



Scribbles

California Writers Club – Central Coast Writers Branch

centralcoastwriters.org

January, 2024

January 16, 2024

Writing Back-Cover Copy

Shelley Adina



Your book cover gets your reader’s attention, but your back-cover copy can clinch that sale. Back-cover copy is an art form and, whether traditionally or indie published, authors need to know how to write it well. In this hands-on presentation, *USA Today* bestselling author Shelley Adina will break down the back-cover blurb, from shoutline to hook. Attendees will leave with a working draft of the copy for their upcoming book or query

letter.

Shelley Adina is the author of more than 50 novels published by Harlequin, Warner, Hachette, and Moonshell Books, Inc. Find out more at www.shelleyadina.com or her store at www.moonshellbooks.com.

February 20, 2024

Small Publishing in a Big Universe

Steven Radecki



Between traditional publishing and self-publishing there is small publishing. In this presentation, our speaker will discuss the place independent publishers occupy in the publishing ecosystem, comparing and contrasting the

submissions processes, benefits, and challenges authors might encounter as they follow each publishing path.

Steven Radecki is the author of *Building Baby Brother*, short fiction, technical papers, and the non-fiction book *Multimedia with QuickTime*. Steven is also the managing editor of Paper Angel Press, Water Dragon Publishing, and Unruly Voices as well as executive producer of the *Small Publishing in a Big Universe* podcast.

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Dear Fellow Writers,

Can't believe it's January 2024. To quote Eubie Blake, "If I'd known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself." Wikipedia attributes these words to the musician, though there is some question about whether he said it first.

Eubie Blake was born in 1883 or 1887 and died in 1983. He was performing on the piano professionally around 1900. He had a decades-long career—playing the piano and composing for ragtime, vaudeville, and jazz. Professionally, he partnered with lyricist Noble Sissle. They wrote the first all-African American Broadway show, *Shuffle Along*. It included the song "I'm Just Wild about Harry," which became Harry Truman's theme song when he ran for president in 1948.

Blake went to college in 1946 and learned how to transcribe music. He had never written any of his down! He spent the next twenty years or so transcribing all of his works from memory.

In the late 1960s, Blake began touring again and discussing ragtime music while playing the piano. He helped cause a ragtime revival aided by Newman and Redford's *The Sting* (1973).

President Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1981. Blake kept on performing until his death in February of 1983. Apparently, he did take good care of himself.

Lots going on this month.

CCW's Literary Salon will be from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, January 21, 2024 at

Juice N' Java
599 Lighthouse
Pacific Grove, CA

All members are invited to bring a work-in-progress to share.

The first Writers Roundup of 2024 will be on Saturday, January 27, 2024 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Joyce Krieg and Nancy Middleton will be sharing ideas on all phases of editing your work. Roundup meets at the Little House, which is in Jewel Park next to the Pacific Grove Public Library.

Our January meeting will be on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at the

Center for Spiritual Awakening
522 Central Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA

It is across the street from the Pacific Grove Public Library. If you want to help set up, doors open at 5 p.m. 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!

Our January meeting speaker will be best-selling author Shelley Adina, explaining back-cover copy, the little blurb you read on the back of a book. Your book cover gets your reader's attention, but your back-cover copy clinches sales. Back-cover copy is an art form; whether traditionally or indie-published, authors need to know how to write it well.

Shelley will break down the back-cover blurb, from shoutline to hook. Attendees will leave with a working draft of the copy for their upcoming book or query letter.

She's written steampunk under Shelley Adina and romances under Adina Senft. For more information, check out www.shelleyadina.com or www.moonshellbooks.com.

Meanwhile, happy writing,

Sarah E. Pruitt
CCW President

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

Sunday Salon

January 21, 1-3pm

Juice n Java

Next Writers Roundup

All About Editing

Joyce Krieg and Nancy Middleton

Saturday January 27, 1-3pm

The Little House in Jewel Park, next to the Pacific Grove Library

We all know the importance of editing our work, whether we're planning to self-publish or go the traditional route. A crucial first step is determining what type of editing your manuscript needs. There's a huge difference between a developmental edit—a "big picture" analysis of your story to see if the plot holds together and the characters are compelling—versus a final proofread to catch typos before you press the "publish" key on KDP. But how do you find a competent editor? How much do they charge? And if you're planning to edit your own work, how do you develop an eagle eye for common errors and correct them so your manuscript appears professional and polished?

