



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

March 2019

WRITING WORKSHOP AND BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 9th, 2019, 9:00 – 12:30

Workshop Hours: Check In 8:30 – 9:00, Breakfast 9:00 – 9:30

Workshop 9:30 – 12:30

The Four Foundational Pillars of Novel Construction

with

C. S. Lakin

A great novel needs a solid foundation!



C. S. Lakin is the author of twenty novels and ten writing craft books (The Writer's Toolbox Series).

- **Concept with a Kicker:** Novelists need to understand the difference between idea, premise, and concept. A great idea does not make a novel. Ideas have to be taken to a higher level; they have to have a kicker.
- **Conflict with High Stakes:** Too many novels have minimal conflict—internal and external. Conflict needs to involve high stakes—both personal and public—for the story to propel forward with the necessary tension.
- **Protagonist with a Goal:** All too often protagonists of novels are aimless, just reacting to events as they happen without having a specific plot goal. But a novel needs a clear objective for its hero.
- **Theme with a Heart:** The way the theme is presented throughout the story should show the “heart” that underlies the plot.

She works professionally as a copyeditor and writing coach for authors, agents, and publishers in six continents and critiques more than two hundred manuscripts a year. She also guest blogs on the top writing blogs and offers online video courses for writers and editors at [Writing for Life Workshops](#).

Lakin is the fiction-track director of the San Francisco Writers' Conference and teaches workshops around the country, including plotting and scene-structure boot camps.

Her award-winning blog “Live Write Thrive” provides year-long instruction for writers. Contact her at cslakin@gmail.com, and check out her books on her [Amazon author page](#).

NOTE WORKSHOP TIMES:

Sign-In from 8:30 – 9:00. Breakfast 9:00 – 9:30. Workshop 9:30 – 12:30. At Zio Fraedo's Restaurant: 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. \$45 members, \$55 guests. **Reservation Deadline: Noon, Wednesday, March 6th, 2019.** To reserve a spot, go to the CWC Mt. Diablo web site at: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>

CWC is an IRS 501-c3 non-profit charitable organization (ID 94-6082827). Donations are fully deductible to the extent of the law.

Memo from Vice President Judith (Judy) Ingram

Greetings, Mt. Diablo Members:

As our winter world awakens to spring, we may yearn to revitalize our muses and refresh our writing projects with helpful new perspectives. Your CWC-Mt. Diablo branch is eager to energize and assist you with two amazing offerings at our **March 9th branch meeting**.

First, we welcome back C. S. Lakin for a **three-hour fiction workshop**: “The Four Foundational Pillars of Novel Construction.” I took a peek at her book *The 12 Key Pillars of Novel Construction* which expands into thirty chapters what Susanne will present to us at the workshop. Come prepared for an intense, practical exploration of how to build an idea into a solid novel using Susanne’s tested blueprint. We’ll have extra pens, breakfast, and plenty of coffee available to help you take advantage of this engaging workshop opportunity.

Second, you are invited to stay after the workshop for a **special board meeting** that needs your input. It’s time to elect officers and fill board and committee positions, so that the good work of CWC-Mt. Diablo can continue into the upcoming year. Positions are shifting as some board members retire and others want to take on different responsibilities. If you are interested in a board position, chairing a committee, or just curious about how your branch works, please plan to attend this meeting. You may find a niche that has your name on it, where you can exercise your gifts and experience to benefit other writers.

As if these two opportunities were not enticement enough, you are also invited to begin the morning with a delicious breakfast buffet and the chance to visit with your writing peers and meet new people before the workshop begins. You can register for this event through our branch website: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>.

I hope to see *you* on March 9th.

Judith Ingram
Vice-President

CONTENTS

- p. 3 Join the Board Mtg; Member News: Jill Hedgecock interviews George RR Martin (yes, him)
Writers Table Topics through June
- p. 4 Additional Events at National University? Public Safety Writers Association Conference
- p. 5 Member Benefits; Bay Area Book Festival
- p. 6 Our Upcoming Programs; News to Me
- p. 7 Young Writers Contest
- p. 8 Young Writers Contest Donor Page



To find a writing contest: Have you ever thought to check Submittable on Facebook?
<https://www.facebook.com/submittable/>

They list contests that are registered with them. All kinds of writing contests.
Warning: MOST (many?) contests charge submission fees.

