

LOCAL BOOKS

Making the most of his words

Officer turned author learns how to get to the point

By Lisa Crawford Watson
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Few people would say a novel is easy to write. Even if you have the beginning in mind and have figured out the end, there's that long, winding middle to consider, with all that depth of detail, plus issues and resolutions, micro-stories and memories. And words, so many words to pick and choose and

string together in a satisfying arc that lifts the reader to the top of the roller coaster, where it hangs just long enough to foster a moment of hope before careening down into a satisfying conclusion.

Even fewer people would say a short story is easier. When writing a brief tale, you're dealing with an economy of words. Every one counts. There is no time to wander around lost in the woods, me-

andering through the tale until you find your way. You have fewer words with which to set the scene, develop the plot and resolve the dilemma.

Particularly says author Scotty Cornfield, when every short story he writes is no more and no less than 101 words. Each still needs a beginning, a middle and an end, or the suggestion of it. It has to grab our attention, give us a reason to

care and leave us in some kind of satisfied state. And they do.

That each story is based on a random prompt makes it interesting. That Cornfield gathered 101 stories of 101 words each makes it a book. That he titled it "Fast Fiction" makes it pure genius. The kind where everyone who reads it wonders, "Why didn't I think of this?"

Maybe we did. But Scotty Cornfield is the one who wrote all 10,201 words and got it published through Flagstone Press and on the market through Book Baby by the end of

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LOOKING BACK

RESULTS OF A BIG BLOW



MONTEREY HERALD ARCHIVES

The purse seiner Petrina F, one of seven ships anchored at the Monterey Harbor that was blown ashore by a 60-mph northeast gale on Monday, Feb. 23, 1953. A half-million dollars in damage was reported.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

New public trail system in San Vicente Redwoods

The multiuse trail system will open Dec. 3

By Eric Sleeper
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DAVENPORT » After more than a decade of restoration and preparation, stalled by the effects of the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, in collaboration with its partners, will soon open a new, multi-use trail system in the San Vicente Redwoods.

"We're going to have trails for hikers and mountain bikers and dog walkers and equestrians," said Sarah Newkirk. "All of this is embedded in a property that also has threatened endangered species, a commercial timber harvest and community based fire risk reduction activities."

The 7.3 mile trail system, which opens to the public Dec. 3, will feature 4.1 miles of biking trails, 2.3 miles of eques-

trian trails and about a mile of paths intended for dog walking. The head of the new trail system is located at 12001 Empire Grade, and features a 72 car capacity parking lot and onsite restrooms. Cellular phone service is available at the trailhead but can be spotty or absent inside the forest.

"We planned these trails to avoid conflicts with the threatened and endangered species, the other resource uses on this property and some of the more dangerous characteristics of the property," said Newkirk. "We had to be very careful and intentional."

The new trail opening is the first phase of a planned network of trails spanning 38 miles within the nearly 9,000 acres of the San Vicente Redwoods. Prospective hikers, bikers and horse riders are required to register for the system's iridescent trail pass, which will give them access to the trails from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will also be a ki-



JESSICA A. YORK — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

After a decade of work, more than 7 miles of public hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails are set to open Dec. 3 at the 8,600-acre San Vicente Redwoods property in the Santa Cruz Mountains. During a media-day preview Thursday, from left, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County Executive Director Sarah Newkirk, Peninsula Open Space Trust President Walter Moore, Save the Redwoods League President and CEO Sam Hodder and Sempervirens Fund Executive Director Sara Barth walk a portion of the trails.

osk on site where visitors can register. "There are rules, but they are

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ON GARDENING

Trees in space

If you have lots of space in your garden (acres), you could grow a collection of full-size deciduous or evergreen trees. We might explore the value of big trees in a future column, but we focus now on the space for trees and shrubs that are suitable for the space of typical residential gardens.



Tom Karwin

When gardening within limited space, gardeners often select dwarf fruit trees or smaller shrubs. These options could work well in the landscape, assuming the available space is large enough to accommodate the plant's mature size and access for cultivating and (with fruit trees) harvesting.

The garden could include narrower spaces in which dwarf trees and larger shrubs would not fit well. Examples include side yards, a shallow bed before a wall or fence, or a narrow bed along a driveway or walkway.

The solution for such spaces is the espalier, which involves pruning and training a tree or shrub to control its form, and tying it to a wall, fence, or trellis to conform to a limited space.

