



The Valley Scribe



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

CONTENTS

Karen's Corner // 2

2024-25 Speaker
Chart // 3

"The Procession" // 4

How Writing Clubs
Mentor // 5

The Curious Savage
Review // 6

Randy Newman Loves
L.A. // 7

"Waters Edge" // 8

"February" // 9

CWC-SFV Club
Information // 10



LISTEN AND LEARN THE ART OF THE SHORT STORY

Presented by CWC-SFV Speaker Chair Heather Bradshaw



The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is pleased to welcome author LISA TEASLEY, as the keynote speaker on Saturday, February 1 at 1:00 pm with a ZOOM presentation titled: "The Art of the Short Story."

Lisa's presentation will cover the basics of craft, truthfully rendered characters, narrative, detailed setting and style particular to short story writing. She will discuss the elements which shape the integrity of a story, the choice of the most appropriate narrative point-of-view, and the art of language for musicality, economy and precision.

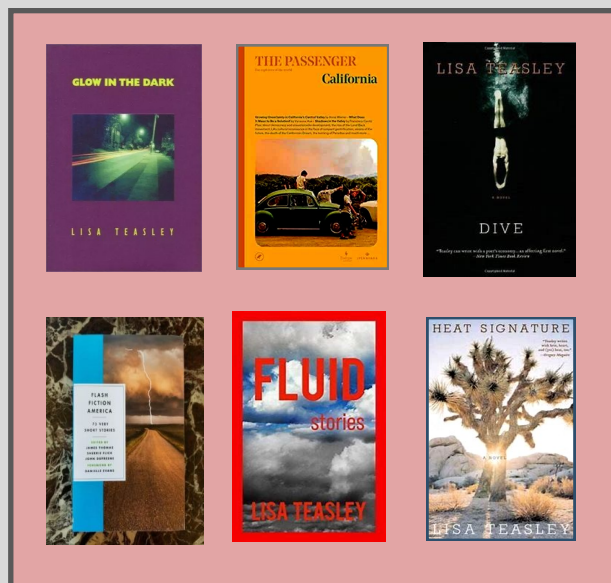
Lisa is the author of the story collections [Fluid](#) and the award-winning [Glow in the Dark](#) as well as the critically acclaimed novels, [Dive](#) and [Heat Signature](#) (Bloomsbury). Teasley's writings have been translated into French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Chinese, and Arabic, and much anthologized including in the W.W. Norton anthology [Flash Fiction America](#) and [Europa Editions The Passenger: California](#).

Teasley is the writer and presenter of the BBC television documentary "[High School Prom,](#)" and the librettist of [The Passion of Nell](#) commissioned by Long Beach Opera, which will have its world premiere in Fall 2025. Teasley has taught in the MFA programs at UC Riverside, California Institute of

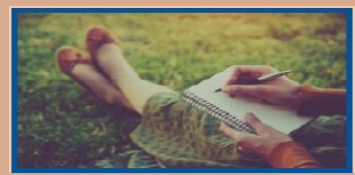
the Arts and Antioch University, as well as at the UCLA Writers Program.

She has led writing workshops in countries such as Indonesia, Nigeria, Haiti and China.

To learn more about this presenter, visit: www.lisateasley.com and make sure to have your questions ready for the Q & A after the talk. We look forward to seeing you there!



In-person Attendees: *Mingle with other writers in the Saban Center at Motion Picture Television Fund, 23388 Mulholland Drive, Woodland Hills, CA 91364 Wasserman Campus. In-person attendees do not need to register in advance. Members free. Guests pay \$10 at the door. First visit is free. Please arrive a few minutes early.*



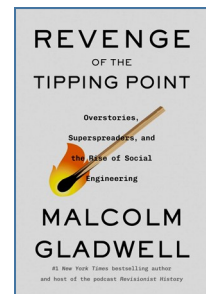
Dear Colleagues:

By the time you read this, I pray the wildfires are fully contained and the winds have died down to a whisper. I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

It's difficult for me to be creative in the midst of tragedy. I need time to mull over what has transpired. And since I'm not able to pick up a shovel and assist in the cleanup, I donate to organizations on the front lines, helping the victims and their beloved pets, as well as the amazing first and second responders. It's the least I can do.

And I read.

There are certain authors to whom I gravitate. Many years ago, club member Rita Brown invited author/researcher Lisa Cron to speak to our club. Cron's engaging presentation described the power of storytelling by explaining the relationship between brain science and the written word. Since then, I've read each of her titles. Another brilliant author I enjoy is Malcolm Gladwell. Gladwell's [Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering](#) (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2024). The book is an updated expansion of his first title -- [The Tipping Point – How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference](#) (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006).



