



# Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch

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

January, 2023

January 17, 2003

Location: Center for Spiritual Awakening, PG

John Byrne Barry

Settings that Work



The primary job for setting is to immerse readers in the scene, but the most memorable settings do more than that — they advance your story, echo your theme, and convey mood and tone. More than anything, they reveal character. This talk will address how to capture the essence of a place in writing that is lean and strong, pushing your story along without stopping its momentum.

**John Byrne Barry** is a writer, actor, designer, walker, and pickleball player. He is author of three novels, including [When I Killed My Father: An Assisted-Suicide Family Thriller](#), which was recently named a finalist in the San Francisco Writers Conference 2022 Writing Contest. He is also a board member for the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association (BAIPA). You can find out more at [johnbyrnebarry.com](http://johnbyrnebarry.com).

February 21, 2023

Brooke Warner

What it Takes to Finish a Book



Description of her talk will be coming.

With 22 Years in book publishing, **Brooke Warner** is the publisher of She Writes Press and SparkPress, president of Warner Coaching Inc., and author of several books. Visit her website at <https://brookewarner.com/>.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

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



## CCW President's Letter

By Sarah Pruitt

Dear Members,

I finally had an opportunity in May to go on a trip to Paris that had been postponed twice due to COVID. Included in all of the pre-trip literature was a reading list. (Thanks to the pandemic, I got most of it read.) Not unexpectedly, the list included travel books, histories, and a memoir about Paris walks. Surprisingly, it also had a couple of novels set in Paris—one by Cara Black and the other by George Simeon. I also read Louise Penny's *All the Devils are Here*, which takes place in Paris, and included a map. The descriptions of Paris in these novels included gardens and neighborhoods that enriched my visit and guided my urban hikes.

Settings are an essential part of a story, and our January speaker John Byrne Barry will speak on this subject. He will explain how settings can advance the plot, reveal character, and enhance themes.

### **NOTE OUR MEETING LOCATION HAS CHANGED**

Our January meeting will be at the Center for Spiritual Awakening, a non-denominational church. The address is 522 Central Avenue, across from the Pacific Grove Public Library.

The rent is slightly higher than at Juice n' Java, so please be prepared to donate to cover the costs. Also, you will need to bring your drink.

In our survey last fall, most of you said you would rather have snacks at our meetings than a full meal. Your Ex Comm is open to ideas as to a source for these snacks. All reasonable suggestions are welcome. We are looking forward to seeing more of you in person.

We have a 5-minute reader lined up for January but would love some volunteers for the upcoming year. What is a 5-minute reader? It's any member who would like to read from their written work at our meeting, with a 5-minute limit. Published or still a work-in-progress, all are welcome. Volunteering is a terrific opportunity to spread the word about your writing and practice presenting it to an audience.

After a short break in December, the Sunday Salon will resume on Sunday, January 22, 1-3pm at Juice n' Java. (It meets the Sunday after the monthly meeting.) The new bi-monthly Writers's Roundup will meet on the last Saturday of odd-numbered months at the Little House in Jewell Park in Pacific Grove 1-3pm. This month it is Saturday, January 28, 2023, with Scotty Cornfield speaking. His topic will be "Ask a Pro: Writing about Cops and Crooks." The next Roundup will be Saturday, March 25, 2023.

I wish you all a wonderful new year and many happy hours of writing.

Sarah E. Pruitt  
CCW President

# Announcements

## New CCW members

Please welcome new member Peter van Bommel.



## Member Congratulations

**Scotty Cornfield** will be signing his new book *FAST FICTION: 101 Stories of 101 Word Each* (vol. 1) at River House Books on Jan 15th at 1 pm. He will be bringing out his magic story wheel, reading stories and giving away thousands in cash and prizes (just like always).

Members **Scotty Cornfield** and **Nicki Ehrlich** achieved Honorable Mention status in the [Monterey County Weekly's](#) annual 101 word short story contest.

