



Central Coast Writers

A Branch of the California Writers Club

Speakers Report

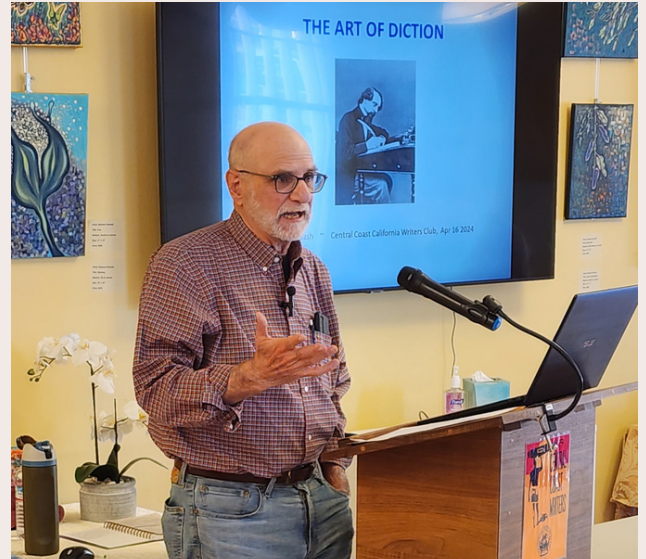
Nancy Middleton

In Search of the Perfect Word

Diction, the words you choose, affects the style and tone of your writing and, if used effectively, can stop a reader in their tracks, according to poet Roy Mash. “Words are atoms of meaning,” he said. “They have associations but not necessarily meaning until they cling together and form bonds.”

When we speak, ideas translate easily into words. When we write, however, an idea is often followed by a pencil-chewing moment in which we consider the right words to express it. “Sometimes we struggle so long,” Mash said, “we end up settling for a less-than-perfect word.”

Writers have long debated which is better: common words such as Hemingway used or the “out of the way” words Faulkner favored. Words can be divided in four tiers, according to Mash. The most basic are core words that any second language learner recognizes (blue, run, house). It’s possible to write using only core words and be effective, but using words from the next tier, peripheral words (ardent, bungle, frazzled), can add spice to your writing. As with any spice, Mash said, you can overdo it. “Peripheral words put definitional strain on the reader, but they also wake them up a bit.” He then cited two higher tiers, the passive (alluvium) and the arcane (cohoosh) writers can use to elevate their prose.



German and Latin had a huge influence on the English language, Mash said. For every German word (begin), there is a more “elevated” Latin version (commence), and the words you choose from these pairs affect your writing palette. Jane Austen’s work, for example, features a lot of “high-brow” Latinate words.

In addition to word choice, phrasing and word order as well as sentence length affects the style and tone of your writing. Short sentences can sound almost fable like while longer, more complex sentences and phrasing set a different tone.

Mash considers himself a “word collector.” When he writes, he sometimes starts with the words and moves upward to form the idea. Other times, he starts with the idea and works down toward the right words. “Working within the poetry form directs you to certain words and ideas,” he said. “Poetry requires the tiger being kept in the cage.”

Next Meeting - May 21
The Five Bios Every Author Needs
with Joey Garcia

LINKS IN THIS ISSUE

COLUMNS

Presidents Message
Announcements
In So Many Words, *Nicki Ehrlich*
Member Profile, *Michelle Smith*
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What's On Your Nightstand, *Barbara Siebeneick*

UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES

4/23 **FREE** Online Writing Workshop with Savannah Gilbo, *See Calendar*
4/24-26 Fantasy Writers' Week register with ProWritingAid.com *it's FREE*
4/27 Independent Bookstore Day - *see Calendar*
5/ 4-5 PG Good Old Days
5/18 Writers RoundUp - Marketing for Authors
5/21 Monthly Meeting / Guest Speaker
5/26 Sunday Salon

STATISTICS

April Mbr. Attendance: 34
Plus 3 guests/visitors

NEW MEMBERS

Charlotte Banks - *Comedy, horror*
Wendy Goodman - *Cozy Mystery, YA, SciFi*

PUBLICATION & RECOGNITION

Barbara Siebeneick - Poem 'Sometimes' accepted for CCW's *Ekphrastic Vision & Verse*



Joey Garcia

The Five Bios Every
Author Needs

May 21st

Opportunities for Members

- Check out our new Facebook page: “**CCW Members Only**”
- At our May Meeting we'll be trying out the **Open Mic** period from 5:45 to 6:00 pm. Look for a sign up sheet. You'll have at most five (5) minutes to open a discussion, ask questions, make an announcement, look for writing groups etc. Strict cut-off at 6:00 pm for meeting preparations. This is different from our five-minute-reader period during the meeting.



YouTube

CCW - Our YouTube Channel

Did you miss a meeting? Some of our amazing guest speakers are allowing us to film and post their discussions. You can find those recordings on our [YouTube Channel HERE](#). Also, don't forget our five-minute readers! Kay Krattli was our April reader. Her work was wonderfully funny and insightful, check it out.