



Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch
centralcoastwriters.org

June 2016

June 21 Speaker David Lukas

Revision and Inspiration

MICHAEL DAVID LUKAS has been a Fulbright Scholar in Turkey, a night-shift proofreader in Tel Aviv, and a waiter at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont. Translated into more than a dozen languages, his first novel [The Oracle of Stamboul](#) was a finalist for the California Book Award, the NCIBA Book of the Year Award, and the Harold U. Ribalow Prize.

A recipient of scholarships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Santa Maddalena Foundation, Montalvo Arts Center, and Elizabeth George Foundation, his writing has appeared in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Slate, National Geographic Traveler, and Georgia Review.

He will discuss the tension between revision and inspiration, as well as strategies for revision, fundamental to the writing process. He lives in Oakland, California.



Coming on July 19

Chelsea Lindman – The Author's Agent

Chelsea Lindman is a literary agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates. Her primary interests include playful literary fiction, genre-bending fiction, smart women's fiction, and forward thinking or boundary-pushing non-fiction. Her fiction clients include Sherwood Anderson Fiction Award Winner Kristopher Jansma, LA Times Book Prize Finalist Ariel S. Winter, and Richard Bausch Fiction Prize Winner Jesse Goolsby. Her non-fiction clients include performer Roslyn Hart, comedienne Laura Lane and Angela Spera, and TEDx speakers Stacey Ferreira and Jared Kleinert. Chelsea enjoys working with debut authors and is most interested in working with clients that are looking to build lasting relationships.

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Bird by Bird

Some of you might know the book [*Bird by Bird: Some Instruction on Writing and Life*](#) by Anne Lamott. If you haven't read it, I highly recommend that you do. If I remember correctly, the title comes from a story about her brother and a school report that he still hadn't written the night before it was due, a report on birds. Despondent, surrounded by source material on his avian topic, he implored his father to provide guidance on what seemed an overwhelming and epic task. His dad said simply, "just take it bird by bird." The logic of that is simple and beautiful—metaphorically applicable to almost any task. Anne Lamott uses it as a backdrop to show how we, as writers, can find reasons to talk ourselves out of doing a thing that we love to do—write, tell our stories, get ideas out of our head and down on paper.

Here I sit, having just plunked myself in front of the computer after almost 14 hours at work—a long day in a series of long days—and all I really want to do is curl up and sleep. However, I've made promises to write—a promise to our fabulous newsletter editor that I'll turn in this article (albeit late, again), and a promise to myself that I'll visit my characters for at least a few minutes every day.

It's not easy. I'm comfortable admitting this to you, because I believe you'll understand how difficult it can be to turn off the outside world and spend time alone in the pursuit of writing. Here's a quote from *Bird by Bird*: "Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul."

I think Ms. Lamott is talking about the stories themselves, but I'm going to expand this to apply to our club, and I hope the dichotomy of this is not lost: we choose to do something that drives us to seclusion, and yet we also choose to associate with others that understand the feeling of solitude that writing can impart, and, by doing so, we "decrease our sense of isolation."

Being a member of Central Coast Writers means that you may spend time with others who understand the physical task of writing as well as the emotional task of writing.

A new club year begins on July the 1st. I hope you've decided to renew your membership and continue your writing journey with us. You'll be treated to wonderful guest speakers, members-only events, helpful information, and camaraderie. It's going to be grand.

Until we meet again, happy writing!

Laurie

The CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB is a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit, dedicated to educating members and the public-at-large in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Good News! The California Writers Club just reached a state-wide membership of 2002. The Central Coast Writers membership is 155.

On Biography and Music Journalism — Sylvie Simmons



Sylvie Simmons emerged in the world of music journalism in the late 1970s, when, as she put it, “you had to have a penis to be a rock writer. I wrote like the boys until I found my own voice,” she said.

