



Scribbles

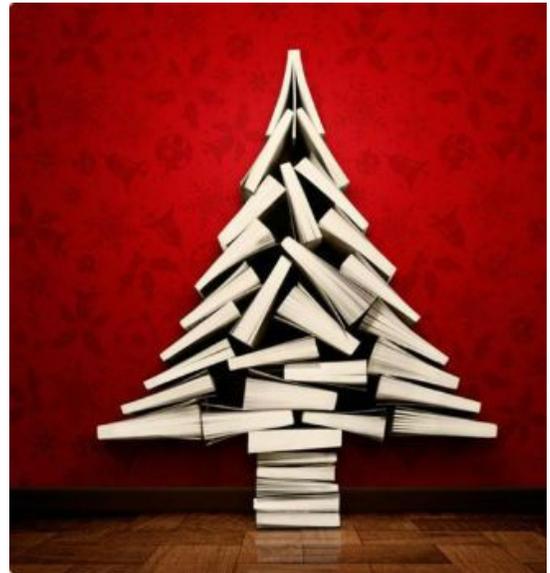
California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch

centralcoastwriters.org

December 2015

**Holidays in the Highlands
Members' Potluck
Sunday, December 6
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.**

**174 Spindrift Road, Carmel
(Details on page 3)**



Coming on January 19



Joshua Mohr: "Plaracterization"

Author of five novels, including a *San Francisco Chronicle* bestseller and *O Magazine* top read of 2009, Joshua Mohr will speak on "Plaracterization," a combination of plot and character, a strategy to help writers dig deep into "the very DNA of your story."

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Embracing the Calm

At this moment I am every bit the cliché of “The Mystery Writer.” On a fabulously rainy Sunday morning, I find myself firmly ensconced in a wingback chair, still in my pajamas (it is only 7:45 in the morning, after all), second cup of coffee at the ready, cat in my lap, soon to be diving back into my NANOWRIMO* book – after I finish my *Scribbles* submission, of course. It’s mornings such as these that make me exceedingly grateful to be a writer. I’m thankful for these small bits of stillness. Writing gives me permission to step out of the hectic, frenzied pace of my normal life. It allows me to be contemplative, to sit quietly. I’m especially appreciative at this time of the year, when writing becomes a small calm before the holiday storm.

As you read this, Thanksgiving might have passed, and myriad December holidays, whichever you celebrate (Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Bodhi, Longest Night, Saint Stephen’s Day, Festivus, Saturnalia, Yalda, Hogmanay, Boxing Day, Watch Night), will be upon us — pushing us headlong and feverishly into the New Year. Don’t we all need to find a way to embrace the calm? Carve out some special moments? How about spending a few hours with your CCW writing family?

By now you should have received an invitation to Holidays in the Highlands. This issue of *Scribbles* also has more details. I want to extend a VERY hearty thank you to CCW Vice President, Sharon Law Tucker, who does so very much for the club. Her latest feat is arranging the venue for this year’s event! This is sure to be a special, relaxing afternoon, and I hope to see you at our party on Sunday, December 6.

Now, I’ll head back to a world of my own creation, where the chaos and annoyances are completely made up. However, if some of my real world were to sneak into my writing, one might want to take a look at the victims; although, for the record, I assure you, any resemblance to anyone living or dead is purely coincidental. Writing murder mysteries – so much better than therapy.

*NANOWRIMO = [National Novel Writing Month](#).

Until we meet again, I wish you happy writing!

Laurie

See page 3 for Holidays in the Highlands details!



Your audience is one single reader. I have found that sometimes it helps to pick out one person – a real person you know, or an imagined person, and write to that one.

-- John Steinbeck

Central Coast Members' Annual December Potluck

Holidays in the Highlands



Sunday, December 6, from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.
Location: 174 Spindrifft Road, Carmel

All Members (and one guest each) are invited to this very special Tudor manor house in the Carmel Highlands! This is a beautiful, spacious private home. Thanks to our Vice President Sharon Tucker and to Melvin Kaplan/The Harry Singer Foundation for making this fabulous venue available to us for our December social event.

