



Scribbles

California Writers Club—Central Coast Writers Branch

centralcoastwriters.org

July 2017

Tuesday, July 18

Jordan Rosenfeld

Get Intimate with Your Characters



Those books you can't put down until your eyelids are sandy and your brain is buzzing at two a.m.—what makes them compelling? Unforgettable, unique characters. Mastery of Point of View (POV) allows readers to engage intimately with characters. **Jordan Rosenfeld** will discuss key character cues and the elements of each point of view for masterful character development.

Rosenfeld is author of five books on writing and three novels. Her newest book is [*Writing the Intimate Character: Create Unique, Compelling Characters Through Mastery of Point of View*](#), as well as [*A Writer's Guide to Persistence, Writing Deep Scenes*](#) (with Martha Alderson), and [*Make a Scene*](#). Jordan's freelance work has been published in *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Scientific American*, and many more. [@JordanRosenfeld](#) jordanrosenfeld.net

Sunday, August 20

Members & Guests Summer BBQ

Whispering Pines Park on Pacific Street in Monterey

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Note: No General Meeting in August



Read all about the BBQ on page 4!

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Life—a Daring Adventure or Nothing

I'm not cute enough to be stupid.

The younger me was able to feign sweet ineptitude (at least I hope I was faking it). This undeniably made certain situations easier; no one asks very much of you if they believe you are inept. However, the ability to pull off a sham of ignorance diminishes with age, much the same way chattels depreciate. Older is expected to equal wiser, and I'm okay with that.

The trade-off, or maybe the payback, for those times when I allowed others to do the thinking for me is that now I understand the pleasure that comes with being recognized as knowledgeable—even if the scope of my intellect is limited.

With this letter I begin my 3rd year as the president of the Central Coast Writers. I stepped into this position with a feeling of “holy moly what have I gotten myself into,” and I'll admit to still feeling that way on occasion. This club is busy! Everyone on the CCW Executive Committee works hard to assure our club thrives, grows, and is a service to our members. While we can't do the writing for you, we can encourage you. We can expose you to others who understand your journey. We can provide information to help you along your path. And we can have fun together while doing those things.

As you know, it's time to renew membership to our club. We've received quite a few renewals, but I won't take any credit for that. This club is a fantastic place with or without me; however, I am thrilled that I haven't driven you off screaming. To those brave souls who are sticking with me for my next year as president I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Planning is in the works for our summer BBQ and Holiday party, more workshops, and fabulous speakers—to name some of the benefits of membership.

Last month's letter from the president mentioned fear, and how some writers, if not all writers, feel a fear that, simply put, keeps us from fulfilling our potential. I hope that being a member of CCW helps you put that fear aside and move forward. There is a certain feeling of security found in communing with the like-minded. Life should be a “daring adventure or nothing,” and I hope CCW remains a part of your adventure.

“Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold. Faith alone defends. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.”
—Helen Keller

***Until we meet again, Happy Writing,
Laurie***



Playing with Fact and Fiction: Susan Sherman

Don't worry about recreating an historical world in perfect detail. It won't be perfect. It will be an imagined facsimile of that world. If you feel confident writing it, your readers will feel comfortable reading it. That was one of the messages from our June speaker, Susan Sherman, author of [*If You Are There*](#).

Sherman's latest novel explores how physicists Marie and Pierre Curie experimented with spiritualism in their scientific quest to discover the source of radium's energy. By paralleling the scientific and spiritual worlds, Sherman employs an interesting cast of characters. One is Eusapia Palladino, a famous Italian medium of the late 19th and early 20th century, who drew respected figures into her circle. Many believed in her powers, even after she was exposed for trickery.

Historical fiction allows the author to mix fact with a world of his or her own making, Sherman said. People are always asking her whether details in the novel are true or not. "People like to surmise. They like to wonder, is that true?" she said.

Sherman is an avid researcher, poring through memoirs, newspapers, sociological studies, maps, and images from the period she writes about. "I love to get buried in research," she said. "I come up with so much stuff, I have to be selective [about what to include]."

