



Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch

centralcoastwriters.org

February 2023

February 21, 2023

Brooke Warner

What it Takes to Finish a Book



Come ready to be inspired by this conversation about the secrets to writers’ success, ranging from the emotional challenges writers face (and can overcome) to concrete strategies for prioritizing your writing. You’ll learn how to stay the course, give yourself the much-needed high-fives along the way, and remember that the journey is indeed the reward. Getting a book done requires support, and Brooke Warner has made a career of supporting writers to pursue their dreams of getting published. Sometimes all it takes is a shift in perspective, someone saying the right thing at the right moment. Join this encouraging conversation to get re-inspired—or to maintain the inspiration you already

have—to reach the finish line with your book.

Brooke Warner is publisher of She Writes Press and SparkPress, president of Warner Coaching Inc., and author of *Write On, Sisters!*, *Green-light Your Book*, *What’s Your Book?*, and three books on memoir. Brooke is a TEDx speaker, weekly podcaster (of “Write-minded” with co-host Grant Faulkner of NaNoWriMo), and the former Executive Editor of Seal Press. She writes a regular column for *Publishers Weekly*.

March 21, 2023

Paul Zeidman

Screenwriting 101: Learning the Basics, and a Little More



Paul Zeidman will discuss the importance of “show, don’t tell,” what should and shouldn’t be on the page, what we mean by structure and why it’s so important, and screenwriting as a marathon--not a sprint.

Paul Zeidman is an award-winning screenwriter and the author of three screenwriting books. He has run his screenwriting blog since 2009, co-hosts the Creative Writing Life podcast, and has been the featured guest on several screenwriting podcasts.

WHAT’S INSIDE

CCW President’s Letter	2-3
Speaker Report	4
Announcements	5-6
Member Profile	7
Contests and Conferences	8
What’s on Your Nightstand?	9
In So Many Words	10
The Last Word	11



CCW President's Letter

By Sarah Pruitt

Dear Members,

In February we have Valentine's Day, which was a big deal when I taught middle school. Clusters of friends, usually girls, brought bags of presents to school for all their friends—mostly other girls. Cards, flowers, and stuffed animals abounded, along with way too many milk chocolate hearts. (You can never have too many 72% cocoa hearts, but milk chocolate has its limits.)

My grandfather sent a Valentine to the young woman who later became my grandmother in 1906 or 1907. It was a postcard reading: "Hello, greetings—I trust this finds you enjoying Valentine's Day. Nero" (Yes, his name was Nero, and no, he did not play the violin.)

I suspect his lack of expression is hereditary. I find writing conversations and actions less challenging than figuring out how to describe feelings. Often, my first drafts are reduced to just naming the emotion. "He was mad. She was happy." I found the following book very helpful, *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expression*. The book covers seventy-five emotions and describes each its physical, psychological, and mental effects on the human body. I find it very helpful.

Last month our beloved Clarissa Conn resigned as treasurer. She has served several years working hard to keep our books balanced. We will miss her. Our new treasurer is Gary Parker. Gary and I have been working (dare I say, struggling) with

our bank to get his name on all of the correct documents. He has emerged triumphant despite the rain, the floods, and the Byzantine banking rules. Welcome to your new position, Gary!



Our meeting in January was possible because your board worked hard to produce it. Joyce Krieg, Gary Parker, and his wife Karen designed, printed, addressed, stamped, and mailed lovely invitations. Nancy Middleton provided a fantastic speaker. Gary Parker picked up and served pizza. Ken Holden and Maria Skyttä lugged paper products and water to and from their house. Barbara Siebeneick and Scotty Cornfield greeted, let in latecomers, and sold pizza tickets.

Many came early to help arrange tables. It was lovely to see the room full of tables of people eating and chatting, with the people at my table munching pizza, catching up with friends, and getting to know a guest. I look forward to seeing more of you at subsequent meetings.

Our speaker next month is Brooke Warner on “What it Takes to Finish a Book.” We will be meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 5:30 PM at the Center for Spiritual Awareness, 522 Central Ave. in Pacific Grove. The Center is across the street from Pacific Grove Library.

