



# Scribbles

California Writers Club - Central Coast Writers Branch  
[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)  
December 2011

## CCW Holiday Potluck!



Our holiday potluck is open to CCW members and their guests: friends, family, writing buddies, etc. It is in lieu of our regular monthly meeting, *so don't miss it!*

**Date:** Sunday, December 11, 2011

**Time:** 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Place:** Home of Pat and Dan Matuszewski, 4280 Peninsula Point Drive, Seaside

**Entertainment:** Our own rock star (and former president) David Rasch, and a fun, interactive party game presented by Susan Horcajo.

**Important Details (i.e., FOOD):** Pat and Dan are providing lasagna and the club will supply wine and bottled water. You can bring a salad, side dish, appetizer or dessert. If you need something to drink other than wine or bottled water, please BYOB. If you don't cook and/or have no means to concoct something for the potluck, please come anyway! Your presence is more important than your culinary skills.

**Directions:** Watch your mailbox for an invitation with detailed directions coming soon.

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

**Patricia Covert**, of Monterey, is writing non-fiction.

**Alyson Brown**, of Seaside, is interested in writing articles and is working on a book.

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## "A REASONABLE REQUEST"

"So," one of you asked me at the end of our November meeting, "how much money does our club have, anyway?"

As I stammered for an answer and stalled for time, he continued, "You're always acting like we're broke, begging us to buy door prize tickets and all that . . . ."

It was a reasonable request, I realized, one that deserved an answer. It's the members' money, after all, not mine nor the Executive Committee's. I responded as honestly as I could. "Somewhere around sixty-eight hundred."

Not bad for an organization of our size, structure and purpose.

The request for information about our finances came, I am sure, out of a lively, free-for-all debate earlier that evening about finding a new meeting venue. I'd talked about how we'd been priced out of pretty much every hotel on the Monterey Peninsula, and how we'd have to get creative in finding affordable meeting space.

In the member survey we conducted in October, you spoke loud and clear. You want to subsidize the cost of the venue by eating dinner. You don't want to pay an admission fee without getting fed. You want to keep the meeting in the evening on the third Tuesday of the month and absolutely, positively do not want to meet on the weekend. We on the Executive Committee are prepared to honor your wishes. We also realize that for a good portion of our members, \$15 to \$20 is all you can and will spend for dinner out, except possibly for special occasion splurges. Try finding dinner for under \$20, with a meeting room for fifty-plus, in a safe neighborhood, free parking, ADA accessible, available consistently on the third Tuesday of the month, on the pricey Peninsula!

But gosh, with almost seven grand in our treasury, . . . shoot, we could afford to meet in someplace pretty fancy-schmancy! We could rent a meeting hall – Sunset Center, say, or the Pacific Grove Community Center – and still let our members and the public come for free. As for dinner, the club could easily underwrite the difference between what the members are able to pay and what the venue is actually charging, couldn't we?

I suppose. Never mind that our treasury would suffer a severe hit after a year or so of that kind of spending. That's not a legacy I want to bequeath to the next president. Not to mention that we're a nonprofit with a mission of educating writers. Subsidizing dinners for members hardly feels like the best possible use of our funds.

*(continued on page 3)*

(Prez Sez, continued from page 2)

Our budget in a nutshell:

**Income:** The bulk comes from member dues, followed distantly by profit from workshops and the door prize drawing.

**Expenses:** Our biggest single expense is the share of dues (\$20 per member) that we must remit to our parent organization, California Writers Club. Keep in mind, however, that they provide insurance, IRS accounting services, and our 501(c) 3 nonprofit status, so it pretty much evens out. Other major expenses are publicity (newspaper ads and those cute little postcards you get every month), transportation/ lodging for speakers, and printing/ mailing *Scribbles* for those who still want a paper newsletter.

For the record, as of this writing our check register shows a balance of \$6,857.41.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

If you were to pick one hour of the day to memorialize, what would it be, and why?

Submit your answer to [ccwscribbles@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ccwscribbles@sbcglobal.net). The Editor would like to print a selection of submissions in the January issue.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I would love to join a **critique group** for genre fiction (fantasy/sci-fi, in particular, but historical or mystery would also be of interest to me).

I'm writing fantasy at the moment, but have written both historical and mystery (and historical mystery). My schedule is very open. Only Friday afternoons and weekends aren't good for me.

