protests such as the Montgomery bus boycott. And was jailed for his acts of civil disobedience. He was one of the leaders of the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

In the speech's most famous passage – in which he ignored his prepared text, perhaps prompted by Black singer Mahalia Jackson, who shouted behind him, "Tell them about the dream!" King then began his famous speech: “I have a Dream.” You can listen to Dr. King’s “Dream” speech [here](#).

In the late fifties and early sixties, I was a white teenager living in the very white community of Salem, Oregon, but I often watched the national news, by myself in our TV room. I watched films of sit-ins, marches, the forced integration of Southern schools and the March on Washington. On that day in 1963, I remember the sea of thousands of Black American citizens, many weeping as they listened to Dr. King’s description of his dream. I was also very moved by his fervent words, which reminded me of a prayer, an appeal to a higher power for an end to racial injustice and discrimination.

I had been horrified by the cruel attacks by Southern authorities on marchers and especially the harassment of young Black teens, my own age at the time, who walked a gauntlet of sneering, shouting white teens, their future classmates. They looked straight ahead and walked through a maelstrom of hate. I was so impressed by their courage and I also admired the courage I’d witnessed by civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On April 4, in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King was assassinated by James Earl Ray. King's death was followed by national mourning, as well as angry riots in many U.S. cities. His death was a catalyst of reforms in many parts of our country. Dr. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2003.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in cities and states throughout the United States beginning in 1971; the federal holiday was first observed in 1986. The **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial** on the **National Mall** in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 2011.

On Mon, Jan 20, 2025, our country will celebrate Dr, Luther King, Jr. Day.

To learn more about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. go to:

[Martin Luther King, Jr. | About Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)



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We're excited to present the Winter 2024 edition of the California Writers Club branch. This magazine is one benefit of membership in the CWC.

If you do nothing else today, open the issue and read Jack London's advice to authors. His advice is a great way to start the New Year.

Also, inside this issue you'll find an update on our club President, the winning poets and poems from The Smalls contest. Members' new books and articles on The Heroine's Journey. Jack London's chair, and reconsidering Joaquin Miller. In addition, you will find upcoming events and information on the CWC.

The Bulletin is sent to all members in pdf format as an email attachment. To read a pdf of the current issue click [here](#).

Happy reading!

Joyce Krieg, Editor in Chief
Sandy Moffet, Associate Edidor
Roger C. Lubeck, President
Crissi Langwell, Secretary

If you have questions or issues, contact:
editor@calwriters.org
president@calwriters.org

WHEN I WAS EIGHTEEN

By CWC-SFV Member Brian Muldoon

**Because I was born and raised in Connecticut
A state famous for its Abolitionist movement
I thought I was far and away from racism
Until one day in our small town's firehouse
I heard young white men talk of beating up
Black men in an adjacent town**

I SAID NOTHING

**And I learned that when you acquiesce
You accept
And if you accept
You will own a piece of racism for the rest of your life
And I do**





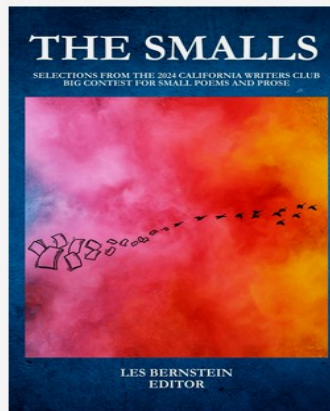
millennium 1

I am a
20th century
man
no Shakespeare here,
no Mona Lisa, no Spinoza
I drive cars
with the radio
on
the windows down
my high beams
light the curves along the
dark and climbing road
the smooth wheel turns in
my hands
as tires roll below
at 63
along the freeway
through the night
beneath the slender Turkish
moon
white over West Hills
crystal stars
above the looming
exit sign
green and white
Topanga South

CWC-SFV Member
Ken Mazur

THE SMALLS

Announcing a new CWC publication for 2025.
Available on Amazon for \$10.00



Click on the Image

The Smalls includes selections from the California Writers Club 2024 “Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose.” This is a vibrant collection of unique voices chosen from the contest entries. Each selection in this slim volume of 50 works from our members serves as a testament to the power of language, as they illustrate Gilbert K. Chesterton’s statement, “One sees great things from the valley, only small things from the peak.”

Within these pages you will encounter poems and prose that resonate, ignite, console and maybe make you laugh. The writers featured within these pages are both emerging and established voices, who wish to share with you the universal and personal strength of the human spirit.

