



Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch
centralcoastwriters.org
November 2023

November 21, 2023

Write What Scares You!

Maria Francesca



Every story has an element of horror woven into it, whether it's the boogeyman hiding in the closet or the debilitating fears of grief, loss, hopelessness, powerlessness, oppression, and danger. Many writers don't realize their writing contains horror elements because, as horror/suspense writer Douglas E. Winter says, "Horror is not a genre; it is an emotion. It is a progressive form of fiction, one that evolves to meet the fears and anxieties of its times." Come explore the dark side, the shadows that lurk in the corners of our consciousness, the proverbial ghostie that goes bump in the night and you might be surprised at what you uncover.

Francesca Maria writes dark fiction surrounded by cats near the Pacific Ocean. She is the award-winning author of [They Hide: Short Stories to Tell in the Dark](#) from Brigid Gate Press, which debuted as an Amazon #1 Best Seller. She is also the creator of the [Black Cat Chronicles](#), a true horror comic book series narrated by a mystical black cat. Her short stories and essays can be found in various publications. Francesca is also the co-chair of the San Francisco Bay Area's Horror Writers Association Chapter. You can find her at francescamaria.com and on social media @writerofweird.

December 3, 2023

Annual Winter Holiday Party



Guests are welcome!

This year's CCW Winter Holiday party will be held on December 3 from 1-4 at the Monterey Civic Club at 540 Calle Principal, Monterey. Please bring a dish of goodies to share.

WHAT'S INSIDE

CCW President's Letter	2
Speaker Report	3
Announcements	4-5
Member Profile	6
Contests and Conferences	7
What's on Your Nightstand?	8
In So Many Words	9
The Last Word	10



CCW President's Letter By Sarah Pruitt

Dear Fellow Writers,

Have you ever read a story that REALLY scared you? I read *Dracula* in college and resolved never again to sleep with an open window. The two other books in this genre were Steven King's *Salem's Lot*, (it took me years to voluntarily peer through my window screens after dark), and *Ammie, Come Home* by the late Barbara Michaels. (I would not look into my living room at night because who knows what was forming in the dark.) NOTE: Stay away from the movie. No atmosphere and the house, a MAJOR part of the spookiness in the book, resembles the setting for a fifties sitcom.

If you've ever considered writing horror or just want to rev up the tension and excitement in a scene, you should find our November speaker interesting. Francesca Maria writes dark fiction including a graphic novel entitled *Black Cat Chronicles*. She will speak on *Write What Scares You: How to Tap into Fear to Create Tension and Drama in Your Storytelling*.

Our November meeting is Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at the

Center for Spiritual Awakening
522 Central Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA

It is across the street from the Pacific Grove Public Library. If you want to help set up, doors open at 5 p.m. Or, any time between 5:30 and 6:15 is an excellent time to arrive.

As always, admission is free for members and guests. Don't forget—FREE pizza!

Your shivering president,
Sarah E. Pruitt
CCW President

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.



Booktoberfest 2023

Once again, our October meeting featured CCW's own members reading from their work. Many thanks to our president, Sarah Pruitt, for organizing this year's event!

Nicki Ehrlich read from *Zephyr Trails* (due to be released next spring), the sequel to her debut novel, *Ellis River*, which traces a young woman's journey across the country following the Civil War. Nicki holds a Certificate in Creative Writing from Monterey Peninsula College and is a member of the Independent Book Publishers Association.

S.A Lunamir read from her debut novel, *Traveling Monsters*, which is free to read with Kindle Unlimited through December 1, 2023. S.A. enjoys tea, hanging out with her cats, and procrastinating.

McKenzie "Mac" Moss read from his novel, *Ransack*, which has been submitted to several publishers. Mac has published several short stories and, before moving to the Monterey Peninsula, worked many years in banking administration. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and saw combat in both Korea and Tonkin Gulf.

Julie Tully read from her memoir, *Dispatches From The Cowgirl: Through The Looking Glass With A Navy Diplomat's Wife*, which was published in 2022 and details the years she lived in Sub-Saharan Africa. Julie's writing has appeared in *Legacy Magazine*, *Military Spouse Magazine*, *InDependent*, and *Your Teen for Parents*. In addition to writing, she works as the assistant manager of River House Books in Carmel.