Attend a Board Meeting



This is YOUR branch. Extra minds and hands are always welcome.

There's always room at the board meetings for observers, the maybe-I'd-like-to-get-involved-ers, advisors and the just plain curious. Join us. (Liz usually serves coffee or tea.) This month **we will meet after the workshop**. The focus will be: The Branch Needs Help. Many on the board have been in their positions for a long time. We need to find volunteers to replace some of the officers. This is your branch too, and volunteer organizations can always use helping hands and new ideas.

Next board meeting: Mar 9, 12:30 -1:30 p.m. Zio Fraedo's.

Member Events, News and Salutes



This section of the newsletter is regularly open to members to submit information about milestones in your writing journey. Publish or self-publish a book? Published in a magazine or journal? Planning a reading at a public venue? Win an IPPY or other prize? Is your play being produced? The TV or movie version of your writing will be out soon? Let us know and we'll put the info here.

JILL HEDGECOCK

A few of our members have submitted to and been published in a local online magazine called *Books n Pieces*. The current issue features an interview our Speaker Chair, Jill Hedgecock landed with George RR Martin—yes, the author of *Game of Thrones* and more. At the same time she spoke with Alan Brennert, author of *Molokai* and his recent sequel, *Daughter of Molokai*. The authors have been friends since their school days. See the interview in the March 2019 issue at: <http://booksnpieces.com/A/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MAR2019BP6x9-DIGI.pdf>

Jill is also reviews books for *BnP*. See her review of Martin's *Fire and Blood* in the same issue.

Check out the whole of the *Books n Pieces* issue. You'll see that they print short stories and articles about writing and publishing, and take ads. This issue has several for books.

Writers Tables Through June 2019

March 9 – No Writers Table due to workshop

April 13 – Three-Person Panel on Editing

May 11 – None Planned

June 8 – Writing Craft (format TBD)
"Polish It & It Might Shine."



Additional Events @ National University?

In order to expand the scope of topics covered by Mt. Diablo's popular *Writers Table*, we are thinking of scheduling sessions under an agreement worked out between CWC and the National University whereby we could use a classroom in their Ellinwood Way campus (100 Ellinwood Way; Pleasant Hill, CA). Scheduling to use their classrooms would allow us to:

- Cover more topics
- Meet more frequently than six times a year
- Delve into more complicated topics in greater depth
- Provide the time and internet connectivity to walk/work through examples and/or tasks

John and I would like to arrange these further sessions because members have shown so much interest and positive energy for the ones held on selected Saturdays. These sessions would be free.

However, a key question is: when would be convenient?

If you would be interested in additional presentations and working sessions, please let us know:

- **Which days** would be best for you?
- **What time** on those days would be best?

If you might be interested in such off-site sessions, please let either Bill or John know when you might be able to attend. After receiving feedback, we will schedule a session and see how it goes!

Best regards from your Writers Table Co-Project Leads,

Bill Stong: william.a.stong@gmail.com
John Marvin: jmarvin8484@gmail.com



Public Safety Writers Association (PSWA) conference

July 18-21, 2019 at the [Orleans Hotel and Casino](#) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This is an affordable, educational, and fun conference. Lots of great panels consisting of PSWA members offering some important and pertinent writing information.

The PSWA is open to all authors, published or not, who write with a public safety theme. We also have a writing competition each year with awards presented at the close of the conference.

CWC member John Schembra is the PSWA vice president, and the membership chair.

Learn more about PSWA: <http://www.policewriter.com>

Learn about the conference: <https://policewriter.com/wordpress/conference/>

MEMBER BENEFITS

Members of the Mt. Diablo branch have automatic access to a huge range of benefits. The February Writers Table meeting introduced the following three:

Our Website:	https://cwcmtdiablo.org/
Critique Groups	Deborah Greenberg: https://cwcmtdiablo.org/critique-groups/
Helpful Editor	Elisabeth Tuck: https://cwcmtdiablo.org/helpful-editor/

The **website** allows branch members to advertise their latest couple of books, spotlight an award or published book, learn about upcoming meetings, see old newsletters which have info about other branch benefits, and see past speakers with links to many of their websites.