## New Meeting Venue

Starting in January, Central Coast Writers will be meeting at the Center for Spiritual Awakening (which is a non-denominational church) in Pacific Grove. The address is 522 Central Ave. It is located on the corner of Central Avenue and Fountain, across from the PG Library. There is plenty of parking. Since the Center doesn't serve food but has a kitchen, we will order in pizza or sandwiches. Bring your own drinks!

## January CCW Events

Join us for **Sunday Salons** on Sunday, January 22. We meet at Juice n' Java in Pacific Grove, 1-3pm. Bring a short piece of writing to read and discuss, come with writing-related questions or just join us to meet other writers. Open to all members of Central Coast Writers!

On Saturday, January 28, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm, member Scotty Cornfield will lead our first **Writers Roundup**. We will meet in The Little House in Jewell Park, next to the Pacific Grove Library. Scotty will be leading a session entitled: "Ask a Pro: Writing about Cops and Crooks." If you are interested in conducting a Writers' Roundup session in 2024, please contact the Writers' Roundup Coordinator, Mary Smathers, at [mary@marysmathers.com](mailto:mary@marysmathers.com).

## Remembering Harriett Lynn, 1945-2022



Harriet Lynn passed away suddenly from stage 4 lung cancer Monday, October 31, 2022 at the tender age of 77. I first met Harriet at a CCW picnic about 6 years ago. She was an amazing woman and friend. Harriet was a performing artist, playwright, photographer, historian, and tai chi instructor known throughout the Monterey peninsula. She began her career in the performing arts in Baltimore as a young woman, and enjoyed the distinction of having worked with Betty Grable and Ginger Rogers.

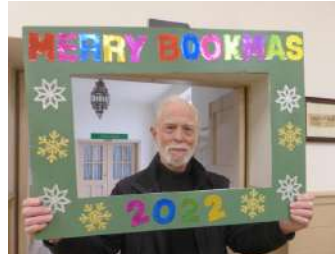
Harriet had a loving, caring, empathetic soul that was disarming and irresistible. If you became her friend, she would never let go of you. One of her driving forces in life was to befriend everyone she met; she believed that "strangers are friends that I have not met yet!" Her curiosity and inquisitiveness were extraordinary – they had no boundaries; every subject interested her.

I will miss her beautiful smile and vibrant love of life.

With Love,  
Sharon Law Tucker

# Announcements (Cont.)

## Enjoying the Holiday Party



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.



## “Damn the Torpedoes!”

### Christie Monson

Armed with a teaching credential in Learning Disabilities, Christie Monson taught elementary special education for several years before she transitioned to private tutoring for middle and high school students who often asked for assistance with their essays. “After helping them for a few years,” Christie says, “I realized I had a few things to say myself. That’s when I wrote my first book.”

In elementary school and throughout high school, Christie’s teachers inspired her to write. Later, in 2002, she joined a writers group that met behind the old Thunderbird Bookshop. “This lighthearted group made it easier for me to let my creativity flow,” she says. “Before then, I was way too shy about reading to a group.”

Christie subsequently enrolled at Mills College where she earned an MFA in Creative Writing. Ultimately, she decided to try her hand at fiction. “I thought I was going to stick with nonfiction,” she says, “but I took a wonderful fiction workshop that broadened my scope. We read each other’s pieces before gathering, put everything under a magnifying glass, and asked respectful questions, which can be more probing than criticism and far more effective. We left no stone unturned, but there was no harsh criticism. This is the model that I think is worth seeking.”

Christie says she’s been “all over the map” with her writing. “In my first book, *The Jesus Question: Daring to Walk the Path of Peace* (2008), I tackle religion and politics. My novel *The Dream Loom* is a metaphysical/magical realism story published in 2020.” She’s also written an unpublished humor piece titled “Don’t Lick That Railing! A guide for Californians Who Might Find Themselves in Minnesota.” And she’s currently working on a memoir about a group of friends who took care of a dying friend for a year and a half. “I have no interest in doing book tours or getting too heavily into marketing,” Christie says. “I simply love writing in all genres for writing’s sake and getting my stories out there.” Her advice to newbies is, “Write what makes you happy to write. Damn the torpedoes!”

