



# The Valley Scribe

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



## October 1st—The Power of the Pen: Short Stories and Beyond

### CONTENTS

Karen's Corner	2
Fall Speakers	3
Speaker Review	4
Cat and Dog Quatrains	5
Archie and Mahitabel	6
Good Vibrations	7
Karen Gorback Teaches Memoir Lesson	8
Nanowrimo	8
Season Tickets	9
LUXOR	10&11
Invitation	12
Dog Days	13
Anne W. Lee Has Published	14
Send Your Good News	14
Inevitable Surprise Of Seasons	15
CWC-SFV Club	16

The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is pleased to welcome author, playwright, memoirist and director, Beverly Olevin, as the keynote speaker on Saturday, October 1 at 1:00 pm via Zoom. She will give a presentation titled, "The Power of the Pen: Short Stories and Beyond."



Beverly Olevin

Beverly Olevin is the author of several novels including *"The Good Side of Bad"* which won the Kirkus Award for Best Fiction. It has been adapted into a feature film for release later this year. Her short stories have been published in literary magazines across the country including *The Gypsy Moon*, which was featured in Ms. Magazine. Many of her plays have been produced, including *Soundings* which was a Los Angeles Times critics pick.

Beverly was Artist-in-Residence for UCLA Osher's Lifelong Learning Institute. She teaches courses in Writing and Theatre at UCLA, The University of Washington and at Cal State Channel Islands. She also directed the award-winning *The Manor* at Greystone Mansion, which has been running for eighteen years. Beverly was honored as "Distinguished Instructor" by UCLA Extension to recognize her "exemplary teaching and excellence that foster learning and discovery among her students." Her non-fiction publications have sold over four million copies worldwide.

Her background also includes work as an Associate Director with the California State Universities and as an Academic Director in

Oxford, England. She has an undergraduate degree from UCLA and an MFA from Trinity University. She lives in Los Angeles and the Channel Islands with her husband Marc and her dog Mija.

Beverly tell us that Short Fiction is a unique genre with its own pleasures and challenges.

Many famous writers have penned unforgettable short stories.

Her presentation will explore what makes a short story great and also look at bringing a memoir to life. She is hoping to you will be inspired to go to your computer, or pick up a pen, and craft your own tale.

Visit [www.beverlyolevin.com](http://www.beverlyolevin.com) for more information on this prolific writer.

—Program Chair Heather Bradshaw

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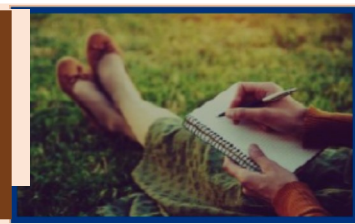
*Please note that all members of the CWC-SFV will receive a Zoom invitation to this presentation. Members of other CWC branches should contact VP/Zoom host Monte Swann by noon on September 30 at [cwcsfhost@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsfhost@gmail.com) for an invitation. Other guests may purchase single-day admission at [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org) by noon on September 30 which will be followed by a Zoom invitation. We regret we cannot accommodate late requests.*



# Karen's Corner

By Karen Gorback, CWC-SFV President

Books are windows to the world but censorship blocks the view.



As many of you know, I taught high school English for many years in the early part of my career, as well as a year of junior high school. During the junior high year, the school principal summoned me into his office early one morning as I was getting ready for my first class. Let me assure you that no one likes being called into the principal's office, including me.

It seemed that the parent of one of my students had called to complain about my teaching a book that was part of the prescribed curriculum in an advanced English class. The title of the offending book? *To Kill a Mockingbird*. "The subject matter is not appropriate for young teens," the parent complained. Thank goodness, the principal disagreed and instructed me to "keep up the good work" by having my students read and discuss the important themes illustrated by this notable piece of American literature.

As writers, we know that the topics exposed in books are often universal and open our minds and hearts to better understand the world we all share. That is why I found a headline from the September 17 *Los Angeles Times* particularly appalling – "Efforts to ban books have surged, library group says."

Although saddened, I wasn't surprised. I've been observing local parent protests over public school reading materials for the last several years. It puts a pit in my stomach. The *Times* article began, "The wave of attempted book bannings and restrictions continues to intensify, the American Library Association reported Friday [Sept. 16, 2022]. Numbers for 2022 already approach last year's totals which were the highest in decades." Good grief.

... According to a November 2021 statement from the American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) "Most of the challenged books focus on LGBTQ issues, discuss racism in America, and/or "document the Black

experience or the experiences of BIPOC individuals" (<https://www.rd.com/article/book-banning>)

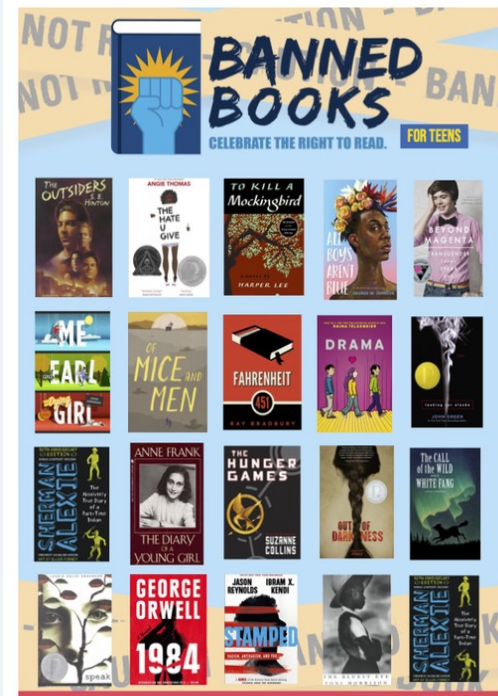
Some of the books commonly challenged in schools and libraries include: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

With the tagline "Books unite us, censorship divides us," Banned Book Week was held from Sept 18 – 26 as the annual celebration of the freedom to read. According to its website (<https://bannedbooksweek.org/slide/2022-theme>), the event is sponsored by a coalition of organizations dedicated to free expression, including the American Booksellers for Free Expression, American Library Association, the Authors Guild, PEN America, and many others.