Espaliers can be formal or informal in structure. The most popular formal structure is the cordon, which consists of a vertical leader and (usually) three tiers of horizontal branches. Several more elaborate forms have been developed over time, offering interesting configurations and greater pruning workloads.

Informal structures, typically based on a trellis, tend to have more natural appearance while being kept within the confines of a narrow space.

The ancient Romans initiated this method, and Europeans refined it into an art form during the Middle Ages. Espaliers are still popular today because in addition to their value as artistic features in the garden they can be positioned for ideal exposure to sunlight and reflected heat from a wall. Another benefit of espaliers derives from training branches to horizontal positions, which increases the production of flowers and fruits.

Espaliers might be called two-dimensional but they definitely have height, width and depth. The depth (the third dimension) is controlled to ensure that the plant fits into a narrow space.

The French term "espalier" originally referred to the structure ("shoulder") on which the plant rested, and now refers to the plant itself, and also serves as a verb to describe the practice.

Espaliers can be more or less successful, depending on several variables. The most important variable is the gardener's diligence in pruning and training the

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ONLINE CLASS

Mindful eating

Tuesday, November 29, 12:45–1:45 p.m.

Led by a dietitian, we'll review the definition, causes, and strategies to control mindless eating and promote a more mindful and healthful lifestyle.

Registration required: montagehealth.org/classes
Information: 649-7220



Community Hospital
of the Monterey Peninsula
Montage Health



Karwin

FROM PAGE 2

plant when it is young and throughout its annual growing season. Persistent snipping can produce a genuinely attractive and exceptionally productive plant.

Another important variable is the plant itself. Some trees and shrubs are well-suited as espaliers because their branches naturally grow in horizontal forms, and respond well to pruning. Plants that grow vigorously can exceed even conscientious pruning and assume a shape of their own.

Even with well-chosen plants and regular care, espaliers are natural products that develop individual character and unique beauty.

My garden includes several espaliers, some of which are described briefly in the following paragraphs and accompanying photos. These are not exemplary espaliers, just case studies of practical gardening experiences.

Mission Fig. My column of last week included a photo of this tree. It has been growing close to a picket fence for over 40 years, and I have been working to limit its height to make the figs reachable and limit its depth to avoid intruding on the adjacent garden beds. I installed four-inch diameter posts on either side about 10 feet from the trunk and pruned away branches that increase the tree's depth. A mature fig tree grows vigorously and responds to heavy pruning with rapid and strong growth. This project requires more monthly attention than I could provide.

Apple Trees. I planted two young apple trees that a nursery had pruned as espaliers. One is a Gala apple and the other has six different popular apple varieties grafted onto its branches. The Gala is planted against the garage wall, above a four feet deep planting bed. It has been growing well, but apple harvests require some agility to avoid trampling the plants in front of the tree. The multi-variety espalier is planted against a house wall, in an 18 inches deep bed. That tree's fruit is easy to harvest (although the identifying tags are lost). These two trees demonstrate the value of proper



TOM KARWIN

The horizontal branches of this espaliered Gala apple tree produced a good crop in mid-July.

placement.

Rose mulligani. This extraordinary rambling rose grows vigorously with canes that can reach 20 feet in length. I planted it against a redwood fence and installed three tiers of plastic-coated wire, held away from the fence on long-necked eyebolts. The rose is growing in a bed about two feet deep, so it is not difficult to access the plant to prune away canes that grow out from the plane of the fence, tie cooperative canes to the wires, and deadhead spent blossoms. This plant demands espalier treatment. Imagine what it would do if left to grow on its own!

Two Climbing Roses. These selections are Graham Thomas' and 'Polka, both capable of reaching 10 feet or more in height. They are planted against the house in three-foot deep beds, growing on hand-made copper trellises about six feet tall, so their height needs control. They are prominently placed and effectively located for periodic pruning of branches that grow out from the intended plane. Their location lacks sufficient width for horizontal branching, so blossom productivity is limited.

Chilean Jasmine (Mandevilla laxa). This is a vigorous vine growing in an 18 inches deep bed on a six-inch wide hand-made copper trellis that rises about 20 feet on a post that supports a small deck. Its tendrils tend to grasp the adjacent apple tree, so they need control. Otherwise, this is a well-behaved plant that blooms regularly from late spring through the summer.