Retired from teaching, Christie enjoys gardening as a therapeutic escape. A CCW member since 2021, she takes great pleasure in writing from her dream office that has a door leading out to her garden. “I like having plants and animals in my environment to keep me from stagnating,” she says.

Christie has attended CCW meetings via Zoom; however, she hopes to make an in-person visit soon. Her website is [ChristieMonson.com](http://ChristieMonson.com).

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





## CONTESTS

### **Ethos Literacy 4th Annual Short Short Story Contest**

**Deadline:** January 15, 2023, 5:00pm MST

**Entry Fee:** \$12.00 per story

**Website:** <https://ethosliteracy.org/about-1>

**Prizes:** Best of Contest: \$200.00, Best of Topic: \$100.00, Best of Youth-14 yrs. and younger: \$100.00, People's Choice: \$100.00

**Guidelines:** See website for complete guidelines. Story must relate to ONE of four topics: winter, ocean, dogs, umbrellas. Word limit 100, hyphenation rules apply. Enter as often as you like. Titles are not included in the word count.

### **The White County Writers Valentine's Day Prose and Poetry Contest**

**Deadline:** January 31, 2023

**Entry Fee:** \$5.00 per entry for either the Poetry or Prose contests

**Website:** <https://whitecountyc creativewriters.org/contests/valentines-day-contest/>

**Prizes:** 1st Prize for both Poetry and Prose Contests: \$25 plus free registration for the WCCW writer's conference

**Guidelines:** See website for complete guidelines. Prose contest-Valentine's Day Murder Mystery, 2500 words max, Poetry Contest- the style is a thirteen line acrostic "Valentine's Day", one page max, bonus points if a murder mystery is worked into the poem.

### **The I-70 Review Bill Hickok Humor Award for Poetry**

**Submission period:** January 1 to February 28, 2023

**Entry Fee:** \$15.00 with entry of one to three poems

**Website:** <http://i70review.fieldinfoserv.com/bill-hickok-humor-award-for-poetry.html>

**Prizes:** 1st Prize: \$1000 plus publication in *I-70 Review*

**Judge:** TBA

**Guidelines:** See website for Complete Guidelines. The Humor Award was created and funded by the N.W. Dible Foundation in honor of Bill Hickok, past president of the Foundation.

## WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

### **The San Francisco Writers Conference**

**Event Date:** February 16-19, 2023

**Location:** Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Hotel, 5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco,

**Website:** <https://www.sfwriters.org/>

**Fees:** November 1-December 31 \$850, January 1-February 16 \$900, At the door \$950

**Details:** See website for complete details, speakers and calendar of events. All attendees must present proof of Covid vaccination or negative Covid test to pick up badge. This is the premier West Coast writing conference. Included in registration: 4-days of SFWC events, Gala Welcome Party, Poetry and Jazz, Poetry Summit, Writing for Hollywood Summit, Pub Quiz with prizes, three light breakfasts with the Pros, and two Keynotes. There are also writing contests, pitch events and numerous networking opportunities.



What are *you* reading now? Which 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](mailto: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.

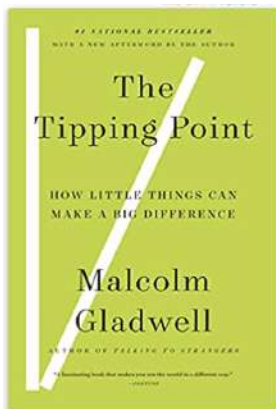
This month's review is from Sarah Pruitt.

### *The Tipping Point: How Little Things can Make a Great Difference*

Author: Malcolm Gladwell

Publisher: Little Brown

2000



This book has been out for years, but I just heard about it. Gladwell's theory is that every important movement or change of direction is based on one event (i.e. the tipping point).