Next year, wouldn't it be great if our parent organization, the

California Writers Club joins the illustrious list of sponsors in support of free speech, because writers know that books unite us; censorship divides us.

This image shows books that have been taken down from library shelves in many parts of our country. In 2022 banned books are back!



[Thousand Oaks Library - Home | Facebook](#)

"The thought that leads me to contemplate with dread the erasure of other voices, of unwritten novels, poems whispered or swallowed for fear of being overheard by the wrong people, outlawed languages flourishing underground, essayists' questions challenging authority never being posed, unstaged plays, cancelled films — that thought is a nightmare. As though a whole universe is being described in invisible ink." - [Toni Morrison](#)



Whether you have been published or have always wanted to write, please join us for monthly Saturday meetings via Zoom to learn more about the craft and business of writing. See [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org) for membership information and single lecture admission prices. This series is free for CWC-SFV members.

## CWC-SFV SPEAKERS FALL 2022



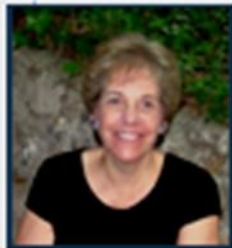
**SEPTEMBER 10, 2022**

**Christobel Kent**

**"Writing Setting: From Italy to Britain"**

By sharing her own journey from her first book set in Italy to becoming a Sunday Times bestselling author, Christobel Kent explores the importance of setting in our stories.

Follow Christobel on Instagram @christobelkentnovelist



**OCTOBER 1, 2022**

**Beverly Olevin**

**"Power of the Pen: Short Stories and Beyond"**

Author, memoirist, playwright, and director, Beverly Olevin hopes to inspire you to craft your own tale by discussing what makes a short story great as well as making a memoir come to life. Visit [www.beverlyolevin.com](http://www.beverlyolevin.com) for more info.



**NOVEMBER 5, 2022**

**Vincent Virom Coppola**

**"The Power of Myth in Story Telling"**

UCLA Professor and author, Vincent Virom Coppola will take us on a journey to the heart and soul of a story, however that story is told, whether on stage, screen, or on an iPad, and in that truly see the power of Myth.



**DECEMBER 3, 2022**

**Dacre Stoker**

**"Stoker on Stoker: The Mysteries Behind the Research and Writing of Dracula"**

Blow the dust of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and read it again, Stoker's great-grandnephew will be here to share the story behind the story of the greatest vampire tale ever. Visit

[www.dacrestoker.com](http://www.dacrestoker.com) for more info.

**SETTING IS THE FOUNDATION, THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF YOUR STORY, ADVISED OUR SEPTEMBER SPEAKER, CHISTOBEL KENT.**

By Elaine L. Mura, CWC Secretary

**O**n September 10, 2022, the CWC-SFV was fortunate to have Christobel Kent, prolific British writer of thrillers, as guest speaker. Christobel spoke on “Writing Setting: From Italy to England.”

Christobel asserted that setting is her strength as a writer. She described a long history of working in publishing houses before setting out to pen her own books. As Christobel described her move from publishing to writing, she indicated that, after taking time from her publishing job to care for her children, she found that things had changed rapidly in the field, especially with the advent of personal computers.

At the same time, her husband found an academic position which required the family to move to Florence, Italy, for a year. It was in Florence that Christobel found her muse and her writer’s voice. For a woman born and raised in England, where emotions were kept deep inside and rarely saw the light of day (definitely behind closed doors), she was intrigued by the Italian way of life – where one’s deepest feelings and emotions were bruited out on every street corner.

When she returned to England, she longed to return to Florence “and so I wrote myself back there.” As Christobel put it, the goal of setting is for the reader to inhabit another physical world. But she found that applied not only to the reader but also to the writer, and so she settled in for a long series of books about Italians, often set in Florence. Over the years, her life experiences were to dictate her subjects, including her year in Italy and a holiday at the English seaside.

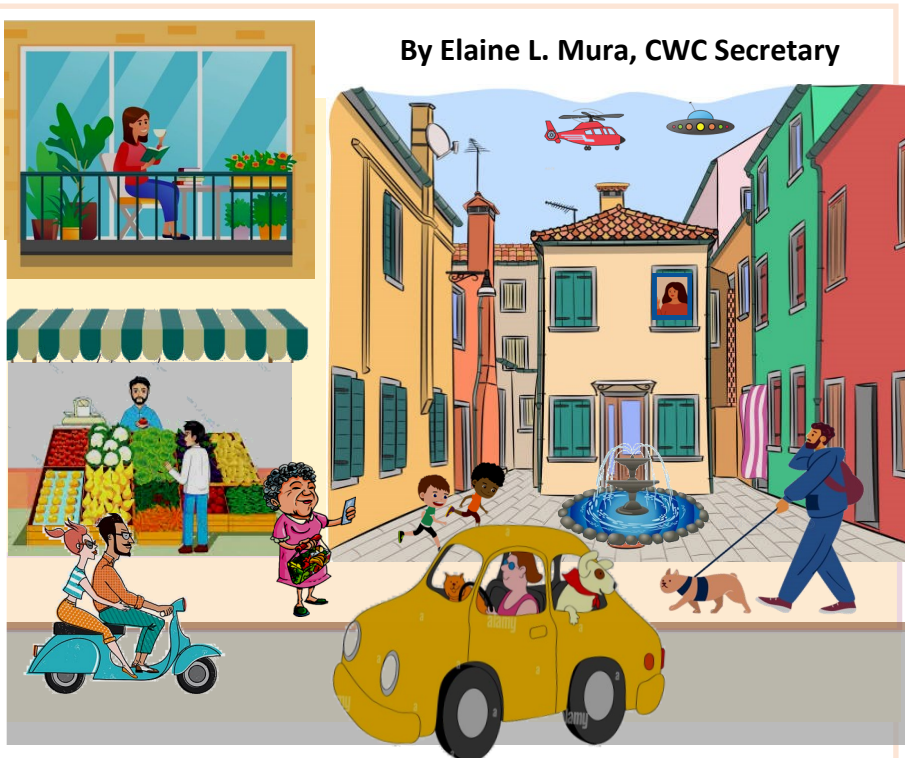
Over a span of years, she wrote ten novels set in Italy, seven set in England, and her latest set in England. Now she wants to change pace and write a historical novel “because a novelist must always try something new...there are only so many plots to go around ... and so many archetypes to describe.”