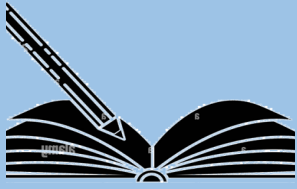
A member recently said, “Poetry lets you get at your emotional core using as few words as possible.” **The Smalls** does that. These poems and short prose may be small in words, yet the ideas and emotions they capture are large in their impact. These poems will move you. Read and enjoy.

Happy New Year
Write On!

Roger C. Lubeck, CWC President
Les Bernstein, Contest Chair, Head Judge, Editor-in-Chief
Crissi Langwell, CWC Secretary, Illustrator

[Click this button to visit The Smalls on Amazon](#)

THE BOOK TOUR OF HER DREAMS



By CWC-SFV Member Davida Siwisa James



Most authors hope for some combination of getting an agent and/or publisher, having our words read by the masses, making a little money, and having people lined up at a book signing.

I was humbled that on April 2, 2024, Fordham University Press in New York City published my historical nonfiction book *Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill: Alexander Hamilton's Old Harlem Neighborhood Through the Centuries*.

Opening my box of hardcover author copies was an out-of-body experience. When I learned that there are over 12,000 books released each month, I was less disappointed that mine wasn't in any bookstores I called on release date.

In April, when I exhibited at the L.A. Times Festival of Books at USC, I was stunned at how many old New Yorkers stopped by, many from my old Hamilton Heights neighborhood. It was an emotional and successful weekend.

I went on a book tour in June to New York and Philly. The first was at the Hamilton Grange Branch of the N.Y. Public Library; the second at the Morris-Jumel Mansion (built in 1765), where George Washington headquartered in 1776 after he won "The Battle of Harlem Heights"; and the third at the home Alexander Hamilton built in Harlem in 1802, "Hamilton Grange National Memorial." It was moving to discuss my book in these historic locations.

The first bookstore signing in my hometown Philly was both disappointing yet heartwarming with my family's turnout. The final signing, at the Barnes & Noble in Center City was perfect - me at a table with a stack of books

engaging customers and almost selling out ended the tour on an unimagined high.

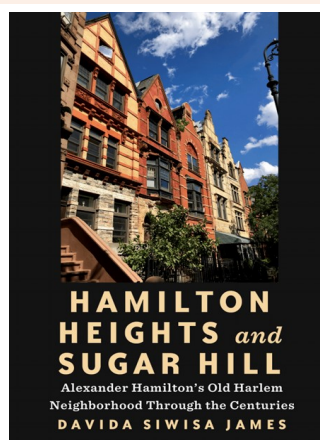
I've given four virtual presentations, all well attended. The last one was in October for the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society, whose members includes one of Hamilton's descendants. A woman whose home is on the cover of my book flew me to NYC in September to take part in a documentary she is producing about Hamilton Heights. And I've been invited to give a book talk in the spring at the Museum of the City of New York as part of the 400-year anniversary of the Dutch arriving in New Amsterdam (New York). All of it is surreal: the Zoom presentations, book signings, documentary filming, and library catalogues.

My book is gradually making its way to bookstores and library shelves. It has been well reviewed so far, including by the international Journal of Urban Affairs. At the Lincoln Center branch of Shakespeare & Co. Bookstore on Broadway in September, I popped in to sign their last copy.

It was a thrill recently to receive my first royalty payment from a real publisher and to know I'd sold enough books to cover my modest advance. It wasn't enough for a trip abroad, but I did take my family out to a lovely dinner to celebrate. Sometimes, small moments and modest successes can fulfill an author's lifelong dreams.