Simmons has written biographies of Leonard Cohen, Neil Young, and French songwriter Serge Gainsbourg. and penned articles on numerous music legends from Mick Jagger to Michael Jackson. For Simmons, writing a biography means getting to the soul of the matter, not just the facts.

At our May meeting, she compared writing a biography to detective work, where you search out information, then check it and re-check it. “We knock on doors, we pester people. We just don’t have the corpses,” she said. She starts with an idea, but if the evidence takes her in another direction, she follows the lead.

When approaching a new subject, she contacts “their people” to gain access, then accumulates a list of folks surrounding that person, ultimately interviewing more than 100 of them for one life story. She hopes for “benign tolerance” rather than active engagement from her subject, in order to ensure that the story she tells is objective. The immersion in her subject’s life is intense, but she tries to achieve emotional distance.

“It’s almost like you are speed-living their lives. At the end of the day you have to sit back and be almost indifferent. You have to detach in order to write a book worth reading,” she said.

As for Leonard Cohen, now in his 80s, she said the young poet didn’t become a singer until after the age of 33. She talked about his relationships with women, religion and the state of longing. “As soon as he was fulfilled he wanted to be hungry again,” she said.

In the Q & A period, when asked about Leonard Cohen’s reaction to her 570-page work on him. “I’ve seen him a dozen times since the book was published. We don’t talk about it. He’s too Canadian to ask, and I’m too English to bring it up.”



Five-minute Reader Jason Warburg



Speaker Sylvie Simmons



Father Harry Freiermuth is 89!

Photographs by Clarissa Conn

Announcements

Membership News

Welcome to our new CCW members:

Erin McClure Gary W. Parker Patrick Whitehurst



Member Congratulations!

Alana Hagood Myles has a new book published by Park Place Publications. *Monterey: Mystery and Mischief* is recommended for children ages 8-12. Myles artfully weaves elements of folklore and history into this tale of adventure, shenanigans, and surprises. With drawings by Myles as well, it is available on [Amazon](#).

Jane Parks-McKay was invited by Joyce Krieg and Patricia Hamilton to be the guest columnist in their “Keepers of Our Culture” column in the *Cedar Street Times*. You can see the [article](#) in the April 29 edition on page 18.

In May, T.C. Zmak’s novel, [Dark Surf](#), received 3 more awards: 2nd place in General Fiction in both the 2016 San Francisco Book Festival and the 2016 Beach Book Festival. In addition, *Dark Surf* is a finalist in the Fantasy category of the National Indie Excellence Awards. T.C.’s debut novel has earned a total of 5 awards as well as rave reviews from book critics and reviewers including Paul Goat Allen, *The Californian*, and Readers’ Favorite.

Meet to Write

Making a regular commitment to your writing is a great way to make progress and achieve creative breakthroughs. Join your fellow CCW members for a writing session Tuesday mornings, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., at Crema, 481 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove. Free. For more information: pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com.

Networking Aloud: A Writers Open Mike

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (2nd Tuesdays of the month)

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

Submitted monthly by Pat Hanson

A “love offering\$” monthly event 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 & essay that follows 15 minutes from a featured published reader. Only applause, no critique allowed.

Our guest reader on June 14 is [Patrick Fontes](#) reading from *Maria’s Purgatorio*. Not for the faint hearted, expect sex, drugs, violence and speaking in tongues. Set in the sweltering summer months in Fresno, California, María seeks purpose, identity and some semblance of family among the gritty underground niches of society. Not content with who she is, or where she came from, María delves into various groups yearning for fulfillment in a dystopian landscape: the underbelly of cities like Fresno.

Kristina Baer kristinabaer.net will be the July 12 featured author, reading from her fictional memoir/novel *Minerva’s Fox* © Two Harbors Press, 2015. In it the protagonist Malorie Ellsworth recounts twenty-four years in her journey from young adulthood to middle age. We first meet her as a first-year graduate student at the threshold of a promising academic career. A year later, when her academic and personal life fall apart, Malorie realizes she has made a terrible mistake. As principled as she is brainy, she isn’t cut out for the dog-eat-dog world of academia. We follow her as she searches for balance in her life, facing serious challenges. Questions or to be featured in the future: Pat Hanson [831-601-9195](tel:831-601-9195) or co-emcee Janice Rocke @ [831-521-0375](tel:831-521-0375).