Scotty Cornfield read from his collections of 101-word stories, which he began writing after getting "hooked" on the *Monterey County Weekly's* annual 101-word short story contest. He has written more than 500 stories—all based on prompts provided by friends and readers—and is currently working on his first novel. Before he began writing, Scotty had a 30-year career in federal and local law enforcement.

Pam Walters read from her memoir, *I Hope Prince Charming Drinks*. Pam has been published in many literary journals and has won first place for non-fiction at the San Miguel de Allende International Conference and first place for memoir from the Palm Springs Writers Guild.

Jason Warburg read from his current work-in-progress, a novel featuring the protagonist of his previous two novels, Tim Green, who stumbles headlong into the rock and roll world formerly occupied by his father, a longtime music journalist. A writer and communications consultant, Jason writes about music and family. His most recent book is *The Remembering: Reflections on Love, Art, Faith, Heroes, Grief and Baseball*.

Wanda Sue Parrott read from her work-in-progress, *The Roswell Revelations*, a memoir that chronicles the decades after the famous 1947 crash of a "flying disc" in New Mexico during which she and a friend experienced possible encounters with aliens. A former journalist and college writing professor, Wanda hopes to have the memoir published by the 80th anniversary of the crash in July 2028.

Announcements

New CCW members

Please welcome new members Brooke French and Robert Walker.



Writers Roundup

Writing about Animals with Maria Skytta
Saturday November 18, 1-3pm
The Little House in Jewel Park, next to the Pacific Grove Library

Sunday Salon

November 26, 1-3pm
Juice n Java

Jack London Awardee, Nancy Middleton



Congratulations to Nancy Middleton, this year's Central Coast awardee for the Jack London Award. The Jack London Award is an honor bestowed by our parent organization, California Writers Club, to one volunteer from each branch to honor exceptional volunteer service. The prize consists of a plaque, presented at a luncheon in Oakland on October 22.

Nancy has provided a high standard of excellent speakers for Central Coast Writers since becoming Program Chair in 2018. In five years, 10 meetings a year, she has never failed to provide an informative and inspiring program, more than once having to scramble at the last minute when the scheduled speaker had to cancel. When the Covid shutdown hit, Nancy didn't miss a beat, immediately pivoting to Zoom.

Nancy's short fiction has appeared in *The South Carolina Review* and her author interviews have been published in *Glimmer Train*. She has been a featured writer at the Clemson Literary Festival and is currently represented by Cassandra Rodgers of Five Otter Literary. Nancy has worked as a freelance editor for several Washington, D.C.-based organizations, including The Brookings Institute. She currently teaches English at California State University, Monterey Bay.

The Jack London Awards are given out every odd-numbered year. Our past recipients have been Sarah Pruitt, Clarissa Conn, Laurie Sheehan, Leslie Patino, Joyce Krieg, Harold Grice, Walter Gourlay, Ken Jones and our founding president, Pat Matuszewski.

Status of Scribbles

Scribbles is at a crossroads. We have been seeking a new editor for about six months, to no avail. Our current editor, Christine Sleeter, will no longer be editing *Scribbles* as of the end of January, 2024. We are considering switching from having the *Scribbles* newsletter, to sending periodic news blasts over email, which some branches do, and using our newly-designed website more intentionally for news. Don't get us wrong – we like *Scribbles*, but it needs someone home to work on it each month. If you might like to edit it, please contact either Christine Sleeter (csleeter@gmail.com) or Sarah Pruitt (Sep23@sbcglobal.net).

Member Congratulations

Member **Nicki Ehrlich** will be signing her debut novel, *Ellis River*, at Barnes & Noble in Gilroy on Saturday, November 4th, from 12 noon to 5 pm.

Announcements (Cont).

Scholastic Art and Writing Contest

Each year CCW provides fifteen judges from our ranks to read about a thousand entries, written works by high school juniors and seniors. Last year there were 260,000 entries nationally. We are an important part of the process of Scholastic's contest. Without judges there would be no contest. You who have volunteered your time to participate as judges are proof of our value as a writing club.

As we read these excellent young writers we find inspiration for the future of creative writing. But we also find new ways to see the world through young eyes. Our own writing repertoire, our well of ideas is enhanced. We learn things from the kids. The writing can be raw and emotional as with the poetry and personal memoir or academic and intellectual as with the essays. It is a bit of work, true. It takes many hours of reading, but hey, we like to read don't we?