Our February literary salon will meet from 1 to 3 PM on the following Sunday, February 26, at Juice n’ Java, 599 Lighthouse Ave. in Pacific Grove.

Enjoy your writing journey,

Sarah Pruitt
President
Central Coast Writers

€€€€€

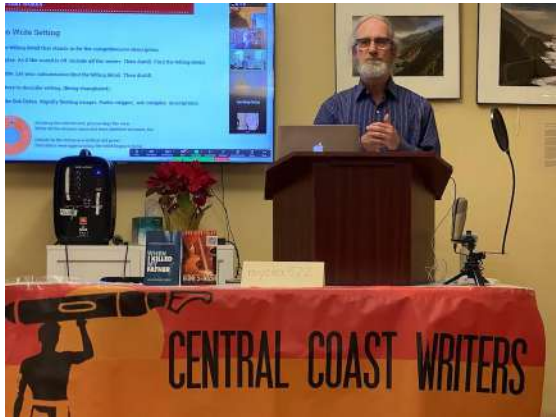
And to sharpen your grammar:

- Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.
- A synonym strolls into a tavern.
- At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar -- fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.
- A run-on sentence walks into a bar it starts flirting. With a cute little sentence fragment.
- Falling slowly, slowly falling, the chiasmus collapses to the bar floor.
- A figure of speech literally walks into a bar and ends up getting figuratively hammered.
- An allusion walks into a bar, despite the fact that alcohol is its Achilles heel.
- The subjunctive would have walked into a bar, had it only known.
- A misplaced modifier walks into a bar owned by a man with a glass eye named Ralph.

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.



The Work of Settings January Speaker



“Setting is important,” according to writer John Byrne Barry, “but a little goes a long way and sometimes you don’t need any at all.” Specifically, you don’t need to supply setting when readers can “do it themselves,” he explained. It’s not necessary to describe places everyone is familiar with; for example, a hospital waiting room. And avoid long passages of description, he added. “It’s best to keep things moving.”

Setting is more than just a backdrop to your story, Barry said. The most effective settings do multiple jobs. He then identified several things setting can accomplish—advance the story, define and change characters, establish the “rules” of your story’s universe, unify the story, convey mood and tone, echo the theme, and serve as metaphors—and he provided examples of each from various novels.

Setting can advance the story by presenting obstacles the protagonist must overcome, Barry said. In *A Perfect Storm*, the setting of a stormy sea is the story as a ship’s crew struggle to survive treacherous conditions. Setting defines character in *Lonesome Dove*, which features men shaped by the harshness of the novel’s landscape. For sci-fi and historical novels such as *The Martian* and *Cold Mountain*, setting is especially useful—and necessary—for establishing the rules of each book’s universe. Setting provides a unifying element in the novel *Hotel*, as all the characters stay in the same New Orleans hotel. The desert setting and hot winds in *The English Patient* convey the story’s mood and tone while Louisiana highways echo the theme of repeating the past in *All the King’s Men*. *The Great Gatsby* offers setting elements—the eyes on a billboard, a green light on a boat dock—that serve as metaphors.

Barry most often uses setting to reflect character. “Place is always filtered through character viewpoints and emotions,” he said. “What your character sees and hears tells us who they are.” For example, one character might notice trees blossoming while another might notice all the parked Teslas.

Overall, Barry recommends a “less is more” approach to setting. He suggested writers find one telling detail that can stand in for a more comprehensive description. “Envision the scene using all your senses,” he said, “and then distill it.”

Announcements

New CCW members

Please welcome new member Loreen Gibbons.



CCW Members Contact List

One of the great things about belonging to a great organization like ours is the knowledge and experience that the collective membership possesses. Since most of us are not fans of reinventing the wheel, being able to reach out to others can really be a time-saver and a way to learn from those who have come before us. To that end, I'm starting up a VOLUNTARY roster of CCW members who like the idea of being able to reach out to others in the club. Here's what it *will* and *won't* be.

It will be:

Completely voluntary (Only those who tell me they want to be on the list and provide their information will be included.)

Very limited in member information

Electronic only (Participants can print out their own copies if they want)

Used to communicate with other participants for non-commercial purposes only

Updated periodically

It won't be:

A replacement for member profiles on our webpage (no bio info/writing credits, awards, genres, etc.)

