



# Scribbles

California Writers Club - Central Coast Writers Branch

[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)

June 2014

Coming June 17 -- *Sheldon Siegel*  
New York Times Bestselling Author  
*"The Making of a Thriller"*



Sheldon Siegel began writing his first book with the intent of finding out if he had any aptitude for writing fiction. He began writing it on a laptop computer during his daily commute on the ferry from Marin County to San Francisco. A 10-week creative writing course helped him finish the manuscript.

*Special Circumstances*, his first legal thriller, featured San Francisco criminal defense attorneys Mike Daley and Rosie Fernandez, two of the most beloved characters in contemporary crime fiction. It debuted in February 2000 and quickly became a national bestseller. It was followed by *Incriminating Evidence*, *Criminal Intent*, *Final Verdict*, *The Confession*, *Judgment Day* and *Perfect Alibi*.

Siegel's newest novel, *The Terrorist Next Door*, introduces South Chicago Detective David Gold and his new partner, Mississippi-born Detective A. C. Battle.

Siegel obviously has an aptitude for writing. Please join us on June 17<sup>th</sup> when he will describe the process of putting together *The Terrorist Next Door*.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Announcements.....	2, 5
As the Pen Flows.....	4, 6
Contests and Conferences.....	9
If the Shoe Fits.....	10
Janet's View.....	2
Member Profile.....	7
Monterey July Fourth Parade.....	5
Notes from the May Speaker.....	3
Poetry Corner.....	8
The (Other) Last Word.....	11





# California Writers Club Leadership Conference

By Janet Tezak

On Saturday, May 3, 2014, I joined CCW Executive Committee members Dorothy Vriend, Judi Marquart, Lillian Surkova, Davyd Morris, Leslie Patino, and Laurie Sheehan on the DeVry University campus in Fremont for the 2014 California Writers Club Northern California Group Leadership Conference. The last (and also the first) time this group met was in 2011, so you can appreciate that there was a lot to talk about. Joyce Krieg (state board representative and chair of the 12-member Northern California group) organized this year’s all-day conference and served as its moderator.

“How We Turned Around Our Branch” was the keynote address, presented by High Desert Past President, Bob Isbill. By 2009, membership in their branch had fallen below the minimum 15 members. However, by March 2011, they had over 100 members. Some of the techniques they applied were redesigning the physical setting of their meetings, promoting more interesting programs and using Toastmasters techniques. According to Bob, they used “aggressive publicity, targeting the community of writers in the High Desert” with public readings at Barnes & Noble as well as other outside reading events. They developed a good working relationship with their local library and schools in the area. They have sponsored two writing conferences and conducted several interesting workshops. Thirty of those workshops were held at the Federal Correctional Complex.

The peer-to-peer breakout groups provided me the opportunity to meet with other Northern California branch presidents. It was valuable to learn what other clubs have accomplished and what problems they have encountered.

The afternoon track sessions gave everyone an opportunity to discuss mutual areas of concern: “Leading the Leaders” – Motivating Volunteers, “Generation Text” – Attracting Younger Members, and “Herding Cats” – Leading Creative Types.

Those of us who participated in this conference enjoyed meeting members from other clubs. It was interesting to hear about new ways of outreach such as workshops at prisons or partnering seniors with young people to learn more about social media. It was also informative to learn that some branches had five year plans or conducted annual writing retreats. Most of all, I learned that we all face many of the same issues and reap the same rewards as members in each regional writing branch.



Moderator Joyce Krieg enjoys a well-deserved, post-conference moment.

**COMING SOON  
TO A MAILBOX NEAR YOU!**

June is Membership Renewal month. Notices will be mailed to all dues-paying members. Please return your check by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Thank you!**





## Jo Haraf – Introducing Backstory

By Dorothy Vriend

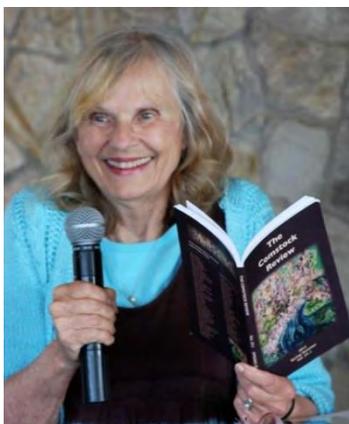
Using memories - sparked by an object, an action or a person - is one of Jo Haraf's favorite techniques for introducing backstory into her writing. During her lively presentation at the CCW May 20 meeting she involved her enthusiastic audience by asking us for examples from our own work or in response to a prompt. Who doesn't love examples? Her five-page handout enhanced her presentation.