Bottom line, if you have volunteered to be a judge, we give our thanks and admiration for your generosity of time and talent. If you are new to this contest, it will be something you will treasure and benefit from in your future writing. If you are the stalwarts who always volunteer, you have our deepest gratitude. Scholastic rewards our chapter of CWC with \$2500 for our coffers. You are important. And it is fun!

All judges will be honored in January after we complete our judging. There are a few more slots to be filled as alternatives, so if you would like to be a judge, drop me a line at <writingcontests.ccw@gmail.com> or Hamilton-dennis@att.net.

Write on! Dennis Hamilton, administrator.

New CCW Website

The new [CCW website](#) has just gone live. Thanks go to Gary Parker and Francie Soito (our designer) for putting in the hard work for the design and transition. The website will be a work in progress for some time. If there's something missing that you'd like to see or a correction please let the new webmaster, Jennifer Schmidt, know at ccw.branch.webmaster@gmail.com. Our thanks to the outgoing webmaster Ken for his hard work over the years at keeping us up to date.

Our new website will have a section for member profiles. If you would like to have your profile added to the website, email us a headshot photo (resolution greater than or equal to 72 dpi) and a 100-word (or less) text that describes your background, genres, published titles if you have them, and URL to send interested viewers to your website. Send the photo and 100-word limited text to ccw.branch.webmaster@gmail.com.

Happy Bookmas!

CWC invites you to our *Winter Holiday Potluck*

Sunday, December 3, 1-4pm

Monterey Civic Club, 540 Calle Principal, Monterey

Please bring a dish to share. Members Guests are Welcome!





“It’s All about Passion”

Don Rose

When tragedy strikes, we often look for something meaningful to sustain us. For Don Rose, that challenge came in 2015 when his 25-year-old daughter, Madison, died in a single-car accident. Shortly after her death, Don read a beautiful poem about Madison written by his son-in-law, Javier, that “literally took [his] breath away.” He learned for the first time that Javier is a poet.

It took Don four years to regain some semblance of normalcy, at which time he read more of Javier’s works. He then amassed those poems, along with some of the bedtime stories he used to tell his children, into a book. When he took the collection to UPS to make a few copies for his family, an employee encouraged him to show it to a publisher.

“Mascot Books said they thought our submission was very unusual with 38 bedtime stories and poems,” Don recalls.

Now retired from a 40 year career as a licensed landscape architect in California and Nevada, Don, a graduate of UC Berkeley’s Landscape Architecture program, began writing when he was 69. He’s since published his series *When the Day Ends...and Dreams Begin...* (March and September 2019 and May 2020, Amazon and Barnes & Noble). In July 2021, he published a collection of short stories titled *Amazing Adventures of Young Superheroes*. In 2022, Don published *Mornings with Uncle Frank*, a reflection on his relationship with his dog after whom the book is titled. *Afternoons with Miss Betty*, named for his other dog, is slated for release by October 2024.

Don’s daily routine begins about 9:30 am, his inspiration guided by the words that flow from his fingertips. “I’m blessed that as soon as I start writing, something wonderful begins to fill the pages,” he says. “I get great joy when the story comes together and has some important things to say.” But his wife, children, and dogs come first. “I have my priorities straight.”

A CCW member since 2019, Don travels with Javier to elementary schools to tell stories and read poems. In addition, he’s working on a three book mystery series for adults, and he’s writing a book titled *Puppy Dog Tales* in collaboration with fellow member Frank Southers.

“I never considered myself an author until my daughter died. It opened up something in me, and I feel at peace in front of my computer.” Don adds, “Have passion for whatever you do in life. Learn to accept your writing, ‘pull the trigger,’ and get published....Keep going if you have things to say to an audience.” Don’s website is www.roselopezbooks.com

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





CONTESTS, CONFERENCES, AND OPEN SUBMISSIONS

The Narrative Magazine Fall Story Contest

Deadline: November 30, 2023

Entry Fee: \$27.00

Website: <https://www.narrativemagazine.com/fall-2023-story-contest>

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$2500 plus publication in Narrative, 2nd Prize: \$1000 plus publication in Narrative, 3rd Prize: \$500, Up to 10 finalists: \$100 each.

