

Asilomar 54

Asilomar Conference Grounds
Pacific Grove, California

October 1-3, 2004

Sustaining Ambiguity in the Age of Accountability



Curriculum Study Commission
Central California Council of Teachers of English

Asilomar 54 Sustaining

WHERE IS the grand conversation? Must all discussion be reduced to a series of facts transferable to a scantron? Where has wallowing in literature for the sake of getting wet gone? The play with words, the probing of plot and people, what has happened to them? Jane Juska, when asked what she did, responded that she sustained ambiguity. Keeping the nature of exploration and inspiration alive in the age of accountability is one of the greatest challenges faced by English teachers today. Join us at Asilomar, a place inherently infused with the spirit of sustained ambiguity.



Program

Friday, October 1

- 3:30 – 9:00 Registration
- 4:30 – 6:00 CCCTE Reception
- 6:00 – 7:00 Dinner
- 7:15 – 8:30 **General Session**
Jane Juska
- 9:00 – 10:00 Group Session #1
- 10:00 – 11:00 Join the NCTE Emeritus Assembly for coffee in the Asilomar Lodge

Saturday, October 2

- 7:30 – 8:30 Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:15 Group Session #2
- 10:45 – 12:00 Group Session #3
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

- 1:30 – 3:00 Group Session #4
- 4:30 – 6:00 Reception and Book Signing by resident authors
- 6:00 – 7:00 Dinner
- 7:15 – 8:30 **General Session II**
Kim Stafford
- 8:45 – 10:00 **Around the Hearth**
(Choose one session)

Sunday, October 3

- 7:30 – 8:30 Breakfast
- 9:00 – 10:00 Group Session #5
- 10:30 – 11:45 **General Session III**
Dave Eggers
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

If You Have Questions...

... about registration or accommodations, or if you need extra copies of this brochure, write or telephone the *Conference Registrar*:

Dan Wolter (707) 253-9397
1134 Walnut Street
Napa, CA 94559
• dwolter@napanet.net

For additional information, please contact *Commission Chair*:

Brad Shurmantine (707) 257-7127
1685 Atlas Peak Road
Napa, CA 94558
• blshurm@napanet.net

or contact one of the *Conference Chairs*:

Vivian Boyd (925) 944-1382
100 Emerson Court
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

or

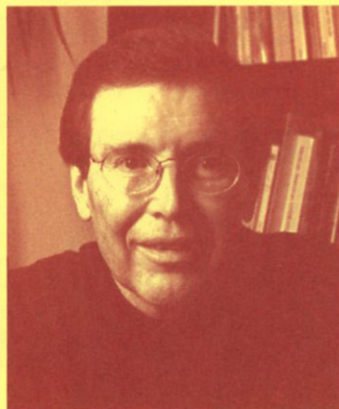
Mary K. Healy (510) 845-3239
2634 Virginia Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
maryk.healy@ucop.edu

Ambiguity in the Age of Accountability

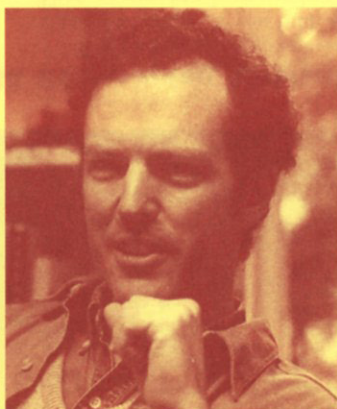
Featured Speakers: Teachers and Writers



Jane Juska



Francisco Jimenez



Kim Stafford

◆ A thirty-year veteran of the high school English classroom, **Jane Juska** reflects, in her book *A Round-Heeled Woman*, on her experience teaching writing to inmates at San Quentin. Case hardened criminals are on their best behavior in her class because she brings them something foreign to their everyday existence: "... and what they love me for the very most is that I have brought them language. It is a gift they thought to have lost forever." It is the power of words that calms the savage heart.

◆ **Francisco Jimenez** documents his childhood experiences in *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* and *Breaking Through*. Maneuvering through the California education system as an English Language Learner, he is puzzled when a teacher talks to him of reading for pleasure. The concept is

incomprehensible to the boy who reads with a worn-out pocket dictionary at his side. But Miss Bell unlocks the secret joy when she hands him a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath*. In reading about the Joads, Francisco finds in literature a story of human strife that parallels his own, and a love of literature, teaching, and writing is born.