Thanks, **Deborah Cardillo** (831/239-8730)

Greetings! I am both new to the area and a new member of the Central Coast Writers club. I have **written a book** about the mourning process called *A Beautiful Mourning*. Here is one of my favorite reviews:

Having been a hospice nurse for thirty plus years, I find *A Beautiful Mourning* nothing short of magnificent! Elsa writes from her heart and soul, giving the reader a sacred roadmap for the journey through grief. This book will speak not only to those who have loved and lost, but to anyone who is a seeker of truth and authentic living. Elsa's blend of simplicity with profound wisdom and grace infuses each page with the love and light from which it was written.

- Cathy Truehart, R.N., M.A.

If this is a topic of interest to you – or someone you love – please visit my website at [www.elsaweber.com](http://www.elsaweber.com) for more information. Thank you and I look forward to meeting you.

Warmest regards,

**Elizabeth "Elsa" Weber**

## ACCOLADES!

**Pat Hanson** has already had one of her stories accepted for Jennifer Basye Sander's Christmas story collection. Here's the hood for her story:

"Somehow that week, out of the depths of my despair, I got an idea. We'd have a 'Virtual Christmas.' We'd each find and wrap up pictures of five gifts we would have been thoughtful and generous enough to buy, had there been money to put into circulation!"

Pat, your story is lovely! (See page 9 for more on the upcoming book.)

In *Off 68*, a *Californian* publication, Robert Walch bragged on **Martin Dodd's**

inclusion in the anthology of short stories entitled *The Barmaid, the Bean Counter and the Bungee Jumper*. It talks of Martin's career-related writing and his evolution into being a creative writer. At least half of the article is devoted to Central Coast Writers ("If anyone is seriously interested in writing, Dodd encourages him or her to consider becoming a member of Central Coast Writers. "There are so many resources available and people willing to share their experiences that this is a wonderful place to pursue that interest," he said."), so you'll definitely want to catch the entire article, at <http://tinyurl.com/7tpeepu>.

(Thanks, too, for the plug about our contests column here in *Scribbles*, Martin!)

### "THE MEMBERS HAVE SPOKEN"

We've tallied the results of the October member survey, and here's what you told us:

You want to keep the meeting on Tuesday night, or another weekday night, by an 88% margin. We hear you – you don't want to move the meeting to the weekend – and we'll never bring it up again!

Forty-seven percent like our present home at the Bay Park Hotel, though the only other options mentioned were Sunset Center and "a school, library, or public meeting hall." As to how to pay for the venue, 62% would like to subsidize the venue by buying dinner, while 38% would rather skip the meal and just pay an admission fee.

As to the content of the meetings, it was an even spread among the four choices: writing craft, traditional publishing, self-publishing and social media.

Other meeting topics suggested: interactive writing workshops for practice and feedback, public speaking, networking, introduction of new members and visitors, writers' block, writers' success stories, pitching, web site building, non-fiction, building your platform, marketing connections, and sales opportunities.

Thank you, everyone, who completed the survey and mailed it in a timely manner. This feedback is very helpful to your Executive Committee.

Central Coast Writers Presents

## Content, Character & Connection: The 3 Keys to Becoming a Successful Author in a Bottom-Up World

Want to take your writing to the next level? Yearn to learn from and network with experts? Want to get your book published? Join San Francisco literary agents Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada for a humor-filled day that can transform your career. Gain first-hand insight into:

- ▶ How agents, editors, and publishers work
- ▶ How to develop and refine your work
- ▶ Make a commitment to achieving your goals
- ▶ Which publishing option is best for you
- ▶ Why now is the best time ever to be a writer



1972, Larsen-Pomada has sold hundreds of adult fiction and nonfiction books to more than 100 publishers and imprints. They are more eager than ever to find new writers. Michael handles non-fiction; Elizabeth represents memoirs, and commercial, literary, and women's fiction, including romance, mysteries, thrillers, and suspense. Michael is the author of *How to Get a Literary Agent* and *How to Write a Book Proposal*, and coauthor of *Guerrilla Marketing for Writers: 100 Weapons for Selling Your Work*. Mike

and Elizabeth are co-directors of the San Francisco Writers Conference, February 16-20, 2012, [www.sfwriters.org](http://www.sfwriters.org). Michael's blog: [sfwriters.info/blog](http://sfwriters.info/blog).