Lavender African Star Flower (Grewia occidentalis). This is a new project for a three-foot-deep bed in

front of an eight-foot-high wall. The selection, found at the UCSC Arboretum & Botanic Garden, is an uncommon, not-too-large tree with attractive blossoms. It is well-suited for this microclimate, which has limited early sun and afternoon shade. This tree's natural growth structure tends to be erratic so the discipline of espalier pruning will encourage it to grow into the intended form.

Lessons learned: the success of an espalier could depend on plant selection, location, and (most important) regular pruning, ideally on a monthly basis.

If you have a narrow location that has full sun exposure and that an espalier could enhance, now is a good time of the year to begin such a project. See below for references to helpful websites.

Advance your gardening knowledge

A good introduction to espaliers is Peter Thevenot's article, "Everything You Need to Know About Espalier." This is available on Fine Gardening magazine's website, www.finegardening.com/project-guides/pruning/espalier.

Fruit trees are popular subjects for espaliers. The Grow Organic website presents a good video overview of issues related to fruit tree selection. Browse to <https://www.groworganic.com/collections/bareroot-trees>.

Wikipedia, one of my "go-to" sources of information on plants and gardening, has a helpful page on espaliers. Browse to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Espalier> and scroll down to Species Choices for lists of trees, shrubs, and woody

vines that are well-suited for espaliers.

Fine Gardening magazine has announced a fee-based virtual course, "Sustainability in the Garden." Here's their description: "Join us as we take a deep dive into the complex and sometimes controversial gardening topic of sustainability. This on-demand lecture series features four separate classes related to the overall theme. Each highly engaging session is modeled after a college course and is taught by a leading expert in the field. With each class you'll receive not only in-depth instruction but also informative handouts to help you understand and visualize the concepts being discussed. Each class is offered on-demand, so you can view it at your leisure." The course instructors are well-qualified gardening specialists. To learn more and register, browse to <https://tinyurl.com/b62zb542>.

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America's recent webinar, "Out Of This World Succulent-Scape at the Orange Coast College Planetarium," was quite interesting. Horticulture educator Joe Stead described the process of developing a large succulent garden at the college, and then relocating the garden to another site on the college campus. The garden design was impressive, and the large-scale garden development work was amazing. This institutional project demonstrated designs and installation methods that could be applicable in more typical residential gardening projects. The recorded webinar can be viewed at www.facebook.com/CactusAndSucculentSocietyOfAmerica/.

The Cactus and Succulent Society of America has posted several of its webinars online Browse to YouTube.com and search for "Cactus and Succulent Society of America" for a long and wide range of cactus and succulents topics from the CSSA and other sources. Some presentations are less than five minutes long while others are up to an hour in duration. Some are very competently done, and others are rather casual, but still include solid information.

Enjoy your garden!

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Books

FROM PAGE 2

September. And that's just Volume One.

When a man equips his daily constitutional with a sturdy pair of shoes, a Cardigan Welsh Corgi named Scooter, a voice recorder and a prompt in mind, it's not hard to believe that Volume Two is already in the works.

"Every morning, I scroll through my list of prompts, pick one and as I walk, I start brainstorming, riffing on the topic, drilling it down, a little skill I learned through improv training back in the day," said Cornfield.

By the time "Scotty and Scooter" get home, the author has all kinds of ideas, yet it can still take anywhere from 15 minutes to a couple of hours to get the story down.

Back Story

Cornfield was supposed to be a journalist. Or so he thought. All throughout high school, journalism got him up in the morning and kept him up into the night. He even took his skills off campus and started writing for local papers. He loved it. This was who he was and what he wanted to do.

Yet, when he revealed to an editor that he planned to major in journalism at San Jose State, the guy recommended Cornfield get a degree that specialized in an area, "a beat" he could write about for the paper. He suggested crime.

Cornfield considers that a fateful meeting with his editor.

Cornfield's writing career started once he retired from the San Jose Police Department in 2008. A guy with a long history in deep undercover work, who got a sense of satisfaction out of putting the right people in jail, he developed a keen understanding of irony and an ability to think and move fast on his feet.

Cornfield decided to turn his abilities into art and take an "improv class." He found acting without a script, directing himself, developing the plot as he enacted it and playing it out spontaneously with others, exhilarating, entertaining and a whole lotta fun.