Working in television earlier in her career, Sherman still tends to think of a story as written in three acts: in the first she introduces her characters, shows what they want, and what's stopping them from getting it. She defines her characters by the choices they make—including their mistakes. By the end of that first section, it's clear what's at stake for her characters. In the second act she amps up the stakes, and in the third, she builds up all the emotional turmoil, moving toward a final crisis or conflict.

Historical fiction is clearly a love for this author. "Putting my characters into actual events is a real fun thing to do," she said. Discussion followed regarding one unique aspect of the genre: historically speaking, readers know what's going to happen, but the characters don't.



5-minute reader Nancy Middleton



Speaker Sharon Sherman



Joyce Krieg holds the CWC *Literary Review* containing Mike Latta's story.



Leslie Patino points the way with a new directional sign.

This is Us

Remember those warnings we get from Laurie at every general meeting about how, if you are wanted by the FBI, it might be wise not to show up at places where your photograph might be taken? Here are some shots by Gary Parker from the June meeting. You were warned. It appears we are having fun!



Announcements

Membership News

Welcome to our new CCW members:

Mark Alexander
Alka Joshi
Sara Paff
Christopher Tobin



Member Congratulations!

Mary Feliz's [Dead Storage](#) launches July 18, the third in the Maggie McDonald Mystery Series published by Kensington's Lyrical Press. Silicon Valley Professional Organizer Maggie McDonald tackles her toughest case yet when a dear friend is falsely accused of murder. Aside from a depressed mastiff with PTSD, the only witness is an undocumented teen. Can Maggie come up with a solution without putting her friend, her family, and her community at risk? maryfeliz.com

Harriet Lynn performs "Ella Shields: The Woman Behind the Man" on Wednesday, July 19, at 1:30 pm at the Gentrain Society, Monterey Peninsula College, Lecture/Forum 3. Free (\$2 parking fee). Harriet, a professional performing artist/playwright/ offers her entertaining one-hour program donned in top hat, white tie, and tails about the legendary British Music Hall/vaudeville male impersonator, Ella Shields. Ella's "look" is the likely inspiration for "Victor" in Victor/Victoria; starring Julie Andrews. Ms. Lynn's website is h-tac.com.



The last chance to see **Carol Marquart's** "The Golden Girls of Hollywood" is Wednesday, July 5, 1:30 pm. at the Gentrain Lecture Hall, Monterey Peninsula College. The reading stars **Nancy Swing**, Cynthia Guthrie, **Mary Feliz**, and **Harriet Lynn**.

CCW's Annual BBQ Sunday, August 20, 1:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.



August means CCW's annual BBQ with the always popular Grilling Grices! In fact, Harold, Sam and their grilled goodies are so popular that we've outgrown the Patiño's backyard. This year we'll gather on Sunday, August 20, from 1:30 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at Whispering Pines Park on Pacific Street in Monterey. This is the charming, shady little park nestled in a canyon just south of the library and a string of medical offices as you head out of downtown Monterey toward Del Monte Center. Parking is limited to 30 vehicles, so carpooling is encouraged. CWC raffle lady Cheri Love and her physical therapist husband Mark Young have generously offered additional parking at their office, Pacific Physical Therapy, 929 Pacific Street, a five- to ten-minute walk to the park. Watch the August issue of *Scribbles* for complete driving and parking directions.

As usual, our BBQ is not intended as a potluck, but if you'd like to bring a side dish or dessert to share, that would be a lovely gesture. The club will provide bottled water—you bring whatever else you'd like to drink. Yes, beer and wine are permitted at Whispering Pines. Unlike past years, we won't be urging you to "BYOC"—bring your own chair. One of the many factors that attracted us to Whispering Pines is the covered picnic area with seating for seventy. If you prefer a seat with a back, you're welcome to bring a chair and sit with your feet in the grass. And in case you're wondering, the park does have bathrooms.