Christobel’s advice for writers was clear: “Sit down, write, and don’t stop until it’s finished.” She added that she considers editing a luxury, since she is often contracted to write a book a year. She told writers to broaden their power of observation in order to maximize the positive effects of setting. But she came back to her key to writing: “Just do it!”

Christobel had some intriguing things to say about the pantsers\* and the plotter. Apparently, all of her books set in Italy (including a long series of detective novels) were written on the spur of the moment, simply evolving as she went along. However, she found writing novels set in England was a harder task; after all, it was more difficult to maintain distance in her own land. It was later in her career as she embarked on writing books set in England that she began to plot out her stories. She laughingly described her first attempt at writing a synopsis: “It ended up being 120 pages long.” When asked for a recommendation for a new reader, she quickly suggested, “The Drowning River,” the first in her series of detective novels set in Florence.

After the presentation, Program Chair Heather Bradshaw thanked Christobel and invited members to the next Club presentation on October 1, 2022 at 1 p.m.: Beverly Olevin speaking on the power of the pen when writing short stories and memoirs.

\* A pantsers is someone who, “flies by the seat of their pants,” meaning they don’t plan out anything in their story, or plan very little. Source: *Urban Dictionary*



## Your BFF

For all of its life, a dog is your BFF  
Without any strife, even if you're blind or deaf  
Dogs are sent from heaven above  
So that we have someone to love



## Love Will Never Drift

Your lover may give you a gift  
And leave as soon as you have tiffed  
By friends you may find you've been stiffed  
But a dog's love will never drift.

## Supply the Feed

With your pets you surely don't need  
A signed agreement, not indeed  
Because dogs and cats do not read  
But you know you must supply the feed



## All Ailurophiles

Cat lovers all ailurophiles  
Are loving of their pusses' wiles  
cats as they know are full of guile  
And never fail to bring forth smiles



## Throughout Its Life

You may have a child and wife  
Who are yours through joy and strife  
Who march with you to drum and fife  
But a dog loves you throughout its life

Source: [gograph@gograph.com](mailto:gograph@gograph.com)

# The Secret World of Archy and Mehitabel— Crafty Cats and Rational Roaches

Republished with the permission of *Splash Magazine*.

By Elaine L. Mura



Dan Gilvezan and Carolyn Hennesy -Photo by Bill Dow

When overworked New York Evening Sun columnist Don Marquis decided to change his perspective about the world in 1916, he discovered Archy. And then Mehitabel. Both were popular figures in the second decade of the twentieth century. And then faded from public view – only to be resurrected and adapted for stage by playwright Dan Gilvezan in the twenty-first century: “I discovered Marquis’s columns in an old book in the dusty aisles of an antiquarian bookstore and immediately fell in love with both the characters and the ideas – as well as with the delightful illustrations by George Herriman. It’s hard to believe that the columns are now over 100 years old. They remain as charming, poignant, and relevant today as when they first enchanted readers in 1916.” Eventually, Marquis parlayed his charming beings into three bestselling books.

But on to the imaginative tale of those little critters. One evening, when Don Marquis (Bill Chott) happened to return to his newspaper office late at night, he heard the clacking of his manual typewriter. When he investigated, he found a cockroach frantically hopping from key to key while composing a letter to the journalist. It turned out that the cockroach had a name – Archy (Dan Gilvezan) – and a history as a free verse poet in a previous life. Is it any wonder that he was reincarnated as a roach? But there is more. As Don and Archy become buddies, Don is introduced to a whole new world of small folk, including fleas, fruit flies, lightening bugs, and all manner of multi-footed creatures (Richard Horvitz, Kelly Stables). But the star of the evening is Mehitabel (Carolyn Hennesy), a “toujours gai” alley cat who loves her freedom and has quite a spectacular relationship history. Do you suppose that these little fellows have something of importance to offer to all of us? You’ll have to visit Archy’s Whitefire Theatre home to find out.

Director Moosie Drier helms the creative wanderings of these creatures with skill and humor. Kudos to writer/adaptor/actor Gilvezan, who does a bang-up job of portraying the delightful Archy, who manages to turn a cockroach into a very likeable and clever being with something important to say. And let’s not forget about the kittenish Mehitabel, whose street life gives new meaning to freedom. In fact, kudos to the entire ensemble cast (Gilvezan, Hennesy, Chott, Horvitz, and Stables), who’ve got just the right amount of *joi de vivre* to continuously “bug” the audience.



Dan Gilvezan and Bill Chott  
– Photo by Bill Dow

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THE SECRET WORLD OF ARCHY AND MEHITABLE is secret no more, and the audience is better for it. Congratulations for a very clever, creative look at their world – and ours – certainly a different perspective for all of us. This is a hilarious and thought-provoking piece which will charm, titillate, and warm the hearts of everyone in the theater. A winner! THE SECRET WORLD OF ARCHY AND MEHITABEL runs through October 15, 2022, with performances at 8 p.m. on Saturdays only. The Whitefire Theatre is located at 13500 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423. Tickets are \$30 (seniors \$25 on Saturday 9/17 at 3 p.m. only). For information and reservations, call 818-687-8559 or go [online](#).

