



Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch

centralcoastwriters.org

September 2023

September 19, 2023

Finish your Book in Three Drafts

Stuart Horwitz



Have you ever asked yourself while writing, “How many drafts is this going to take?” It may seem like such a question couldn’t have an answer, but this session will propose that the answer is three, provided we approach each draft with the right spirit and take the right actions between drafts. The first draft, or messy draft, is all about getting the material down. The second draft, or method draft is about bringing the best parts up a level, and the third draft, or polished draft is all about making it good. Finding your unique approach requires a method rather than a formula to know where the work of revision lies most clearly.

Stuart Horwitz is a ghostwriter, independent editor, and founder of Book Architecture (www.bookarchitecture.com). His clients have reached the bestseller list in both fiction and non-fiction, and have appeared on Oprah!, The Today Show, and in the most prestigious journals in their fields. He is the author of three acclaimed books on writing: *Blueprint Your Bestseller: Organize and Revise Any Manuscript with the Book Architecture Method*, which was named one of the year's best books about writing by *The Writer* magazine, *Book Architecture: How to Plot and Outline Without Using a Formula*, which became an Amazon bestseller, and *Finish Your Book in Three Drafts: How to Write a Book, Revise a Book, and Complete a Book While You Still Love It*.

October 17, 2023

Booktoberfest!

Once again, CCW is hosting Booktoberfest in October. Several of our members will be readers. Booktoberfest is our annual celebration of our members’ publication achievements. Members who have published books within the last 12 months are invited to read from them at our October 17 meetings, and all members with a book are invited to bring them to sell.

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CCW President's Letter

By Sarah Pruitt

Welcome to September. In more enlightened times, this month marked the end of summer vacation. Most students have been in school since early August.

All of you know that this year's picnic was a total blast! KIM and GARY PARKER generously provided our venue. Their backyard, fully qualifying for the English term, 'back garden,' sported gorgeous trees, shrubs, and flowers everywhere. Even the bees were friendly in that they did not attack me.

So many other people helped. LAURIE and JOHN SHEEHAN set up the food tables. With KEN HOLDEN, all three solved the mysteries of the free-standing canopy, cabaña, or weather protector. (Remember Laurie writes mysteries.) SCOTTY CORNFIELD directed guests and collected dropped-off dishes.

JOYCE KRIEG, KIM PARKER, and MURPHY PARKER, the resident canine, greeted the guests and passed out name tags. Murphy is 126 in dog years, and I appreciate his taking time from his busy schedule to provide an air of friendly dignity to the gathering.

I appreciate the way so many of you anonymously helped clean up. I carried something to my car and returned to find folding chairs stacked and table clothes piled. Also, thanks to all guests for the lovely food, carrying away your leftovers, and the dishes they rode in on.

On a different subject, I need help with the October meeting. Would one of you be willing to work with me in organizing BOOKTOBERFEST? For those new to CCW, Booktoberfest is our annual celebration of our members' publication achievements. Members who have published books within the last 12 months are invited to read from them at our October 17 meeting, and all members with a book are invited to bring them to sell.

Taking charge of Booktoberfest involves sending out email blasts to our members, taking sign-ups, and coordinating the event the night of the meeting. If this sounds interesting, contact me at sep23@sbcglobal.net for details.

Last year I did most of the work in advance. On the day of the meeting, you would need to be present. I've done it before and would like to work with you.

Last June, I had an opportunity to attend a writers' conference in Canby, Oregon. What a treat to wander around for three days, taking workshops, talking with other writers over meals, and meeting one-on-one with mentors and agents. One person helped me figure out my Life Story—as in, what do I REALLY want to write about? Another talked me through the best examples for a one-sheet introduction, and a third explained deep Point Of View.

I knew my novel was not ready for submission, so I did not try to pitch it. Instead, I sat down with each mentor or agent and asked one question: Is this plot and subject matter salable? (They said it was.)

I am very interested in what September's speaker, Stuart Horwitz, has to say. His subject is *Finish Your Book in Three Drafts: Crafting Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction with the Book Architecture Method*. Three drafts? Sounds lovely. I am on my gazillionth round of editing on my project.