CCW's Nancy Middleton and Joyce Krieg, both professional editors, will answer your questions at the next CCW Writers Round-Up on Saturday, Jan. 27, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Little House in Jewell Park, corner of Central and Grand in Pacific Grove (right by the library). Admission is free and you are welcome to bring spouses or writing buddies. You'll leave with a better understanding of the editing process, and with effective methods for copyediting and proofreading your own work.



Nancy is CCW's program chair and teaches English at CSU-Monterey Bay. Her short fiction has appeared in *The South Carolina Review* and her author interviews have been published in *Glimmer Train*. She has been a featured writer at the Clemson Literary Festival and has worked as a freelance editor for several Washington, D.C.-based organizations, including The Brookings Institute. Her latest novel is represented by Cassandra Rodgers of Five Otter Literary.

Joyce is a past president of CCW and our parent organization, California Writers Club. She has published three mystery novels with St. Martin's Press and had a long career as a print and broadcast journalist. For the past ten years, she has provided editing services at all levels for dozens of writers in the Monterey area, many of them referrals from CCW's Patricia Hamilton of Park Place Publications. She worked with Patricia on her *Life in Pacific Grove* series and wrote the text for *Pacific Grove at Your Feet*, a collection of local walking tours.



January 24 - February 27: SANTA CRUZ COMMUNITY READS

Each year the [Friends of the Santa Cruz Library](#) community vote for a single book to explore in depth. The selection for 2024 is [The Monk of Mokha](#) by Dave Eggers. The Friends are hosting about a dozen events in early 2024 that reflect the themes in Egger's book. Activities include an author talk, book discussions, films, a field trip, art & writing workshops, music, trivia, and much more. All events are free and open to the public but require a reservation.

The Literary Review: 2024

A New Approach

As has been the tradition of the CWC for many years, there will be a *Literary Review* published in 2024. With the blessing of the CWC, the High Desert Branch has created a new model. In order to expedite the process, and to make the costs more manageable, there will be some significant changes. Please read the following document carefully so that your branch can fully participate.

The *Literary Review* will no longer consist of stories submitted by individual members then collected and judged by the CWC. Each branch will be in charge of selecting the stories and poems that best represent the highest writing from their branch. The number of selections that a branch can submit will be determined by their membership. Those with 50 members or fewer will be allowed one story and one poem. Those which have memberships from 51 to 100 will be allowed two stories and two poems. You see the progression. By our calculation, using the current reported membership, we may have up to 64 stories and 64 poems—a substantial anthology.

How are the stories to be chosen? This can be ascertained in various ways. One way is to publish a branch anthology, which many of our branches have done. Some branches judge their submissions, assigning first place, second place, etc. to the stories and poems. These branches will submit their top winning stories and poems. The number of submissions, as stated previously, will depend on their membership count at the time of submission.

Those branches that have an anthology that has not been judged will have to form an unbiased committee to judge their stories and poems and select the ones that represent the best writing of their branch. Branches that do not have an anthology may choose to have their own short contest, giving their members a few weeks to submit stories and then give a panel of judges a few weeks to choose the winners. Again, the best selections will be submitted according to the size of the branch's membership.

All submissions will be sent to Mike Apodaca, president of the High Desert Branch. (MrDaca.ma@gmail.com) The High Desert Branch will compile the anthology and submit it to the CWC for approval and publication. After it is approved, the book will be published through KDP. Those who have a story or poem published will receive a free hard copy. (Hard copies to be supplied by and paid for by the member's branch.) Everyone else in the CWC will receive a link to download a free PDF of the publication. The *Literary Review* will also be available on Amazon.com in both printed and e-book formats.

Submission Specifications:

All submissions must be thoroughly edited before they are submitted. They will not be edited by the High Desert Branch. Please remember that any errors will not reflect well on the branch that submits the piece or on the CWC as a whole. Quality of work is very important, so every effort should be made to make all works as error free as possible.

Timeline:

February 28, 2024, Midnight submission deadline: All submissions must be submitted to Mike Apodaca (MrDaca.ma@gmail.com). NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Any submissions that are formatted incorrectly will be rejected. It is possible—but not guaranteed—that if a submission is received very early and is found to be formatted incorrectly, there will be time to return it to the member (via their branch) for correction. The later a work is submitted, the less chance there may be for any opportunity for correction.

April 30, 2024: *Literary Review* will be completed and submitted to the CWC for approval.