HAMILTON GRANGE NATIONAL MEMORIAL



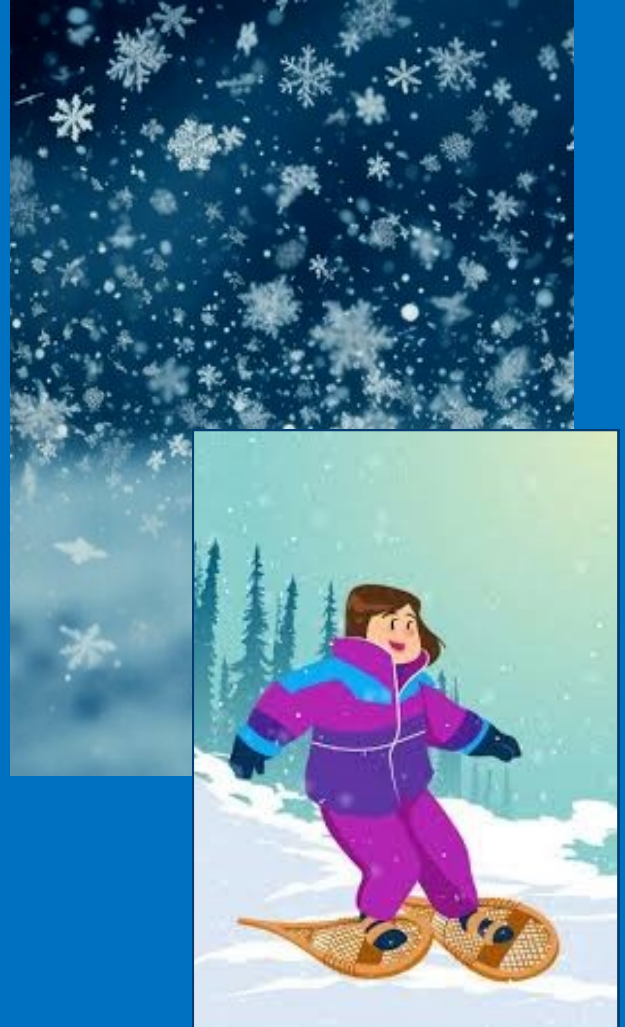
BARNES & NOBLE, PHILLY

Snowshoeing

By CWC-SFV Member Pat Avery

Bundled in layers of clothing
I leave my cabin's protection
Wind blows this way then that
Snow dust flies in my eyes
Drifts soften mountain ridges
Obscure boulders, bury saplings
Create bowls around tall pines
The only sound is gusts in the trees.

My mind sings with the freedom
Of tramping through the woods
Snowshoes sink into powder
Giant footprints mark my passage
Cheeks now rosy, nose cold
Toes and fingers numb
I retreat to savor hot soup
And fireplace warmth.



THE CARTOON GENRE IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

By CWC-SFV Editor Kathy Highcove

A comic strip cartoonist is a writer. A daily newspaper comic strip, combined with a few apt drawings, tells or continues a story. Cartoons, comic strips and comic books are a part of literary history. They act as a daily commentary on family life, politics and culture. Before the appearance of national radio and television stations, newspaper comic strips had informed and entertained readers. The comic writing genre has always been popular with every age group, every race and religion around the globe.

Since the turn of the 20th century, comic strips have been featured in newspapers around the world. Big city daily newspapers, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, publish a whole page and more of popular comic strips. The venerable *New Yorker Magazine* has featured cartoons and comic strips for a century.

Daily comic strips are similar to continuing chapters in a book. Each panel contains an intro, a build of tension and then an ending to a scene—or perhaps the dialogue beckons the reader on to the next day’s panel. The comic story can be humorous, sad, thoughtful, ironic, mischievous, light-hearted, edgy, controversial, similar to any novel’s storyline.

When Canadian Sandra Bell-Lundy began her strip, *Between Friends*, her characters, Susan, Maeve and Kim, were in their thirties, as was their creator. Over time, as the strip evolved: Susan faced infertility and adopted a daughter; Kim married and became a step-mother; and Maeve remained immersed in her demanding career as she navigated her new social life as a divorcee. The cartoon trio discussed office politics, motherhood, romance and career angst. Over time the trio had to wear reading glasses, their kids grew up and went off to college. Some comic strip characters never age but Sandra’s characters have aged twenty years, as did the cartoonist.

What’s life like for these cartoon women in their fifties? They may have physically aged, experienced ageism in their

jobs, but they have also evolved as the years went by. The *Between Friends* strip world is a “never-ending story.”

It takes a special set of skills to be a cartoonist. Sandra began her career creating comics for her university campus newspaper, a women’s networking newsletter, and worked on newspaper ads. After developing a cartoon strip loosely based on a group of her friends, she self-syndicated it to several southern Ontario dailies for four years. In 1994, *Between Friends*, attracted the attention of *King Features* and is now syndicated worldwide in ten countries around the world.

For this feature, I asked Sandra to comment on the comics genre, and she replied: “A comic strip must have something to say, a message, in other words. A comic message could be conveyed in a succinct one-off gag or in a graphic novel that contains a storyline that builds to a climax, action and resolution. There are a multitude of genres or publications that use a comic medium. In all cases, a graphic is a necessary element of the story rather than simply an illustration. Cartoonists are faced with a limited amount of space with a limited amount of space in which to work. A comic might be wordless but the image would still need to convey some sort of message.”