Our September 19 meeting will be at the Center for Spiritual Awakening, 522 Central Avenue in Pacific Grove. 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!

Let me remind you of coming attractions:

Writers Round Up will be on Saturday, September 23, from 1-3p.m.

Nicki Ehrich and Mary Smathers will be speaking on Self-publishing Basics.

They will be speaking at Little House in Jewell Park, Pacific Grove (across from the library)

Sunday Salon meets the Sunday after our monthly meeting. This month it is Sunday, September 24, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Juice n' Java.

Sarah E. Pruitt

President

Central Coast Writers

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.

Announcements

New CCW members

Please welcome new member Elvia Navarro and Clair Fay; and returning member Carol Marquart.



Member Congratulations

Member **Shanna Iudice**'s debut novel [*Traveling Monsters*](#) is coming out on September 2nd. In *Traveling Monsters* a young couple tour through the picturesque cities of Italy and enjoy the wonderful cuisine the country has to offer, but there are monsters after them.

Have you published a book within the last month? Won a writing award? Please send information to csleeter@gmail.com.

Sunday Salon

September 24, 1:00—3:00 pm, at Juice n' Java

Next Writers' Roundup

Saturday, September 23, 1:00—3:00 pm

Mary Smathers and Nicki Ehrlich

Successful Self-Publishing: How to do it, What to expect

Mary Smathers and Nicki Ehrlich will let you in on their personal self-publishing journeys, and how they learned to create award-winning books. This discussion of editing, designing, publishing, and marketing, will help you sift through the do's and don'ts of one of the fastest growing publishing options.

Nicki's debut novel, *Ellis River*, won the Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Award (The Bill Fisher Award for Best First Book - Fiction), received an Honorable Mention for the Eric Hoffer Grand Prize, and was a Finalist for the Eric Hoffer First Horizons Award, and a Semi-finalist for the Publishers Weekly Booklife Prize.

Mary's debut novel, *In This Land of Plenty*, was named the 2021 Adult Fiction Book of the Year from BiblioLab's Indie Author Project-California, won a Gold Medal for Western Fiction from Readers' Favorite Awards, earned a Bronze IPPY for Regional Fiction E-book and was a finalist in the Family Saga and Historical Fiction categories from the American Fiction Awards. She also is the author/publisher of a short story collection and two bilingual children's picture books.

New Scribbles Editor Needed

The *Scribbles* editor compiles material that other members write each month, lays out the document, and emails it to members. None of this is terribly time-consuming; most of the work takes place during the latter part of each month. The *Scribbles* editor is also a member of the club's Executive Committee, which meets once per month on Zoom. For more information, contact Christine Sleeter (csleeter@gmail.com).

Announcements (Cont)

Scenes from the August picnic



Thanking retiring webmaster Ken Jones



Announcements (Cont)

Advertise in the Bulletin

Now advertise four times a year!

Want to increase your visibility? Sell your service? Promote your book? Increase speaker engagements? Pump up your web traffic? Or just send a greeting? Each issue of *The Bulletin* — published four times a year — reaches close to 2,000 published and aspiring writers, in 22 branches throughout the state. AND it is published on calwriters.org.

Deadlines: March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1, with publication occurring on the 15th of those months.

We are accepting writing-related advertising from businesses, CWC members, and individuals who wish to reach our target market at reasonable prices. Four tiers of ads are being offered:

- Business card size (2" x 3.5") ads for \$35.
- Index card size (3" x 5") ads for \$60. These will be interspersed throughout The Bulletin as appropriate.
- 5" x 7" size ads for \$90 placed at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief

All of the above can be paid for by check as described below, or by PayPal (below).

We will make available one and one only full-page vertical or horizontal ad (7" x 10") for \$200. First come, first served, and for that reason, arrangements for this ad must be made by check and submitted by postal mail and by email as described below. Advertisers whose ads are received by mail too late to qualify will be notified of their option to buy a 5x7 or smaller ad and their checks will be returned.

All ads submitted must be self-edited, print-ready, and will be published as received. We reserve the right to decline material deemed inappropriate at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. All ads must be emailed as a jpg file attachment to advertisingcwc@gmail.com and a copy sent to editor@calwriters.org. A physical copy of your ad must be enclosed with the postal mailed payment. Please include your return address, email address, and telephone contact number.