May 31, 2024: Publication of the 2024 *Literary Review*.

Disclaimer:

This is not a mandatory project. Those choosing to participate will do so voluntarily. It is hoped that each branch will see it as an opportunity for the branch to promote its best writing and writers. We look forward to seeing the best of the best from our members.

Contact Information:

Those branches with questions about the submission process should direct them to Mike Apodaca at MrDaca.ma@gmail.com. Please identify yourself in your email by making the subject line read: LITERARY REVIEW SUBMISSIONS. Those with specific questions about format and subject acceptability should direct their questions to Mike Raff at mpseven@aol.com. The subject line should read LITERARY REVIEW QUESTIONS.

Submission Guidelines:

Political or religious pieces meant to educate, proselytize, or persuade a reader to accept the author's point of view will not be included in the anthology. The 2024 *Literary Review* will be geared toward the general reading audience; therefore, works containing excessive violence or overt sexual situations or language will not be included.

Works shall be as error free as possible and formatted using Times New Roman 12 point font. There is a maximum word count of 5,000 words per submission.

PROSE SUBMISSIONS:

- Center the title on the first line.
- Type the author's name exactly as they wish it to appear in the book (including any professional titles, if desired, such as John Smith, MD) on the second line.
- Type the author's branch on the third line.
- Leave the fourth line blank.
- Do not indent the first paragraph of a work or the first paragraph after a scene break or at the start of a new chapter.
- Scene breaks should be indicated by centering three asterisks with a space between each.
- Indent all other paragraphs by 0.35 inch.

Do not use block formatting. Do not put a blank line between paragraphs or enable Word's default spacing between paragraphs. (This can be eliminated by making sure both the BEFORE and AFTER boxes in the SPACING section on the LAYOUT tab in Word are set to zero. See the screenshot below.)

- All work is to be submitted in either DOC or DOCX format.

POETRY SUBMISSIONS:

- Center the title on the first line.
- Type the author's name exactly as they wish it to appear in the book (including any professional titles, if desired, such as John Smith, MD) on the second line.
- Type the author's branch on the third line.
- Leave the fourth line blank.
- Poets may use whatever line spacing they prefer. However, if other than single spacing is used, the stanza breaks must be absolutely clear.
- Poets may use whatever formatting on the page they prefer: left justified, indented, centered, etc. Editor will make every effort to recreate the work in the publication exactly as it is submitted.
- Poets must submit their works in both DOC/DOCX and PDF formats so the editor can see the exact formatting the poet intended for the work.

ALL AUTHORS:

As an aid to those submitting, a Word template file is included with these instructions. The *Literary Review* will be formatted using a 6" X 9" page size, 0.5" margins all around, and a 0.3" gutter with "Mirror Margins" enabled, Widows/Orphans and hyphenation disabled.

- Do not include any headers or footers, including page numbers.
- Each work must include the author's short bio (150 words +/-). Bio should be separated from submission by several blank lines or by other visual means. While submissions will not be edited, the editor reserves the right to edit an author's bio for voice, style consistency, and/or length.
- Authors are responsible for keeping a copy of their submission. The High Desert Branch will not be responsible for keeping any copies of submitted works.
- Works previously published in the *Literary Review* will not be accepted.

AUTHOR'S RELEASE FORMS:

Each author must sign and submit a release form that acknowledges the following:

By submitting an entry, author represents and warrants that entry: (a) is author's original creation; (b) does not violate or infringe any copyright, trademark, privacy, or publicity rights, or other proprietary or intellectual property rights of any person or entity; (c) is not defamatory, libelous, obscene, overtly proselytizing, or illegal for any reason; and, (d) is author's sole and exclusive property. Author further represents and warrants to hold complete, worldwide distribution rights.

Author understands that they retain the rights to their work, but any royalties and/or profits from the sale of the 2024 *Literary Review* will go to the CWC.

Submissions are to be sent from each branch as an attachment to an email or emails addressed Mike Apodaca at MrDaca.ma@gmail.com. Subject line must read: LITERARY REVIEW SUBMISSION.



“Dare to be You” Antoinette Thompson

Antoinette Thompson dates the beginning of her love of words to elementary school when she first began writing poetry. “I’ve always had an affinity for words, learning them, writing them. They come very organically. Writing is a true love of mine, and it has helped me express myself. When I’m emotional or when something just strikes me out of the blue, I have to put it down on paper!”