Judges: Editors of *Narrative Magazine*

Guidelines: See website for Complete Guidelines. This contest is for the creation of a short story, essay, short graphic narrative, short memoir, or excerpt from a short work of prose. Entries must be previously unpublished, no longer than 15,000 words, and must not have been previously chosen as a winner, finalist, or honorable mention in another contest.

The Nina Riggs Poetry Award sponsored by Cave Wall Press Literary Journal

Deadline: November 15, 2023

Entry Fee: Free

Website: <https://cavewallpress.com/>

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$1000 plus publication in *Cave Wall Literary Journal*.

Guidelines: See website for Complete Guidelines. This annual award is given to a poet for one PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED POEM nominated at Cave Wall Press by ANYONE BUT THE AUTHOR. It may be on any subject, in any form. Send us the poems you've enjoyed best that you've come across in publications. No more than six poems may be nominated from the work of any one poet. See guidelines for nomination instructions.

The Story Unlikely's Annual Short Story Contest 2023

Deadline: October 1-December 31, 2023

Entry Fee: Free

Website: <https://horrorrtree.com/category/calltype/contest/>

Judge: Kirstin Valdez Quade award winning author of "The Five Wounds"

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$750 plus publication, 2nd Prize: \$500 plus publication, 3rd Prize: \$250, surprise honorable mentions will be awarded.

Guidelines: See website for Complete Guidelines. Multiple entries accepted. Each story may not exceed 4,500 words. The short story contest is open to everyone with a brain (a jab at AI, or to the screen swiping, order taking, zombie-like state of the West? You decide). Don't be fooled by our promo illustration, there are no restrictions on genre: fantasy, sci-fi, memoir, fiction/nonfiction, etc.-we don't care as long as it's a good story.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators SCBWI November 16, 2023

Event Dates: Virtual Event, "You, The Story", with Ruta Sepetys for SCBWI members.

Location: Virtual

Cost: \$95.00 membership fee. Join at any time to register, many other events are available.

Website/Registration:

<https://www.scbwi.org/events/you-the-story-an-scbwi-virtual-event-with-ruta-sepetys>

What's on your Nightstand?

Barbara Siebeneick



What are *you* reading now? What book has moved or engaged you in a special way? Share it with the other CCW members. All genres will be accepted. Please send your review to Barbara.siebeneick@gmail.com. Remember to add: Name of book, author, publisher, date of publication and your name. Tell us what the book is about (without giving away any spoilers), your reaction to it and why. This month's review is from *Nora Peyton*.

My bedside reading options resemble a Janga tower: eight or nine books plus one or two old issues of *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*. They represent a variety of genres; some have been read, others wait their turn. There is no particular order. No FIFO accounting standards. In fact, as I write this, I've discovered a few dusty "must reads" from the last year or so. Here is a sampling from the top and the bottom of the tower:

SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome by Mary Beard, WW Norton, 2015

I think it is wonderful to read a sweeping history, with rich details, and not have to worry about whether any part of it will be on the test. Beard begins in 63 BCE and takes us through 14 emperors, three dynasties, and roughly three centuries. Most interesting is the repeated pattern of government reimagined along with (here I quote the back cover) "nuanced attention to class, democratic struggles, and the lives of entire groups of people omitted from the historical narrative for centuries." It is a page turner (really)!

It remains in the pile because I go back and sample it now and again.

California: A History by Kevin Starr, Modern Library, 2005

I bought this book in 2012 when I settled in California. Another "sweeping saga" that I learned so much from reading (in small bites). It helped me put all the disparate pieces of California facts and tall tales in context and has enriched my understanding and pleasure as I get to know my new state.

Us Against You by Fredrik Backman, Washington Square Press/Simon & Schuster), 2018

This is so different from other Backman books I've read. In fact, I put it down not too far into it because it is achingly sad. I know, if I keep reading, there will be redemption and renewed faith in people's inherent goodness (the back cover promises me). Perhaps the time has come to pick it up again.



I was thrilled to see all of the published authors at Booktoberfest this year! If I didn't get a chance to tell you then, you're all amazing, and I'm so very proud to be a member of this organization of writers and lovers of the written word.