Deadlines for Branch news submissions are the same as for advertising: March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

Each CWC Branch is eligible to submit one 5x7 ad to publicize a branch conference that they are sponsoring, and this ad will be published free of charge.

Capacity for advertising will be determined by the Editor-in-Chief. In case we receive more ads than can be accommodated, advertisers will be notified of the option to reserve space in the next issue. Space is limited, and appropriate ads will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. A copy of *The Bulletin* will be emailed to advertisers upon publication. Please include your preferred email address along with your ad submission. Questions? Call Bob Isbill at (760) 221-6367.

Checks or money orders for submitted ads must be made payable to CWC Central Treasury and mailed to:

HDCWC
17645 Fisher St.
Victorville, CA 92395

Announcements (Cont)

Webmaster Needed

The CCW Webmaster makes recommendations on updating the club webpage. The Webmaster is responsible for all aspects of running and maintaining the CCW website to include updating content (e.g., upcoming events, president's messages, speaker reports, regular columns) based on input provided by others. The Webmaster is responsible for communicating with the web host to maintain the account and resolve any access issues, and ensuring the club's domain name remains registered and licensed. Webhosting and domain name fees are paid by the CCW. Previous webpage experience is highly recommended, but a strong desire to help the CCW webpage remain fresh, timely, correct, and relevant is just as important.

This is a paid position (pay is negotiable). The Webmaster need not be a member of CCW. For more information, contact Gary Parker (CCWBranch.Treasurer@gmail.com).

High Desert CWC Branch to Present Free Zoom Meeting with John Truby on Genres

It has been said that if you're ready to graduate from the boy-meets-girl league of storytelling, meet John Truby. His lessons draw epiphanies that make you see the contours of your psyche as sharply as your script.

On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 6 PM to 7 PM, the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club will present story master John Truby who will discuss his latest book *Anatomy of Genres*. This remarkable Zoom meeting is free to all members of the CWC and the link to the meeting may be found below. Truby says, "What if I told you there was a secret to story that will increase your ability to sell your stories 100-fold?"

According to John Truby, **GENRES** have more to do with how your story works than any other element — any other idea, plot device, character archetype, beat sheet, methodology, or prescribed structure — by far. Whether you're writing for movies, TV, or novels, **the game is won or lost in genres**.

John Truby is the founder and director of Truby's Writers Studio. Over the past thirty years, he has taught more than fifty thousand students worldwide, including novelists, screenwriters, and TV writers. Together, these writers have generated more than fifteen billion dollars at the box office. He regularly applies his genre techniques in story consulting work with major studios including Disney, Sony Pictures, Fox, HBO, the BBC, Canal Plus, Globo, and AMC.

In this book club type meeting, participants can submit written questions pertaining to genres in the book to Bob Isbill via email sent to HDCWC@aol.com. In the subject line, please put Genre Question. Include your name, your branch, and of course the question you would like to have John Truby address. *Anatomy of Genres* may be purchased through Amazon.com or www.anatomyofgenres.com.

Join this exciting and informative Zoom Meeting at 6 PM on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. Here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86220784034?pwd=TThCMWhyc0FYbjRid1JmUnZiWit6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 862 2078 4034, Passcode: 375034



“The Challenge and Fun of it All”

Linda Mutty

Former administrator and teacher Linda Mutty recalls visiting Jack London State Park in Glen Ellen with her parents when she was 12. “Having just read *The Call of the Wild*, I walked the property in awe that I was walking in the footsteps of one of my favorite authors.”

From that auspicious moment, Linda decided to write. She went on to graduate from San Jose State University with a B.A. in English Literature, and in 1971 she published her poem titled “Do We Part” in *Reed Magazine*. She also completed several graduate writing courses at the University of Oregon.

After retiring in 2012 from her 40-year career in education, Linda happened upon a box filled with her college writings. She discovered a typed three-page short story with her professor’s comments still attached: “You have talent. I hope that you keep writing no matter what life throws at you.” Those words stimulated a serious attempt that led to Linda’s first novel, *A Stone’s Throw Away*.