**WHAT:** Seminar on how to write your book, get it published, and make it successful. The last hour will be devoted to 3-minute, one-on-one sessions in which you can pitch your book, get feedback on the first page of your manuscript, proposal, or published book, and ask questions. Free follow-up phone consultations.

**WHO:** Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada, nationally known agents and conference directors.

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 28, 2012 - 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Doors open 8:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Bay Park Hotel, 1425 Munras Avenue, Monterey

**COST:** Early-bird special before Jan. 1, 2012:  
CCW Members \$75, Non-members \$89  
After Jan. 1 - \$ CCW Members \$85, Non-members \$99  
Includes coffee, lunch salad bar buffet, 20 pages of valuable handouts

Makes a great  
Christmas gift!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Before 1/1/12: \_\_\_\$75 CCW Member \_\_\_\$89 Non-Member After 1/1/12: \_\_\_\$85 CCW Member \_\_\_\$99 Non-Member

Make checks payable to "CCW Branch of CWC"

Fee refunded if you become a ML-EPclient. 2 scholarships available: email Mike Larsen at [epml@aol.com](mailto:epml@aol.com).

Mail to: Central Coast Writers, P.O. Box 997 Pacific Grove, CA 93950

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

## “Jennifer Basye Sander’s Inside Look at How Book Ideas Get ‘Sold,’”

by Pat Hanson

The picture of Jennifer Basye Sander in our November *Scribbles* didn’t do this experienced, dynamic, energetic book publisher justice. It does however show her in a tailored suit with a pile of books, looking every bit the senior editor at Random House and Prima Publishing that she was for many years. What didn’t come across was the dynamism and creativity with which she gave us an insider’s view of what goes on behind the scenes of an editorial acquisition meeting where book ideas are discussed and either accepted or thrown out.



Arlen Grossman, Jane Parks-McKay, Janet Tezak, David Rasch, and our speaker, Jennifer Basye Sander  
(Photo by Joyce Krieg)

By selecting eight CCW members to come up and role-play scripted typical questions each department in a publishing company might ask before they package a book, Jennifer demonstrated vividly how each player could make or break a writer’s idea. Her questions were simultaneously scary and reassuring. She shared them not discourage us, but to make us realize what might be behind a rejection, and prepare for the answers. Here’s a sample:

**Acquisitions Editor:** Calls the meeting and is lucky to get all the players there.

**Production:** “We’re on a tight schedule, how can we meet this deadline? What about the cost of photos, this type, the paper, the size, the look?”

**Sales:** “This title will never sell, can we do better than that?”

**Art:** Hardcover? Trade Paperback? Font? Format? Appeal of cover art?

**Marketing:** Timing of release? “Can we buy ‘positioning’ in major bookstores, so a display gets at the end of an aisle? Does this author have a platform (speaking/media experience) to promote this book?”

**Publishing:** “I want a profit/loss analysis for # of copies, # of print runs. This is not one-of-a-kind, what other houses have similar books?”

**Rights:** “What other international markets can we sell the rights to? Japan, Sweden, China, etc?”

**Special Sales:** “Is there a major corporation that might buy this book? Multi-level marketers like Amway? Mormons (who are very loyal to authors they like and have a strong social network to spread the word)? Walmart? Costco?”

The question-and-answer period that followed provided a veteran publisher’s perspective on the state of the industry. As far as e-books are concerned, she believes that it’s never been a better time

(continued on page 7)

for any author to see their ideas and their hard work in print, however, she cautioned us about the glut of e-books out there, and was worried about sales and that e-books might become the high-tech equivalent of self-publishing, being stuck with a garage full of books.

As it concerns print on demand, she listed a number of companies she's heard of, but cautioned us to research costs and contracts. I hadn't heard about The Espresso Book Machine, a kiosk now available in several places across the country, from which your book accurately formatted on a thumb drive, can print out in eight minutes! Even she said "Who knows how people will be reading in the future."

An inspiring talk, her final words to us, based on all of her experiences, were "Don't take no for an answer. Just keep trying." Jennifer generously offered to continue her discussion with us and answer questions about our personal book projects. You can contact her at [basyesander@yahoo.com](mailto:basyesander@yahoo.com).

## POETRY CORNER

Theodore Skaggs, aka Chance T.B., is a returning guest Senior Poet Laureate visiting from North Dakota in 2010/2011. He is between 70-80 years of age, depending on which persona the creative mind-traveling writer/engineer portrays. He is a storyteller by nature, and Virgoan by birth.