" 'This boy has a sweet voice,' said Mr. Nolan. 'I never heard a voice like that.' But I had. His own great-uncle had such a voice." This line from Sebastian Barry's novel *On Canaan's Side* is just one of the many examples Haraf brought with her.

It could be a familiar gesture, such as the way a woman pushes back the hair from her eyes, that reminds a character of a person from their past. It could be a sound, such as the tolling of a church bell, or it could be a taste that takes one back to an earlier experience. All the senses, including touch and smell, can act as a catalyst. Using something that exists in the present helps create a seamless transition to the past, Haraf said.

Some authors use a storyteller character to make the leap. Haraf used a quote from Mary Helen Stefaniak's novel, *The Turk and My Mother*, as an example. "Eavesdropping seemed my only prospect for another long summer evening, when Staramajka suddenly opened the door, almost catching the toes of my left foot under it, and invited me to hear the story of my mother and the Turk," Stefaniak writes.

Haraf followed a career of more than 25 years in management with legal and consulting industries by enrolling in a low-residency MFA program through Pacific University in Oregon. A low residency program means she can complete most of her coursework at home, then spend a short period of time on campus. Haraf is currently working on a series of short stories exploring major news events from New York in the 1920s and telling them from the point of view of a peripheral character.



Jean Bennett reads her poems that were recently published in *The Comstock Review*.



Jo Haraf describes timely transitions, when characters turn to their pasts.



## *A Fool Leash Tale*

By Jeanne Gavrin

I hold the large red handle of a retractable leash. At the other end is Darwin, 19 pounds of bristle-coated, almost black Cairn Terrier. He thinks jaunts are stop-and-go for his needs. I adjust. Darwin does his leg lifts, I do my power walk. Strangers grin as they watch me pace back and forth.

These are no easy-peasy moves following doctor's orders: Walk! At least a half-hour a day! Get your heart rate up! Since 2005, that's more brisk miles than I can count on paws, fingers, and toes.

Walking does not bore me. There's litter to trash. A quick pick-up and a refuse-can-dunk to say, "Thank you for sharing your neighborhood with Darwin and me."

And litter to treasure. The business card from a bed and breakfast in Turkey may come in handy; three addressed French postcards I send on to France after adding stamps and my greetings, *en français bien sûr*; an invoice I reunite with one grateful contractor; a wallet I discover with license, credit cards, a bank ID, and \$250 cash. The bank teller connects this billfold and contents with a relieved owner. The \$20 bill I spot on a path I keep.

One recent day, Darwin stops, squats. I march in place, scooping the poop while he pokes his muzzle at a rock. A rustle at my feet reveals an entire newspaper. Examining closer, I see a photo, a handsome profile of a dark-colored dachshund. Next to it, I read, "Adventures with Rex - Life in the Hammock."

A pull from the leash tells me Darwin's powering on. In a rush, I gather up *Foolish Times*. Pacing down the pavement, back and forth depending on Darwin's stop and go, I read how Tom Burns gets Rex off the back porch hammock.

After multiple tries, Tom entices Rex with the offer of a sniff at Mr. Delahunty's Endangered Species Feces Exhibit. Sounds like something my Cairn companion might like, too. There's a twist when Mr. Delahunty shows his collection to his wife's bridge group. I laugh out loud. *Foolish Times* makes my heart happy. A faithful reader I become.

To Darwin I wonder, "Upon us, what may future litter unleash?"

Jeanne Gavrin is a retired psychotherapist who adds writing to her repertoire. "A Fool Leash Tale" appeared in the May 2014 issue of *Foolish Times*.



## *Care to Join Me for a Pleasant Summer Stroll?*

By Joyce Krieg

Looking for something meaningful to do to celebrate Independence Day? Trying to get more exercise? Yearning to spend more time with your fellow writers?

The Monterey Fourth of July parade may be just what you're looking for.

Central Coast Writers had so much fun marching in the Pacific Grove Good Old Days parade in April that we can't wait another year to do it again. Hence, the decision to enter the Monterey July 4 parade.

The region's premiere Independence Day event starts at 10 a.m. on Friday, July 4, and covers roughly six city blocks: down Alvarado, across Franklin, and up Calle Principal. As at the Good Old Days parade, we'll be carrying signs with witty sayings about the writing life. In honor of Independence Day, we'll add a couple more signs showing our support of Freedom of the Press.

To add to the fun of the day, CCW will be catering a picnic on the lawn of Colton Hall for all members who walk with us in the parade.

