



# Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch  
[centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

May 2016

## May 17 Speaker Sylvie Simmons

### Writing a Comprehensive Biography

Sylvie Simmons, author of [I'm Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen](#) will speak about writing a definitive biography without losing your emotional distance, your livelihood or your mind. She will talk about research, interviews, immersing yourself in another person's life, what to reveal, what not to reveal, how to gain your subject's trust...and how being passionate about a dream can lead to an extraordinary life.

SYLVIE SIMMONS is a London-born U.S.-based music journalist and author. A widely regarded writer and rock historian since the late 1970s, she is one of very few women included among the predominantly male rock elite. She has interviewed artists from Mick Jagger to Michael Jackson. The Leonard Cohen book was named best biography of the year (2012) by NPR's "All Things Considered." She is also a singer-songwriter and ukulele player signed to [Light in the Attic Records](#).



## Coming on June 21

### Michael 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.

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## April Showers (Bring Good Old Days)

What a wonderful wet weekend we shared at Good Old Days! Thank you to everyone who braved the elements to walk in the parade and man the booth. A special thanks to those who helped with the setup and tear down, and those who manned the booth for longer than their appointed time—I could name names, but that would pretty much use up the rest of my allowed president letter space! If you missed this event, don't worry, we'll do it again next year, and there's another opportunity to walk with us in the Fourth of July Parade in Monterey.

April was the first meeting I've missed since becoming your president. I was especially sad to miss the speakers! I was told that Sandy Balzo, invited speaker turned member, did a wonderful job describing the joys and foibles of writing characters in a series, the 5-minute reader wowed everyone (way to go, Ned), and the student writing contest winners were lovely and engaging. Also, I missed seeing all the meeting regulars—my writing family means a lot to me.

I'll be back with you at the May meeting, and I'm very excited that we'll welcome Sylvie Simmons as the speaker! If you don't know about Sylvie I'd suggest doing a little googling—she's quite impressive. Given her vast experience and popularity I'd suggest arriving a bit early to get a good seat.

Until we meet again, happy writing!

Laurie

## Pacific Grove's Good Old Days

Photos by Laurie Sheehan unless noted

Who took this one?



Photo by Patricia Hamilton



## Balzo on Writing the Killer Series

Sandra Balzo ran down some of the hurdles in writing a series in her presentation to CCW in April. You've got to make choices carefully, she said. Making some decisions upfront will make the series better and your writing life easier.

If your story is a whodunit tale, deciding on an amateur or professional sleuth is one of those early decisions. Balzo pointed out that having a professional sleuth is easier, making it credible that your hero is exposed to criminal activity and has the tools to pursue it. Choosing an amateur sleuth is also a common choice, but the amateur needs a motive. She gave examples: he or she could be a suspect or have loved ones in peril.

The location of your novel creates a milieu that can also help move the plot forward, Balzo said. For a crime novel, she suggested a location where there is a natural influx of people, giving the writer a ready cast of victims and suspects. "That means fresh meat, delivered to my sleuth's door," she said.

Choosing your character's fictional history, and deciding how you will age your characters are two decisions there's no turning back from, Balzo said. Your character's history sticks with you from book to book. And adding a few years between books can accumulate quickly; your hero or heroine might be too arthritic to accomplish the feats you have in mind.

Oh, and no happy endings. You need some conflict to build on for your next book! All great tips from Sandra Balzo.



Five-minute Reader Ned Huston



Speaker Sandra Balzo



Leslie Patiño congratulates contest winners Jenna Garden (l) and Victoria Mazariegos

Photographs by Clarissa Conn

# Announcements

## Membership News Member Congratulations!

Diana Y. Paul's novel, *Things Unsaid*, received the award for New Adult Fiction from the Beverly Hills Book Awards for 2016, as well as the Five Star Review Award for Readers Favorite in the Women's Fiction category.

## Networking Aloud: A Writers Open Mike

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

May 10<sup>th</sup> **Peter Hoss** will read from *Born in Yosemite: 75 Years of Personal Observation*. Peter takes the reader on a 75-year journey through the historical events and personal adventures that have shaped his Yosemite experience.

Our guest reader on **June 14<sup>th</sup>** 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.