# Good Vibrations

In the August Scribe, my fellow CWC-SFV member, Sam Glenn, wrote an article titled, "Vibrations," which reminded me of the song, "Good Vibrations," recorded by Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys. This memory sent me to YouTube where I listened to the song again. Hearing the groups' beautiful harmony was still as awesome as it was 50+ years ago.



By Bob Okowitz

Music takes me to another world. A world that's safe and no one can yell at me or criticize me. I'm sure a shrink would have called me 'overly sensitive' when I was young, but listening to songs was a world I could enjoy without fear of criticism.

Sometimes I would wonder, Which band do I like best—the Beatles or the Beach Boys? Both groups had INTENSE followers, but I could never choose. They were both great bands and listening to them created joy in my life.

Brian Wilson has had his share of mental health issues, but when he wrote music, he was a genius. He talked about wanting to write what was "true." I think "In My Room" stands out as a truth that's experienced by many teenagers. I was mesmerized by the song.

The early Beatles music was fun and upbeat. Later on, after visiting India, their music grew more spiritual. I have often listened to George Harrison in the past two years, while dealing with Covid Jail. I hate being socially limited by Covid, and Harrison's music helps me deal with this feeling. To me, he was the most sensitive of the Beatles.

I grew up in NYC, and Simon and Garfunkle were making great music in Queens, when I was in high school. They sang about how it felt to feel isolated. I recently learned that "The Sounds of Silence" was written after John Kennedy was assassinated. This put a whole new light on the song which I'd already enjoyed for many years.

At the same time, across the Hudson River in Newark, New Jersey, the Four Seasons created music that was fraught with teenaged anguish and joy. "Big Girls Don't Cry" described feeling pain in a relationship; "Walk Like A Man" told us about a young man's breakup with his girlfriend; "Candy Girl" described the joy of being in love.

My high school classmate, Kyle Brierley, regarded Dylan as the poet of our generation and kept his song lyrics in a binder. I think "Blowing In the Wind," and "How many roads must a man walk down?" were very powerful social commentary. "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall," warned about nuclear war—maybe war in general. Kyle was right on: in 2016, Bob Dylan was awarded a Nobel Prize for Literature. Ain't life amazing?

The flip side of Dylan's thoughtful style could be The Lovin'

Spoonful, who sang about the ups and downs of young love, like "Did You Ever Have to Make Up Your Mind," and "Darling, Be Home Soon." Funny how sentimental, joyful music is so unforgettable. Upbeat songs like that *always make me smile*.

Bob Dylan was also a great folk singer, one of many, such as Woody Guthrie. Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Peter Paul and

Mary, Joni Mitchell, and James Taylor. Crosby, Stills, and Nash had a remarkable song, "Wooden Ships." The song deals with people who left the U.S. to escape the conflict between the establishment and idealists. The line towards the end, "Who Won?" is impossible to forget.

I can't write about music from the 70's and 80's without mentioning Diana Ross and the Supremes and Stevie Wonder. The Supremes had many hits, including "Come See About Me," and "I Hear A Symphony." Their lyrics were about love lost or love found. *Rolling Stone Magazine* once listed the top artists of the Rock Era and described Diana Ross as "... a great singer who made folks feel like she was singing directly to them." Sure seemed that way to me!

Stevie Wonder won 25 Grammys over the years, with such hits as "Higher Love," and "You Are the Sunshine of My Life." His "Living for the City," was the first Motown song with social commentary. Motown had many other great groups and singers, like the Four Tops, and Temptations. Once, my wife Rita and I were out dancing and the band started playing "My Girl," by the Temptations. Several women rose up from their chairs, and gleefully danced to this beautiful song about love.

I can't write about all the great music of my youth, but I must mention The Eagles, with their haunting "Hotel California,"; Blood, Sweat, and Tears, who incorporated brass into their rock music. Their intense, "You've Made Me So Very Happy," made me feel a sweet joyfulness.

When Linda Ronstadt sang, she put her heart and soul into every line. I could feel what she sang about, which drew me closer to her music. Whomever she was talking about when she sang. "You're no good, No good, Baby, You're no good." must have been a very miserable man. Sure glad he wasn't me!

A guy named Al once said something amazing about music—something that I definitely understand:

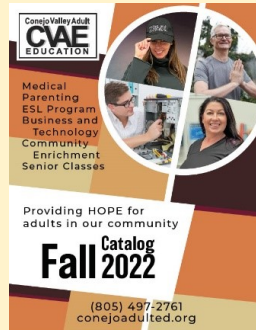
*If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music. ... I get the most joy in life out of music.*  
Albert Einstein

# Announcements from CWC-SFV President Karen Gorback

Join me for a live class in Memoir Writing at Conejo Valley Adult School in Thousand Oaks on October 7 and 14 from 9:30 - 11:30 am. For more information and to enroll, visit page 23 online at

<https://conejoadulted.org/catalogs/>

Or call (805) 497-2761



I will also be signing books at the Thousand Oaks Grant Brimhall Library Authors' Fair on Saturday, October 15 from 1-4 pm.

The library is easy to find at 1401 E. Janss Rd. Thousand Oaks. (805) 449-2660

If you've never been to this library, be sure to visit the 3,600 gallon saltwater aquarium that lines one side of the walkway between the adult and children's section. It's awesome!