So why are we doing this? We discovered at Good Old Days that parades are a wonderful (and inexpensive!) way to get the word out about our writers club. You would not believe the number of comments we received from people who had no idea there's a writers club on the Monterey Peninsula. The more members we have, the better speakers and workshops we can bring in.

The time has come to make a commitment! If you can participate in the parade, please contact me no later than Friday, June 13: [joycek@redshift.com](mailto:joycek@redshift.com), or leave a message at 649-6171. Please, no calls after 8 p.m. Family members and friends are welcome to march with you.

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### *Looking for a critique group?*

**Poetry:** Saturday *before* the regular CCW meeting, 9:30 a.m. to 11'ish  
Juice & Java - 599 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove

**Prose:** Saturday *after* the regular CCW meeting, 9:30 a.m. to 11'ish  
Juice & Java - 599 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove

(To confirm meeting dates, contact Harold Grice at 594-2280 or [ookaayy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ookaayy@sbcglobal.net).)

### *Looking for a poetry reading group?*

**PGPGPG** meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Sally Griffin Center - 700 Jewel Avenue, Pacific Grove

(This is a poetry reading group where writers gather to share their work with friends.)



## Fig

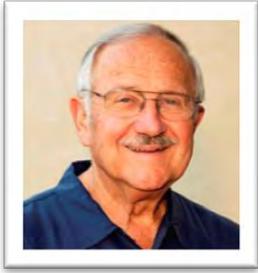
By Trish Watson

Fig was the first fruit  
Forbidden fruit  
Round and ripe  
Shared between lovers  
Reveling in the dark  
Wrapped in broad leaves at the hint of dawn  
Fleeing the shadows of paradise

Timeless, enticing  
Yielding, soft  
Scented with the juice of lemons  
Soaked with the golden labor of a thousand bees  
To sweeten the kisses of Cleopatra  
Seducing kings  
With honeyed figs

A humble fruit  
Filling the favored prize of childhood  
Grainy sweet in soft baked dough  
On rainy days  
Pure sunshine on my tongue  
No greater reward for chores all done  
Than two Fig Newtons delivered with a hug

Trish Watson is an antiques and vintage collectibles dealer who was inspired to write by her grandmother. Her poem, "Hope" was included in the February 2014 issue of *Written Across the Genres*, a literary anthology published by Luminare Press



## *Shoulder to Shoulder*

**Sam Kier**

Sam Kier has been a “voracious” reader of military history since his early teens. Now a military historian, Sam writes both fiction and non-fiction in this genre.

In 1954, upon his graduation from Stanford University where he earned a B.A. in psychology, Sam was drafted into the U.S. Army, completed basic training at Fort Ord, and was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team at Fort Lewis in Washington. He went on to earn an M.A. in educational psychology from Sacramento State University and a Ph.D. in educational psychology and special education from the University of Arizona.

Since his retirement in 1997 from his work as an elementary and junior high school teacher, school psychologist, special education administrator and professor of educational psychology, Sam has seen three books published, beginning with *Sons of the Commonwealth: A Story of the Pennsylvania Reserves*, 1999 by Mechling Associates, Inc. A blend of military history and character-driven fiction inspired by Sam’s interest in genealogy, *Sons of the Commonwealth* was followed by *Thirty-Six Points: A Novel of the Korean War* published in 2005 by Heritage Books. Sam’s third book, *Two Centuries of Valor: The Story of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment*, was published in 2010 by Park Place Publications.

While Sam’s background in education was favorable to his professional career, it undoubtedly reinforces his expertise as a writer. He also credits his writing success to his interactions with other writers. “As a military historian, the most growth has come from reading the work of other historians,” Sam says. “I’ve also profited from having others read and critique my writing and helping others write about their military experiences.”

Sam, who joined CCW in July 2010 after attending a book fair held at Carmel’s Barnyard Shopping Village, writes between the hours of 9 am and 2 pm in his home office. He spends much of this time fielding questions from other veterans, active duty soldiers and families of men who were killed in action. “I enjoy communicating with these folks,” Sam says.

After *Two Centuries of Valor* was published, Sam received a commendation from the Secretary of the Army for “contributing to regimental continuity, tradition and esprit de corps.” In 2012 he received the Lieutenant General Stanley Larson Award for “making an exceptional contribution to Army history and culture.”