A four-year CCW member, Linda writes literary fiction (and some poetry) in her home office, marveling at how “one tiny idea bursts into many.” A proponent of sharing her work, she encourages other writers to learn from each other and become comfortable with critical feedback. She also suggests reading different genres and authors whose work you admire as well as plowing through reads that don’t captivate your interest. “Figure out why they don’t,” she says. “What’s missing for you?”

Once Linda has read a work for pleasure, she’ll don her analytical hat and dissect it. Likewise, she suggests “finding the delete tab on the keyboard, or the eraser on a pencil, or the courage to draw a line through words already written in the draft. In my experience, recognizing the final draft of a story is one of the most difficult parts of writing.” Finally, she asks writers not to become discouraged or apathetic with the writing process. “There’s no such thing as a clear path when composing,” she says. “That’s the challenge and the fun of it all.”

Linda’s poem “Reflections” was published in the 2022 California Writers Club *Literary Review*. She’s self-published five novels through KDP Amazon and is completing the final edits for her sixth. Though she dreams of publication by one of the Big Five houses, these days she’s less inclined to seek representation—a blessing and a curse, she says. “It’s too easy to publish my books but so hard to promote them.” More importantly, she aspires to become a better writer each day.

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





CONTESTS AND OPEN SUBMISSIONS

The TulipTree Humor Contest

Deadline: October 17, 2023, 9 PM PDT

Entry Fee: \$20 per entry

Website: <http://www.tuliptreepub.com/humor-contest.html>

Prizes: **Grand Prize:** \$1000; Contributors/Honorable Mentions for each issue will be paid \$50 per acceptance plus publication in Tuliptree Review.

Guidelines: See website for Guidelines. No restrictions on form, style, or content as long as it fits the requirement of finding humor in the work. Judging is done in two rounds. You may enter as often as you like with a \$20.00 fee per entry. All entries must be previously unpublished.

The Changing Skies Climate Change Writing Contest

Deadline: September 17, 2023, 11 PM MDT

Entry Fee: Free, one piece per submission

Website: <https://journal2020.submittable.com/submit>

Prizes: **1st Prize:** \$500 **2nd Prize:** \$200

Guidelines: See website for Guidelines. Send us your creative nonfiction writing (prose only; *no poetry for this contest*) about climate change! How has it affected you? People you know? If it's about climate change, we want to read it. All entries must be previously unpublished. All work will be considered for both online and print publication. Changing Skies is a journal affiliated with the University of Boulder Co.

The Last Stanza Poetry Journal

Deadline: September 30, 2023

Entry Fee: No fee, this is a submission call

Website: <https://laststanzapoetry.blogspot.com>

Prize: \$100 to one winning contributor. All submissions will be considered for publication. One outstanding poem gets cash plus an interview.

Guidelines: See website for Guidelines. The theme for this issue #14 will be "I Never Knew". As with every issue, poems submitted do not need to follow the prompt/theme. Poems can be any style, preferably non-rhyming. Poets may submit up to three poems, each no longer than 64 lines.

The NESFA Science Fiction Short Story Contest

Deadline: September 30, 2023 11:59 PM EDT

Entry Fee: Free, only one entry per author

Website: <https://www.nesfa.org/awards/short-story-contest/>

Prizes: **1st Prize:** Certificate of achievement, three [NESFA Press](#) books, and a free membership to their choice of the next Boskone Event or the Boskone after that. **Runners-Up:** Certificate and two [NESFA Press](#) books. **Honorable mentions:** Certificate and one NESFA Press book.

Guidelines: Visit the website for the guidelines and read them carefully.

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 *Sarah Pruitt*.

[*Vacuuming in the Nude and Other Ways to Get Attention*](#), Peggy Rowe, Forefront Books, 2022.

Peggy Rowe's collection of stories about her life is hilarious. Her prose reads like she is talking to you at her kitchen table over coffee.

To my surprise, her writing journey was a challenge. Editors rejected her writing for decades. She claimed she could paper the Taj Mahal with her rejection slips. After decades, she discovered her style—short, amusing anecdotes about her family and life. Her first book was published after she turned eighty. And it became a bestseller.