Executive Board Nominations and Elections

Club members who are present at the June General Meeting will be asked to vote, according to our bylaws, for the four elected positions in our club: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The nominating committee has asked those currently presiding to consider remaining for another term, and they have accepted the nominations.

2016-2017 Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your membership in Central Coast Writers!
By Christine Sleeter, Membership Chair

June is CCW membership renewal month. For only \$45.00, you can continue to enjoy our wonderful monthly speakers' series in the beautiful Point Pinos Grill and our summer and winter parties, receive your monthly copy of *Scribbles*, and attend next year's workshops at the member rate.

You'll soon receive a renewal letter via snail mail. You then have the following options for how to renew.

- You can snail mail a check for \$45.00 in the return envelope that comes with the renewal letter
- You can renew at the June or July meeting at Point Pinos Grill

The renewal window is open until August 31. Send your renewal in today!

A Few Simple Rules For Donating to the Door Prize Drawing

By Joyce Krieg, CCW Secretary

The door prize drawing is a beloved tradition at our monthly meetings, and the source of funds for the cash prizes in our high school short story contest. In addition to generously supporting the raffle by purchasing tickets, a number of you are also donating items for prizes. So much so that your CCW Executive Committee has had to devise a few guidelines.

The Raffle Chair—Cheri Love—makes the final decision as to prizes offered each month. If there are too many prizes, this can cause the drawing process to drag, sometimes even cutting into the guest speaker's time. In this case, some items may be held until the following month. Likewise, gifts that arrive after the ticket sale begins—usually around 5:30 p.m.—may be held for later give-away.

Please keep these guidelines in mind when deciding whether to donate prizes to the raffle:

- Wine and chocolate are always welcome!
- In general, items should be new.
- Books are limited to
 - topics related to writing—recently published, please;
 - recent releases by our members, one-time-only per title; and
 - books by our guest speaker.
- Produce, cut flowers and plants should be fresh and look attractive.
- Sorry, no homemade edibles due to health/liability concerns.

The CCW officers and board reserve the right to make the final decision, which may include bending the rules, keeping in mind the best interests of the club and our members.



CCW's Annual BBQ

And while on the subject of picnics, CCW's annual BBQ is scheduled for **Sunday, August 7** from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The brilliant team of Harold and Sam Grice will once again be our grill masters. How lucky are we? More details in the July edition of *Scribbles*, but mark your calendars now.

Annual 4th of July Parade

You'll receive an email soon with more information about the July 4th parade in Monterey. If you are interested in walking with CCW in the parade, please contact Lana Bryan at ana.bryan@writeteam.com with "July 4th Parade" in the subject line.

Palettes & Quills 5th Biennial Poetry Chapbook Competition

Donna Marbach, owner of Palettes & Quills (providing Literary Arts services), has managed the Poetry Chapbook Competition since 2008. The contest is open to all writers. This year's judge is Alan Britt. For details, go to palettesandquills.simplesite.com. Prize: A \$200 cash award plus 50 copies of the published book. All finalists receive one free copy of the published book. Deadline: September 1, 2016.

Fiction Workshop in France

Agent Andy Ross and Susan Sutliff Brown are conducting a week-long fiction workshop in *Saint-Remy-de-Provence* this October. Details:

andyrossagency.wordpress.com/2016/04/14/join-me-for-a-fiction-writing-workshop-in-provence/



“Sit Your Butt Down and Write”

McKenzie Moss

While serving in the U.S. Navy, McKenzie (Mac) Moss performed several sea duties in Korea and Vietnam, including as Commanding Officer of a minesweeper, sweeping leftover WWII mines at Japanese and Korean harbors. Later, he pursued an MBA at the U.S. Naval Academy and took on the position of CEO of several banks, including Bank of the West. Passionate about his Cessna 182, Mac flew his plane for both leisure travel and Civil Air Patrol missions. But all along, a desire to write lurked within.