### TRAV'LIN MONEY

That North Dakota's so cold my brain near froze up,  
So I took the color from the cricks an' sluices's an' such  
an' threw it on Burro an' hauled it to the bank there in Killdeer.  
I takes Burro inside an' spill it out, an' ask, "How much?"

The clerk gasps, mouth open an' eyes big, "I don't no!"  
An' he holler for ol' fancy pants Bernard,  
Who come a-strutting out all puffed up like important.  
Look hard to the pile a-color spill off Burro, thinking hard.

Says he, "We'll take it," eyes a-blaze, "get it analyzed, credit your account."  
"You gotta give me a receipt for how much," I says to him.  
"What for? We gonna get you how much it is when we get it."  
"I'll just go take it over to that there bank in Dickinson."

"No-no-no!" shouts Bernard, "We'll take it down to Bismarck."  
"I'll be a-going with it. It ain't a-gonna be out-a my sight,"  
I tells him, an' get in the carry van with the poke an' guys a-takin' it.  
We gets to Bismarck an' take it in. I make sure it's there all right.

Well, they counts it an' weighs it an' assays it, all the while markin' on paper;  
Then they comes an' invites me in to this big office. I go in an' stands a-lookin'.  
He looks old, mean an' dried up an' scratchy faced, grins, "Who the hell you rob, Chance Tee?"  
"Weren't the ones you already done robbed in this here bank, Billy-doon."

*(continued on page 8)*

“Well, let me say you got the goodly part of a fortune there.”  
He signs a paper and pushes it across. “We’ll be takin’ care of it for you.”  
I look at the paper. It ain’t got zeroes, jus’ numbers, sluice gold don’t come that way.  
“That’d be good,” I says to old Billy-doon. “Cause I don’no what’m gonna do.”

An’ I comes out, and stand to thinkin’. An’ all the fillys are a-smiling and glad-eyed.  
I supposed it would-a been easy to take one along, one with heft,  
them knowin’ I got this here paper with a bunch of numbers, none of ’em zeroes,  
but I been heart broke so much an’ again there ain’t a lot of funnin’ left.

So I traipse back up to my cabin on the hill where the sun sees it first.  
An’ I sits on the porch with the glossy that be in my mail box down to Manderee.  
An’ I study all the clean sand an’ blue water an’ girls with hardly nothin’ on  
an’ I says to Burro, “Ain’t it ,,bout time I done something just for me.”

Burro just yawns, flaps dust off his ears, an’ says, “EE-YYAAWW.”  
"Shut up! Burro, you ain't nuth'in but a stupid JACKASS!"

(Theodore B. Skaggs is actually Harold E. Grice, Board Member Emeritus of Central Coast Writers branch of California Writers Club. He is a 2011 CWC Jack London Award winner. Harold read this poem at the CCW picnic in August.)

Your Poetry Editor: Nancy Jacobs.

**2012 San Francisco Writers Conference**  
**("A Celebration of Craft, Commerce, and Community")**

Would you like to learn from **over 50 authors**, including the writers of:

- *Shooting Kabul* (Naheed Senzai),
- *Barn Boot Blues* (Katherine Friend),
- *And My Shoes Keep Walking Back to You* (Kathi Kamen-Goldmark),
- *Spiritual Envy: An Agnostic’s Quest* (Michael Krasny),
- *Looking Good in Print* (Roger C. Parker),
- *Murder One* (Robert Dugoni),
- *Happiness Sold Elsewhere* (Lolly Winston), and
- *Sin and Syntax* (Constance Hale)?

What about having the opportunity to meet **nearly 40 agents and editors**?

Would it help if you knew that you would be spending the long President’s Day weekend in San Francisco?

Visit [www.sfwriters.org](http://www.sfwriters.org) to learn more.

## CONTESTS, AND A PROMOTION

The submission period for North Carolina's

### **Salem College's 2012 International Literary Awards Competition**

has opened. There are separate prizes for (1) a short story up to 5,000 words, (2) a poem up to 100 lines, and (3) a piece of creative nonfiction, including personal essay and memoir, up to 5,000 words.

The winner in each genre will receive \$1,200. The two honorable mentions in each genre will receive \$150.

The deadline is February 3, 2012.

For complete rules, visit  
<http://tinyurl.com/7xnqrf>.

