

## CALM luncheon reaches a milestone

What was happening in Santa Barbara in 1987? Paavo Nuervo was barely more than a hole in the ground and we joked about long lines at traffic lights on the freeway. That year, Toni Morrison's "Beloved" (Pulitzer Prize bound) came out, Fox TV introduced "The Simpsons," the Academy Awards named "The Last Emperor" best picture and a group of women began a new idea in fund-



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Susan Miles Gubransen

raising for the not-for-profit Child Abuse Listening and Mediation with the first annual Celebrity Authors' Luncheon. It featured interviews with local authors Joanna Barnes, Barnaby Conrad, Fannie Flagg and Sue Grafon. The popular luncheon is celebrating 20 years. On March 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Pess Parker's Doubletree Resort, it will feature Teri Garr ("Speedbumps: Flooding It Through Hollywood"), Tab Hunter ("Tab Hunter Confidential"), Gregg Hurwitz ("Troublesooter"), Christopher Kennedy-Lawford ("Symptoms of Withdrawal") and Denise Nicholas ("Freshwater Road") with interviewers KRY's Debby Davison and Kate Schwab from Eorders Books & Music.

"People say you should write what you know," said Mr. Hurwitz by phone. The Harvard and Oxford graduate's words tumble out at a lickety-split pace. "But I use writing a book as an excuse for continuing education. I don't write what's familiar, but what I want to know."

"Troublesooter," the latest of his six books and the second using protagonist Tim Rackley, takes readers into the seamy, violent underbelly of biker life in Southern California.

"I wanted to know about people in biker gangs so I was a great excuse to study the subculture of what we catch glimpses of riding down the freeways," Mr. Hurwitz said. "I built the gang in the book out of what I learned, which included a trip to Miami and talking to a former member of a biker gang who's written anonymously about them. He's the one who told me about a guy who had fooled with a gang member's girl. The gang killed him, cut off his head and put it in the lap of his body sitting on the couch. A gang's behavior can be outside society's perimeters. If you see them, you need to know what to look for or you don't know what you're passing."

One of the sparks igniting his story happened a few years ago when a gang of bikers took over Hollister, a little Northern California town. At the time, the American Biker Association issued a statement at the time saying that 90 percent of bikers are good people and those in Hollister were the one percent who were not. Ever since, according to Mr. Hurwitz, hard-core gang members wear a "1%" patch on their leather jackets.

"If you see those, you know they're part of this group. If they're wearing an ascot, you probably don't have to worry!" said Mr. Hurwitz.

The author was most surprised how thoroughly sophisticated gang business practices are. Their elaborate drug dealing systems have shell corporations set up with teams of accountants and lawyers.

"The government can really only get them on the CCE (Continuing Criminal Enterprise) statute similar to the mafia. I was also surprised how their club sys-

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tem plays right into making their businesses even more effective. They easily and frequently cross state lines, which gives them an automatic distribution pipeline.”

In “Troubleshooter,” the bad guys are on the run and part of a game plan stretching back to Afghanistan. That makes it a fugitive thriller, but the book is also a love story and about Rackley’s conflict in trying to follow personal values while being effective as a law enforcer. “All this gets integrated,” Mr. Hurwitz said, “into the way Rackley handles this case. The book has the fastest engine of all my books, especially as the plot jackknives back on itself.”

For information about or reservations to the CALM luncheon, call 682-3925.