A final note: For years the Grices quietly footed the bill for the fantastic spread they put on. Two years ago, the Executive Committee started setting out a donation jar, with a suggested donation of \$10 per person, or whatever you can afford and think is appropriate. This "kitty" will follow us to the park, with our thanks. —Submitted by Leslie Patiño

Announcements (continued)

Executive Board Elections

At the June General Meeting, the attending membership voted to re-elect the sitting officers for our Central Coast Writers Club. The board members for another year are:

President Laurie Sheehan
Vice President Sharon Law Tucker
Secretary Joyce Krieg
Treasurer Clarissa Conn

Congratulations to all and thank you for all you do!

LET'S GET TOGETHER AND JUST WRITE!

Magic happens when you make a regular appointment to work on your writing. Even more magic happens when you get together with other like-minded creative spirits. Please join your fellow CCW members for a fun, informal session of writing every Tuesday morning, 9:30 to 11 a.m., at Crema, 481 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove.

No sharing, no critiquing—just 90 minutes of hunkering down over a laptop or notepad and making some progress on our writing projects.

Free admission and free WiFi (albeit a somewhat weak signal). Coffee and breakfast pastries available for purchase in the downstairs coffee bar. Look for us up on the second floor, the dining room on the west side, toward the back. Yes, we are there every Tuesday morning!

Hint: if you are easily distracted, bring earphones/earbuds and some favorite tunes or white noise. It can be loud and busy in Crema depending on how many other customers show up, and the piped-in music may not be to your liking. You know us writers—any excuse to keep us from actually getting any work done, right?

We will not be meeting on Tuesday, July 4, due to the Independence Day holiday. If you have questions, send a message to Joyce Krieg, pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com.

Two New Member Discounts Arranged by California Writers Club

1. *Family Tree Magazine* (for genealogical writers and researchers) offers CWC members \$3 off a one-year subscription (7 issues). You can receive a discounted *Family Tree Magazine* rate for 7 issues of \$24.00 (instead of \$27.00). When ordering by phone (888-403-9002), mention source key: 87DCWC. Expiration of this agreement is 6/30/2018.
2. *Writer's Digest* offers a discount to CWC members from this link: ssl.palmcoastd.com/0768P/apps/COMBO_CW2?ikey=C**W41. Expiration of this agreement is 12/31/17. An opt-in box says "Please send me *Writer's Digest's* and *F+W's* FREE newsletter plus exclusive offers via e-mail. You'll also receive special offers from our marketing partners..." If you do not check the box to opt in, the discount still applies.

Free Online Writing Classes Offered by Livermore Library

The Livermore Public Library offers a free online classes on many subjects, a full 24-hour class that starts every month, to complete at your leisure. The writing courses include Mystery Writing, Writing for Children, Fantasy Writing, Write Your Life Story, Writing Young Adult Fiction, Write and Publish Your Nonfiction Book, Publish and Sell Your E-Books, and many more. Check it out at [this link](#). Thanks to Sharon Law Tucker for this valuable resource.

Two Monthly Writerly Events: Networking Aloud and Curated Words

Networking Aloud is at Old Capitol Books (559 Tyler St, Monterey) every second Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., coordinated by [Janice Locke](#). A featured writer shares for 15-20 minutes, then it's open mic with 5- to 7-minute time slots. On July 11, the featured writer is **Liz MacDonald** who lives, writes and keeps bees on the edge of the Los Padres National Forest. Her story about becoming a late-blooming sports fan aired recently on NPR's "Only a Game." Her travel essay "Propane and Hot Sauce" appears in *A Moveable Feast*, an anthology of travel and food writing. She works as a web content strategist at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Curated Words is a free event with a comfortable atmosphere. Provocative and/or beautiful literary presentations. Each writer has been chosen for the quality of their work and its unique contribution to an eclectic assemblage. Every last Thursday of the month at Juice N Java, 599 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove. 6:45 to 8:45 p.m.



Finding Her Voice

Debra Busman

Growing up, Debra Busman was a voracious reader and wonderful oral storyteller. But she struggled to express her feelings about childhood abuse in writing—sentiments—“locked in as yet unspoken silences”—until she was well into her late thirties.