## ITS TIME FOR **NANOWRIMO**: REGISTER AND START YOUR NOVEL!

### What Is NaNoWriMo?

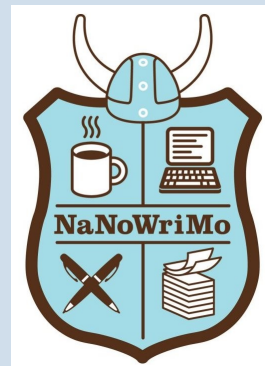
National Novel Writing Month began in 1999 as a daunting but straightforward challenge: to write 50,000 words of a novel in thirty days. Now, each year on November 1, hundreds of thousands of people around the world begin to write, determined to end the month with 50,000 words of a brand new novel. They enter the month as elementary school teachers, mechanics, or stay-at-home parents. They leave novelists.

NaNoWriMo officially became a nonprofit organization in 2006, and our programs support writing fluency and education. Our website hosts more than a million writers, serving as a social network with author profiles, personal project libraries, and writing buddies. NaNoWriMo tracks words for writers like Fitbit tracks steps, and hosts real-world writing events in cities from Mexico City, to Seoul, to Milwaukee with the help of 900+ volunteers in thousands of partnering libraries and community centers like... well, like nothing else.

NaNoWriMo is internet-famous. It's community-powered (hello, Wrimos!). It's hosted authors drafting novels like *Water for Elephants*, *WOOL*, and *Fangirl*. It's a teaching tool and curriculum taught in 5,920 classrooms, and NaNoWriMo's programs run year-round.

Whatever you thought NaNoWriMo is, it's been more than that to millions of past participants. First go to:

[Welcome | NaNoWriMo](#) for information and if you're ready for the challenge, go to: [Sign Up | NaNoWriMo](#)



Kathy Highcove, CWC-SFV editor



# SEASON TICKETS



By Gary Wosk

I didn't belong sitting in the stands right behind home plate with the blandest baseball fans in the world. They were as apathetic as could be, acting as if nothing mattered to them, a spoiled lot that was just there to be admired by those watching the game on television. Call me egotistical, but I thought I was better than them.

"Cheer up; it could be worse. Look how lucky we are," I would tell these pompous fools. I would get only blank stares, as if I was upsetting the apple cart. They interpreted my words as an insult, an affront to their royal highnesses' attitudes, all of them incapable of introspection.

These elite Dodgers fans took everything for granted, acting as if their season tickets would be renewed automatically forever, and complimentary at that.

While other fans, the real fans, scrimped and saved just to sit in the nosebleed sections or the bleachers, these obnoxious prima donnas acted as if sitting in the best seats was their birthright.

Even the stadium food wasn't good enough for these entitled snobs. No stadium food for these stiff; I guess that makes me a hypocrite since I didn't have an appetite for what was on the menu either.

You'd think they would have greeted me with open arms after being gone for so long, but that too was beneath them. Apparently, they were incapable of showing any feelings, unlike myself. Their attitude was just go with the flow. I finally realized that they were jealous of my good fortune.

"It was a lucky a break, nothing more," I explained to them. "I'm not sure how I landed up in downtown." They weren't buying it and accused me of abandonment, the old guilt trip.

I did confess to the ingrates, however, that, "I liked getting away," which only made matters worse. That was

the straw that broke the camel's back. I wasn't bragging, but that's how they interpreted it. I was a pariah to them for the rest of the season.

The smarty pants who arranged for us to be at every home game were determined that I wouldn't go missing again, so they made sure that I was firmly tied down. The last thing they wanted was to have to explain to the public again why I wasn't sitting next to Angelina Jolie and George Clooney any longer.



"Freddie is not going anywhere," I heard the person in charge boast. "It's funny how only he got away and the others stayed put. You know, he doesn't seem like the others. I can't quite put my finger on it." Hearing those words lifted my spirits.

So, there I was, sitting next to these placid imbeciles who

never got excited about anything even when a player on the Dodgers hit a grand slam. They just looked straight ahead with the same dull looks on their faces.

Even though they didn't want anything to do with me, I tried my best to make amends with them, but mum was the word. And to tell you the truth, I'm not the best communicator either. It's hard to get the words out and when I do, I doubt if the numbskulls are listening.

Looking back, I must confess that I was a fool for not appreciating all that I had. It sure beats where I am now, in a drab warehouse with all the other cardboard cut-outs next to me, waiting for when we're needed again. And maybe, just maybe, if I'm lucky, I'll be able to get away once more when a strong gust of wind sends me flying to downtown.

## LUXOR

By Elaine L. Mura

**E**gypt is an ancient country which elevated temples and tombs to new heights of magnificence. For the resolute tourist, a trip to Egypt must include the tell-tale signs everywhere of a glorious history spanning over 3,000 years. Nowhere is this more evident than in Luxor (aka the New Kingdom capital of Thebes). Located just over 400 miles south of Cairo, Luxor lies on both sides of the Nile as it bisects the country. In Luxor, both the East and West banks of the Nile are mandatory visits for the intrepid traveler.

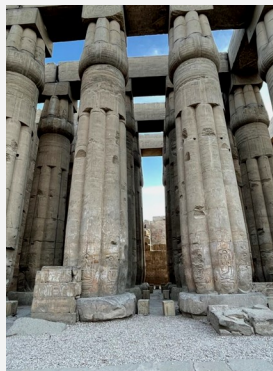


Photo by Elaine L. Mura

Tombs and temples seem to call to us from the beating heart of Luxor. When you first arrive, making the choice among so many of which site to visit first is one of the most difficult decisions of the day. But, then, it's impossible not to visit the granddaddy of all temples immediately. You'll probably want to set your alarm for 4 or 5 in the morning to get ready to visit **Karnak Temple**, one of the most important sites in all of Egypt. Be warned that, by the time noon rolls around, scorching heat may turn the sizzle of Karnak into physical distress rather than impressive memories.