He calls these events "Epidemics." An epidemic needs several factors to get started. Mavens have the information and are respected. Connectors know a lot of people and can get the word out. Salesmen sell.

He gave several interesting examples: the start of the American Revolution, the Airwalk Shoe Company, and Georgia Sandler's campaign to increase the knowledge of diabetes and breast cancer in the Black community of San Diego.



A new year, a new beginning, a new calendar: How different do we feel on January 1<sup>st</sup> than we did on December 31<sup>st</sup>? (Party libations notwithstanding.) Does this nebulous calendar have a physical effect on us? What is this thing we call “time?”

I attended Poets & Writers’ “Five Over Fifty” celebration on Zoom in December. If you’re not familiar, the magazine highlights five of the year’s debut authors who are over the age of fifty. These writers discussed many reasons why they hadn’t published a book earlier in their lives: Their focus was on jobs or family, no time, no inclination—they didn’t know they were “a writer” until later in life.

I think all of us, by a certain age, have at least one story to tell. Whether or not we write it, let alone share it with others, is a choice many contemplate, some aspire to, and few accomplish.

There are seminars claiming to teach how to “make time” for writing, but how does one “make” time, when time seems to be some indefinable apparition? As much as I’d love to get into a philosophical tirade here, I won’t. My point is that I am, as many of you are, a writer over the age of fifty. And for those of you who do not yet fit this category, you’re headed there, we know this.

During the “Five Over Fifty” Zoom gathering, attendees wrote comments: “How about Six Over Sixty? Or Seven Over Seventy?” (In fact, one of the Five Over Fifty authors was 85 years young.) Debut novelists fit all of these categories. When I attended my first Creative Writing class at Monterey Peninsula College, I worried I would be the oldest in the room and in no way would the college-age students be interested in what I had to say. Not true. As it turned out, there were more of us oldsters there and the class soon became ageless—cohorts engaged in the excitement and trepidation of writing and sharing what we wrote.

Listed are the Poets & Writers “Five Over Fifty” authors of 2022:

**Madhushree Ghosh**, author of *Khabaar: An Immigrant Journey of Food, Memory, and Family* (University of Iowa Press)

**Sari Botton**, author of *And You May Find Yourself: Confessions of a Late-Blooming Gen-X Weirdo* (Heliotrope Books)

**David Santos Donaldson**, author of *Greenland* (Amistad)

**Shareen K. Murayama**, author of *Housebreak* (Bad Betty Press)

**Jane Campbell**, author of *Cat Brushing* (Grove Atlantic)

In 2023, contemplate your place in time. You might not make it into the magazine, but don’t let time keep you from writing and finishing your debut!

Happy writing in the New Year!



## The Last Word Christine Sleeter



### Picturing Characters

I'm a fan of Louise Penny's series featuring Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. A few weeks ago, Amazon Prime launched [Three Pines](#), a series based on her novels. That series prompted a discussion among my book club friends about how we picture Gamache, given Amazon's selection of Alfred Molina to play his role.

"I wasn't sure about Molina at first, 'cause he was more good looking than the image in my head, but Molina's acting is great."

"In my mind I know exactly what Gamache looks like and Alfred Molina he is not, so I am adjusting."

"I envisioned Christopher Plummer as Gamache."

"Hmm. Not me. Too old. I had George Gently in mind, with dark hair."

"I am taking a pass on the Gamache movies. I have my own image of Ruth, Olivier, Myrna, Gamache, etc and I don't want to lose this."

What does all of this say to me as a writer?

It tells me not to over-describe characters. Give readers just enough detail to reveal the kind of person a character is, and then let your readers construct an image that works for them.

**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	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
Open	Proofreader

### CCW Website

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

Click *Scribbles* Newsletter for archived copies.

### For anything **Scribbles** related:

Contact *Scribbles* editor Christine Sleeter

[csleeter@gmail.com](mailto:csleeter@gmail.com)

### Not yet a member of CCW?

You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:

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

### NorCal Group of California Writers Club

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