Deborah Greenberg collects names of authors wanting to join a **critique group** for supportive feedback. She forms groups based on geographic location and genre. Fill out the form online and let Deborah see if she can organize a group that works for you.

Elisabeth Tuck offers **Helpful Editor**. Want feedback from a professional editor on two pages of your work? Follow the link on the website and let Elisabeth edit a little of your work for free.

FIFTH ANNUAL BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL

May 4 & 5

The Festival is a two-day event complete with literary sessions presenting top authors from this region, the nation, and the world, along with an outdoor fair with hundreds of literary exhibitors. We also offer events for kids and writing contests. We transform vibrant Downtown Berkeley into a literary utopia where readers of all ages and interests can find kindred spirits.



Tens of thousands of book lovers meet hundreds of acclaimed authors over an exciting weekend in downtown Berkeley, California. A premier literary event.

Drawing for Mt. Diablo Members

Print this page, write your name on the coupon, cut it out, attend the March meeting, put the coupon in the glass/basket/bag and be in a drawing for \$25 off a future meeting.

After each drawing, the non-winning coupons will be destroyed. Look for a new coupon each month in the newsletter. One coupon per member per meeting. A member may only win once per CWC year, i.e., Sept – June.

March 2019 coupon

MT. DIABLO CWC Members only. Good for \$25 off one meeting

Print this page. Cut out this coupon. Write your name below and drop in the





Basket/hat/paper bag at the meeting corresponding to the date on this coupon.

One coupon will be drawn at each meeting to be applied to a future mtg.

Your name: _____

Must be present to win.

Our Upcoming Programs for 2019

Mar. 9 	C.S. Lakin WORKSHOP <i>Four Key Pillars of Novel Structure</i>	C. S. Lakin is a multi-published novelist and writing coach. She works full-time as a copyeditor and critiques about two hundred manuscripts a year.
Apr. 13 	Elisabeth Stark Scene-making: The Essence of Storytelling	Host of Story Makers Podcast (StoryMakersShow.com), author of the novel <i>Shy Girl</i> (FSG, Seal Press) and co-director and co-writer of several films, including <i>FtF: Female to Femme</i> , a creative documentary and <i>Little Mutinies</i> , a short (both distributed by Frameline.) She earned an M.F.A. from Columbia University in Creative Writing and has taught at the Pratt Institute, UCSC, St. Mary's where she was the visiting distinguished writer, and elsewhere. She co-directs and teaches at BookWritingWorld.com and SonomaCountyWritersCamp.com. Elizabeth is currently producing a feature film called <i>Lost in the Middle</i> , and is finishing a novel.
May 11 	Rachel Herron <i>How to Revise Your Novel</i>	
June 8 	Bel McNeill <i>What Bookstore Owners Look For</i>	Owner of Lafayette's Bel and Bunna Books

We're always looking for great speakers. If you've heard a great speaker on writing/publishing/editing topics, email Programs Chair Jill Hedgecock at hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net

NEWS TO ME

By the editor

I admit I know little to nothing about publishing, and this may be a wild goose chase, but the following interested me. While researching a possible speaker to refer to our branch Speaker Chair, Jill Hedgecock, I came across the pseudonym of an author whose research might be of use to authors making decisions about publishing or self-publishing.

Emily Harstone is the pen name of a self-described "author whose work has been published internationally by a number of respected journals." She does have 5 inexpensive books on Amazon about manuscript submission, manuscript publishers, how to get your creative writing into literary journals, and author prompts. She titles herself a professional submissions adviser who spends much of her time researching manuscript publishers. On Facebook she posts about publishers she has researched. There is no indication that she charges for any of her information (other than, of course, her books.)

