

# The Milford-Haven Novels

A Journey into the Heart of Mara Purl's Women's Fiction Writing

[www.MaraPurl.Wordpress.com](http://www.MaraPurl.Wordpress.com)



**Joys of the Central Coast Writers' Conference  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

Posted by: [MaraPurl](#) / September 24, 2012

## EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Sign me up!

## CATEGORIES

Select Category

## BECOME A FAN OF MILFORD-HAVEN NOVELS!

[Milford-Haven Novels by Mara Purl](#)



One of my favorite things is connecting with other authors, as those of you who read my blog already know. This happens in various ways—from small, private author tea gatherings to huge book festivals like the L.A. Times Festival of Books where hundreds of authors speak and one hundred thousand readers come to find us.

At smaller regional book festivals I've had the pleasure of meeting several colleagues who've become friends over the years. This autumn, the stars must've aligned because I found myself at the nexus of three favorite things all at once: I got to be in my spiritual home, California's Central Coast; I got to teach and mentor scores of fellow writers; and I met three outstanding authors who became immediate friends.

The Central Coast Writers' Conference has the reputation of being one of the best-run in the country, and now I know three reasons why. Writer July Salamacha is its Director; she has a fabulous team; and it's hosted by Cuesta College, one of the region's education gems.

Judy writes a weekly column "By the Bay" for The Tribune in San Luis Obispo, highlighting events and issues in Morro Bay, Los Osos and Cayucos. She's also the program director for the premier professional writers' organization in the region, SLO NightWriters (where I had the honor of being a guest speaker last year.) Add to this her many community advocacy activities, and it's hard to imagine how she gets it all done. But with her finger on the pulse of writing and publishing trends, and a passionate belief in helping young writers find their true path, she directs the Conference with both head and heart.

For two days, we teacher-types race from classroom to classroom to meet with our eager, over-achieving students, who come in all sizes, ages, and writing genres. And when we're not teaching ourselves, we sneak into each other's classes to eavesdrop on the wisdom of our colleagues. Among my students were two young women who sparkled with creativity and passion for their craft; an award-winning author whom I know from Women Writing the West; and a noted local journalist. So even while standing at the podium, I was learning as much as I was teaching.

Now to the new author pals. One is **Jeff Carlson**, whose high-tech sci-fi thrillers are thrilling tens of thousands of followers, and besides, his humor and spirit are infectious. His latest novel is *Frozen Sky*. One is **Barbara Abercrombie**, who writes essays, non-fiction, and children's books with a grace and sensitivity that are inspiring her huge following. Her latest essay collection is *A Year of Writing Dangerously*. And then there's **Victoria Zackheim** whom I seem to have recognized as a spiritual sister, but also a mentor. Victoria has a way of gathering people and ideas, then shining a spotlight on issues that may have been right in front of us but remained invisible until she sets the stage and flips the on switch. She writes and edits essays (Her latest collection is *Exit Laughing*), writes plays and screenplays, and the critically acclaimed novel *The Bone Weaver*, bringing a sense of both social conscience and personal revelation to all her work. She also teaches in the UCLA Extension Writer's Program, conducts workshops in the U.S. and Europe, and was a 2010 San Francisco Library Laureate.

I'll be keeping in touch with these wonderful colleagues and students. And I sure hope to get invited back to this fantastic conference. If you live anywhere in the region and have dreams of being a writer, don't miss next year's. By the way, photographer Dennis Eamon Young has posted fabulous photos of the event in case you'd like to take a look.

For more information on the evolving world of *The Milford Haven Novels*, visit my new website [www.MaraPurl.com](http://www.MaraPurl.com) where you can subscribe to my newsletter, follow me on social media, enjoy photos and videos, discover more special offers and more.