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◆ **Kim Stafford's** many books include *A Thousand Friends of Rain: New & Selected Poems* and *Wind on the Waves*, a collection of short stories. In *The Muses Among Us*, the teacher emerges, contextualizing the writing process, from listening to editing. Along the way, insights, notes, and stories amuse, educate, and engulf us with the beauty of well-chosen words. When comparing the writing process to the resonate sound of an oft-played violin, Kim says, "Unsaid words grow powerful, wish to speak out. Ideas gather their bones and rise up."

Come, rise up and join in the celebration of learning as exemplified by three teachers who write, and three writers who teach.

Saturday Night Around the Hearth

8:45 - 10:00

A. Francisco Jimenez

Join our Writer-in-Residence as he reads from his books *The Circuit: Stories From the Life of a Migrant Child* and *Breaking Through*, and discusses his experiences as a migrant worker, writer, and award-winning teacher.

B. Jazz on the Sand

An Asilomar tradition, Ray Skjelbred returns once again to end your evening with a rousing hour of solo piano. A recording artist and a veteran of the Turk Murphy Band, Ray will play from his vast repertoire of blues, rags, swing, and Tin Pan Alley classics.

C. Rich Barre and Eddie Muller: Noir Fiction and Cinema

Rich Barre, who the *San Francisco Chronicle* labeled "one of the best hard-boiled detective novelists of the 90's," will be joined by Eddie Muller, novelist and historian, for a fireside chat regarding the many subtleties and delights of Noir fiction and film.

D. The State of the Profession

Miles Myers, former President of NCTE, and Patti Stock, current President, will host a conversation regarding critical issues in education today. Come share your thoughts and learn from your colleagues.

Asilomar 54 Sustaining

Group Discussion Sessions

The Asilomar Conference is based on sustained group discussions following the teachers-teaching-teachers, collaborative learning philosophy. The chair and one or more resource persons in each group do not function as lecturers. Rather, participants share information and insights as the discussions evolve. The emphasis is on good conversation and the pursuit of intellectual interests. For the group to maintain integrity, it is necessary that the same people stay together for the weekend. It is also essential that people prepare by reading the suggested books for the section they choose.

Please select a first, second, and third choice from the group sessions below. Every effort will be made to assign your first choice, but groups are limited to twenty-five since more would tend to limit discussion. Group sessions will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

The following letters after each title indicate the approximate grade level focus:

(P) Primary (E) Elementary (I) Intermediate
(M) Middle School (S) Secondary (C) College
(G) General Enrichment

The ► symbol at the end of some group descriptions indicates requested pre-conference reading or that you bring material in preparation for your session.

1. Some Work of Nobel Note: J. M. Coetzee G

2003 Nobelist J.M. Coetzee challenges us with unsettling images and ideas to find a moral center in his allegorical novels, especially the conundrum of homeland security in *Barbarians* and the vortex of shame in *Disgrace*. Join this group to share excerpts, discuss issues, evaluate his prose, and pose new questions for post-conference thinking. ► Read *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace*.

2. Daily Writing in the Spirit of William Stafford G

We will read from the daily writings of William Stafford, and practice in the spirit of his work: creating texts the length of poems but for use in multiple genres. The goal will be to know what it is like to practice the continuous writing life you have imagined. ► Read *The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems*, by William Stafford, and *Early Morning: Remembering My Father*, William Stafford, by Kim Stafford.

3. Forgotten California Writers: William Saroyan and Toshio Mori MSC

William Saroyan and Toshio Mori changed the face of American and California Literature. A giant in his lifetime, Saroyan wrote proudly of being Armenian and Californian. Saroyan helped his friend, Toshio Mori, the first Japanese California writer, when Mori was frozen out by publishers. Now mostly untaught, both men changed the face of Californian writing with their powerful stories. ► Read *The William Saroyan Reader* and *Unfinished Message*, by Toshio Mori.

4. The Literature Workshop: Teaching Texts and Their Readers SC

Explore approaches to solving classic instructional problems that perplex beginning and veteran teachers of literature. Topics include reading difficult texts, dealing with competing and contradictory interpretations, and ensuring that discussions are lively and productive. Bring texts you are teaching, and samples of student work. ► Read *The Literature Workshop*, by Sheridan Blau.