“I had stories that needed telling,” Debra says, “and a very dear person once told me I was good at it.”

So it was with determination and purpose that Debra earned an A.A. from Monterey Peninsula College, a B.A. in literature and women’s studies from UC Santa Cruz, and an M.F.A. from Mills College. She also obtained a graduate certificate in teaching of composition from SFSU and is now Associate Professor and Director of the Creative Writing and Social Action Program at CSU Monterey Bay.

“During the teaching semester, [my writing] is almost non-existent,” Debra says. “I’m consumed with helping over eighty lovely emerging writers come into voice.” But when summer rolls around, she delves into a “loose and fluid” routine, “with the internal writing process going on twenty-four/seven as [she] walks dogs and wanders hills—the pen-to-paper writing happening in random spurts and intense days of hunkered-down, full-on immersion.” Ultimately, her introspection “interweaves seamlessly with the actual physical act of writing.”

Debra’s genres are fiction and creative non-fiction. In 2015 she published a novel, [Like a Woman](#) (Dzanc Books), which is being shopped by her agent for adaptation to film. She’s also published short stories and poetry and has contributed to formal academic publications with much of her work tackling racial and other challenging social issues. Debra is currently finalizing chapters for inclusion in academic publications that focus on topics such as ethnicity, immigration, and white privilege.

In addition to academia, Debra has worked in construction and landscaping and has had stints as a ranch hand, a bartender, a waitress, and a factory worker. She’s also had her hand in nearly all facets of the writing industry, including as a typesetter and press operator and as owner and operator of a printing/copying business in Pacific Grove for fifteen years.

With her vast knowledge of the industry and a talent cultivated from the seeds of necessity, Debra, a CCW member for two years, offers the following advice for aspiring writers:

“Write. A lot. Read. A lot. Read for joy, but also read like a writer, checking out how writers work their magic,” she says. “Study, and steal brilliant craft techniques, making them your own.”

Debra’s website is debrabusman.com.

Michelle Smith’s articles have been published in a variety of magazines. Her website is theebonyquill.com.



Tracy K. Smith



Tracy K. Smith was born April 16, 1972 in Falmouth, Massachusetts, and raised in Fairfield, California, the youngest of five children. She loved Emily Dickinson and other poets as she was growing up. Studying at Harvard, she joined the Dark Collective, a reading series for writers of color. She continued her studies at Columbia University where she received her MFA. She married Raphael Allison and has three children, and works at Princeton and also at National Public Radio.

Smith has written three books of poetry, one of prose, and won the Pulitzer Prize. Her nonfiction book is [Ordinary Light](#), which explores the subject of a close one dying of cancer, as her mother did. [The Body's Question: Poems](#) won the 2002 Cave Canem prize for the best first book by an African American poet. 2011's [Life On Mars](#), which explores the mystery and vast expanses of space, was inspired by her father's experiences with the Hubble Space Telescope. Her [Don't You Wonder Sometimes?](#) is about David Bowie. In the future Smith aspires to write two operas.

Smith was named United States Poet Laureate in 2017. She claims that people do not like to identify consonance, assonance, or alliteration. As Poet Laureate, she wants Americans to push past that. Smith asks three questions when writing poetry: "What do you hear? What do you feel? What does it remind you of?"

Carla Hayden from the Library of Congress states that Smith brings history and memory to life. *The New York Times Book Review* writes "The most persuasively haunted poems here are those where [Smith] casts herself not simply as a dutiful curator of personal history but a canny medium of fellow feeling and the stirring of the collective unconscious...it's this charged air of rapt apprehension that gives her spare, fluid lines their coolly incantatory tenor."

The Poetry Corner

By Nancy Jacobs



Don't You Wonder Sometimes? by Tracy K. Smith

After dark, stars glisten like ice, and the distance they span
Hides something elemental. Not God, exactly. More like
Some thin-hipped glittering Bowie-being—a Starman
Or cosmic ace hovering, swaying, aching to make us see.
And what would we do, you and I, if we could know for sure

That someone was there squinting through the dust,
Saying nothing is lost, that everything lives on waiting only
To be wanted back badly enough? Would you go then,
Even for a few nights, into that other life where you
And that first she loved, blind to the future once, and happy?