*Here's a unique opportunity!*

PartSelect.com is giving away \$5,000 worth of **new GE appliances** to one lucky blogger. To enter, simply choose one of our official blogging topics below, write a post and sent it to [contests@partselect.com](mailto:contests@partselect.com). It's that easy!

Official Topics:

- Your worst DIY disaster.
- Your proudest creation or empowering DIY moment.
- Your best "if my appliance could talk" story.
- The coolest way you problem-solved a home-related conundrum.
- The coolest thing you upcycled or repurposed in your home.

For more detail and official rules, see  
<http://tinyurl.com/6uoaebh>.

### **8th Annual Literal Literary Postcard Story Contest**



Make your own postcard using photos, drawings, or images in the public domain, write a story inspired by that postcard, then send us the image and the story. The relationship between image and story can be as subtle as you like, as long as the contest judges can see the connection.

Maximum length: 500 words, fiction or non-fiction, prose or poetry. First prize: \$250.

See <http://tinyurl.com/6vqqvbd> for more details.

Jennifer Bayse Sander, the book packager who gave a great presentation at Central Coast Writers two weeks ago, is collecting short, first-person stories involving heartwarming holiday encounters for an anthology to be published by the non-fiction division of Harlequin in Nov 2012: ***A Miracle Under the Tree: Real Stories of Hope, Faith and the True Meaning of Christmas***. Stories should be 1,500-2,000 words, but longer will be considered. The deadline for submission to [basyesander@yahoo.com](mailto:basyesander@yahoo.com) (916-847-9090) is December 31, 2011. Those chosen will receive a small honorarium and a copy of the published book.

## WORKSHOPS PRESENTED BY OUR SISTER BRANCHES

**Alice LaPlante** describes her recently published novel *Turn of Mind* as “a murder mystery told from the point of view of the murderer, who has Alzheimer’s disease.”

At **South Bay Writers’ January 10 dinner meeting**, LaPlante will discuss the point-of-view issues her “unreliable narrator” raises.

“According to the conventions of fiction,” LaPlante says, “a third-person narrator always tells the truth.” Thus, her protagonist makes a great angle for discussing point of view, an issue that already confuses many writers.

LaPlante teaches creative writing in the Bay Area, including at Stanford.

Three authors will share “**Proven Paths to Successful Writing and Publishing**” at the next luncheon meeting of the **Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club** (CWC) on **Saturday, December 10**, at Zio Fraedo’s Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Judith Ingram will discuss four steps to publication, using her non-fiction book, *A Devotional Walk with Forgiveness: Daily Exercise for Spiritual Fitness* as an example.

Jeryl Abelmann, author of *Quickly, the Magic Spatula*, will share overcoming rejection and goal-setting for publication.

Nannette Rundle Carroll, author of *The Communication Problem Solver*, will present how to handle critical conversations and preserve vital relationships in the publishing process.

Check-in begins at 11:30 am, with a seated luncheon following a short meeting. The cost is \$20 for CWC members. Reservations must be received by December 6. Contact Jean at [jeaniegpops@comcast.net](mailto:jeaniegpops@comcast.net) or phone 925/934-5677.

*"Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader – not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon."*

*- E.L. Doctorow*

## How to Enter Previously Published Entries in Contests, by Wanda Sue Parrott

Imitating Walt Whitman can help you win writing contests. If you use his technique, you'll be able to enter your work-in-progress many places, multiple times.

How? Consider these facts:

- Many, if not most, writing contests call for "unpublished" works. If your piece has been previously published in a book, magazine or just a newsletter, online website, blog, or club anthology, it has technically been published even if only a handful of people have seen it.
- If you revise it, you create a new edition that has not yet been published.
- Submit your latest version of your work in progress, provided you own the copyright.

To achieve this Whitmanesque feat, tweak a title by adding or removing a word or two, changing it completely, or giving the original title a super-head or sub-head that complements the old wording. Rewrite the opening line, stanza, paragraph, or change a few key words in the beginning, middle or end.

Is this cheating? Plagiarism? I have yet to hear of any writer who sues himself or herself for stealing his/her own wording. So, if you want to enter a poem or piece of prose in a contest that calls for previously unpublished works, you must be the judge about whether to tweak the piece to upgrade (and disguise) your earlier version of previously published prose or poetry.

Does conscience play a role? You be the judge!