Since 2014, Antoinette has churned out hundreds of poems at breakneck speed. No matter the time of day or night, if she gets the bug to write something, she puts pen to paper. Referring to herself as an “incessant” writer, she writes several times a week, if not daily, depending on her schedule and inspiration. “I’ll stop what I’m doing and put pen to paper or voice to a note-taking app. It doesn’t matter where I’m at. Whenever the inspiration hits, I write, as things can slip away so quickly.”

A registered nurse for more than 33 years, Antoinette is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree. She’s reviewing programs in both Nursing and Collaborative Health and Human Services, and she plans to transfer to CSUMB. In addition, she’s been an avid antique dealer since she was a teenager, participating in several large antique shows starting at age 16. “I love the history in different types of antiques,” she says. “I still collect and sell and will do so until the day I die.”

An ardent bibliophile, Antoinette reads several books at a time. “I have a Kindle app on every device I own as well as my good old hold-them-in- your-hands printed books. I also love movies and having conversations with people about anything and everything under the sun.” She urges us to seek knowledge from other writers as well as from different walks of life. “I treasure my family and friends, and I’m always open to making new ones. Life experience can be a great foundation for amazing writing.”

While Antoinette writes some fiction, she hopes to self-publish her poetry. The key to great writing, she says, is to be your true, authentic self. “I want to do it for myself, but I hope that somewhere out there, something I’ve written may help or inspire someone in some way. I know I’ve been inspired by the writing of others and, hopefully, I can do the same.” She adds, “There are those who can teach you to be grammatically correct or to fit a form, but in the end, it is you who is the craftsman. I say, dare to be you!”

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





CONTESTS

The Darling Axe Clash of the Query Letters Contest

Deadline: January 31, 2024

Entry Fee: \$5.00 CAD per entry-(\$3.75 USD), optional feedback \$20.00 CAD-(\$14.99 USD)

Website: <https://darlingaxe.com/pages/query-letter-clash>

Judge: Michelle Barker

Prizes: 1st Prize: \$700.00 CAD-(\$524.65 USD), 2nd Prize: \$200.00-(\$149.90 USD), 3rd Place: \$100.00 CAD-(\$74.95 USD). All three finalists will be published online in *The Chopping Block*. All winners will be given access to our new craft book, *Immersion and Emotion, The Two Pillars of Storytelling*.

Guidelines: See website for complete guidelines. Multiple submissions accepted. All work must be original, unpublished and unrepresented. Write your best query letter to pitch your work. [USD conversions as of 12/20/23]

Ethos Literacy 5th Annual Short Story Contest 2024, A fundraiser to Support Literacy

Deadline: February 1, 2024, 5:00 PM MST

Entry Fee: \$15 for entry, or a discount of \$20 for two entries

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

Prizes: Best of Contest: \$300, 4 Best of Topic Prizes: \$100, All winning and honorable mention stories will be published in an e-zine online.

Guidelines: See website for complete guidelines. Word limit 100 words. Write on one of these topics: bicycles, eclipse, fire, or suitcases.

The Jim Baen Memorial Short Story Award

Deadline: February 1, 2024, 12:01 AM PST

Entry Fee: Free

Website: <https://www.baen.com/contest-jbmssa>

Prizes: Grand Prize: Winner will be published as the featured story on the Baen Books main website and paid at normal paying rates for professional story submittals, currently \$0.08/word. Winner will receive an engraved award, free entry to the 2024 International Space Development Conference and a year's membership in the National Space Society. 2nd Place and 3rd Place: free entry to 2024 ISDV Conference, and 1 year membership in the National Space Society. All winners will be honored at LA's National Space Society Conference.

Judge: Baen Books editors and authors

Guidelines: See website for Complete Guidelines, read them carefully. 8000-word limit. Story should show the future of manned space exploration 50-60 years out. No dystopia wanted. Hopeful future of space colonies, AI, moon bases, and space travel welcome.

WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

The San Francisco Writer's Conference, See website for complete details.