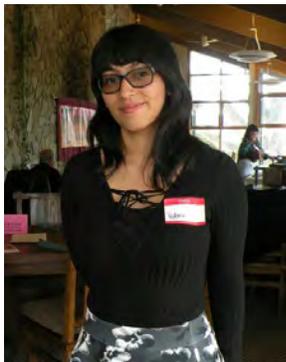
Questions or to be featured in the future: Pat Hanson [831-601-9195](tel:831-601-9195) or co-emcee Janice Rocke @ [831-521-0375](tel:831-521-0375).

## Short Story Contest Winners!

By Leslie Patiño

Congratulations to all 45 high school seniors who submitted stories to the 2016 CCW Short Story Contest. They represented 11 high schools and 16 teachers from all over Monterey County. Eight CCW members met in March for the difficult task of determining the top 6. Read their stories on the [CCW website!](#)

<u>1<sup>st</sup> place</u>	<u><a href="#">The Boy Who Found His Ears</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Victoria Mazariegos</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Millennium HS</a></u>
<u>2<sup>nd</sup> place</u>	<u><a href="#">Underneath</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Katharine Tinney</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Salinas HS</a></u>
<u>3<sup>rd</sup> place</u>	<u><a href="#">The Writing on the Wall</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Jenna Garden</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Salinas HS</a></u>
<u>Honorable Mention</u>	<u><a href="#">In the Absence of Light</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Tatjana Tam</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Carmel HS</a></u>
<u>Honorable Mention</u>	<u><a href="#">Fate Intertwined</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Andrea Resendiz</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Greenfield HS</a></u>
<u>Honorable Mention</u>	<u><a href="#">Within the Aerosol Can</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Sheldon Ozaeta</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Millennium HS</a></u>



1st place winner Victoria Mazariegos, left, and 3rd place winner Jenna Garden, right, attended the CCW meeting on Tuesday night to receive their certificates and award money. It was lovely to have them there as well as their family members. Congratulations!



## Executive Board Nominations and Elections

CCW is looking for qualified members with excellent communication skills and the ability to work as a team. The Board has selected a nominating committee for this year's elections: Leslie Patiño, Christine Sleeter, Dorothy Vriend, Sarah Pruitt, and Lana Bryan. Speak to any of these women to put forth your own candidacy or that of another.

At the May general meeting, the chair will announce the candidates for the positions of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Members will elect these four positions at the June meeting. Presidential appointments of membership, programs, publicity, and others will join the elected officers for the transition meeting during the summer.

But we need members for all levels of involvement. Remember, CCW doesn't run itself. This is your club, and you can make it continue to be the best, but only by volunteering.

## Membership Renewal

Membership renewal packets will be mailed to you near the end of May. Here is the dues structure:

\$65 full year rate – for all new members joining between July 1 and December 31. Membership will expire on June 30 of the upcoming year. Renewal dues will be \$45.

\$42.50 half-year option – for new members joining between January 1 and June 30. Membership will expire on June 30 of the same year. Renewal dues will be \$45.

\$65 "full year plus" – for new members joining between January 1 and June 30. Membership will expire on June 30 of the following year. Renewal dues will be \$45.

## LET'S GET TOGETHER AND JUST WRITE!

By Joyce Krieg



Looking for a way to inject a bit of socializing into the solitary business of writing? Several of us have been meeting on a semi-regular basis on Tuesday mornings at Crema in downtown Pacific Grove, and now we're opening up this informal group to any CCW member who would like to join us.

Just to be clear, this isn't a critique group. The whole point is to simply have a regular, standing appointment to go somewhere and work on our writing with other like-minded individuals. I'm inspired by the "Shut Up and Write" movement that started with thesis writers at universities in the San Francisco area and has now gone viral around the world. As one "Shut Up and Write" participant sums up, "No critiquing, exercises, lectures, ego, competition or feeling guilty."

The day is Tuesday, every Tuesday unless otherwise notified. Hours are 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. and the place is Crema, 481 Lighthouse Avenue, corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and Lighthouse in Pacific Grove. In anticipation of some of your questions:

- Any kind of writing is welcome. It doesn't *have* to be the Great American Novel or an epic poem.
- There is no cost to attend. Keep in mind, though, that Crema is a business and is providing this space to us for free, so it's only fair to at least order a cup of coffee or tea.
- Laptops are welcome and Crema has free WiFi. However, as an aging Victorian, electrical outlets are sparse, so charge up that battery beforehand. Or do like I do and bring a notepad and pen.
- No, you don't have to commit to showing up every single week, though I certainly hope you'll *want* to. I envision this being a "come when you can" sort of event. However, please be on time.