Currently, Sam is working on a book that will carry on the story of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry’s involvement in the war in Afghanistan. The Dari term in its working title, *Shona ba Shona: The 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, translates to “shoulder to shoulder,” he explains. Sam’s poem, *Outpost Harry*, submitted to The Diplomat’s “Guns, Grenades and True Grit” poetry contest, took second place. His website can be found at [www.twocenturiesofvalor.com](http://www.twocenturiesofvalor.com)



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



## *Ben Jonson - The Passionate Poet*

*Language most shows a man,  
speak that I may see thee.*

"O Rare Ben Jonson" the marker reads. When Ben Jonson was buried in Westminster Abbey in 1637, his friend William Drummond remarked that Ben Jonson was a great lover and praiser of himself and a scorner of others, content to lose a friend than a jest.

It becomes obvious that Ben Jonson considered himself talented and was not afraid to express this. He was indeed interesting, a character bigger than life, a man of many faces. He was a playwright, poet, and actor. Along with a group of young followers known as the Sons of Ben (later known as the Cavalier poets), the world became their stage where they acted, argued, wrote poetry, even spent time in jail because of created controversies.

Jonson had an appetite for controversy, as did his rival, William Shakespeare who would not become a literary icon until later. Despite their differences, Shakespeare actually appeared in the cast of Jonson's second play, "Every Man in His Humour."

Jonson had a volatile personality but, strange as it may seem, this trait actually seemed to attract more readers.

In 1605, when Jonson's popularity was at an all-time high, King James I appointed him as court poet to succeed Edmund Spenser. There is quite a contrast between the two poets' writing styles. Edmund Spenser liked to use flowery language and ornamental diction. Jonson's style introduced the clear, classical form, not unlike the writing of the ancient Romans.

### *"To Celia"*

*By Ben Jonson*

Drink to me only with thine eyes  
And I will pledge with mine.  
Or leave a kiss but in the cup  
And I'll not look for wine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise  
Doth ask a drink divine;  
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,  
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,  
Not so much hon'ring thee  
As giving it a hope that there  
It could not withered be;

But thou thereon did'st only breathe,  
And sent'st it back to me,  
Since when it grows and smells, I swear  
Not of itself, but thee.

.....

Here's an excerpt from one of my favorite Jonson poems, "Friend to Supper:"

Tonight, grave Sir, both my poor house, and I  
Do equally desire your company;  
Not that we think us worthy such a guest,  
But that your worth will dignify our feast  
With those that come, whose grace may  
make that seem  
Something, which else could hope for no esteem.

# Contests And Conferences

By Diana Paul



*Best of luck! Be sure to share your contest experiences with Scribbles.*

## Akron Poetry Prize      University of Akron Press

Deadline:      June 15, 2014  
Entry Fee:      \$25  
Website:      <http://www.uakron.edu/uapress/akron-poetry-prize>

A prize of \$1,500 and publication by University of Akron Press is given annually for a poetry collection. Maxine Chernoff will judge. Submit a manuscript of 48 to 90 pages with a \$25 entry fee by June 15. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

## Katherine Anne Porter Prize      University of North Texas Press

Deadline:      June 30, 2014  
Entry Fee:      \$25  
Website:      <http://untpress.unt.edu/contest>

A prize of \$1,000 and publication by University of North Texas Press is given annually for a collection of short fiction. Using the online submission system, submit a manuscript of 100 to 200 pages with a \$25 entry fee between May 1 and June 30. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

## Glimmer Train Press

Deadline:      June 30, 2014  
Entry Fee:      \$19  
Website:      <http://www.glimmertrain.org>

A prize of \$2,500 and publication in *Glimmer Train Stories* is given twice yearly for a short story. Using the online submission system, submit a story of 2,000 to 20,000 words with a \$19 entry fee by June 30. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

## Individual Artist Grants for Women      Barbara Deming Memorial Fund

Deadline:      June 30, 2014  
Entry Fee:      \$25  
Website:      <http://demingfund.org>

Grants of \$500 to \$1,500 each are given twice yearly to feminist writers who are citizens of the United States or Canada. The current round of grants will be awarded to women poets and creative nonfiction writers. Submit three copies of a manuscript of up to 20 pages, a project description, a budget, and a résumé with a \$25 entry fee during the month of June. Visit the website for the required entry form and complete guidelines.

## Catamaran Writing Conference – August 13-17, 2014, Pebble Beach

The registration fee is \$1200 by July 15<sup>th</sup> which includes four nights lodging at the Robert Louis Stevenson School on 17-Mile Drive, 12 meals, 4 days of literary workshops in small groups of 12, and nightly receptions and presentations. Additionally, for local writers interested in attending the conference without the room accommodations, there is an additional \$400 discount. For more details visit: <http://catamaranliteraryreader.com/conference-1/>



## *"Say it Now, and Just Say it Right."*

The French philosopher Blaise Pascal said "When we see a natural style, we are astonished and charmed; for we expected to see an author, and we find a person."