Encouraged by “a treasured high school English teacher,” Mac, who joined CCW in August of 2015, has been writing for more than twenty years. He was inspired to perfect his craft (which he now considers his day job) by his participation in the Carmel Writers Group, a gathering of eight or more local writers founded by Maxine Shore in the 1990s “most [of whom] have retreated into the shadows.”

Mac writes fictional short stories and action/thriller novels in his home office and shoots for two to three hours of writing time each day (“mornings preferred”). Some of his short stories have garnered monetary awards, and several were published in Carmel Writers Group’s *Rocky Point Murders*. He’s also tried *plein air* writing, which he finds “freeing and inspirational.”

While his current manuscript lies in the hands of a professional editor, Mac is undecided about whether he’ll self-publish or seek the services of an agent. Either way, he hopes to “be finished with this damned novel” in the coming year. Whether hunkered down in a cozy home office or communing with the splendor of Mother Nature, the path to success, Mac says, is simply to “Sit your butt down and write. Read, write, read, write!”

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



Use writing as your excuse to throw a party each week—even if you call that party a “workshop.” Any time you can spend time among other people who value and support writing, that will balance those hours you spend alone, writing. Even if someday you sell your work, no amount of money will compensate you for your time spent alone. So, take your “paycheck” up front, make writing an excuse to be around people. When you reach the end of your life—trust me, you won’t look back and savor the moments you spent alone.

—Chuck Palahniuk Source: roxanmcdonald.com/

Robinson Jeffers



Robinson Jeffers was a winter baby born on January 10, 1887, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. He was very well educated, having been encouraged by his parents. He attended the University of Pittsburgh, Occidental College, University of Washington, and University of Southern California. He was very much influenced by Walt Whitman, Euripides, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

His education included schooling in Germany and Switzerland, where he mastered German and French and conversational Italian, and began to write poetry.

Wild times as a postgraduate included an assortment of young ladies and too much wine and nightlife. In 1906, along came vivacious and engaging Una Call Kuster, a graduate of USC already married to a successful attorney. The attraction was magnetic. Their love affair lasted until 1912 when Una divorced her husband and immediately married Robinson. That year, Jeffers published *Flagns and Apples* at his own expense.

They planned to go to England, but World War I broke out and they decided to go to Carmel, California, instead. They arrived in September, 1914, and lived in a log cabin. A small inheritance bought time for him to perfect his craft. In 1919 Robinson Jeffers was able to purchase a parcel of land on Carmel Point. There, he himself built the stone house known as Tor House. His responsibilities of being husband, father and provider caused much turbulence in his life. Still his poetry was impressive, especially his book *Californians* published in 1916.

His next feat was to build Hawk tower, an addition to Tor house with stones dragged up to the location from the shoreline below. In 1924, *Tamar and Other Poems* was published. It was written as a verse drama, a long



narrative form followed by shorter lyrics. Over the next ten years he published seven major volumes.

In 1932, Jeffers made the cover of *Time Magazine*. More success followed when in 1947 his adaptation of *Medea* opened on Broadway with Dame Judith Anderson in the title role. Sadness followed this success when in September, 1950, Una died from cancer. *Hungerfield and Other Poems* was published in 1954 as a small tribute to Una. Robinson Jeffers died September 20, 1962.

One should remember Robinson Jeffers as a fierce environmentalist, talented poet, and for this quote: "Cruelty is a part of nature but it is the one thing that seems unnatural to us."