If you have questions I haven't answered, or if you'd just like to add your name to the list of interested writers, send me an email at [pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com](mailto:pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com).

## Exciting CWC Member Benefit at the Bay Area Book Festival

By Joyce Krieg, Central Coast branch, CWC Vice-president



The California Writers Club-NorCal Group takes great pleasure in announcing an exciting opportunity just for you, our members. This year, the CWC-NorCal Group has reserved a booth at the second annual Bay Area Book Festival, and is offering the opportunity for CWC members to sell their books at the booth—at no cost!

The Bay Area Book Festival takes place Saturday and Sunday, June 4 and 5, in downtown Berkeley in and around Civic Center Park. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. both days. Last year, this free event drew some 50,000 people, 300 author/speakers and 160 vendors. This year, CWC will be one of the exhibitors.

Details are still being worked out, but here is what we can tell you:

- CWC members are invited to sell their books and/or promote their writing-related business at our booth at no cost to the member.
- You must have a current seller's permit from the State Board of Equalization if you plan to actually sell anything.
- You must be present in the booth and handle all details of making the sale. No dropping off books and expecting others to sell them for you!
- Shifts will be set up on two-hour intervals. You must remove yourself, your books, and all other promotional materials at the end of your two-hour shift.
- Shift assignments will be made either on a first-come, first-served basis or by lottery, depending on demand. You may not sign up for more than one shift unless and until all other interested CWC members are accommodated.
- You may use your shift to promote a writing-related business (editing, book design, PR, etc.) in lieu of selling books.
- This opportunity is available *only* to current members of CWC.

If this sounds like something you'd like to do, add your name to the master list by sending an email to Joyce Krieg of the Central Coast branch, [pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com](mailto:pacificgrovejoyce@gmail.com). Even if you have already signed up or indicated interest to someone at your home branch, please add your name to Joyce's master list. Put "Bay Area Book Festival" in the Subject field and indicate your home branch in the body of the email. We'll be sending detailed information as to how to reserve a spot on or around May 10.



## Musings from a Deep Thinker

Gayle Lubeck

At a young age, Gayle Lubeck found verbal communication a difficult process and started keeping journals from the time she was in grammar school. “I’ve always felt the compulsion and desire to write down my innermost thoughts,” Gayle says. “As a deep thinker from early on, I just did what felt natural to me. I used writing as the vehicle for self-expression, and I continue that journey today.”

Throughout her journey, Gayle has worn many hats. She worked for the California Conservation Corps, she was employed as a security guard, and she sold chemicals out of her car’s trunk for an Oakland-based industrial cleaning company. Earning a B.A. in advertising with a minor in art, along with a certificate in marketing communications from San Jose State University, Gayle went on to complete graduate school in the English and Comparative Literature program. She published two scholarly papers as part of the Significations CSU Graduate Conferences, and two flash nonfiction pieces (“White Fury “ and “Whiteout”) were published in 2014 by PushPen Press as part of *Three, An Anthology of Flash Nonfiction*.

Today, Gayle’s hectic schedule as Human Resource Director for Old Fisherman’s Grotto restaurant allows only one or two writing sessions per week. Despite a demanding work week, however, she manages to carve out time to write creative non-fiction.

“I make appointments with myself on a weekly basis in order to journal and work on new material,” Gayle says.

Most comfortable writing at home or in one of her favorite coffee shops like East Village Coffee Lounge in Monterey, Gayle adds, “I think writing outside—what I call plein air writing—provides a [fresh] perspective. Always carry a notebook or laptop with you because you never know when inspiration may strike. Taking classes, attending workshops and reading are [also] great tools,” she says.

In addition to writing creative non-fiction, Gayle aspires to write a memoir and a book about WWII submarines. “My father served in the Navy, and I want to learn more about his service, the conditions they had to endure and anything else I can uncover during research.”

A CCW member back in 2011, who rejoined in summer of 2015, Gayle is fond of our organization because of the wonderful people she’s met and continues to meet. “I also enjoy the critique group and look forward to participating again soon.”

*Michelle Smith’s articles have been published in a variety of magazines. Her website is [thebonyquill.com](http://thebonyquill.com).*



## Pablo Neruda



Pablo Neruda was a renowned world poet, who had little recognition in the North America. He was born Neftalí Ricardo Reyes Basoalto on July 12, 1904 in Parral, Chile. At the age of thirteen he started to submit articles to the daily, La Mañana. His first article was the poem “Entusiasmo y perseverancia.” Educated at the University of Chile, he took the pen name Pablo Neruda after a Czech poet. In addition to being a poet, he was also a politician.