Here’s Sandra’s sum-up of the comic writing genre: “Comics have a rich history of a reflection of the culture of their time. They are the basis of post-secondary study, they are celebrated in comic art festivals world-wide, and there are museums devoted to the collection art internationally.”

On the next page, you’ll view five strips that describe character Kim’s indecision about finishing her long planned book—a common problem for many writers. Her worries become a topic for additional panels that followed in the *Between Friends* comic strips. Enjoy!



Cartoonist Sandra Bell-Lundy and her three main characters In *Between Friends*.



Maeve is a sophisticated and savvy divorcee. Her career: Maeve has consistently climbed the corporate ladder and reached the position of Vice President. After discovering

that her international company had demerged and she had unknowingly been training her less-expensive replacement, Maeve moved on and created her own consulting firm...beginning with a stint in Paris. Her love life: Although successful in the business world, her complicated love life is a revolving door.



Kim is married to Derek, a widower, and is Mom to her stepson, Danny, a graduate student who is living with his girlfriend in Toronto. Her challenges: Creative forces, writer’s block, social media

marketing and the close proximity of the home-office kitchen.



Susan is married to Harv and has an adopted daughter named Emma, a graduate student. Her career: After a 25-year career with the same company and being passed over for a promotion

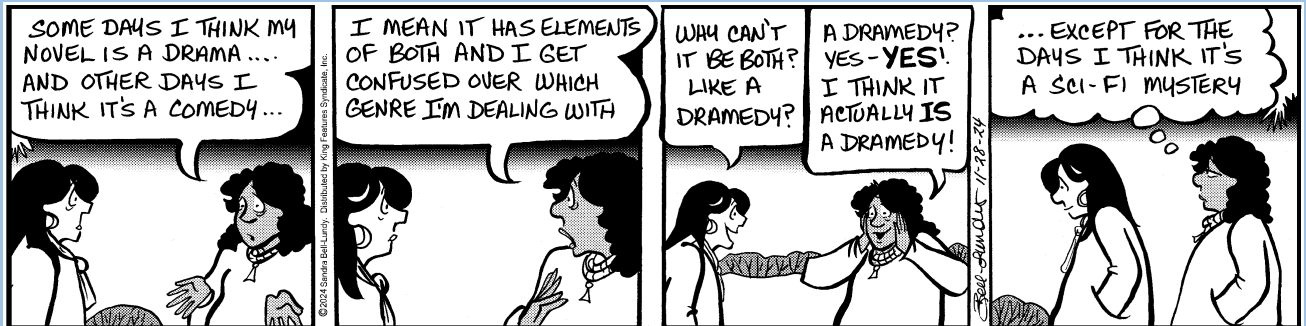
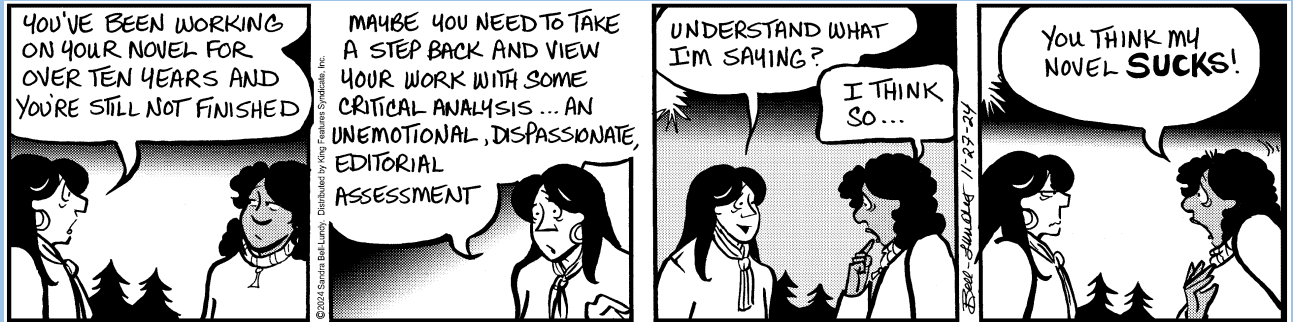
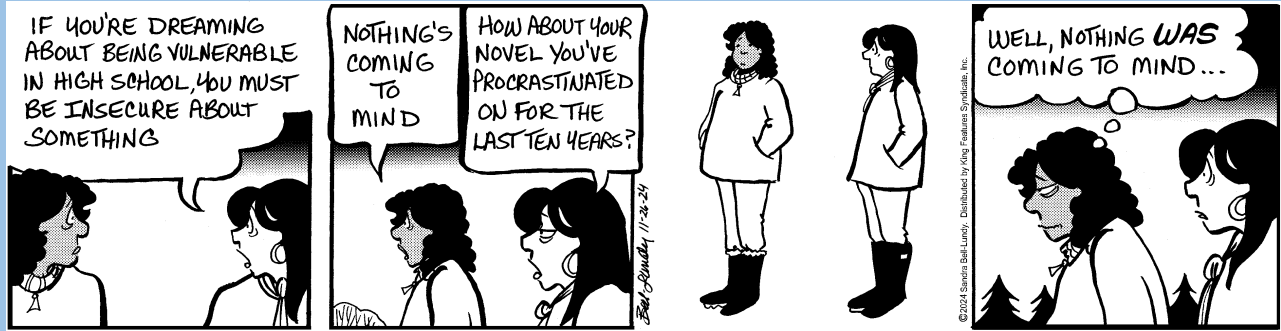
given to a younger, inexperienced man, Susan has begun a new career with a start-up company in a management position. Her superior coping strategies: Merlot, chocolate truffles, non-fat cappuccinos, and stress-busting gym visits...starting tomorrow.