November, being the second to last month of the year, sometimes finds me wondering...what's taking so long? Sometimes a year speeds by feeling as if January just ended and all of a sudden we're planning Thanksgiving dinner. It's like a year in retrograde. Thanksgiving? What happened to summer? Or spring for that matter? Then again, I'm looking forward to the birth of my first grandchild this month. And, speaking of births, my manuscript should be in the hands of my editor before the sweet potatoes are done...whipped cream piled high on pumpkin pie.

So, what does a writer do once the manuscript is handed off to the editor?

Honestly, this writer looks forward to the chill of Fall and Winter; cozying up to flickering firelight, conjuring new characters, and engaging in warm conversation with old fiction friends. There's something to be said for paring down the TBR (to be read) pile because it's too dark to tend the garden.

Take a break. Sure, why not? You deserve it. You've worked hard, you've completed a good draft, and committed to making it the best it can be. It'll be back in your hands for more edits, soon enough. For some, a break means getting away from writing, but can we really? We're writers. We constantly think about the next one, don't we? But take a couple of weeks. Read outside your genre, watch a movie or three. And if you just can't stop writing, try writing a short story or a poem, or something outside your normal writing habit.

If you feel this break is the perfect time to start writing the next book, good for you! But don't forget about the "fine print" on the one in your editor's hands.

Work on the metadata:

- Create your back cover copy.
- Take a new author photo. Or don't, if you really like the one you have.
- Write at least one long and one short description of the book.
- Perfect your elevator pitch or log line.
- Write your acknowledgement page. Any time of year is a good time to be thankful. Show your gratitude to those who helped you and encouraged you to get this far.
- Update your author bio and create at least one long and one short version.
- Update your website.
- Make a list of review sites and contests to consider.
- Create a budget, if you haven't already.
- Make sure you have ISBN's, bar codes, and Library of Congress numbers.

Don't forget, November 1st is National Author's Day. If you missed it, celebrate anyway, because it's a day worth observing more than once a year. Read a book by your favorite author or discover a new author at your local library or bookstore. If you're an author, celebrate you! The book may not be finished yet, but you've reached another "win" by getting it this far. Congratulations! Have another piece of pumpkin pie and don't scrimp on the whip cream

The Last Word
Christine Sleeter



Greetings from Denmark!



You might recognize me above. The other woman is my tour guide, who turned out to be a transplant to Copenhagen from California!

Having enjoyed the TV mini-series *Borgen*, I was thrilled to see the actual Christiansborg Palace, which is where Denmark’s government is located and where the mini-series took place.

I’m sending you the November newsletter from Norway, which is where I’ve come for a meeting. One of these days, I’ll have a meeting in Norway in summer instead of almost-winter!

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you!

Christine

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Sarah Pruitt
Vice President	Scotty Cornfield
Past President	Sharon Law Tucker
Secretary	Joyce Krieg
Treasurer	Gary Parker
Programs Chair	Nancy Middleton
CCW Workshops	Sharon Law Tucker
Membership	Maria Skyttä
Publicity	Nora Peyton
Hospitality	Mike Beck
Newsletter	Christine Sleeter
Webmaster	Jennifer Schmidt
Writing Contests	Dennis Hamilton
Central Board Representative (acting)	Joyce Krieg
NorCal Representative	Position open

Scribbles is the official monthly publication for members of Central Coast Writers, a branch of the California Writers Club, a registered non-profit corporation. All material is copyrighted ©2022 by California Writers Club and may not be reproduced without permission. Opinions expressed under individual bylines do not necessarily represent an official position of, or endorsement by, Central Coast Writers or California Writers Club.

Scribbles is published by: Central Coast Writers, Post Office Box 997, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Editorial Staff

Christine Sleeter	Editor
Nicki Ehrlich	In So Many Words
Nancy Middleton	Speaker Report
Barbara Siebeneick	What’s on your Nightstand?
Michelle Smith	Member Profiles
Patricia Watson	Contests and Workshops

CCW Website

centralcoastwriters.org

Click *Scribbles* Newsletter for archived copies.

For anything Scribbles related:

Contact *Scribbles* editor Christine Sleeter
csleeter@gmail.com

Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:
Centralcoastwriters.org

NorCal Group of California Writers Club

cwnorcalwriters.org