"I knew I had found my people, my tribe and my creative outlet," he said. "I got serious, took more classes and got into established improv groups. We incorporated a lot of humor, but not every time. We weren't always trying to be funny, at least not in an obvious way. Even then, it was more about irony."

He decided to enter a

short-story contest, requiring entrants to pare their content to 101 words.

When he didn't win, he made plans to practice, by sending prompts to his adult son, who used each as inspiration for a song, while Cornfield wrote a story.

"We stayed with it for a while and came up with some pretty cool stuff," he said. "I made a commitment to continue, writing a 101-word story, based on other people's prompts or my own, every single day. It's been fascinating to develop someone else's idea and people enjoy seeing what I've done with theirs."

Sometimes, Cornfield reaches his word count and realizes he hasn't woven in some important element of the story. So, he turns to the title of the tale, where he can introduce just a little more context.

"Having built rules around my writing," he said, "it's important to obey them. It's a challenge to honor the prompt and tell a complete story in this confined space. The title offers a hint. And some stories resolve, while others leave you hanging, wondering, thinking and maybe even resolving it yourself"

Once Cornfield decided he had enough material for a book, he considered calling it "Flush Fiction," imagining people would read it when they had a moment to themselves. But with that title, he wasn't sure readers would take him seriously and he sees it as a legitimate book. So he went with "Fast Fiction." A binge-worthy book, you really can read it in one sitting.

The idea of moving to Monterey County was neither a lifelong goal nor a plan until one day, he accidentally said it out loud and liked how it sounded. Two weeks later, he and his wife Sandi, bought a property on the Peninsula. He got a dog. He joined Central Coast Writers. He started writing. What the Cornfields love most about their life by the bay are the grandchildren who live a half mile away.

When Cornfield speaks about his book, sometimes he brings a colorful story wheel, which he spins. The listed category on which it stops — comedy, crime, slice of life, serious stuff, cop or slice-of-life drama — leads to his choice of the story he reads to his audience. "Fast Fiction" published Nov. 18. He will read and sign books on Nov. 29 at Olivia & Daisy Book Boutique in the Carmel Valley Village and on Jan. 15 at River House Books in Carmel. After hearing his works, feel free to provide him with a prompt for his next story.



Cornfield

Trails

FROM PAGE 2

common sense rules that are designed to make trail users safe and to make sure that the ecosystem remains as undisturbed as possible," said Newkirk. "We've already had 2,000 people sign up to register for the beautiful new trail passes, which help us to communicate if the property closes for planned or unplanned reasons."

The trail system came about as a collaboration that began in 2011 between the Save the Redwoods League, the Sempervirens Fund and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, with each playing a part in the restoration, conservation and management of the

preservation reserve.

"Without collaboration, we would not be here," said Sara Barth, executive director of Sempervirens Fund. "Since Sempervirens Fund and POST purchased this property a decade ago, and began this four-way partnership, we've really embarked on a process of multifaceted restoration, which has led to a series of connections we would not have anticipated."

One of the connections Barth refers to is with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band who have worked with the conservation cohort for the past few years. Although there are no surviving members of the indigenous Awaswas-speaking people who once inhabited the San Vicente Redwoods, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band have helped to preserve their legacy by work-

ing with the Land Trust and its partners to name the five distinct trails within the preserve in the Awaswas Language.

Scars from the CZU Lightning Complex fire remain on the preserve, and blackened trees line the perimeter of the trailhead, but within the forest, signs of regrowth are apparent and much of the forest floor is now populated with tall yerba santa plants, which were germinated by the fire.

"Visitors to this property will see that this is a fire-resilient landscape, and has evolved with fire for thousands of years," said Sam Hodder, president and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. "As you walk the trail, you'll see life coming back and that nature in this landscape is used to this. It's been there and done that, and the redwoods are

at that leading edge of a recovering natural system."

The next phase of the planned 38-mile trail system could begin within three to five years, but will depend on available funding, and visitor and wildlife behavior after the first phase of the system opens.

"One of the great challenges in conservation work today is how to connect people with the land in a way that doesn't decimate what you're trying to connect them to," said Walter Moore, president of the Peninsula Open Space Trust. "The Land Trust and the partners have done a brilliant job on every level in incorporating those aspects and their work here is remarkable."

For information and to pre-register for a trail pass, visit landtrustsantacruz.org.

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Old Fisherman's Grotto

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