Getting There

You will receive your invitation and maps with driving instructions in the mail. Note that there are two right turns off of Highway One to Spindrifft Road. Take the second Spindrifft Road turn, which is the third street after the first Spindrifft Road turn.

Parking and Carpooling

Parking is limited on Spindrifft Road, so carpooling is highly recommended. A good meeting place is the Crossroads Shopping Center at Highway One and Rio Road, which is less than 10 minutes from the event location. You can leave vehicles in the parking lot and carpool from there. Several people will be arriving at 12:45 and parking near the Starbucks to aid with carpooling. Better yet, carpool with your friends from your homes!

Food and Drink

It's a potluck, so bring your favorite dish to share and include a serving utensil, as well as BYOB. Corkscrews available! Important: Remember to take your dishes and utensils with you after the party. Because the venue is a private home, we must be sure nothing is left behind. Help the cleanup crew by taking care of your own items.

We look forward to enjoying visiting with you all in this resplendent setting!



The Agent Experience: Andy Ross Speaks



Since an agent takes 15% of the money flowing to you as an author, you might as well get one who earns it. This from agent and former bookstore owner Andy Ross, who spoke at CCW's November meeting. Ross was owner of the legendary Cody's Books in Berkeley for 30 years. He opened his literary agency in 2008.

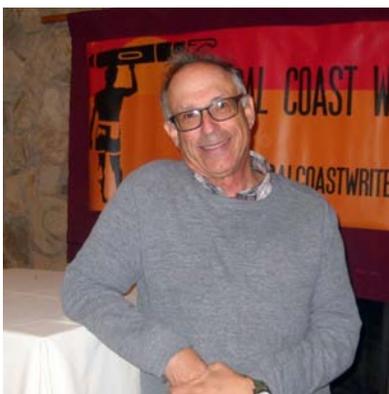
You want someone to represent you who adds value, and who knows what publishers want, Ross said, not someone who is too busy to work for you. You need an agent who is going to do what is necessary to find a home for your book.

As for publishing houses, the best one is not necessarily the biggest — it's the one most enthusiastic about your book. If you are with some mid-size publisher and you are the lead book, that may be the best place for you, Ross said.

Asked to demystify the procedure of finding an agent, Ross offered common sense advice: get a list of agents (such as the one found at agentquery.com), check out agents' websites for submission guidelines, and then send out at least 20 or 30 submissions. You'll need a query letter, and if you're writing non-fiction, you'll need a book proposal. For fiction and memoir, you'll need to have a full manuscript ready, he said.

Ross represents approximately one hundred authors, and at any given time, he might have five projects being circulated around New York, maybe selling ten or fifteen books a year, he said. Ross also wrote *Ask an Agent; Night Thoughts on Writing and Book Publishing*, released in Epub format from Smashwords, [available](#) for \$2.99.

For more information go to Andy's website and blog at andyrossagency.com or email him at andyrossagency@hotmail.com. Make sure to put "Central Coast Writers" in the subject line.



Literary Agent Andy Ross



Olivia Morgan shares her 5-minute holiday reading

Announcements

Membership News

Welcome to our new CCW members:

Richard Wheat
MC Hyyppa



Member Congratulations!

T.C. Zmak's first novel, *DARK SURF*, was named a winner in the 2015 Southern California Book Festival. It earned an Honorable Mention in the General Fiction category, and was recognized at an awards ceremony in Los Angeles on November 21.

Practice Your Reading on Video

Clarissa Conn, our club Treasurer and photographer extraordinaire, graciously offered to videotape members who are interested in practicing their reading and reviewing it for feedback, both for our monthly five-minute readers and for next year's Booktoberfest readers. See yourself as others see you! Contact Clarissa, the one with the camera, at any monthly meeting. Clarissa also will take your headshot to send in with your member profile on the [CCW website](#). (Have you submitted a profile yet?) Submit your profile and .jpg image by email (subject line "Member Profile") to info@centralcoastwriters.org.

Prompting Collaboration

South Bay Writers is offering a writing challenge to the members of the CWC Branch. Write a short story from this prompt: the one-dollar bill. If chosen, your contribution will be both an independent short story credited to you and also serve as a chapter in the overall narrative. All details [here](#).