5. Post-Modal Genre Jumping: Creative Non-Fiction as the Integrative Other SC

An introduction to the “moves” writers make to shape this hybrid form of writing, characterized by incorporating multiple modes and by using question-based approaches to create new meaning. There will be workshops for experimenting in the form. Please bring your favorite examples. ► See <www.creativenonfiction.org>



14. War SC

Teaching students about war and its aftermath means removing them, irrevocably, from the world of innocence. This session explores, through the example of the Vietnam war, how novels, stories, poems, and memoirs—from America and from Vietnam—can combine with documentary history in introducing this most painful of topics. ► Read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien and *In Pharaoh's Army* by Tobias Wolff.

15. Lying, Cheating, and Teaching: What's Happened to Ethics in the Classroom? MSC

Recent headlines have proclaimed that a new ethical paradigm is rocking the halls and classrooms of our schools. Cheating scandals have become a way of life. The new parental ethics teach all the wrong life lessons, and the implications for your classroom are profound and disturbing. Join us for an informative look at one of the most perplexing problems teachers are faced with today.

16. Where All Kids Are Above Average: Supporting the Older, Struggling Reader IMS

The purpose of this workshop is to outline what struggling readers really need to succeed, share specific integrated strategies and literatures that work, and experience the dynamic interaction of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Participants will walk away knowing how to help and motivate this important population of learners.

17. Theorizing the Jewish Diaspora SC

The paradigm of the Jewish Diaspora has contributed to Asian, African, Caribbean, and many other constructs of the “diasporic” identity. This paradigm continues to evolve in recent theoretical and imaginative works in ways that have striking implications for discursive strategies for imagining an identity informed by place or otherwise unfettered by territory.

18. Islam in the English Classroom MSC

With more Muslims in the United States than the sum of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, how funded are teachers for addressing students from this population? The group will address issues of cultural geography, historical precedents, literary themes, and the role of family and women in the culture that gave our state its name.

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26. Dickens in the 21st Century: Disorder and Anarchy SC

In this election year teachers will examine contemporary political issues such as terrorism, homeland security, and disorder and anarchy abroad, while delving into a close reading of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. Enjoy lively discussion and an invitation to share best lessons, resources, and insights on themes of love and betrayal, spies and doubles. ► Read *A Tale of Two Cities*.

27. Images of Women in Literature SC

In this session we will look at images of women in literature from a literary and a cultural perspective. We will examine traditional and emerging images of women in literature and discuss how emerging images of women subvert cultural stereotypes. ► Read *A Place Where the Sea Remembers* by Sandra Benitez.

28. Francisco Jimenez, Teacher and Writer MS

Francisco Jimenez is the author of deeply moving memoirs that chronicle his journey from the cotton fields of California to Santa Clara University, where he was recently named U.S. Professor of the Year. His books are accessible, eminently teachable, and inspiring. We will explore Jimenez's work as teachers and as writers. ► Read *The Circuit: Stories From the Life of a Migrant Child*.

29. Toni Morrison in the Classroom SC

Toni Morrison's wonderful and difficult novels are becoming fixtures in many California classrooms. Her books shimmer with transcendent imagery, awaken ancient mythologies, and provide dramatic, new perspectives on womanhood and masculinity. We will explore approaches to her work that make it accessible for our students. *Beloved* will be our focus, but other works will be discussed as well. ► Read *Beloved*.

30. Honka Tonka Blues: Ways to Communicate Through Verse G

Join us as we explore a variety of ways to communicate as colleagues and with our students through various forms of verse—haiku, tanka, free verse, prose poems, and more. Expect to read and write and reflect through the eyes and hearts of each other. Plan to come away with ideas you can use immediately in your classroom. ► Read *Teaching with Fire—Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Teach*, edited by Sam Intrator and Megan Scribner.

31. The Triggering Town SC

Following an idea by teacher/writer Richard Hugo, we'll explore new ways of writing fiction through collaboration and listening. We'll invent a town and write stories that respond to each other as we search through the town's life. We'll overlap details, scenes, and characters, and do plenty of fooling around with language.

32. Roving Martians: Using "Speculative Fiction" to Introduce Science Fiction in the Classroom SC

Science Fiction is often labeled as reading for 'nerds'. And the impact of such writing is sometimes lost because of the conventions of the science fiction tale. This session will look at the idea of 'speculative fiction' as a middle ground to introduce science fiction to the standard classroom.