Pablo Neruda’s first published book *Crepusculario* (1923) contains many poems from this period. In 1933 *Residencia en la tierra* was published. The title translates to Residence on Earth, a book of powerful poetry where Neruda’s world of alienation comes alive. Influenced by the Spanish Civil War and the murder of his friend Garcia Lorca, Neruda began his collection of poems *Espana en el corazón*, printed by soldiers at the Civil War front.

In 1939, Neruda decided to change his poem “Canto general” into an epic poem about the whole South American continent including its people and projected future.

*Viente poemas de amor y una canción desesperada* is a book of 20 love poems and a song of despair and includes explicit celebration of sexuality. Love poetry often equates women with nature. Neruda took this model comparison to new heights making women a strong force of nature.

In 1945 Neruda returned to Chile and joined the Communist Party, after which he was an outcast. He had to live in several foreign countries, causing his obscurity instead of recognition as the great poet and writer that he was.

Neruda won many awards, including the International Lenin Peace Prize in 1953 and, most notably, the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1971. Later books include surrealistic poems.

He died in 1973. One can remember him by this quote:



“The books that help you the most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is that of easy reading; but a great book that comes from a great thinker is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty.”

Neruda wrote a number of odes about simple objects like onions and socks in which he managed to express thought-provoking and often profound ideas.

### Ode to Maize by Pablo Neruda

America, from a grain  
of maize you grew  
to crown  
with spacious lands  
the ocean foam.  
A grain of maize was your geography.  
From the grain  
a green lance rose,  
was covered with gold,  
to grace the heights  
of Peru with its yellow tassels.

But, poet, let  
history rest in its shroud;  
praise with your lyre  
the grain in its granaries:  
sing to the simple maize in the kitchen.

First, a fine beard  
fluttered in the field  
above the tender teeth  
of the young ear.  
Then the husks parted  
and fruitfulness burst its veils  
of pale papyrus  
that grains of laughter  
might fall upon the earth. [[Read more.](#)]

## Contests and Conferences

By Patricia Watson



### CONTESTS

**Contest:** Breakwater Review Peseroff Prize, Breakwater Review Poetry and Fiction Contest

**Deadline:** May 15, 2016

**Website:** [breakwaterreview.com/peseroffprize/](http://breakwaterreview.com/peseroffprize/)

**Entry Fee:** \$10.00, online submissions only

**Prize:** \$1000.00 award to the winners in each Poetry and Fiction categories

**Contest Rules:** [breakwaterreview.submittable.com/submit](http://breakwaterreview.submittable.com/submit)

**Contest:** Futurescapes Annual Writing Contest

**Deadline:** July 15, 2016

**Website:** [futurescapescontest.com](http://futurescapescontest.com)

**Entry Fee:** Free. Short Futuristic Fiction based on the prompt "Cities of Empowerment"

**Prizes:** 1st Prize: \$2000.00, 2nd Prize: \$1000.00, 4 Runner-up Prizes: \$500.00

**Contest Rules:** [futurescapescontest.com/contest-rules](http://futurescapescontest.com/contest-rules)

### WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

#### **The Writers Workshop, Chicago**

**Location:** Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Chicago, Illinois

**Date:** May 15-16, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Event:** A weekend for writers with Reid Tracy, Caroline Myss, and Nancy Levin, sponsored by Hay House Publishing

**Cost:** \$550.00 for full event.

**Website:** [hayhouse.com/writers-workshop-chicago-2016-event](http://hayhouse.com/writers-workshop-chicago-2016-event)

#### **ASJA Writers Conference, New York City**

**Location:** Roosevelt Hotel; ASJA members only on Friday (membership available online), General Admission attendees Saturday only

**Date:** May 20-21, 2016

**Cost:** Saturday \$349.00 General Admission, \$449.00 whole weekend for members

**Website:** [eiseverywhere.com/ehome/asja2016/348920](http://eiseverywhere.com/ehome/asja2016/348920)

### ADDITIONAL CONTEST/CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

(Submitted by Wanda Sue Parrott)

#### ***Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors***

**All Military Personnel, Veterans, and their Families: Call for Submissions and Contest for Volume 5**

**Deadline and Fee:** June 1, 2016 (postmarked); No fee

**Website:** [semopress.com/events/proud-to-be-writing-by-american-warriors](http://semopress.com/events/proud-to-be-writing-by-american-warriors)

**Two types of entries:** Anthology entry only; Contest and Anthology entry

**Categories and Prizes:** Short Fiction, Poetry, Interview with a Warrior, Essay, Photography; \$250 prize in each.

Writing must be by veterans, military-service personnel, or their families. Include the military connection in your short bio.