Networking Aloud: A Writers Open Mike

Next meeting: **Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (2nd Tuesdays of the month)**

Where: OLD CAPITOL BOOKS – 559 Tyler St., Monterey, CA 93940

Our free monthly event is open to the public **every second Tuesday: NETWORKING ALOUD: A WRITERS OPEN MIKE**. Come early & sign up for a five-to-seven minute reading from any genre: prose, screenplay, poetry, or essay, following 15 minutes from a featured published reader. We applaud one another; no critique allowed.

Tuesday, **December 8**, will feature realtor **Richard Warren** reading from his recent independently published *Hello Moon, For the Child in All of Us*, beautifully illustrated by Jill Fressinier. In this short and profound storybook, Eve wakes up and engages the moon in dialogue, answering the moon's question "Do you know who you are?"

January 12th will feature **Martha Graham-Waldon**, a Santa Cruz writer and activist who is the author of the memoir, *Nothing Like Normal: Surviving a Sibling's Schizophrenia*. After an idyllic childhood, she witnessed her sister's downward spiral into schizophrenia as they both journeyed through adolescence. Her struggle to survive and move forward on a journey of self-discovery will resonate with anyone who has known the heartbreak of mental illness in their family, while inspiring hope and healing as well. nothinglikenormal.com.

On **February 9**, we'll open with a staged reading by **Carol Marquart** from her play "Mark Twain and the Wild Wild West, 1863-1868."

Featured readers needed for 2016 – Contact phanson@csumb.edu

Direct questions to Pat Hanson at 831-601-9195 or co-emcee Janice Rocke at 831-521-0375.

“Free to Be Me”



Jean Bennett

Jean Bennett has been writing poetry since she was in the sixth grade. “I sat on a chair [and read to my mother] as I was writing my poems,” Jean remembers. “She listened to my work while she washed the dishes.”

Fast-forward to her adult years, and it’s clear Jean is content with the niche she embraced early on. Graduating from the University of Oregon with a master’s degree in early childhood and a master’s in poetry, she comprised her thesis solely of poetry. That thesis remains in the University of Oregon library.

Jean has seen her poetry published in CA Quarterly and several other poetry magazines. With a long list of published titles to back her, she advises aspiring poets to find a group of like-minded individuals with whom to share their work. As for her own writing routine, Jean can find inspiration in a cup of coffee or a breaking wave. “When I’m in good form, I write after breakfast almost every day,” she says. “I usually have a pen or pencil with me wherever I go, and I’ve often written while on a blanket at the beach.”

Though she’s reluctant to don the title of retiree, Jean, who joined CCW earlier this year, embraces the time she now has to write each day. “I’m free to be me,” she says. “Book club, ukulele, CCW, church.” In addition to poetry, Jean also writes short stories, and one of her children’s stories was published in *The Christian Science Monitor*. A story she wrote for adults was published in *Spudman* magazine.

As is the case with many writers, Jean hopes to someday garner well-deserved recognition for her work. But in the meantime, she’ll keep plugging away, jotting down ideas as they present themselves and writing every day.

Her guidance for all fellow CCW members? “Just keep writing!”

Michelle Smith’s articles have been published in a variety of magazines. Her website is <http://theebonyquill.com>.



Poems by C. J. Shoemaker

We Did Our Best

Some call it spunk, but at the time I thought it pretty foolish
the day our little girl stepped up and challenged that sixth grader.
Of course she did what she thought right to help her little friend.
And that's why she persisted when he said, "I'll get you later."

And when the players' parents tried to undermine the coach,
and blame him for their losses, said that Coach had failed the test,
they tried to get our son to join them saying Coach had failed.
But he stood up and faced them with, "Well, we all did our best."

I'm sure we all hope for the best in planning for the future,
and want our children to achieve success, security.
We question their decisions and wish they'd heed advice.
We hope that they will really be the best that they can be.

Now their decisions have been made; I think that they've done well.
When sitting in the evening, when we've finished all our chores,
it gives us a good feeling just to know how others see them,
rememb'ring what that fellow said, "I hope my kids turn out like yours."