33. Popular Culture: Why Fight It? Use It! SC

We will discuss, examine, and investigate methods of integrating contemporary media and popular culture into our classes, how to help empower students by critically analyzing media as text, and the role of cultural literacy in the 21st Century. Please bring lesson plans and ideas to share with the group.

34. Literature Goes to School SC

Participants will discuss novels, plays, short stories, and poetry whose settings, significantly, are schools. Such works as Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*, Ethan Canin's "Palace Thief," David Mamet's *Oleanna*, and Willy Russell's *Educating Rita* (among others) will provide grist for our conversational mill. Come to enjoy the discussion or to plan an elective course. Teaching materials and poetry packets about students and schools will be provided.



35 Discovering Ambiguity through Poetry G

"...The darkness around us is deep" and "...to be a discoverer you hold close whatever you find, and after a while you decide what it is. Then, secure in where you have been, you turn to the open sea and let go." —William Stafford. This weekend, all who want to join in this experience of finding and explaining and letting go will gather to ponder, write, and share their poems.

Acknowledgments: Asilomar photography, including cover photo with embedded images, Ken Williams; brochure layout and design, James Shuman; and the conference planners, members of the Curriculum Study Commission.

6. Building a Personal Reading Program MS

This session will focus on essential components of a personal reading program that builds skills and interests in reading across a wide spectrum of ability levels. Through small and large group discussion, participants will articulate obstacles to reading in the classroom and will generate strategies to address these obstacles. Participants will create a new or updated draft of a reading program.

7. Writing On the Road G

Freeing students from the classroom can encourage experimentation with different points of view and genres. Participants will select a local destination to explore and write about. Group members will respond to one another's drafts with a view toward producing a classroom publication. Materials will be sent.

8. Word for Word: Bringing Literature to Its Feet G

Word for Word Performing Arts Company leads you through its process of taking a story from the page to the stage. The group will learn how to use a one-to-two page story as a piece of theater, performing every word as dialogue. We will transform evocative writing into theatrical images. Texts will be provided. ► *Flash Fiction*, and *Improvisation for the Theater and Theater Games for the Classroom* by Viola Spolin.

9. Graphic Novels: Not Just a Glorified Comic MS

Graphic Novels—find out what all of the buzz is about. Take a look at the wide variety of forms these books take; get ideas on how to start and maintain your own collection. We'll discuss how to use these valuable tools with English Language Learners and the reluctant reader. ► Read *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud.

10. Exploring Issues of Tolerance Through Literature SC

Representatives from Facing History and Ourselves will guide participants in an examination of forgiveness, repair, and reconciliation, using *The Sunflower* by Simon Wiesenthal and *A Human Being Died that Night* by Pumla Madikizela. Participants will explore apartheid and Holocaust histories and instructional unit ideas. ► Read *The Sunflower* and *A Human Being Died that Night*.

11. Cin(E)-Poetry: Bringing Technology and Poetry Together in the Classroom MSC

Learn how technology transforms the English classroom through the creation of Cinematic Electronic Poetry. Artist and teacher George Aguilar explains this digital art form in easy to understand terms. Attendees will discuss the poetry presented in this unique format and create a group project with digital cameras and laptop computers. ► See more at <www.george.aguilar.com>

12. Nature Writing SC

Join us for a weekend of reading and writing in the genre of nature writing. Though the emphasis of the weekend will be on sampling various nature writers and doing some of our own nature writing, participants will also find out about and share course, unit, and individual lesson ideas to engage students in the literature of nature writing. Bring favorites of this genre and an interest in writing in the perfect setting of Asilomar.

13. Writing for Publication: From Idea to Manuscript to Print G

Join Carol Jago, editor of CATE's *California English*, in a workshop designed for teachers interested in writing for publication, and either wondering how to begin or having difficulty getting started. Participants will leave with both a draft of an article and a method for making writing a natural part of your professional life.

19. Joan Didion: Writer of the California Legacy G

From the Donner Party to the fifth largest economy in the world, Didion's moral imagination has informed her readership about the meaning of the California legacy, its dreams and its reality. Our weekend discussion will examine those tensions and contradictions articulated by this cogent chronicler of the Golden State. ► Read *Where I Was From* and *Play It As It Lays*.

20. Textual Intervention: Literature "Re-Generation" and Writing

Textual Intervention, as developed by Professor Rob Pope, allows students to "re-center" and "re-generate" original text through imitation, parody, and collage. This session will explore some of the textual interventions that encourage high school and college students to become better and more creative writers and critical thinkers.