No matter how elegantly you present yourself as a writer, the reader can see through to the person doing the writing. Are you prepared to allow your readers to know your true personality: your dreams, your fears, your caring tenderness toward those close to you? Are you willing to write to them as openly as you would to your dearest friend? If you write something that your readers can identify with, they will be charmed.

In her book: *Woe is I*, Patricia T. O'Conner says: "The truth is that the reader is always right. Chances are, if something you're reading doesn't make sense, it's not your fault – it's the writer's. And if something you write doesn't get your point across, it's probably not the reader's fault – it's yours. Too many readers are intimidated and humbled by what they can't understand, and in some cases that's precisely the effect the writer is after."

We have no control over what the readers will do with our ideas, but we do have the responsibility to present ideas that might reach deeply into their personal space. If we don't offend them by trying to flaunt our writing skills, but write to our readers as we would say it to a friend, they might receive our words personally rather than intellectually. Franz Kafka said, "If the literature we are reading does not wake us, why then do we read it? A literary work must be an ice axe to break the sea frozen inside us."

I don't presume to be any more knowledgeable as a writer than others. It was my friend, our past president, Ken Jones, who suggested, in the infancy of our CCW branch, that I write this column to encourage others to write. It's simple – if the shoe fits – take it or leave it. I may be able to help others with what I say, just as my fellow writers inspire me every month. I get ideas from you, from my family; even my granddaughters have said things that inspired a column.

I also get ideas from people who have been around the block a few times:

"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little – do what you can." – Sydney Smith

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." – Helen Keller

"Say it now, and just say it right. If you truly believe it, you'll be saying it right." – Neil Diamond

The ideas from these quotes are not of me, but they are a part of me.

While we are pounding the keys in our writer's solitude, or scratching ideas on the back of a grocery list, I think it is important to remember a most poignant quote: "We are not alone."

*Be well,  
and do good work,  
Jonathan*

## The other last word

By Laura Emerson



Okay, so maybe I don't tell the truth on those true/false quizzes when I answer the question about how easily I adapt to changes in my life. For a very long time, I convinced myself that my desktop computer, with its electric plug and DSL cable, was all I needed to cruise the Internet highway. I also "bragged" that I preferred making phone calls on my landline phone and had the cell phone, with no added features, to use only in emergencies. My Internet "memberships" were with AARP and Central Coast Writers.

I now have a very portable laptop with Wi-Fi, a color remote printer *and* an iPhone. The laptop is two years old, the printer is six months old, and next month I will have had the iPhone one year. My Internet "memberships" have greatly expanded as I have continued to discover numerous valuable resources.

I include Facebook on that list of valuable Internet resources. It enables me to stay connected with family and friends who live out of the area – including newsletter editor Leslie Patiño as she walks El Camino de Santiago. Through Facebook, I have "watched" my grandsons growing up between my visits to them in North Carolina. I know what my siblings and their children (and their children) are doing with their lives so that when we get together there are not those awkward moments when we try to reconnect with each other. Six months might have passed since I last saw them, but it feels like only yesterday.

Have you visited the Central Coast Writers webpage? Ken Jones and Kemberlee Shortland, as co-webmasters, regularly update the site to provide current information, including upcoming speakers and newsletters. What the website cannot do is interact with its visitors. That's where Facebook comes in.

Yes, Central Coast Writers has a Facebook page – with 62 "Friends." Can you think of a better place to organize our marching in the Monterey Fourth of July parade, even having a conversation about what to do afterwards? Or, for Patricia Hamilton to post more questions about the October workshop?

Where and when do we begin this discussion?

## CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Michelle Smith .....	Member Profiles
Dorothy Vriend .....	Monthly Speaker

## CCW Website

[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)

## For anything *Scribbles* related:

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[lnpatino@comcast.net](mailto:lnpatino@comcast.net)

## Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:  
[centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)  
or contact Davyd Morris: [meldrm@aol.com](mailto:meldrm@aol.com)



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Post Office Box 997  
Pacific Grove, CA 93950



*Sheldon Siegel*

June 17<sup>th</sup>

5:30 p.m. - Dinner

6:30 p.m. – Meeting

**Point Pinos Grill**

79 Asilomar Boulevard

Pacific Grove

(831) 648-5774