You Never Know

I hugged my son and kissed him
as he got into his car.
A fellow who was with me
said, "Oh, that's the way you are!"
Another said, "It just ain't right
to raise a boy that way.
You never know how he'll turn out."
I couldn't think of what to say.

But then the third man spoke these words
in a quiet, even voice.
"I know you fellahs think you're smart,
but I kind of like his choice.
I raised five boys with an iron hand,
did the best that I knew how.
But I lost two in Viet Nam.
Wish to God I could kiss 'em now."

Robert Mitchum



Robert Mitchum was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, August 6, 1917 and died after a long acting career on July 1, 1997 in Santa Barbara, California. He was married to Dorothy Spence Mitchum from 1940 until his death. They had three children together, two boys and one girl. Robert Mitchum believed that he had American Indian blood.

Besides acting, he was a film editor, author, composer, and singer. As an actor, he was considered the soul of film noir by Roger Ebert. Robert Mitchum was also considered the forerunner of the anti-heroes that were popular in the 1950's and 1960's.

A few of his best known films are *Night of the Hunter*, *El Dorado*, and *Heaven Knows Mr. Allison*. He never won an Academy Award, although he was nominated. He did win a Golden Globe and a Lifetime Achievement Award, and he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Most people do not know that Robert Mitchum also wrote free-form poetry throughout his career. Two of the more interesting poems that he wrote are "Reagan" and "Out of The Past." He did have style in his poetry writing, which is why collectors are still searching for Robert Mitchum's lost poems.

For Reagan

He'll go far, of that I'm sure
since grease and a smile
will get you a mile in this town.

People love him, but what do
they know? He's just another
B-grade star with an A-grade grin
and a glad-hand ready for
any and all.

Fuck them all, I say. Only a few
here are worth their salaries
and the rest are mannequins
dressed for the window show.
Jesus, maybe New York was the
place, but I'd miss the beach and
the sunsets here. I'm damn lucky
even if I can't have it all.

Out of the Past

These hills, that ocean out there, the sun
heating these roadstered streets at
noon where the young and the beautiful
pass me with their eyes empty of light
but filled with the darkness of longing.

Too often I've lost myself in them,
swallowed the dark draught and followed
them west, under the setting moon
to the edge of the world and oblivion
until the sun again ripples the air
above these roadstered streets
and dressed in someone else's clothes
I rise to become whoever I may be today.

By Robert Mitchum

Contests and Conferences

By Patricia Watson



CONTESTS

Minotaur Books/Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Competition 2016

Deadline: December 14, 2015, 11:59 EST

Entry Fee: \$00.00 — Free, no reading fees.

Website: us.macmillan.com/minotaurbooks/writing-competitions

Enter one unpublished crime novel by submitting author, in the English language, in book length no less than approximately 65,000 words. Self published work may be considered unpublished in this competition. Please read publication requirements carefully. Submission guidelines and downloadable form are on the website.

Prize: One standard book contract with Minotaur Books, a division of St. Martin's Press, with \$10,000 paid against future royalties.

Writer's Digest Short Story Contest

Deadline: December 14, 2015

Entry Fee: \$25.00

Website: writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/short-short-story-competition for guidelines and submission forms. (Early-bird entry is over, but you can still apply. See the [Entry Form](#).)

Prizes: One First Place Winner will receive: \$3,000 in cash, their short story title published in Writer's Digest magazine's July/August 2016 issue, a paid trip to the ever-popular Writer's Digest Conference, a copy of the 16th Annual Writer's Digest Short Short Story Competition Collection, a copy of the 2016 Novel & Short Story Writer's Market, a copy of the 2016 Guide to Literary Agents.

Second Place Winner will receive: \$1,500 in cash, their short story title published in Writer's Digest magazine's July/August 2016 issue, a copy of the 16th Annual Writer's Digest Short Short Story Competition Collection, a copy of the 2016 Novel & Short Story Writer's Market, a copy of the 2016 Guide to Literary Agents.

