



# Central Coast Writers

*A Branch of the California Writers Club*

## Speakers Report

### Writing Your Story

Memoir is not about all you did in your life, according to writer Dr. Evelyn LaTorre, but what you did with it. Unlike autobiography, which relates the events of a person's life, memoir provides a deeper experience than just talking about the past. A good memoir shows transformation or perhaps answers a question.

To find the focus of your memoir, LaTorre suggested listing your areas of expertise and roles you've played that have taught you something. Possible topics could include: places you've lived, memorable teachers or students, a special holiday memory, an interesting acquaintance or relative, pets you've had, an event or situation where you overcame difficulties, or coming of age. "Think of the stories you tell over and over," she said. "They must mean something to you."

Books compete with television, movies, and social media, so your memoir must be interesting to hold people's attention, LaTorre said. People value writing when it entertains, introduces them to characters and cultures they might not otherwise meet, surprises them, paints a character they relate to, or helps them understand a deeper truth they've never considered. "Pick something universal and be a relatable character," she said. "Allow the story to change as you write. We write what we need to know, so unresolved issues may show up."

Like any good story, memoir should start with an inciting incident and make clear what's at stake. Focus on a specific time period, use big events as anchors, and include key scenes that support the transformation story. "Don't include events just because they happened," she advised. Show how the big events are connected and include two or three minor themes (subplots) that build on the main theme. Create scenes that make the reader respond emotionally or cognitively, weave in backstory, and use flashbacks sparingly. "Don't rationalize your behavior," she added, "and don't tell the reader what to think."



It takes a lot of courage to tell the story of your life, LaTorre said. The rewards are not monetary, but "when the mind is put to creative use, the sensation of freedom is off the charts." She suggested potential memoirists read lots of memoirs, enlist a developmental editor to help hone their story, and aim for an 85,000-word manuscript. "What I love about writing memoir is the serendipity of having things connect in your subconscious," she said. "Memoir helps us know and make peace with ourselves."

Nancy Middleton

**Next Meeting - April 16**  
*The Art Of Diction: Choosing Your Words*  
with Roy Mash

## COLUMNS

In So Many Words, Nicki Ehrlich  
Member Profile, Michelle Smith  
Speaker Report, Nancy Middleton  
What's On Your Nightstand, Barbara Siebeneick

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### STATISTICS

March Mtg. Attendance: 43

Our longest distance attendees from the most recent meeting came from Cupertino and San Juan Bautista!

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For details please see the [CCW Event Calendar](#) on our [webpage](#). We encourage our members to attend and support local literary events.

- **Saturday March 30th at 1:00 pm** - CCW Writer's Roundup
- **Tuesday April 16th at 6:15 pm** - CCW Monthly Meeting, speaker - Roy Mash on the Art of Diction: Choosing Your Words
- **Sunday April 21st at 1:00 pm** - CCW Sunday Salon

## ANNOUNCEMENT

At last week's meeting Scotty Cornfield sent around sign up sheets seeking volunteers for the **Good Old Days event on May 4-5**. Unfortunately those sheets were not returned and we're hoping to get them back as soon as possible. If you've mistakenly picked them up please call Scotty (*number below*) so he can get the info from them.

If anyone signed up and has NOT heard from Scotty it means he didn't receive your information. Please call Scotty to get your sign up confirmed.

Scotty Cornfield    **Phone:** (408) 690-3417    **email:** [scotty@scottycornfield.com](mailto:scotty@scottycornfield.com)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Madeleine Clark -

Margaret McHugh - Memoir

### Inkspots

"Is the spring coming?" he said. "What is it like?" ... "It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine..."

**Frances Hodgson Burnett,**  
*The Secret Garden*

*Jennifer Schmidt*



## Spotlight Event

We'll spotlight local events in which our members may have interest in attending. If you have an event for our calendar please submit to: [ccw.branch.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:ccw.branch.webmaster@gmail.com)

### MPC GUEST AUTHOR SERIES

Wednesday March 27th at 7:00 pm -  
MPC Guest Author Series Welcomes  
**Darcie Little Badger.**

[Join the Zoom Meeting HERE](#)

Meeting ID: 848 4268 2930

Passcode: 913009

**EVENT DETAILS LOCATED ON OUR CALENDAR**