SOURCES:

<https://comickingdom.com/between-friends> and <https://sandrabelllundy.substack.com/>
[Why comic strips are important to me \(and why I think they should be important to you\) - Blog.Arkholt](#)

FREELANCE WRITER KIM HAS ANGST ABOUT HER UNFINISHED NOVEL

Panels Provided by Sandra Bell-Lundy



Published with the permission of [King Features](#)

“Heartbeat/Heartbreak” Writing Contest

“Heartbeat/Heartbreak” Writing Contest - Redwood Writers



A disastrous first date or love at first sight? It can all happen in a matter of a heartbeat.

Redwood Writers invites participation from writers of all genres in the contest. Whether you have been lucky or unlucky in love, share a true or made-up story of a first meeting or a decision to part ways. It can be fiction, a memoir, or an essay about love won or lost.

You have up to 1500 words to tell your story, make us laugh, cry, or inspire speculation about why you said hello or goodbye. Revisit the past or imagine a love that did or didn't last, what you wish could've been or is yet to be. It all happens in a heartbeat.

ENTRY FEE:
California Writers Club
Members:
\$10
Non-members:
\$15

First prize:
\$100
Second prize:
\$50
Third prize:
\$25
Honorary Runner-Up:
Certificate

*Every winner receives a certificate.

ENTRIES:
In addition to all Redwood Writers members, the contest is open to:

- All CWC members, regardless of residence.
- Non-member residents of Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Mendocino, Lake, Humboldt and Solano counties.

DATES:
Submission dates:

Open: Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024
Close: Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at midnight

Winners announced:

Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025

at the Redwood Writers
general membership meeting
11 a.m.
Finley Center
Santa Rosa

Winning stories will be published online.



SNOW

**snowflakes
scraps of lace
floating down**

from the fabric of Winter's sky

**caress my face
with their healing kiss
in solitary moments
I savor the glistening scene
embracing me
and become aware
of fragile beauty
slowly disappearing
at my feet**

**CWC-SFV Member
Lillian Rodich
12/24**



HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYWONE!

By CWC-SFV Member Michael Edelstein

New Year's Best

In Twenty-Twenty Five

May your good luck come alive

Knowing best wishes fulfilled

And your champagne properly chilled

As you climb over life's boulders

May troubles flee from your shoulders

May your rooms be commodious

And all your tasks less odious

Your hours replete with health

And your bank account with wealth

Your every resolution

Shall improve your constitution

May the powers up above

Overfill your hours with love

In other words, Twenty-Twenty Five

Should see you healthy

Wealthy and ready to jive

Do you live to write? Write for a living? Whether you're a published author or "just always wanted to write," there's a place for you in California Writers Club! Our 21 branches range from Mendocino to Orange County and include writers of all levels and interests. Our mission: to educate writers of all abilities in the craft of writing and the marketing of their work.

Learn more about the California Writers Club

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 meetings at the Saban Health and Wellness Center at the Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF), located at 23388 Mulholland Dr, Woodland Hills, CA 91364, 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 \(cwc-sfv.org\)](#). 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](#)

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