21. The Color of Noir G

Obsession, corruption, passion, self-destruction: How relevant is noir today? Is it style or substance? Find out as we take a hard look at one of the most influential and enduring of forms while focusing on such classics as *The Big Heat*, *True Confessions*, *Double Indemnity*, and *Blade Runner*. Check out the four films and be prepared to discuss them. Reading the novels from whence they came will lend a deeper cut, but is not required. (Nor is wearing black.) With special VIP guests.

22. Overcoming Silence: Teaching Speak in the High School Classroom S

Give students a chance to encounter something familiar: a teenage narrative that journeys through difficult contemporary issues. Participants will examine the instructive and literary-rich text that is Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*. A series of exercises, activities, and a flexible unit plan will be provided. Bring Anderson's novel to share and discuss.



23. Implementing Literacy Strategies MS

This workshop will discuss a variety of practical, hands-on approaches to literacy building in middle and secondary schools. In addition to discussing a variety of best practices, participants will also share their own successes. What do you do, as a matter of course, to improve your students' literacy skills? Bring sample assignments to share.

24. Writing and Teaching G

We will talk about our writing selves and how our writing informs our teaching. We will write a lot and be kind to ourselves, since that is the first rule of writing—and teaching.

25. Opera for Beginners (and Opera Lovers) G

For many, opera has always seemed esoteric and difficult to understand. This section will help both the beginner and the more knowledgeable enjoy the emotional and intellectual rewards of operatic theater. Selections studied will be familiar, enjoyable, and memorable. Materials and ideas provided can be used in classrooms, and participants will come away humming tunes and savoring the memory.

Registration Information

Conference Fees

Registration

Because a predetermined number of rooms on the Asilomar grounds have been reserved for this conference, registrations are processed in the order they are received until all spaces are filled. Historically, this occurs by June 15 or earlier. Register by paying all fees at the same time. No on-site registrations are taken.

Accommodations (Lodging and Meals)

The accommodations fee includes two nights' lodging and six (6) meals (Friday dinner, served from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M., through Sunday lunch). Only a very limited number of single rooms are available. Rooms fill early and all room assignments are on a first-come first-served basis. Participants lodging off grounds may register for the conference on a

nonresidential basis by paying the off-grounds fee of \$45. Meals are not included; individual meal tickets, however, may be purchased at the Asilomar office. *By state law, smoking is forbidden in all rooms.*

On-Site Bookstore

The bookstore will be located in Scripps Conference Room during the conference weekend. Every attempt will be made to have the books listed by the session. If you would like to pre-order, phone, fax or write:

Attn: Pam Bensinger

THUNDERBIRD BOOKSHOP (at The Barnyard)

PO Box 22830, Carmel, CA 93922

LOCAL PHONE: (831) 624-0544

(800) 94-BOOKS FAX: (831) 624-0549

• www.thunderbirdbooks.com

• pam@thunderbirdbooks.com

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Asilomar 54

Registration Form

Please complete and clip a separate registration form (photocopies acceptable) for each person attending and mail in the same envelope with your payment (made out to Curriculum Study Commission) for the full amount to Dan Wolter, 1134 Walnut Street, Napa, CA 94559; telephone 707-253-9397 <dwolter@napanet.net>.

Please print! Date _____

Number of years teaching _____ Gender: M / F

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-Mail Address _____

Evening Phone (____) _____

Roommate(s) _____

Preferred Group #: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

Registration Fees

	CATE member	*Non-member
Early Registration (postmarked by June 15)	\$ 80	\$120
Late Registration (postmarked after June 15)	\$120	\$160
Off-Grounds Early Registration (postmarked by June 15)	\$140	\$180
Off-Grounds Late Registration (postmarked after June 15)	\$180	\$220

Membership Fee *

Members of CATE pay the reduced registration fee. Those who pay the non-member fee automatically receive a one-year membership in CATE, entitling them to reduced rates at other conferences, the CATE convention, and a one-year subscription to *California English*.

* The Non-member Fee includes a one-year membership in both CCCTE and CATE.

Unit Credit

You can earn 1.5 quarter units of university credit. Check the box if you are interested in CSU Hayward Extension Credit. Yes!

Accommodations (lodging and meals; prices per person) (Please check desired accommodation)

HISTORIC (private bath)

Tide Inn, Hilltop, Lodge, Scripps

- Single \$290 (very limited availability)
- Double \$195 each (limited availability)

(If selected, you must indicate a second choice. Remit the larger fee.)