The new book explains how major social changes and opinions tend to be the outgrowth of similar types of circumstances or tipping points. Even if you don't read nonfiction, give Gladwell a try. You'll meet intriguing characters worthy of the silver screen and become absorbed in gut-wrenching plots. Some were ripped from headlines of decades gone by, while others are as contemporary as Medicare fraud and the opioid crisis. You'll also read why Holocaust museums were thankfully built throughout the country to ensure that future generations never forget.

And just like Cron explained, Gladwell's masterful storytelling lights up my brain and keeps me engaged, even in a book filled with the erudite topics of human behavior and social engineering.

Thus, the next time you're browsing in a bookstore or scrolling online for your next good read, treat yourself to Gladwell. Make it a Valentine's Day gift just for you!

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)



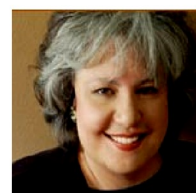
January 11, 2025

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)



THE PROCESSION*

By CWC-SFV Member Anne W. Lee

Satan's Mistress-
jealous and demanding equal glory,
comes to vindicate her anger.
She will not be dismissed.
Hem of her royal red gown
cascades gracefully, effortlessly
down the canyon staircase.
Your eyes are fixed on the glow.
She consumes simple sagebrush
as greedily as museum delicacies.
Her palate never cleansed
from one course to the next.
The winds play in her hair-
she feels refreshed.
Sparks fly as she snaps her long fingers-
she feels impatient.
Only her mercurial mood
determines access to her intrigue
or flight from her wrath and roar.
Your anxiousness amuses her.
She breathes ash upon you
indifferent to you gasping for air.
Her acrid scent
sears her profile
the image into your memory.
Now trapped in this procession
you clutch your irreplaceables like children
hiding them behind you
keeping them silent.
You bow.
Afraid to look her in the eye.
What will she demand of you?
"Sacrifice them all!" hisses the inferno.
She passes and never looks back.

** Revised January 2018 from original poem written on November 1, 1993
during firestorms in Southern California*

HOW WRITING CLUBS MENTOR

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal

California Writers Club and Chair, CWC-South

You hear stories about discouraged young writers who sought out – or blundered into – beloved Pulitzer- or Peabody-Prize winners and struck up friendships that became lifelong mentoring bonds. If you've hit upon that as your personal strategy for literary conquest, good luck. But the odds against it happening stand roughly two billion to one. I pulled that figure out of the air. It's probably higher. Bummer. Short of tracking down and dazzling Doris Kearns Goodwin or Stephen Colbert, what's an aspiring but unpublished talent to do? Quick answer: Go to where creative spirits congregate. Writers clubs afford these opportunities on a regular basis. Specifically:



1. Many members are established writers and even when not best-selling authors, they have useful advice, experiences and possibly contacts to share.
2. Members who haven't reached the ranks of stardom might nonetheless provide support, encouragement, friendly critiquing, a role in one of their projects or a collaboration partner.
3. The speakers at meetings, some of them very prominent, answer questions during their talks and generally stay to chat afterwards.
4. Associating with writers who actively journal, research, interview, hammer out drafts and the like inspires you to look beyond the obstacles and pursue writing every day of your life.
5. Consider speakers and members as potential interview subjects. With the right angle, you could profile them and freelance the result to local (or broader) media. Note: Don't ambush them. Tell them in advance what you intend to do

6. With few exceptions, writers clubs have their own newsletters, websites and often, magazines and anthologies. Having a byline in one could represent the first step in your career.

7. Many of these publications announce contests and seminars. Enter the competitions; first place can lead to recognition and prize money. Attend the workshops; learn new secrets to personal growth and success.

8. Volunteer for positions such as public relations chair or webmaster to advance club goals while sharpening your skills and enhancing your networking circle.

9. Learn how to generate clips. Then, keep clips. As a rule, publishers prefer to work with writers who already have visibility, credentials and credibility. They like it if you have a themed blog (as in "Julie and Julia"), and clippings of your articles and links to them show that other publishers considered you fit to publish, that you have some ability to promote yourself, and that you probably know some of the ropes for getting published so a new editor won't have to school you from scratch. Plus, of course, they demonstrate your proficiency as a writer.

10. After a few months of meetings and publications, there is no way to not glean nuggets of sound instruction on finding an agent, submitting an article to a magazine or compiling a strong book proposal.

In conclusion: What you observe at your writers club about the craft and business of writing helps you get a foot in the door.

The Curious Savage Review – Who’s the Crazy One?