Used as a way to market to club members or anyone else

Posted on the CCW website or anywhere else online

Shared with anyone other than other CCW members who agree to participate in the contact list

Participants who misuse the contact list will be removed from it.

To submit your information so you can be included on the list, send your desired information to:

scotty@scottycornfield.com

You may only include the following information (and you are free to leave out fields you don't want to submit). The list will only include one phone number, one email and one website or social media site:

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

ONE SOCIAL MEDIA SITE (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and your WEBSITE (if you have one you would like to list)

Thanks for listening. I believe this can be a very valuable tool for those looking to contact other club members about relevant topics. We'll see how it works and what level of interest it might generate.

Scotty Cornfield
CCW Vice President

PS: If you have questions, comments, etc., feel free to reach out directly to me. If you didn't before, you now know how to reach me.

Announcements (Cont.)

Scholastic High School Writing Contest Completed

For many years Central Coast Writers has provided judges for a national high school writing contest. Last year saw 260,000 entries distributed among the various categories, such as short story, personal essay or memoir, poetry, novel excerpt, journalism, humor, science fiction, etc. Our sixteen judges each had about 100 entries to read. That means we read well over 1500 pieces. For the judges there is the reward of reading great writing from our up-and-coming young writers. For CCW, it means \$2500 for our coffers.

I love the poetry. When another human being invites you into their soul, their anguish or joy, it is a treat and an honor to read. These writers are better than I was at their age. Sometimes the poetry is so intimate I feel like I am invading their privacy. And when they use original imagery and perspective, employ themes to stitch it together, no matter what age the writer, good poetry is good poetry.

So let us thank these judges for their expertise, their generosity of time and their support for Central Coast Writers. Some of them finished their “panels” after having the flu! And one read most of her panels on her I-phone! Our heroes are: Mike Beck, Clarissa Conn, Sandi Cornfield, Scotty Cornfield, Nicki Erlich, Pat Gardner, Dennis Hamilton, Mary Kay Hamilton, Ken Holden, Joyce Kreig, Nancy Middleton, Linda Mutty, Sarah Pruitt, Nancy Pyzel, Barbara Siebeneick, Mary Smathers, and Susann Thon. Thank you all for your service to the young writers.

And for you who would love to be a part of next year’s team, let us know. We will save you a place.

Dennis Hamilton, coordinator, writingcontests.ccw@gmail.com.

Writers’ Roundup



CCW’s newest event, the Writers’ Roundup, debuted last month before a standing-room only crowd (well—after we took away all of the seats, it was standing only). Club member Scotty Cornfield (seen here with Sarah, Maria, and Barbara—just a small representation of the crowd we had to turn away), presented “Ask a Pro: Writing about Cops and Crooks.” Most of the attendees agreed that it was probably the best writers’ presentation they had attended that day.

Since the club has a tremendous amount of talent, knowledge and experience, these Roundups are a great way to benefit from the membership. Our next Roundup will be on Saturday, March 25, from 1-3 pm. when Nancy Middleton will talk about “Landing an Agent.”

It’s just like landing a 747—except there’s a lot more begging and groveling. If you’d like to take advantage of these free events, the Roundups all take place in The Little House in Jewell Park, next to the P.G. Library.



“From Playwriting to Poetry”

Peter Serchuk

Peter Serchuk became a serious writer when he was an undergraduate at the University of Illinois. He admired the works of Arthur Miller, Eugene O’Neill, and Tennessee Williams, which led him to focus on playwriting. After taking workshops from poet Laurence Lieberman, however, Peter’s interest turned to poetry. Lieberman persuaded Peter to attend graduate school at the University of Michigan where Peter won the top prize for poetry in the country’s largest collegiate writing competition, the annual Hopwood Awards. Decades earlier Arthur Miller also received a Hopwood Award for fiction.

After his graduate studies, Peter worked for 38 years in advertising in Detroit, St. Louis, New York, and Los Angeles. During that time, he wrote poems in the early morning hours before work and again at night after he put his daughter to bed. Now retired, he does most of his writing in the afternoon.

