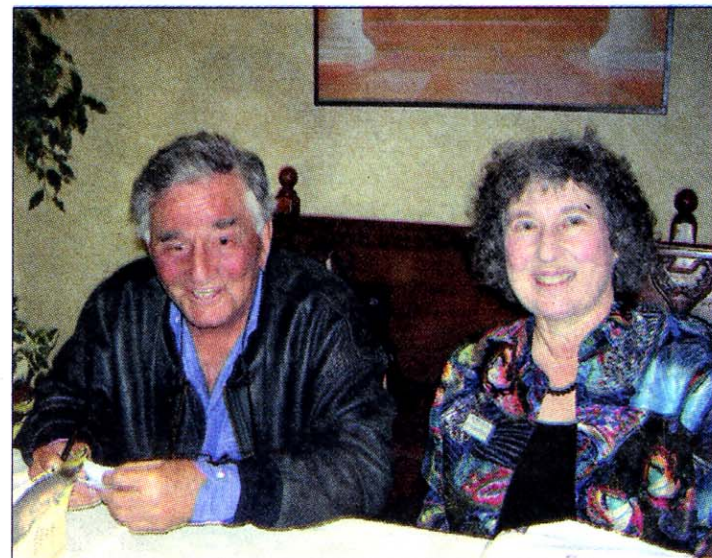




Actress Mariel Hemingway (right) with CALM Auxiliary member Shirley Waxman at the Celebrity Authors' Luncheon



Interviewer Kate Schwab with author and veterinarian James Rollins at the CALM luncheon



Actor Peter Falk with CALM Auxiliary member Pam VanBlaricum during the book signing

Celebrity Authors' Luncheon

"Because of you, CALM helps children blossom and grow." Those words were on flower seed packets scattered around the floral centerpieces at the 21st annual Celebrity Authors' Luncheon given by CALM Auxiliary (Child Abuse Listening and Mediation) at Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort. Talk about "doing lunch" – this is one not to miss. Guests began arriving at 10 am to hit the book room and load up on all the ones they wanted autographed – not only the five authors who would be interviewed, but also the 10 guest authors. Astonishing to me was learning that there are 750 published writers living in Santa Barbara county.

With a sold-out crowd of about 700, the lobby was rubbing elbows room only. The doors opened for lunch and the ballroom was instantly filled. There was the longest "Last Supper" table on the dais I'd ever seen, where emcee **Jack Canfield** ("Chicken Soup for the Soul" books), interviewers **Debby Davison** (former TV anchor) and **Kate Schwab** (Borders regional marketing manager) and celebrity and guest authors were seated. Event co-chairs **Sharon Bifano** and **Stephanie Ortale** were in the audience. Sharon recalled, "I brought the idea from a luncheon Erma Bombeck used to do in Arizona where I lived." Stephanie and Sharon have been co-chairs all 21 years, backed up by an auxiliary of 50 members.

Traditionally the night before, the CALM Auxiliary invites celeb authors and interviewers for a get-acquainted cocktail party. This year, **Fred and Joyce Lukas** opened their Tuscan Villa for the party. Taking a "home tour" and enjoying their furnishings was as much fun as the get-together.

The next day, after a lunch of Boursin Cheese soup en croute, a salad of sliced New York steak with truffle oil and almond tuile filled with chocolate mousse, it was time for the "main



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course" – the interviews with celebrity authors.

As Davison talked to **Lynne Cox** about her book, "Grayson," we learned that Cox had broken all kinds of long distance ocean swimming records as a teen. One day, she was training off the California coast when she felt something beneath her. As she neared the pier, an old fisherman told her it was a baby whale that had lost its mother. If Cox had come ashore, the whale would have kept following her, beached itself and died. She stayed out in the water for five more hours and her book tells the story.

Author **James Rollins**, who volunteers to spay and neuter stray cats, told the audience, "You don't have to read my book, just buy it." By the way, before he became a writer, he was a practicing veterinarian. Now he spends his time figuring out how to "kill people" and "crash space ships" for his action, adventure and suspense novels, such as his latest, "Black Order."

Montecito resident and former publicist for authors **Jane Heller** told how she used to be in NBC's "Today" show green room holding nervous writers' hands. Then she wrote a book and was in the green room scared to death popping Xanax to calm herself. The first thing they asked on the show was, "How does it feel to be on instead of promoting?" She replied, "I don't know. I'm heavily sedated!" Heller does a lot of name-dropping in her books and once wrote that actor **Michael Caine** has his nose hairs airbrushed out of his photos. When Debbie asked whether that was true,



(from left) Co-chair Sharon Bifano, CALM Auxiliary President Joanne Nelson, co-chair Stephanie Ortale with emcee Jack Canfield at the cocktail party at Fred and Joyce Lukas' home

Heller replied, "I made that up." Her last romantic comedy is called "Some Nerve."

Schwab introduced the audience to **Mariel Hemingway**, whose grandfather was the author Ernest. She's a charming "Chatty Cathy" who has been married for 23 years. Her husband was diagnosed with Stage 4 melanoma seven years ago and given only a few months to live. He's alive and well today, the family believes, because he changed some life habits. The new book is "Mariel Hemingway's Healthy Living from the Inside Out: Every Woman's Guide to Real Beauty, Renewed Energy, and a Radiant Life." Her philosophy, for men as well, is based on four simple areas: food, exercise, silence and home environment.

"I have lots of experience (in bad habits)," Hemingway said. "My dad grew up in France knowing fine food. Julia Child was my parents' Maid of Honor. My Idaho mom went to the Cordon Bleu, but we ate off TV trays. No one got along after 'wine time.' Part of the ritual of food should be to set the table and sit down together."

Peter Falk, who is now 80, was just as charming and lovable as his most famous character, Columbo. When Debbie asked whether he minded being recognized all over the world, he replied, "It's the greatest form of flat-

tery, to have created a character everyone loves so much." He says he's not sure why he wrote his first book, "Just One More Thing," but he explained, "I like short, funny stories so there are sixty-four two- or three-page stories in the book."

Falk graduated from high school in 1945 and soon after joined the Merchant Marine as a cook. He later received a Master's degree from Syracuse University, before telling his father in 1957, "I've decided to be an actor." His father replied, "You mean paint your face and make an ass out of yourself the rest of your life?" When Falk said, "Yes," his dad put out his hand and said, "Good luck!" Where did the famous Columbo raincoat come from? Wardrobe wanted him wearing a variety of suits, but Falk wanted something unique and remembered his old raincoat in the closet and the rest is "history."

Because Falk is an accomplished artist and has had vision out of only one eye since childhood, Davison wanted to know whether that bothered his perspective when drawing. We couldn't stop laughing when he responded, "I don't know. I've never drawn with two eyes."

For more info on CALM, its services and its annual luncheon call 965-2376 or visit www.calm4kids.org.