She gives advice about manuscript submission, and publishers accepting submissions, and she reviews many publishers. <https://www.facebook.com/emilyharstone/>

I'm not recommending this person's books, nor do I vouch for any information she shares, it just seems to me that **it would be wise to do thorough research about publishing before shelling out money you may never recoup if only you had put as much effort into publishing as you have into writing.**

Mt. Diablo Branch's Young Writers Contest 2019

Proudly sponsored by the Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club. Contest is open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students who live in or attend school in Contra Costa County. Categories include short story, poetry, personal narrative and humor.

DEADLINE: Manuscripts must be received by **9:00 p.m. on March 25, 2019**. Winners will be notified by email by April 20, 2019. Non-winners will not be notified.



TEACHERS: STUDENTS MUST SUBMIT THEIR STORIES AND POEMS THEMSELVES. We are striving to encourage individual creativity and expression. Do not send entire class assignments. Each submission requires individual student information.

PARENTS: Parents of winning students will be requested to give permission for the child to be photographed for print, videotaped, or electronically imaged and agree to allow his or her child's picture to appear in newspapers, news releases, and/or other published formats.

PRIZES: Winning *short stories* and *poems* from each grade level will receive \$100 for first prize, \$50 for second prize and \$25 for third prize.

The *Humor Award* of \$100 will be awarded to one winner (combined grades) or one winner in each grade level, at the judges' discretion.

The *Betty Tenney Personal Narrative Award* of \$100 will be given to the best personal narrative in each grade.

Second and third place prizes may be awarded in the personal narrative category at the judges' discretion.

Manuscripts are accepted
via [Submittable.com](https://www.submittable.com)
January 15 – March 25,
2019.

Prizes will be presented to winners on Saturday, May 18, 2019 at National University on Ellinwood Way in Pleasant Hill. Further information on the awards ceremony will be provided to the winners. Parents are welcome. Teachers of winning students will be invited to attend the ceremony.

CWC is a federal non-profit 501(c)(3) <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/> Questions? Email us at youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org.

Young Writers Contest Fundraising

Sponsored by
The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch

Please consider joining one of the following donor clubs to benefit our programs in support of young writers. Your tax-deductible gift will appear in the contest program in May, and in the newsletter every month in the year you donate. Or remain anonymous if you prefer!

DONATIONS A/O Jan 2019

The Jack London Founder's Circle (\$500+)

The John Muir Member Club (\$150 - \$249)

Jim Hasse

David George in honor of

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

The Mary Austin Writers Club (\$50 - \$99)

Edward Stanislawski

Linda Force

Patty Northlich

Chloe Laube

The Gertrude Atherton Guild (\$10 - \$24)

Robin Gigoux

Howard Weisman

Phyllis Nagle

Maya Das

Sheryl Ruzek

Fran Cain

The John Steinbeck Society (\$250 - \$499)

Judith Overmeier

The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club (\$100 - \$149)

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

Ken Kirkoff

Kathy Urban

Judy Ingram

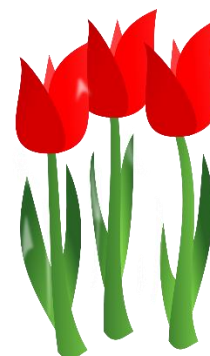
Charla Gabert

The Helen Hunt Jackson Group (\$25 - \$49)

June Gatewood

George Cramer

Wendy Blakely



Contra Costa County middle school students who enter the Young Writers Contest are eligible for cash prizes in short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative, and humor. Contest submissions are free. Check our branch website for details: cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/young-writers-contest/

The Mt. Diablo Branch hosts an awards luncheon in May of each year.

All program expenses are supported by individual donations and grants. Thank you for considering membership in one of the above donor clubs.

** Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ Acknowledge my gift in honor/memory of: _____

Or via PayPal click "buy now" on the Mt. Diablo website

<http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/next-program/>. Please add the \$2 transaction fee

Make a check payable to: *CWC Mt. Diablo Branch*. And mail to:

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507 Attention: Young Writers Contest

HAPPY ST PATRICK'S DAY