Built over the course of 1,300 years by succeeding kings and queens (each of whom added something unique), Karnak is the largest temple in the world and has been called complete perfection by many. Eighty thousand men reportedly worked on the temple, which was buried under sand for over a thousand years. Get ready for a big-time walk if you're planning to see all of this huge complex. There are various temples, tombs, rows of sphinxes, carvings, flagpoles, statues, pillars, obelisks, and an open-air museum and sacred lake. And that's just the beginning. A word of caution: it will seem as if everyone in Egypt has come to Karnak on the day you visit, and the word crowd will quickly become superfluous. Regardless of any small details blocking your way, there is nothing which can compare to standing motionless between the parallel rows of mini-sphinxes or amid the queues of towering carved columns while staring upwards at the heaven those ancients dreamed about and sought after. For you night owls, there is a stirring Sound and Light show after dark.

Keep those hiking shoes on – and plan on another very early morning – for your eagerly anticipated trip to the Valleys of the Kings and Queens and Nobles. Of course, your trip will begin with the **Valley of the Kings**, where some of the most impressive arche-

ological discoveries in decades lie. Years of excavation eventually revealed that this remote valley was the necropolis of the New Kingdom pharaohs. Would that all those eager archeologists were as canny as the hordes of “unofficial” seekers who sacked most of the tombs years before they were “discovered.” Sixty-three tombs have been found in the valley, each with its own special feature. For example, the tomb of Ramses VI contains the inner sarcophagus of the pharaoh, while tombs of Horemheb, Amenhotep,

Tuthmosis III, and others are filled with stunning carvings – some still bearing traces of vivid color – of the Book of the Dead and other funerary rituals, as well as the gods and goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon patiently waiting to welcome the monarch to the afterlife. One of the deepest tombs in the valley has 90 steps leading down to multiple levels, while one of the longest spans 350 feet. Be aware that only a few of the tombs are open for public viewing at any one time. However, even a limited portion provides intriguing things to see – and lots of exercise.

But probably the most famous tomb still awaits – the **Tomb of Tutankhamun**. Compared to many of the other spectacular tombs in the Valley of the Kings, King Tut's tomb is small – in keeping with his brief reign and youthful death. After all, he ascended the throne when he was nine years old and died at 18. Scholars have suggested that the “boy king” was controlled and manipulated by others – and his demise may have been under questionable circumstances. Apparently, royal intrigue surrounded his reign and may have been a constant over the three Kingdoms. So what makes this tomb so special? Not only did King Tut's tomb receive more fanfare than other tombs in the area – but it was one of the only tombs which was not pillaged by robbers. Thus, it is still possible to view – in museum settings – Tut's gold and jewel encrusted three sarcophagi, as well as the jewelry, furniture, and other artifacts assembled to send Tut to the next world in style. Even though the tomb is not as elegantly decorated as many others, it contains something very special: Tut's mummy, which offered some new findings – but also raised some new questions. Scholars found that his leg was deformed – and then there is that unexplained hole in his head.

But there is still more to see. Between the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens lies the **Mortuary Temple of**

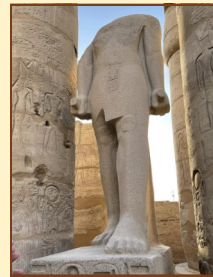
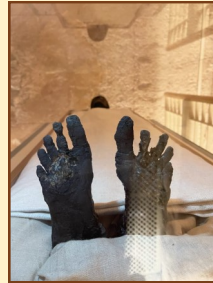
*(Continued on page 11)*

*(Continued from page 10)*

**Hatshepsut** (known to many as hot chicken soup), the female pharaoh of Egypt who ruled for 18 years and introduced the concept of diplomacy to Egypt. Despite her creative alternatives to war with neighboring states, statues depicting the lady king are in poor repair, perhaps a testimony to her penchant for wearing the royal beard. Set at the foot of a sheer limestone cliff face, the imposing colonnaded temple sports its share of chapels, sphinxes, statues, and carvings – three stories connected by ramps. The trees from neighboring countries that dotted the area in times past have all but disappeared. From the air, this temple stands out as a spectacular reminder of Hatshepsut's reign.

To the southwest of the Valley of the Kings lies the **Valley of the Queens**, a burial site for royal wives and children dating from the reign of Ramses I. Few tombs are open to the public, but it's worth a trip to see Queen Nefertari's tomb if you can get special permission and pay a steep fee. In general, the tombs are not as well maintained as the more famous Valley of the Kings. Finally, the **Valley of the Nobles** contains the tombs of more than 400 Theban nobles and high officials. What marks these tombs as special is their emphasis on day-to-day life in old Egypt – rather than on the world of the kings and the Gods. These tombs share the lives of servants, minor bureaucrats, middle-class families, farmers, fishermen, and hunters of the time. There is little carving due to the poor quality of the stone in the area; however, the paintings often retain their vivid colors and provide a fascinating panorama of life in the New Kingdom. A sharp-eyed tourist might notice some human bones tucked away in the sand. Again, only a small number of tombs are open.

But on to Luxor itself and the **Luxor Temple**. In the heart of Luxor next to the famous Winter Palace Hotel fronting the Nile lies the temple complex – sort of a Karnak without the extensive public relations. Built around the time of Alexander the Great, scholars have suggested that Alexander wanted to demonstrate to Egyptians that he honored their traditions – and so he made sure to treat their pantheon and rituals with respect. In other words, the overall message conveyed by the Luxor Temple



seemed to be political rather than religious (or even artistic). The temple sports an interesting mixture of Greek and Egyptian elements – a blending of two styles to create a third. A glance at the carvings immediately heralded a change from the traditional mathematically squared-off images at Karnak. Suddenly, the King and Gods had curves rather than the ubiquitous parallel lines and angles. And sometimes doing things considered unseemly at the time – like a king dancing to unseen music. In fact, Luxor Temple has the most complete scenes of the annual Opet Festival, where a procession carried images of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu from Karnak to Luxor.