*If you practice Whitman's technique, you'll be able to enter your work-in-progress many places, multiple times.*

Therefore, in order to qualify for contests, despite having previously published your entry, write a manuscript like Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," that remains a lifelong unfinished work-in-progress and reaches its final edition only when your pen is laid to rest.

*["No comment," says the Editor, an attorney in another life.]*

## MEMBER PROFILE

### *Nancy Jacobs* *“For the Love of Writing”*



Since you're reading this column, you've probably read the work of this month's featured member, Nancy Jacobs, who writes the poetry column each month for *Scribbles*.

Rarely at a loss for words, Nancy says she's adamant about preserving her work for future generations. "I feel that what those poems are saying strongly reflects on lives lived and history played out in word form," says Nancy, who looks forward to the day when her poems are published.

Speaking of history, Nancy's is filled with interesting tidbits. Bilingual as a child, Nancy says she was denied the opportunity to study Italian, her first language. She grew to love the English language, though she found grammar somewhat difficult to grasp.

"I liked to read Olde English," says Nancy, whose all-time favorite writer is William Shakespeare. "But I don't think I can still do it." Other favorites include Faulkner, Steinbeck, Dostoyevsky, and Michener.

Nancy studied art, literature, and business, but her life circumstances would take her down a different path. "For lack of space, I gave up art," she says. "I studied paralegal

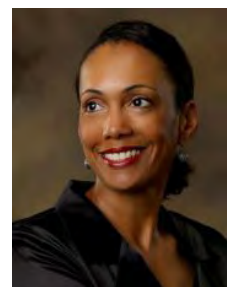
work and real estate, and I did some freelance writing for the back of post cards, [along with] other commercial writing."

While Nancy aspires to see her poems published, she already has a few notches on her writer's belt. Some of her articles about Sicilian Americans, based on interviews she conducted in her subject's homes, were published in an Italian American newspaper. Nancy's articles captured the poignancy of her interviewee's lives because of her immersion into their fascinating and educational stories.

"Writing has been more of a hobby than a profession," says Nancy who would also like to write fiction. "It's like a subtle musical experience for me . . . and has always been easier than art."

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Michelle Smith is a semi-retired physician and freelance writer whose articles have been published in a variety of magazines. Her web site is <http://theebonyquill.com>.



*\$1000 total cash awards*

**Central Coast Writers 2012 Spring Writing Contest**

Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2012

Wanda Sue Parrott, 2012 Contest Administrator,  
invites all poets and writers to compete for  
\$250 in each of four categories:

**POETRY:** rhymed and unrhymed  
(50 lines maximum per category)

**PROSE:** fiction and non-fiction  
(2,500 words maximum per category)

This is an annual event sponsored by the Central Coast Writers  
branch of the California Writers Club.

For a hard copy of the rules,  
send a #10 SASE and request to:

CCW Contest  
P. O. Box 997  
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

The Rules also appear on the Central Coast Writers website at:  
*[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)*.

Or you may print out your own copy of the Rules by clicking [HERE](#).

## IF THE SHOE FITS . . .



### "I WRITE WHAT I SEE."

It occurred to me, at our latest critique meeting, that I was seeing, hearing, feeling something different from what most of the group was experiencing. No, it was not an altered mental state; it was simply receiving information filtered through different life experiences.

While hearing a passage that described society in Hawaii in the forties and fifties, I remembered the feeling I experienced in the post-bohemian society of the fifties and sixties. There was also a picture in my mind of people I knew who enjoyed a similar situation in the twenties and thirties in Carmel. I imagine that the members of our group who were born in the seventies had a different mental picture while listening to the same reading.

When I presented my material describing a situation in my teaching career, I realized that each group member that commented had understood the situation from a different perspective. In other group discussions, I have enjoyed hearing lively debates over what members understood the reader to have said.

Some group members become heatedly involved in debates concerning which of the protagonists behaved appropriately in the particular situation, each seeing the situation *and* values from differing points of view. Wow! What a compliment to the author when readers get so caught up in the work.

When people ask me where I get my ideas, I often say, "I just write what I see." Or, "I just see something and report what happened." But then I realize that *what* I see from my perspective is not necessarily the same as others see it. I see a man sawing wood. She sees a sunset landscape. You see a child chasing a cat. We move on to the next scene. One sees a brat while the other sees a wicked step-father. We move on. She says, "How interesting!" while you say, "It was horrifying!"