Carmel Point by Robinson Jeffers

The extraordinary patience of things!
This beautiful place defaced with a crop of suburban
houses—
How beautiful when we first beheld it,
Unbroken field of poppy and lupin walled with clean
cliffs;
No intrusion but two or three horses pasturing,
Or a few milch cows rubbing their flanks on the
outcrop rockheads—
Now the spoiler has come: does it care?
Not faintly. It has all time. It knows the people are a
tide
That swells and in time will ebb, and all
Their works dissolve. Meanwhile the image of the
pristine beauty
Lives in the very grain of the granite,
Safe as the endless ocean that climbs our cliff.—As for
us:
We must uncenter our minds from ourselves;
We must unhumanize our views a little, and become
confident
As the rock and ocean that we were made from.

Contests and Conferences

By Patricia Watson



CONTESTS

Contest: The Narrative Prize

Website: narrativemagazine.com/node/421

Deadline: June 15, 2016

Entry Fees: Free. Submission online.

Prize: Grand Prize: \$4000.00. The prize may be divided between winners if more than one work is deemed to merit the award.

Contest Rules: Prize goes to the best short story, novel excerpt, poem, or work of literary nonfiction published by a new or emerging writer.

Contest: Rosebud Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley Award for Imaginative Fiction

Deadline: June 15, 2016

Website: rsbd.net Click the Contests tab on the right side, for details.

Entry Fee: \$15.00, \$10.00 per additional entry. Submission by post or email. Entrant's fee includes a copy of *Rosebud Magazine* with winning pieces.

Prize: First Prize: \$1000.00, with four runner-up awards of \$100.00 each. All entries to be judged by author/publisher J. Roderick Clark. All winners will be published in *Rosebud Magazine*.

Contest Rules: Unpublished works of fantasy, science fiction, mystery or horror. The judge is open to works that take literary risks, reach beyond genre boundaries and tell a good story.

Contest: String Poet Prize

Website: stringpoet.com/2016/04/2016-string-poet-prize-guidelines/

Deadline: June 29, 2016. Winner's poem will be set to music by Composer Richard Brooks.

Entry Fees: \$15.00, include up to five poems, up to 40 lines per poem, music themes not required.

Prize: \$1000.00 and publication in *String Poet* magazine, plus music written and performed for the winning poem. Runners-up will receive publication in *String Poet*. Judge: X. J. Kennedy.

Contest Rules: See website for details, entries by post or email.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Ongoing Roxan McDonald Writers Groups

Location: Moss Landing Group, Moss Landing CA, Tuesdays 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Santa Cruz Group, Upper Westside of Santa Cruz, CA, Thursdays 3:00-6:00 p.m.

Location: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), CSUMB, Thursday or Friday Writer's Circle, 4-week sessions, ongoing.

Date: Ongoing; Contact Roxanne McDonald for 12-week groups.

Event: Writers gather weekly for shared critique and craft discussions in supportive, structured meetings. OLLI groups are priced according to listings at CSUMB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Contact: For information about these events, email roxanmcdonaldconsulting@gmail.com.

For CSUMB courses and pricing, contact Roxan McDonald or olli.csumb.edu/.



“Verrry Interesting”

(Arte Johnson, *Laugh-In*)

In almost every form of writing, interpersonal relationships are an important factor. Readers have an interest in and anticipate how the protagonists will get along with each other, or won't. It has been noted that some of the population tend to consider themselves “steadfast and persevering” and consider the other sex “rather stubborn.”

I feel no prejudice in this regard, but recently I realized how stubborn I was being concerning a particular matter. After having let go of my resolute determination, I admired my son's persistence in the matter and wondered where he and his sister got this trait. I then remembered the many stories I told them of how my mother and father steadfastly stood up for “what is right.” I realized what great admiration I feel for my children in standing up for what they believe in, and also in their ability to consider the other person's point of view.