## “...Pay It Forward”

(Lily Hardy Hammond, 1916)

It is said, “Give a man a fish; you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish; you feed him for a lifetime.” Henry Ford said, “Time and money spent in helping men to do more for themselves is far better than giving.”

As teachers and parents, we help children learn to help themselves, not by telling, but by showing them. They learn kindness by seeing us being kind to them or to others.

As writers, the behavior of one of our characters to resolve a problem may inspire the readers to take action to resolve a situation in their own lives.

Benjamin Franklin loaned money to Benjamin Webb in 1784 with the following note, “I do not pretend to give such a deed; I only lend it to you. When you ... meet with another honest Man in similar Distress, you must pay me by lending this Sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the Debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with another opportunity.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: “In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody.”

Veronica Roth, who wrote the bestselling *Divergent* Trilogy, said, “We believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another.” Her protagonist, Tris, faces hard choices about courage and sacrifice for those she loves.

It reminds me of the young girl in *Like a Woman* by Debra Busman, who dared against great odds to help those in need; people, animals, loved ones and strangers alike.

Beverly Cleary demonstrates to pre-teens the courageous compassion of Henry Huggins and Ramona despite personal obstacles.

In writing *The Soloist*, journalist Steve Lopez’ efforts to help the classical bass player on Skid Row, resulted in beneficial changes in both their lives—and possibly the attitudes of many readers and moviegoers.

A child’s spontaneous smile brings a smile to my face. Certain passages in a book make me smile; make me feel good inside.

A proverb that I like to live by is, “If you see a man without a smile, give him one of yours.” Maybe that’s the best reason for us to keep on writing: to make people feel good inside. Make them feel good about themselves.

Something we write may reach deep into the frustration or the longing that readers feel. We don’t know their situations, but are familiar with the aspirations and difficulties of those who are near to us and the positive resolutions; and we write from the heart. The words are ours, but the ideas come from deep inside the readers. If it makes them smile, they are less likely to strike out in anger or resentment.

It’s a good tradition!

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

## The Last Word

By Lana Bryan

### The KellyGram



Reprinted with permission from [The KellyGram](#), March 9, 2016

Listen. Come in here. You want to know about this.

Okay! Want to learn more? Just a few days ago, I spotted a bit of advice from author Stephen King about grabbing your reader's attention in that most important place - the opening line of your new manuscript. King's advice? I used it to start this piece.

The next day, *The Writer's Almanac* profiled Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez, who credited Franz Kafka for starting him on the road to success. Specifically, it was Kafka's opening line in *The Metamorphosis* that grabbed him. "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect-like creature."

Márquez' reaction: "When I read the line I thought to myself that I didn't know anyone was allowed to write things like that. If I had known, I would have started writing a long time ago."

How well did he learn? Here's how he began his famous *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice."

I don't know about you, but if I'd just started reading those books, I'd certainly want to find out more about what bugged Samsa, and what made Colonel Buendía recall a long-ago afternoon just as he was about to be executed.

That same afternoon, I spoke with a prospective client who had sent me a draft of her new manuscript. She included three optional opening lines, and asked for my input. All three were well written, but only one of them followed the King formula, which I passed along to her.

In my own writing, I always try for an attention-grabbing opening sentence, and I suggest you do the same.

## CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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### Editorial Staff

Lana Bryan	Editor
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Leslie Patiño	Proofreader
Robert Whitsitt	Proofreader

### CCW Website

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

### For anything *Scribbles* related:

Contact *Scribbles* editor Lana Bryan:  
[lane.bryan@writeteam.com](mailto:lane.bryan@writeteam.com)

### Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:  
[centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)



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**May 17**

**Sylvie Simmons:**

**Writing a Comprehensive Biography**

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

**6:30 p.m. - MEETING**

**Point Pinos Grill**

**79 Asilomar Boulevard**

**Pacific Grove**