Would I put on my coat and return to the kitchen where
my
Mother and father sit waiting, dinner keeping warm on the
stove?
Bowie will never die. Nothing will come for him in his sleep
Or charging through his veins. And he'll never grow old,
Just like the woman you lost, who will always be
dark-haired

And flush-faced, running toward an electronic screen
That clocks the minutes, the miles left to go. Just like the
life
In which I'm forever a child looking out my window at the
night sky
Thinking one day I'll touch the world with bare hands
Even if it burns.

[Keep reading...](#)



CONTESTS

Mudfish 13th Annual Poetry Prize Contest

Deadline: July 15, 2017

Entry Fee: \$20.00 for first 3 poems plus \$3.00 for each additional poem

Website: mudfish.org/13th-poetry-prize/

Prizes: **1st Prize:** \$1200.00 cash

Judge: Mr. Philip Schultz

Submission Guidelines: All work must be submitted with a check made out to Box Turtle Press, an SASE, a cover page with poet's name, address, and titles of poems. The author's name should not be on poems. See website for full guidelines.

The PRISM international Creative Non-Fiction Contest

Deadline: July 15, 2017

Entry Fee: \$40.00, additional entries \$6.00, includes a one-year subscription to *Prism Magazine*.

Website: prismmagazine.ca/contests

Prizes: **Grand Prize:** \$1500.00 cash, **Runner-up:** \$600.00, **2nd Runner-up:** \$400.00.

Judge: Alicia Elliott

Submission Guidelines: See website for full submission guidelines. Author's name may not be included on work, 6000-word limit, cover page required with author's name, work can be published under a pseudonym but author's legal name must be included on cover page.

The 2017 Fairytale Review Prose and Poetry Awards Contest

Deadline: July 15, 2017

Entry Fee: \$10.00

Website: fairytalereview.com/submit/contests/

Prizes: **1st Prize:** \$1000.00 plus publication in the 2018 Charcoal issue for prose and poetry winners.

Submission Guidelines: See website for full guidelines. The judges are looking for work that encompasses themes of resistance and protest with a fairy tale/fable approach.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Western Caribbean Writing Retreat Cruise

Dates: 9/10/2017 - 9/17/2017

Location: Port of Departure for Royal Caribbean Liberty of the Seas, Galveston TX

Deadline & Cost: \$1750.00 per person for a shared stateroom. Upgrades available, meals included. See website for full details of included features.

Website: cruisingwriters.com/retreat/7-day-western-caribbean-writing-retreat-cruise-september-10-17-2017



Our Chief Want in Life

“What a great thought! I’ll have to write about that.”

“Go ahead. Other things can wait. Get it on paper while it’s fresh in your mind.”

“Okay, as soon as I finish weeding.”

“No, no! Why don’t you do it now? Nothing is more important than developing those fresh thoughts into something worth reading. Weed tomorrow. We can spend the whole afternoon in the garden tomorrow. It’s supposed to be sunny again.”

True. There, together on the lawn, it was pleasant—and productive—to jot down the ideas and develop the theme. Such encouragement often got me started writing after a dry spell. Then I would get caught up in the pleasure of sitting with her, developing fresh ideas and expressing them just so. At times, a poem would flow out of a certain combination of words, and I would get caught up in my favorite genre. How delicious to be writing again!

I had friends at the senior center who expected to hear a fresh poem from me on each of our chosen topics. Another reason to get off my duff and write.

When my cohorts in our critique groups make suggestions to improve my work, I am inspired to express my thoughts in even more efficient and effective prose and poetry.

The words of great poets and authors that I read, and those echoing in my memory, spur me to hone my writing skills and expand my repertoire. Without these, and all my friends and loved ones, would I write at all?

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can.” In fact, I have reminded my students, “You *should* be what you *could* be.” Watching my students seize fresh hope and energy inspired me as well.