But the surprises keep coming. At the very end of the complex we come upon something unexpected – a Christian church emerging from a temple wall. Over time, colorful Christian scenes began to peek through the dust. Keep looking up, and you'll see another startling change. Rather than traditional Egyptian papyrus and folded lotus buds at the top, the capitals are now grandly embellished; and Greek orthodox underpinnings again emerge. If you keep looking up, you can also see a mosque above your head. It seems that, while the entire complex was covered in sand and silt for centuries, people forgot about its existence and built a village directly over the temple – including the thirteenth century Abu al-Haggag Mosque. When the village was removed and the sand was cleared away in the late 1800s so that archeologists could do their thing, the mosque remained nearly suspended in air atop eons of sand. Happily, there was another entrance on the other side. As you stand at the entrance to the temple, you'll probably stop to admire two enormous seated statues of Ramses, as well as a huge pink granite obelisk, one of a pair whose twin now graces the Place de la Concorde in Paris. A visit to Luxor Temple will convince you that this site contains its own hidden mysteries.

Luxor has so much to offer that it's possible to spend days just exploring. And Luxor is only one small piece of the ancient Egyptian puzzle. It's important that you don't let the heat fry all your plans. Just remember that these folks have been dealing with blazing sun and shifting sands for over 3,000 years.

# Invitation

music begins  
strange instruments and rhythms  
folk songs and melodies  
beckoning to the dancers  
  
sometimes in groups  
sometimes along  
we drift into a circle  
as if led by a Pied Piper  
into steps of the dance

musical notes become part of me  
and I am one with the others  
ache in my muscles  
is forgotten  
sadness in my heart  
slowly fades  
while I quicken to the melody

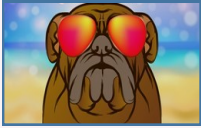
warmth of hands I hold  
eases me  
smiles surrounding me  
are a gift  
doors of grief and pain close  
and music  
echoes back from them  
as the circle I am part of  
draws closer

Lillian Rodish



# In Ancient Times, Dog Star Sirius Sent The Dog Days of Summer

By Phyllis Butcher



**T**he “dog days of summer” — what does that mean, exactly? We have to go back to Greek and Roman times for the answer. It was thought that the period between July 24 and August 24 was evil, when the sea would boil, wine would turn sour and dogs would go mad! But why “dog days”?

How shocking to think that man’s best friend was somehow connected to a time of despair! Well, it seems that the connection refers to Sirius (the Dog Star) in the constellation Canis Major (large dog). Back in the day, Sirius was the brightest star in the Northern Hemisphere and rose approximately when the sun did. But somewhere along the line, the sun and moon tweaked their gravitational pulls, and Sirius was no longer there at or before sunrise. However, Caesar Augustus put us on course to associate the month of August (named by and for him) with unrelenting heat and humidity. If all of the above is confusing, don’t worry about it. It’s already October, and hopefully, we won’t have to endure the dog days of summer for several more months. But having gone this far, has your curiosity been piqued about the origin of some other common phrases and metaphors? Let’s take a look.

## BITE THE BULLET

Meaning: Accepting something difficult or unpleasant.  
History: There was no anesthesia before emergency surgery during battle. The surgeon made patients bite down on a bullet to distract them from the pain. *(Didn’t work if the patient accidentally swallowed the bullet.)*

## BUTTER SOMEONE UP

Meaning: To flatter someone.  
History: An ancient Indian custom involved throwing balls of clarified butter at statues of the gods to seek favor. *(Hmm..wonder if margarine would have worked)*

## GO THE WHOLE 9 YARDS

Meaning: To try one’s best.  
History: World War II Fighter pilots received a 9-yard chain of ammunition. Therefore, when a pilot used all of his ammunition on one target, he gave it “the whole 9 yards.” *(27 feet; unbelievable)*

## NO SPRING CHICKEN

Meaning: Someone who is past his prime.  
History: New England chicken farmers generally sold chickens in the spring, so the chickens born in the spring-time yielded better earnings than the chickens that survived the winter. Sometimes, farmers tried to sell old birds for the price of a new spring chicken. Clever buyers complained that the bird was “no spring chicken”. *(Farmers tried to call fowl but to no avail)*

Sources: <https://usafact.org/the-dog-days-of-summer/>

[The Curious Origins of 16 Common Phrases](#)

## SAVED BY THE BELL

Meaning: Rescued from an unwanted situation.  
History: As scary as it sounds, being buried alive was once a common occurrence. People who feared succumbing to such a fate were buried in special coffins that connected to a bell above ground. At night, guards listened for any bells in case they had to dig up a living person and save them “by the bell.” *(If you really had it in for someone, you removed the clapper)*

## SLEEP TIGHT

Meaning: Sleep well.  
History: During Shakespeare’s time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. In order to make the bed firmer, one had to pull the ropes to tighten the mattress. *(There’s another name for that these days, and it has nothing to do with sleep)*

## HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

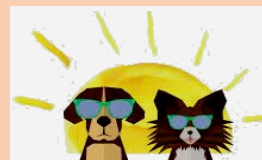
A grapevine is a system of twisty tendrils going from cluster to cluster. The communication grapevine was first mentioned in 1850s, the telegraph era. Where the telegraph was a straight line of communication from one person to another, the “grapevine telegraph” was a message passed from person to person, with some likely twists along the way. *(i.e., the uncredited forerunner of “gossip”)*

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

Meaning: Thank you for your service to this country. We reaffirm our commitment to stand up for the values you fought for: freedom, justice, and equality. History: Desert Storm, Desert Shield, 1989 *(You represent the best of America)*

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Well, enough of this TOMFOOLERY!  
We’re hot!