Peggy Rowe has been married 62 years to her husband, John. They raised three sons. *Vacuuming* is her third book.

She is the mother of Mike Rowe, who hosts *Dirty Jobs*. She also insists that he write the forewords in each of her books. According to Mike, she hopes that his fame will rub off on her.

My favorite stories are the one that explains the book's title, and her description of the ONLY family vacation trip she and her husband took with their boys. Mrs. Rowe and her husband were teachers, and most vacations were "stay-cations." (They also convinced their boys to pity children attending movies. "Poor things. Books are so much better. They probably can't read." They pretended to worry about children in commercials supposedly enjoying theme parks. "Who would strap an innocent child into a ride that will make him vomit?")

I recommend this book because it has these short amusing stories—a quick read that will cheer you even when time is short. One night I laughed like a loon at one of them. My neighbors must have wondered if I was going mad.

If this book is on your bedstead, it will send you off to sleep with a relaxing chuckle.



September always reminds me of back-to-school, even though school resumes in August these days. I remember the cooler autumn air (a relief from humid Illinois summers), buying new school supplies (I still love buying paper, pens, and pencils), and donning comfy new school clothes.

As an adult, when I signed up for a writing class, I reflected on the unknown of a new school year. I was excited to be a part of a group of students and writers who loved the art and craft as much as I did. Okay, they weren't all in it for the love of writing. Some needed an English credit. But we shared our stories and learned how to give and accept critiques.

Whether in a formal class or an informal writing group, critiquing is an art form. In the classes I took, I had to critique work outside my genre preferences. I wondered how to provide constructive criticism and encouragement. At first, I would preface my comments: "I don't usually read sci-fi/fantasy, but..." Soon I found that phrase just wasn't true anymore. In the class, I read all sorts of genres from fantasy, to horror, to romance, and I realized good writing is good writing.

In a previous column I've written about handling critiques (August 2022). What I didn't mention before, because I thought it was understood, is that submitted pages should be as clean as possible.

A "rough draft" is for your eyes only. Not just because it will be chock full of mistakes, but also because you want the freedom to "throw words at a page" and see what sticks. That's part of the writing process. But nobody wants to read that. It's kind of like telling someone about a crazy dream you had.

Submitted pages aren't expected to be "finished," there's a certain amount of testing the waters, but neither should they be "rough." Create a pleasant experience for your reader. Don't make them sift through grammar and punctuation errors to get to the story. The more you work at your writing, the better it will be without as much effort. You will find yourself making fewer mistakes naturally, leading to faster, more efficient writing. And your readers will thank you for it.

I'm very grateful to the critique groups I've been a part of. It's a privilege to be invited into the company of authors who agree to spend some of their precious writing time reading my work and helping to make it better. I want to make their experience as pleasant as possible, so I try to make sure punctuation is correct, typos are eliminated, and sentence structure is what it should be before I hand off pages. I want the reader to be able to concentrate on the characters, plot, and scenes. They're going to find issues because that's their job, but I'll try to make that job easier.

Back in the day, a new school year was an opportunity to gain knowledge and improve skills. This fall, if you belong to a critique group, sharpen your new pencil, open your new notebook, and clean up those pages before submission.



Prompts challenge hesitant writers to start the process, put down the germ seed, put “butt in chair,” and draw us into a world to be created from our minds. The column is meant to be a lectern, displaying writer’s notes. Please send your prompts to Scribbles % Michael Beck pregnev001@gmail.com.

This month’s prompt: Writing Active hooks/How Many Are Enough? Mary Buckham

You are already hooked, browsing the Barnes and Noble in Gilroy, not looking yet always on the prowl, yearning for a good read. Which of these hooks would make you read further into the book, consider picking it up? Did the planted hooks bite and barb you? Are you in, “Hook, line and sinker?”