Peter’s poems appeared in dozens of literary journals and more than a half dozen anthologies. His three published poetry collections are [Waiting for Poppa at the Smithtown Diner](#), [All That Remains](#), and [The Purpose of Things](#), which are available through Amazon and other booksellers.

A CCW member for four or five years, Peter recommends writing workshops for aspiring poets as well as sharing work with other writers whose opinions they respect. “Study the poets you admire the most,” he says. “Learn from the masters.”

Peter’s poetry, readings, and information about his forthcoming publications can be found on his website at www.peterserchuk.com.

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





CONTESTS

The Robinson Jeffers 2023 Tor House Prize for Poetry

Deadline: March 15, 2023, submissions by USPS only

Entry Fee: Reading fee of \$10.00 for first 3 poems, \$15.00 for up to six poems, \$2.50 per each additional poem entered beyond six poems. Payment by check and money order only made out to the Tor House Foundation. See website for address.

Website: <https://www.torhouse.org/prize>

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$1000; Honorable Mentions: \$200

Judge: Juan Felipe Herrera

Guidelines: See website for Complete Guidelines. Poetry in all styles ranging from experimental to traditional forms, including short narrative. Poem length no longer than three pages. Any theme. Formatting guidelines are specific, multiple submissions allowed.

Farmer-Ish Poetry Contest Poems for the Solstice 2023

Deadline: February 28, 2023

Entry Fee: \$10.00 per submission, 3 poems, (3 pages max), per submission

Website: <https://farmerish.net/poetry-contest-poems-for-the-solstice-2023/>

Prizes: 1st Place: \$250. The first 50 poems will be selected for publication, among those 20 will be judged for ranked placement.

Judge: Author Karen Head, Author of *Lost of Purpose*, and *Sassing*. Poet Laureate of Fulton County GA and The Waffle House, professor at Missouri S & T, and editor of *Atlanta Review*

Guidelines: See website for complete guidelines. Poems of up to one page long will be chosen based on themes of interest to Farm-ish Journal readers. All poems must be appropriate for the theme of Solstice. Multiple submissions allowed.

The Madison University Furious Flower Poetry Prize

Deadline: February 15, 2023

Entry Fee: \$15.00 per entry for up to three poems, 6 pages maximum

Website: <https://www.jmu.edu/furiousflower/poetryprize/index.shtml>

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$1500; Honorable Mention: \$750.00. Both winners will be invited to read virtually or in person for the Furious Flower Series. All winners are published in *Obsidian*.

Judge: Eve Shockley, author of *Suddenly We*, *Semiautomatic*, and *The New Black*, Pulitzer Prize finalist, twice winner of the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, Rutgers Professor

Guidelines: See website for complete guidelines.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

The California Creative Writer's Conference

Event Date: March 3-5, 2023

Website: www.wcwriters.com/ccwc/executive_summary.html

Location: Hilton Los Angeles Westside, 6161 West Centinela Avenue, Culver City, CA 90230,

www.losangelesculvercity.hilton.com, 310.649.1776

Fees February to March: \$499, Gold Pkg. with extras, \$599, Platinum Pkg \$699

Details: See website for complete details, speakers, agents, and calendar of events. This conference covers everything an emerging, or accomplished writer, needs to succeed.

What's on your Nightstand?

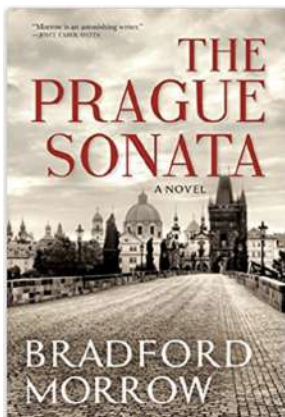
Barbara Siebeneick



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 *Christine Sleeter*.

The Prague Sonata by Bradford Morrow (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017)



I read this novel recently before taking a trip to Prague in October, in order to get a sense of the city. The novel did not disappoint! It opens with a contemporary young musicologist receiving a worn sonata manuscript from an elderly Czech immigrant who wants her to locate the original owner of the manuscript, a friend she has not seen since before the Second World War. Captivated by the music notated in the manuscript, the musicologist becomes drawn into a search for the manuscript's owner, and its composer.