OCTOBER 2022

## ANNE W. LEE HAS CROSSED THE LINE FROM WRITER TO PUBLISHER.

One more CWC-SFV member has taken the plunge and self-published her first book and thus began her new role: introducing their book to the world. Recently, longtime SFV member, Anne W. Lee, has published a collection of her poetry. Read on to learn more about the SFV poet:



*I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in Woodland Hills, CA, for the past 19 years, specializing in working with women and couples through all the challenges and transitions of life. As a member of CWC-SFV chapter for over five years, I've participated in a poetry review groups with Lillian Roddick and a steady writer's critique cohort of talented CWC-SFV writers who have bestowed wisdom and encouragement upon my writing.*

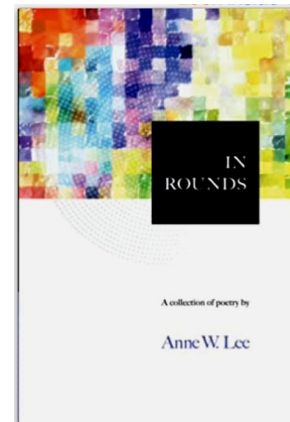
*It brings me great joy to speak at conferences and teach seminars and workshops in my field. I run a weekly women's support program at the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. As a certified Spiritual Director I help others collect their own spiritual epiphanies. Writing and publishing this book IN ROUNDS has brought me both a personal rejuvenation and consternation ... similar to life in general. This book of poetry and prose braids together my fascination with people and relationships, my own spiritual curiosity and my visceral response to nature.*

*I am regularly amazed by my grown daughter and son and am regularly amused by my husband of 40 years, comedian, and writer Robert G Lee. You can find me happily escaping to the beach to write or anywhere else I can hide out in Nature!*

Contact me at: Website: [AnneWLee.com](http://AnneWLee.com) Email: [awetherill28@gmail.com](mailto:awetherill28@gmail.com)

Find my book at :

[Amazon.com: In Rounds: A collection of poetry: 9798832233352: Lee, Anne W.: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9798832233352)



### Amazon Summary

*This collection of poetry and prose braids together Anne W. Lee's fascination with three themes-- the intriguing complexities of the human condition and personal relationships, the intimacies of her spiritual journey, and her lifelong visceral response to the majesty of Nature. Her vivid imagery, insights, and candor stimulate the imagination and invite the reader into a broad range of experiences that capture life's color palette.*

Have Good News to Share? Send It On To *The Valley Scribe*.

If you have recently been published in a community paper, anthology, e-zine, or given a talk, taken part in a writer's workshop or lectured to a group on marketing or writing topics, please send your news to me at: [kghighcove@gmail.com](mailto:kghighcove@gmail.com). Until our CWC-SFV club members are able to meet and share our news in person, this newsletter is your way to share a success.

Katherine Highcove, Editor

# Inevitable Surprise of Season

By Anne W. Lee

If there is subtlety  
within a surprise  
it is in the changing of a season  
Creeping up on me  
slowly...on its belly

The long arm of summer  
slips its grasp from humidity  
I breathe a little deeper  
My cotton shirt sticks a little less

I find my effort to keep up  
with the length of light in the day  
far less demanding  
Not pulling me into one more lap  
of productivity before bedtime

Summer's oven has broiled and crisped  
but now the knob has been dialed down  
keeping just enough coolness  
to sleep without fits and starts

Sweaters moan seductively to me  
through their nubby woolen weaves  
Sensible shoes mock the straps of  
pastel sandals for their lack of heartiness  
against approaching frost

Fruits of summer salads and breakfasts on  
porches step aside

Gourds of autumn roll in  
thick-skinned, pocked and waxy  
Mirroring tones of maple leaves

Leaves force me to witness aging gracefully  
Their skin blushing crimson  
Brown age spots speckle yellowing flesh  
Winds lilt and sing, drying their tears  
as they dance their way down to burial grounds

Reliable old lamps in corners restore securities  
A battalion of wood is stacked  
awaiting the call of duty  
Soups and roasts simmer—full-bodied  
as my grandmother's presence in her kitchen

Music of life shifts from pop to classical  
Bouncing off warm wood, Afghans and pillows  
instead of slick plastics and inflatables  
lying poolside

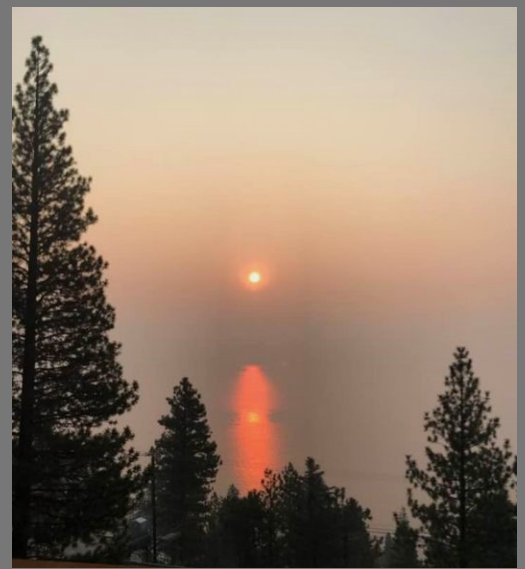
Books begin to amass again  
anticipating my curiosity  
Prayers seem to carry more solemnity

I suddenly awaken to my new seating in this cycle  
feeling familiar and gratefully taken aback  
Acquiescing to what is both known and  
unknown in this inevitable surprise of season

# CWC-SFV BRANCH INFORMATION

The California Writers Club (CWC) is dedicated to fostering professionalism in writing, promoting networking of writers with the writing community, mentoring new writers, and providing literary support for writers and the writing community as is appropriate through education and leadership. The club supports all genres, writing styles and related professions such as editing, publishing, photographic journalism and agents.

The branches, including the CWC-SFV, seeks to provide an environment where members can obtain critique of their efforts, attend workshops, and share experiences. Branches are encouraged to mentor writers of all ages by providing educational programs for adults and fostering youth programs.



Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe. Photo by Peggy Vincent

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