We have many opportunities to observe conflict between opposing political factions in society, leaders of our country and our representatives in legislature. An example of this is the strong reaction of many Americans who resented the singing groups who spoke out against military action in Vietnam and El Salvador. They campaigned on talk radio all across the country, actively boycotted the music and stations that played it, and encouraged others to do the same. Unyielding feelings can result in unyielding behavior. We don't need to abandon our values, but we could seriously listen to other people's feelings so we are able to understand the opposing point of view and express our ideas more effectively. I believe that we can all “get along” if we strongly adhere to our own honest scruples while also receptively considering the opinions of others.

Another dichotomy is a tendency for some people to consider compassion to be either admirable or “just plain stupid.” There are those who may consider it “sheer stupidity” when they see others being kind and helpful without knowing how they might be affected as a result of their compassion. You may remember my poem about the time my tiny daughter stood up to the older bully who was picking on her friend. (“We Did Our Best,” [Scribbles, December 2015](#), page 7.)

There is a technique in psychology called “active listening” that enables us to open our minds to what others are saying rather than thinking of what we will say next while they are talking: we first repeat the gist of what they said, then follow it with our response. That way we actually need to listen and consider the value of their point of view before continuing to present ours.

We can demonstrate this through dialogue in our work. The way we, as writers, present interpersonal relationships will stir the emotions of the readers and draw them into our work or possibly cause them to close the book.

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

The Last Word

By Lana Bryan

The Galápagos



San Cristóbal and Española Islands

It was our first cruise of any kind. We chose a Lindblad Expeditions/National Geographic tour to the Galápagos Islands, because of their reputations as responsible and knowledgeable. Richly rewarded for that choice, we were treated to delicious and abundant meals; lectures on photography, the history of the islands, and Darwin; Zodiac rides and hiking among the unique critters.

A volcanic archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, the Galápagos is a province of Ecuador, lying about 600 miles off its coast. The archipelago consists of 20 islands, seven of which are merely the tips of volcanoes. Only four towns and a few villages exist.

Most of the islands are dry; the rainy season is only in December and January. Some years it doesn't come at all. Our plane landed on San Cristóbal Island, where we hiked in a forest consisting of only two types of trees.

With only 48 passengers, each group of 16 people enjoyed the company of a naturalist for each excursion off of the ship. The naturalists imparted lots of information, always interesting and often humorous, making each day a fun adventure.

Española Island sports a pristine beach that we shared only with sea lions and birds. We snorkeled in the clear waters and hiked the beach to see whale bones. Later we made a dry landing at another smaller beach to see both land and marine iguanas. The latter dive into the ocean and eat algae on the ocean floor.



When they emerge, they have to warm up to 98.6 degrees to activate enzymes to digest the algae. If they can't warm up, they can die of starvation, even with a fully belly.

More Galápagos stories next month,

Lana

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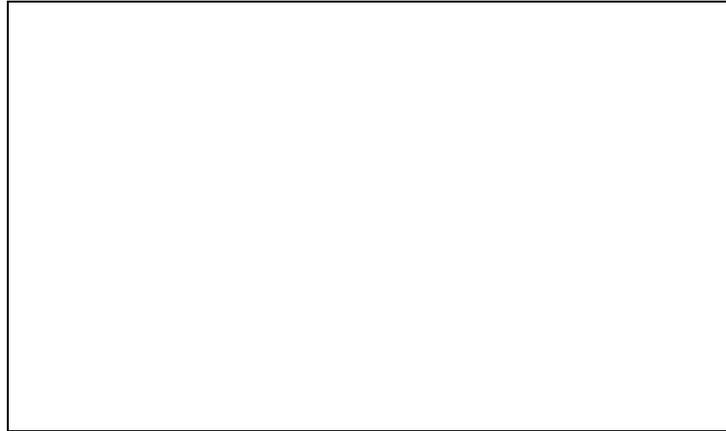
Not yet a member of CCW?

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



June 21

**Michael David Lukas —
Revision and Inspiration**

5:30 p.m. - CHECK-IN and DINNER

6:30 p.m. - MEETING

Point Pinos Grill

79 Asilomar Boulevard

Pacific Grove