This is an extremely well-researched novel with a compelling storyline. The author had obviously spent considerable time in Prague. He also had a command of the city's history, and working knowledge of the Czech language. As a reader, I felt immersed into the city at various points in its history, and when I arrived in Prague myself, I could recognize settings from the novel.

The novel's storyline reads like a mystery, and while I had been able to guess at its resolution reasonably well, I learned details about the Czech presence in the U.S. that I had not been aware of before. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants a story that is easy to be drawn into, set within a magnificent city and a broad sweep of history.



For the love of writing...

As a grade school student in a small town in southern Illinois, February meant construction paper envelopes filled with pre-printed valentines, usually sporting some cartoon character theme. It was imperative to give everyone in your class a valentine whether you liked them (what did we know of love?) or not. The biggest card was for your teacher. If you were lucky, you liked them a lot.

I loved decorating those envelopes with hearts. We learned to fold a piece of pink or red paper and cut the half-heart with those dull, blunt scissors, so the heart was symmetrical. I can still hear the scissor cuts, smell the glue, and feel the texture of the paper.

This reminiscence has nothing to do with writing, but it does speak to loving what you do.

I LOVE the writing process. All of it. Every bit, from the formation of an idea to the rough draft to working with editors and designers to proof-reading to holding the paper-and-ink baby for the first time. And then, when it's all done, I love sharing it with readers, reviewers, book stores, friends, family, and fellow writers.

I love the solitude of the writing process. There is a richness to the fictitious community when first meeting the characters, choosing which path to take in the plot, sitting with a cup of tea and the protagonist, hearing what she has to offer.

I love reading what people liked and didn't like, both sides make me a better writer. I love getting reviews from complete strangers all over the world. I love connecting with people because they connected with my book.

I'm starting another writing class and I look forward to reading what other students are writing. I'm ever so grateful for the critiques and input I get from workshops, and I hope I can be of some help to others in the class. Critiquing other writers' work informs my own writing, so by the time the semester is over, I'm swimming in gratitude. Which reminds me. I need to get back to the pool.

For the month of February, do more of what you love. I encourage any and all writers to continue to learn about the craft. Writing is a life-long endeavor. Don't be afraid of workshops where writing is shared and critiqued. Learn how to critique well and expect it of others. Write some reviews of your favorite reads.

Pick up a pen or pencil. Open a new ream of paper. Dust off your keyboard. Maybe rearrange your office. Whatever you do, do it for the love of writing.

The Last Word Christine Sleeter



Turning Six

On January 20, my granddaughter Elaina turned six. To celebrate, her mother brought cupcakes to her K5 class at school. When she got home from school, she opened birthday presents from the family, and on the Sunday after her birthday, her parents took her and four girls in her class to a trampoline place for the afternoon.

I asked Elaina what it's like to be six. So far she is new to being six, but she thinks she's bigger now, and she might need to eat more like an adult. She hopes that doesn't mean that she has to stop eating French fries. "Adults eat them, too," her mother reminded her.

In the novel I'm working on, the main character has a four-year-old daughter. You can guess who I've modeled the daughter after! But I've also been able to draw on my own memories of being a child. For some odd reason, I remember my own sixth birthday. I remember waking up full of excitement, then opening gifts over breakfast. The entire day felt like magic, and I was sorry when it ended.

While my four-year-old character draws her likes, dislikes, interests, and some of her mannerisms from my granddaughter, her spirit comes from my own memory of being a child. That four-year-old, or that six-year-old, still lives inside me.

As a writer, though, the hard part is tuning into that inner child and letting her come into my writing.

Christine

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Sarah Pruitt
Vice President	Scotty Cornfield
Past President	Sharon Law Tucker
Secretary	Joyce Krieg
Treasurer	Clarissa Conn
Programs Chair	Nancy Middleton
CCW Workshops	Sharon Law Tucker
Membership	Maria Skyttä
Publicity	Gary Parker
Hospitality	Mary Smathers, Barbara Siebeneick
Newsletter	Christine Sleeter
Webmaster	Ken Jones
Assistant Webmaster	Kemberlee Shortland
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

cwcnorcalwriters.org