STANDARD (private bath)

East Woods, North Woods, View Crescent, Long View

- Single \$350
- Double \$215 each

Sea Galaxy, Surf and Sand

- 3 to a room \$175 each
- 4 to a room \$170 each

Total Accommodations \$ _____

Registration Fee \$ _____

Non-Resident Meal Ticket \$70 \$ _____

Total Fees: \$ _____

Payment Method

Sorry, no school purchase orders can be accepted

Check or money order made payable to CSC

MasterCard VISA

Card # _____/_____/_____

Expiration date _____/_____ (month/year)

CCV # _____ (3 digits after card # on reverse side in signature space)

Signature _____

Refunds

For cancellations by July 15, a refund minus a \$15 processing fee will be granted upon request. Due to changes in Asilomar Conference Center policies, we are no longer able to make refunds after July 15, 2003.

Will you be attending free Saturday Reception? Yes No

• Vegetarian Menu please

• Wheelchair Access needed

• Box Lunch for Sunday noon

• **IMPORTANT!** Be advised to REGISTER EARLY to assure lodging and priority in sessions! Order now if you plan to eat a box lunch on Sunday!

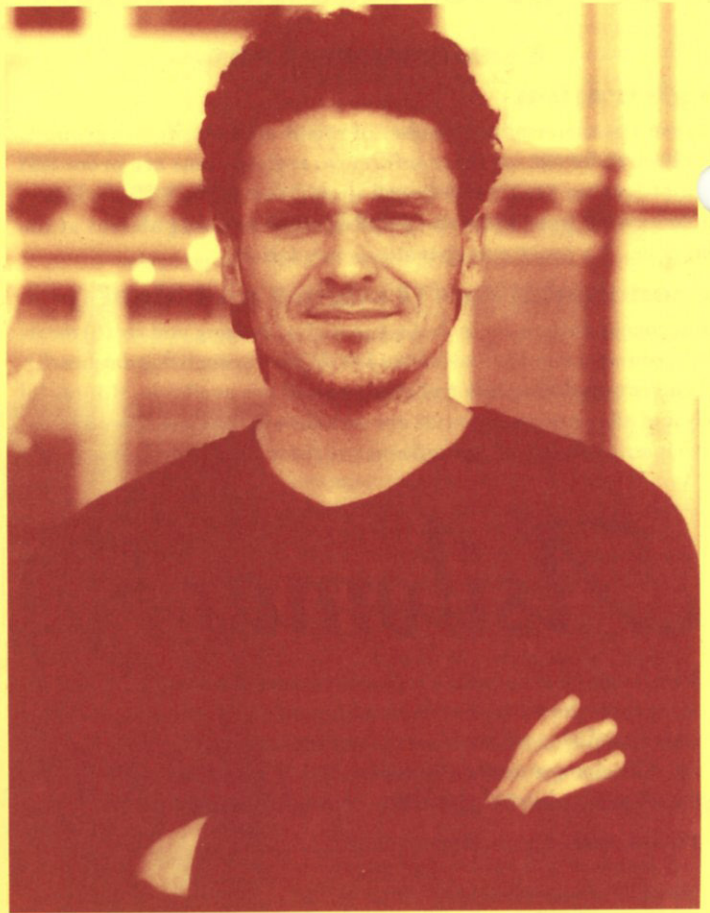
Sunday Morning Speaker:

Dave Eggers

According to a recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* places Dave Eggers at the center of the Bay Area's universe of authors. This Pulitzer Prize finalist is also the author of the novel *You Shall Know Our Velocity* and the editor of the influential, iconoclastic literary journal *McSweeney's*. He is the founder of *826 Valencia*, a San Francisco writing lab for youth.

"Much of the humor in Eggers's memoir derives from flat-out good storytelling. But he's also not adverse to employing a judicious assortment of postmodern literary stunts. ...The conceptual devices are woven so intelligently into Eggers's memoir that they don't detract from the power of his story. In fact, they bring into focus the self-doubt and conflicted motivations that autobiographical writers rarely admit to: Am I selling out my family and friends for the sake of a publishing contract?"

—Bob Wake in an online review of *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*



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Napa CA 94559



The Asilomar Conference is sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission of the Central California Council of Teachers of English, an affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English.