- (1) Along the banks of the river Arno, I scramble, breathless...turning left onto Via die Castelani, making my way northward, huddling in the shadows of the Uffizi. And they still pursue me. Their footsteps grow louder now as they hunt with relentless determination. (Dan Brown/ INFERNO)
- (2) On the day his destiny returned to claim him, Ted Mundy was sporting a bowler hat and balancing on a soapbox in one of Mad King Ludwig’s castles in Bavaria. (John le Carre’/ABSOLUTE FRIENDS)
- (3) Dear Friend. I am writing to you because she said you listen and understand and didn’t try to sleep with that person at that party even though you could have. Please don’t try to figure out who she is because you might figure out who I am, and really don’t want you to do that. (Stephen Chobosky, THE PERK OF BEING A WALLFLOWER)
- (4) Everyone my age remembers where they were and what they were doing when they first heard about the contest. (Ernest Cline, READY PLAYER ONE)
- (5) It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. (Ray Bradbury, FAHRENHEIT)
- (6) Mt. Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty, and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable. (Robert Louis Stevenson, “THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE”)

Mike Beck's Prompt inspired member David David Conneau to share this poem.

It was written during our frequent power outages this past winter (2023), and is based on and sung to the melody of Herman's Hermits' *Kind of a Hush*.

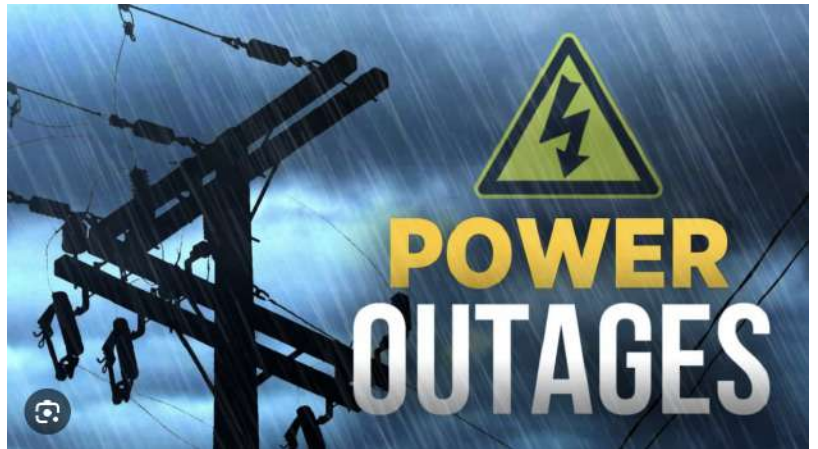
*There's a kind of hush in Del Monte Park.
Tonight, we're all in the dark
And it's all because of P.G.&E.*

*Our frozen foods thaw, our houses grow cold.
Tonight, put Netflix on hold.
And it's all because of P.G. & E.*

*Now the wind will blow, the rain may fall.
It's winter weather, after all.
(Underground your damn lines, avoiding the
pines)
The crews are all on overtime.
The suits are watching profits climb.
(It's all on our dime. Time after time.)*

Yet the rates go higher and higher!

*Our groceries are spoiled, our laundry stays soiled.
Tonight no Wi-Fi or TV.
And it's all because of P.G.&E.*



The Last Word Christine Sleeter



Plottr

I've been playing around with the online tool, [Plottr](#), which is designed to help authors visualize the scenes in their novel. I'm making use of Plottr's 2-week free trial period.

I usually keep track of scenes and chapters on a spreadsheet. I wasn't sure whether a tool like Plottr (or [Scrivener](#)) would enable me to see things I don't see already.

Well, it turns out that it does. Plottr provides individual cards for each scene; there are templates you can use, or you can set up your scene cards however you wish.

I'm entering my scenes onto the timeline, categorizing them as "Scene OK," "Scene needs work," and "Cut scene." To qualify as OK, a scene has to be an actual scene rather than a narration, it has to have conflict, and there has to be an emotional change through the scene. With Plottr, I can now see which scenes need work (or cutting entirely).

I can also easily move some scenes around, merge two chapters into one, and shift how I've categorized scenes after working on them. There are other tools I'm learning to use, such as tracking characters or themes. In other words, it's worth checking out a tool like this because it's turning out to be useful.

Christine

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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CCW Website

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Contact **Scribbles** editor Christine Sleeter
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You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:
Centralcoastwriters.org

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