Yes, and there are others whom I will never meet. They needed me to write: the eight-year-old girl who sent a copy of my poem to her grandfather; the golfer who read my book and learned to forgive himself—and to forgive others as well—thus letting go of guilt and resentment; the girl who finally understood that it was not her fault that she was raped.

Yes! You, my friends, my family, my readers. I need you.

We writers have each other. We must do what we can! If not we, then who?

And if not now—then when?

**Be well,
and do good work,
Jonathan**

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Last Word

By Lana Bryan



Beta Readers

Sharon Law Tucker, CCW's vice-president and our rep to the CWC NorCal Board, fields a question from Carole Bumpus, president of the CWC NorCal Board. She wants to know how do other branches handle beta readers and how do you put the word out?

I know some of you do use beta readers, but our club does not take a role in handling them. So better questions for us might be: How do you get a beta reader? What questions do you ask them? What questions do you want answered by them?

About the role of a beta reader, [Wikipedia](#) says: "An alpha reader or beta reader...is a non-professional reader who reads a written work, generally fiction, with the intent of looking over the material to find and improve elements such as grammar and spelling, as well as suggestions to improve the story, its characters, or its setting. Beta reading is typically done before the story is released for public consumption.

"Beta readers are not explicitly proofreaders or editors, but can serve in that context.

"Elements highlighted by beta readers encompass things such as plot holes, problems with continuity, characterisation or believability; in fiction and non-fiction, the beta might also assist the author with fact-checking."

Sharon further notes that at the Stuart Horwitz workshop in May, "we were encouraged to have beta readers."

Let's start a discussion. If you have employed a beta reader (whether for payment or not), let us know what you expected from the experience. Did you get whatever that was? If you conducted an interview, what questions did you ask? Would you use beta readers again?

If you have thoughts to share, email lane.bryan@writeteam.com with the subject: **Beta Readers**. (Please don't just reply to the email that contained your electronic *Scribbles*, as your reply might be lost in an avalanche.) If I receive enough responses to make it worth your time, I'll include them in a future *Scribbles*.

**Until next time,
-Lana**

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Editorial Staff

Lana Bryan	Editor
Nancy Jacobs	Poetry Corner
Patricia Watson	Contests and Workshops
C. Jonathan Shoemaker	If the Shoe Fits
Michelle Smith	Member Profiles
Dorothy Vriend	Speaker Report
Leslie Patiño	Proofreader

CCW Website

centralcoastwriters.org

For anything *Scribbles* related:

Contact *Scribbles* editor Lana Bryan:

lane.bryan@writeteam.com

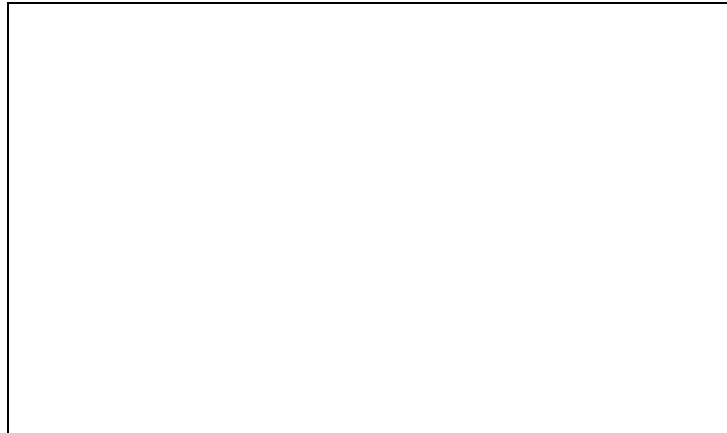
Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:

centralcoastwriters.org



California Writers Club
Central Coast Writers Branch
Post Office Box 997
Pacific Grove, CA 93950



July 18
Jordan Rosenfeld
5:30 p.m.—CHECK-IN and DINNER
6:30 p.m.—MEETING
Point Pinos Grill
79 Asilomar Boulevard
Pacific Grove