Additional Prizes: There are prizes for 3rd to 25th places, see website for details.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

New York Writer's Pitch Conference, an Algonkian Conference

Date: December 10-13, 2015

Location: Ripley Greer Studios, 520 8th Avenue, New York NY

Cost: \$895.00 per person, not including lodging, meals, airfare and transportation.

Website: newyorkpitchconference.com/; Customer service line: 1-800-250-8290

A four-day small group immersion conference with opportunities to sharpen and practice pitches with editors from most of the major publishing houses. Number of participants is limited, so submit applications as soon as possible.



It May Sound Silly, But...

If we shake the tree, the ripe fruit will fall. Or if we just tug gently, it will fall into our hand. Why force them if they're not ready?

I believe that much the same is true when we write. We don't convince people by pontificating like a know-it-all. Just say enough that the readers think they came up with the good ideas themselves.

I learned teaching methods at the university, but that didn't guarantee that kids would learn. We teach positive values by what we say and especially by what we do — but the learning comes from within the student. We teach respect by showing respect, and kindness by showing kindness. What they truly learn is a result of their own perspective of what we attempt to teach.

There is an abundance of literature depicting cruelty, violence and avarice, resulting in more of the same. What we write could certainly include, or suggest, creative resolutions rather than negative knee-kick reactions by our characters. Our readers might enjoy seeing their own personal values come into play.

As a child, I became aware of the brutality of name calling and ridicule. Oh, yes. It's true. My mother named me Claire after my father, Claire Delmer. He, in turn, chose his grandfather's name, Jonathan, as a middle name for me. In the '40s and '50s, being named Claire was like a boy named Sue. I finally decided to switch to my middle name. In the meantime, I learned the value of being considerate to others; and noticed the devastating effect that cruelty had on children more sensitive than I.

When I realized that Claire Jonathan means God gave light, I felt that it behooved me to pass the light on to other people.

When I asked the students in my foreign language classes to evaluate the behavior of characters from the stories we were reading in the target language, they produced some interesting comments, such as "It's a blessing to be a blessing to others." Wow! You can't teach that sort of thing. It comes from the heart of the student. I was delighted with the class discussion following that statement, made by one of their peers: They talked about helping people in the Hood. "No way! Do ya get community service credit?" — "Who cares? It's fun to help people."

A principal once said that he chose me because I think outside the box. I'm not known for keeping my mouth shut. I listen and ask questions. And, like a lightbulb above the head in cartoons, many a faculty decision resulted from my ridiculous "Hey, what if we ..." People would laugh, but then a teacher would say, "No, but what we COULD do ..."

Readers may not always agree with what we say, but they may become creative in their own way because of what we have written. And maybe even more considerate than before.

Be well, and do good work.
Jonathan

The Last Word

By Lana Bryan

Four Editors Walk into a Bar



Well, actually, it was Petra restaurant. The occasion was a send-off for Laura Emerson, who, the next day, was off to San Luis Obispo to start her next life adventure. I joined Laura, Joyce Krieg, and Leslie Patiño for this farewell luncheon. Each one of us has served as editor of *Scribbles*.



Many of you know Laura was one of the first members of CCW. She recently sent me the very first issue of *Scribbles* when she and Martin Dodd were coeditors. They were both too busy to do it alone, but it was suggested that they work together. So working on their own sections, they got the job done.

In true reporter form (pre-email days), Laura remembers driving to Carmel-by-the-Sea to take a photograph and get information for an article, and also to Patricia Hamilton's office for the same.

On producing the first newsletters before CCW could afford copy services, Joyce offered this: "We used the copy machine in Harold Grice's office to run off *Scribbles*. When I was editor, Ken Jones handled this duty, and later Beth Roybal. I only had one experience with the tiny, slow, clunky home office copier, which was obviously designed for making one copy of a letter, not bulk copies of an 11x17 double-sided newsletter."

Laura has already contacted two writers' clubs in SLO (one is a branch of CWC, like ours; the other is an independent group). Everything fell into place to make it comfortable for her to make the switch. We wish Laura the very best in her new home near the beach. We'll miss you, Laura!

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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centralcoastwriters.org

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Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:

centralcoastwriters.org



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