Event Date: February 15-18, 2024

Fees: Dec. 1-Feb. 14 \$895, At the door- \$945

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

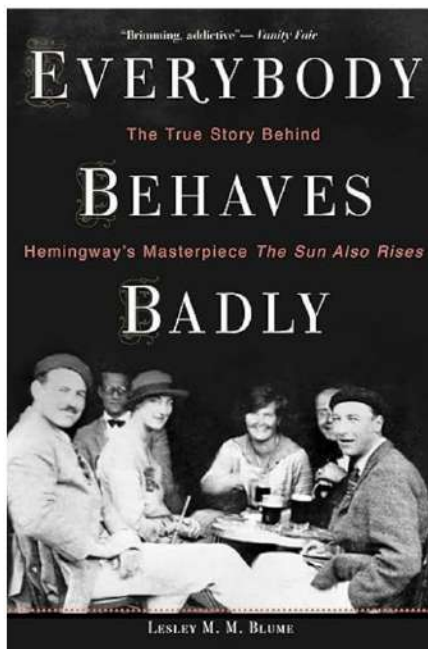
Website: <https://www.sfwriters.org/2024-writers-conference/>

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 *Brenda Taylor*.



Everybody Behaves Badly, the True Story Behind Hemingway's Masterpiece The Sun Also Rises. Written by Lesley M/ Blume; Copyright 2016; First Mariner Books 2017; Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt Publishing Company.

When I went to celebrate my birthday last year in Paris, I patronized a lovely café near my hotel in Saint Germain des Pres. On the bookshelf they had this enticing book, so I wrote down the title, and when I came home, my wonderful husband purchased it for me from Amazon.

It is a colorful background story of Hemingway and his journey in writing, *The Sun Also Rises*, which happened to be his breakthrough first best seller. The author did a marvelous job of researching. I also enjoyed the photographs. I hope that others might find it adventurous and good armchair and history travels.



A new year, another chance. Funny how every 365 days we feel, in some way, we have a chance to start over or try again.

A friend of mine belongs to a book club in Arizona. They will be discussing my debut novel at their next meeting and I am both thrilled and grateful. And a little in awe. She emailed questions about the book, and in my response to her I was reminded just how much it takes to write and publish a novel. I recently sat with nine other local authors at a book-signing at River House Books in Carmel and felt a camaraderie, a thrill, and a collective reverence. Knowing we ten were only a portion of the local authors represented in local bookstores, my admiration spread as I considered the talent and tenacity of that company. No small ripples on still water, the esteem built in me like winter waves crashing on local shores. (Bear with me, I'm working on my metaphors.)

Answering my friend's questions about my book not only brought back the research, reading, watching, and listening I had committed to, but I also realized some of the answers to her questions were not premeditated. Some of those answers became clear after the book was written, sometimes even during discussion or editing. I wondered how my fellow local authors would answer similar questions about their books.

What I love most about writing is when it takes on a life of its own. It creates its own questions and answers, possibilities and dead ends. I had thought, once I got that first book out into the world, my goal would be to write a book a year. I've given up (for now) on that over-achieving ambition. The journey from idea to publication cannot and should not be rushed. I suppose if I had a contract with a major publisher I could be persuaded but, for now, I choose to luxuriate in my author-publisher status and accept that the next book will take what it takes to get done. The characters must have their say, and nature will toss in her own obstacles.

I'm writing these words before year's end. This time of year finds many of us hurrying here and there, rushing to finish some race before the end of the year; a last minute gift, an unfulfilled promise. But these words will be read in the New Year. The shift from December 31st to January 1st is nothing more than a thought, a first breath after a sip of champagne. For some it wafts by while we sleep.

For me, that fleeting moment will underscore all that I'm grateful for in the year past and all I look forward to in the coming year. We're each running our own race. I'm in the midst of a trifecta: one book published, one with the editor, and one on the drawing board. It's a welcome, may I say exciting, place to start the new year. For all the local authors and all of you who aspire to be, may your writing give you joy in 2024!

The Last Word
Christine Sleeter



Welcome to a New Year!

What a year 2023 has been! For me, there was a bout with Covid, a death in the family, unexpected surgery, three weeks in Italy, a week in Hawaii, three days in Norway, and a train trip across two-thirds of the country.

Oh, and writing. One novel that’s chugging along, an academic book that came out in April (with speaking engagements scattered through the year), and another due out in September.

Somehow the fiction writing keeps sinking to the bottom under requests for this or that new piece of academic writing. The new year is a great time for soul searching, for figuring out exactly what we want to accomplish—how we wish to spend the time we have, and the legacy we wish to leave. Which things that come along are barriers to avoid, and which are actually opportunities?

Maybe I’ll get that figured out in 2024!

Christine

CCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Christine Sleeter	Editor
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centralcoastwriters.org

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You can join at a monthly meeting or online at:
Centralcoastwriters.org

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cwnorcalwriters.org