By CWC-SFV Member Dr. Elaine L. Mura

Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine



Steve Young, Kathleen Taylor, and Danny Salay
– Photo by Doug Engalla



Amy Shaughnessy and Christopher Landis –
Photo by Doug Engalla



Steve Young, Danny Salas, Kathleen Taylor, and
Sara Shearer – Photo by Doug Engalla



Lloyd Pedersen and Sara Shearer at the Talk
Back after the Show – Photo by Elaine L. Mura

Penned by playwright John Patrick, **THE CURIOUS SAVAGE** premiered on Broadway in 1950 starring Lillian Gish. The gentle but also subtly screwball comedy asks an interesting question, “Who is really crazy and who is sane?” Well received by audiences, this warm, humorous and charming play has stood the test of time. In 2025, The Group Rep proudly presents **THE CURIOUS SAVAGE** for today’s audiences.

The time is 1950, and the place is The Cloisters, a private psychiatric facility in Massachusetts. Ethel Savage (Sara Shearer) has just been admitted by her step-children Senator Titus (Danny Salay), Judge Samuel (Steve Young), and often-married actress Lily Belle (Kathleen Taylor). It seems that Ethel’s husband, a very wealthy man, died recently – and left millions to his beloved second wife Ethel. The Savage children are convinced that Ethel is insane. She wants to give all of the money away to people who want to follow their dreams but were prevented by a lack of cash. As it turns out, she has hidden those millions so that the “kids” can’t touch them – and they are desperate to find out where.

The Cloister’s “guests” are a motley lot with issues of their own, including Florence (Maria Kress), who dotes on a doll she believes is her son who died in infancy, Hannibal (Patrick Anthony), a pencil-pushing statistician who lost his job to an electronic calculator and now believes that he is a concert violinist, Jeffrey (Christopher Landis), a veteran and the only survivor in a wartime plane crash which killed all his military crew and now believes that he has ugly scars on his face, Mrs. Paddy (Julie Davis), a woman whose on-

ly words have become lists of the things she hates after her husband told her to shut up and now believes that she is a talented artist, and Fairy May (Jessica Kent), a plain woman who believes that she is beautiful. The group is tenderly tended to by psychiatrist Dr. Emmett (Lloyd Pedersen) and nurse Wilhemina (Amy Shaughnessy), who has secrets of her own.

Skillfully helmed by Doug Engalla, **THE CURIOUS SAVAGE** is appealing, intriguing, and very funny – a brilliant combination which held the audience’s attention throughout. Patrick’s well-written play is delightful and keeps on tickling the audience’s funny bone as the often poignant tale unfolds. Kudos to the large cast members with a special nod to Sara Shearer, who manages to hold everything together until the story comes full circle. Mareli Mitchell-Shields’ set design and Shon Le Blanc’s costumes are perfectly 1950s, and Nick Foran’s lighting and Brent Beerman’s sound keep the environment just where it belongs.

This is a must-see production which will charm, amuse, entertain – and yes, sometimes prove thought provoking. It is eerily timely for a story that takes place over 70 years ago. Don’t miss this production.

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE runs through February 23, 2025, with performances at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. The Group Rep performs at the Lonny Chapman Theatre, 10900 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. Tickets are \$36 (discounts for seniors and students available). For information and reservations, call 818-763-5990 or go [online](#)

EVERY DODGER FAN KNOWS IT: RANDY NEWMAN LOVES L.A.

By CWC-SFV Editor Kathy Highcove

I didn't always love baseball. For the first decade of my marriage, I viewed a televised baseball game as an unwelcome distraction from household chores, grocery shopping or seeing an afternoon movie. As the years progressed, I was slowly drawn into watching and reading about the all-American game.



Photo provided by Glenn Highcove

This month, like many of the Dodger faithful, I await the official start of the baseball season and wonder who will be our number one pitcher, our lead batter, and how the new players will perform in early summer games. After all, one key player's injury or one rookie's mistake, can affect the team's whole season and disrupt careful plans and strategies.

Whenever the Dodgers win a home game, immediately after the last Dodger runner has crossed home plate, a very familiar song begins to play and continues as the arena erupts in cheers and emotional chaos as the Dodgers engage in victory hugs and high fives. The song that becomes part of the celebration is "We Love L.A." written and recorded by Randy Newman. This original title was "I Love L.A." but it was recorded again for the more fitting Dodger refrain: "We Love L.A."

I love this celebratory song, and when it begins to play, I turn up our TV's volume so I can hear the song over the crowd's commotion.

When this song was first released in 1983, it was not a big hit, and some popular music analysts labeled "I Love L.A." as a "flop." But in 1984, when Los Angeles hosted the Summer Olympics, the "flop" took off! Sports shoe manufacturer Niki used "I Love LA" for ads that featured famous American track athletes wearing Niki shoes as they ran and jumped. As a result of an international exposure, the song became a big hit all over the world.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles citizens became convinced that "I Love L.A." celebrated their city and their California life style. Several 1980s LA sport teams began to play the song during their games. Eventually, the Dodgers

also played the song at a game. And for years, every home game ends with Randy's Dodger "anthem."