We each see life as through a lens that has been adjusted and focused by our own life experiences and our parents' and teachers' preferences and – if we disagree with them – prejudices. In fact, the opinions and actions of people we hardly know affect the way we look at life.

Diego Rivera is purported to have said "I paint what I see." Some look at his paintings and see people similar to those who populated their childhood. Some see heroes, others see villains. All are seeing what he painted.

Rivera had no control over what people understood from his work.

Neither have we.

**Be well,  
and do good work,  
C. Jonathan Shoemaker**

## EDITOR'S CORNER

### *Why Do I Have to Title These Columns??*



We've just a wee change in our regular features this month. "Bragging Rights" has become "Accolades," to mirror what one of our sister branches calls its similar column. I'm hoping that this will strip the inhibitions – or personal proscriptions – that some of you may have about seeking praise. Think of letting us know about your successes as a step in positive reinforcement, which we all know is a good way to spark future creativity!

As I entered the information about our new members, I thought what a nice idea it would be if, as we see new members joining, we reach out to find out if they would like to car-pool to our meetings. Save gas and carbon emissions, make a new friend, cut down on traffic jams and overcrowding in the parking lot . . . save the world?

Another thing to keep in mind is that our Letters to the Editor column is a good place to let people know that you'd like to get together to attend out-of-the-area workshops and conferences. For example, I will probably attend the South Bay Writers' presentation on unreliable narrators the evening of January 10, and wouldn't mind having company. Let me know if you would like to join me. OR, if you'd like to share a ride, but with anybody other than me, send a letter to that effect and I'll publish it in Letters to the Editor.

*Grins, Cheri*

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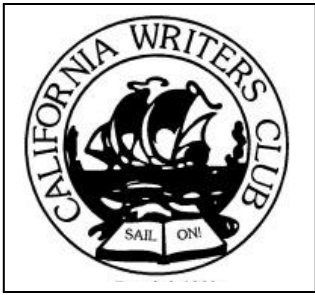
C. Jonathan Shoemaker: "If the Shoe Fits"

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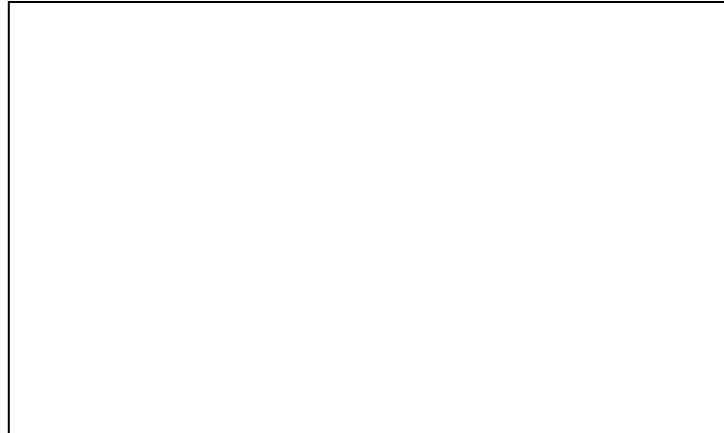
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Photographer: Ken Jones

Contests: Wanda Sue Parrott



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## LOCAL EVENT

### WRITERS' OPEN MIKE

#### **Alternative Café, 1230 Fremont Street, Seaside**

**Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>** will open with recognized writer and columnist **Murlie Hanson** presenting on *The Christmas Tooth Fairy*, winner of a gold medal from Mom's Choice Awards for excellence in children's picture books. Murlie will talk about writing a children's book of rhymes and magic in a television studio setting with favorite characters, the illustrations and graphic design stages, getting recognized by The Steinbeck Center Author Series, being published, and most importantly, into the creative minds of children ages three through nine through bedtime stories. The topic beacons anyone with a child on their Christmas list, and children themselves.

**Afterwards, writers of all genres are invited to share their funniest, saddest, silliest or even scariest Holiday Season story.**

**Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>** in honor of Chinese New Year will feature **Judy Zhu**, a professor of Chinese language and culture at DLI who has won many literature awards in China with over 300 poems, prose and stories published in eight books, as well as various national newspapers and magazines. She a columnist for *Teda Times* when she worked at the US Embassy in China.

Want to be featured? E-mail [phanson@csUMB.edu](mailto:phanson@csUMB.edu) with a short bio, or call 601-9195.