In the eighties, Newman was already a well-known composer, singer and pianist. Throughout the ensuing decades, he's slowly gained popularity and recognition for what's be termed his "sardonic songs whose underlying humaneness and sense of social justice were often misinterpreted by listeners but much praised by critics."

Today. In 2025. he's the author of over two dozen books, a collection that encompasses all his creative work and life story.

In 2013, Randy Newman was welcomed into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He played his most famous song, "I Love LA," accompanied by fellow performers Tom Petty, John Fogarty and Jackson Browne. I dare you to watch this clip without singing along: [Randy Newman | Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame - YouTube](#)

In 2024, unlike in 2020 when the Dodgers won the Commissioner's Trophy during COVID, the players, coaches and their families were given a long joyous parade through downtown Los Angeles which ended up at Dodger Stadium. As every Dodger player hoisted the World Series Commissioners' Trophy, Newman's iconic song "We Love LA" blasted through the speakers. And the crowd sang along with Randy.

Wherever he was that day, watching the celebration, he must have loved it!

Sources: [Wiki](#), [Biography – Randy Newman](#), [Hall of Fame](#)



water's edge

it comes to mind
that sometimes,
love like water
flows beyond the jagged rocks
and fallen limbs
to gather deep in
pools beneath the softer shadowed hills.

the stream, still fair and fast,
will not be slowed by wind or sun,
it seeks those depths in which great
mystery dwells,
and treasures jealous to reveal,
these pools of patience,
where seasoned trees bend
whispering in the face of autumn.

now sparkling to a tumbling fall,
reflections shine from rising spray
the cataract unceasing spills.
its curving wave ascends the lip,
to plunge,
no hesitation seen
its power, like a vibrant string
enchanted plays
its ever changing,
never changing song of motion
swirling deep and clear
beneath the mirrored
water's edge.

Ken Mazur
CWC-SFV Member

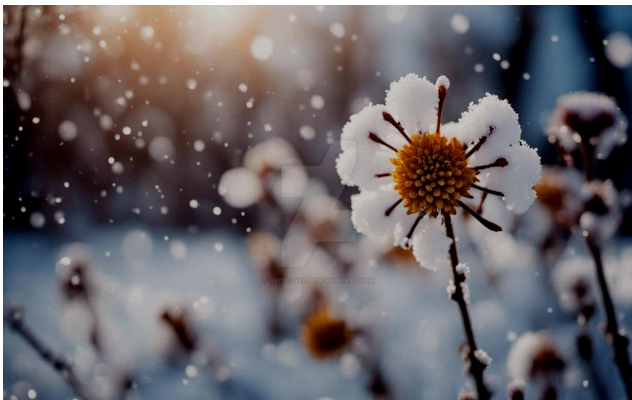


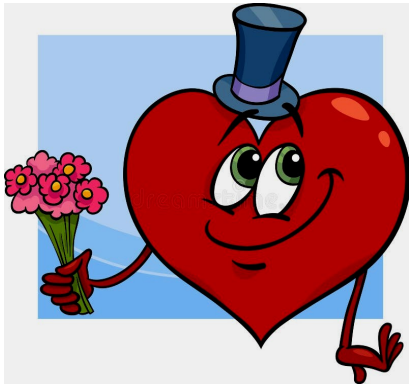
Photo provided by Ken Mazur

February

February wears flowing robes
Serenity, peace and joy embraced
Within her open arms
I wander the paths
Of my landscape bordered
By blooms of compassion
And hold hands
In a circle of love
Slate skies brushed with white
Peaceful, in winter's gray domain
Wind's harsh voice subdued
Stories' shared glow
Before an open hearth
And hope sings warmly
In the chilled dusk
Sings with gentle tones
Cloud thoughts flowing freely
Anger lost in joyful dance
Hope blooms in peaceful gardens
Thunder subdued by
Dark painted skies
While hearth embers
Dance to the wind's wise voice
Soft winds calming anguish
Glowing mist tranquil
Warmed by fireside's glow

Lillian Rodich, 2025





Do you love 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.

CWC-SFV EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS

President
Karen Gorback, Ph. D.

Vice President
Andrea Polk

Secretary
Dr. Elaine L. Mura

Treasurer
Pat Avery

Program Chair
Heather Bradshaw

MPTF Outreach Chair
Phyllis Butcher

Webmaster/ Zoom Host
Anat Golan-Wenick

Critique Group Coordinator and
Membership Chair
Andrea Polk

SoCal Representative
Heather Bradshaw

Member-at-Large
Gary Wosk

CWC Central Board Representative
Karen Gorback

Editor of *The Valley Scribe*
Kathy Highcove

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](#)

