



The Write News

The Mt. Diablo Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

September 2019

MT DIABLO BRANCH MEETING AND LUNCHEON

September 14, 2019 - 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

How to Promote your Book Successfully

featuring

Ann Steiner, Ph.D., MFC, CGP, FAGP

Does the idea of marketing make you squirm? If so, this presentation will help you get outside of your comfort zone, and create a **realistic** action plan to boost your book sales.



- Your book's friends: Marketing, Publicity, and Visibility – tips from the road.
- Building your mailing list before, during and after your book release.
- Strategies for the marketing stage of publication, you've already started that right?

Dr. Ann Steiner is a nationally recognized psychotherapist, consultant, and author. Drawing on her 30 years as a psychotherapist, her popular keynote presentations, motivational speaking engagements, and teaching reflect her warmth, humor, and understanding.

She is a Fellow and former board member of the American Group Psychotherapy Association, was recently voted Member of the Year by the National Speakers Association of Northern California, served on the board of directors of The International Human Learning Resources Network and the National Speakers Association of Northern California. Her latest book, *Help Your Group Thrive: A Workbook and Planning Guide*, Routledge Books, London, is written for **anyone** who leads groups: from workgroup leaders, to writers and critique groups as well as book and service clubs. She is currently under contract with Routledge Books to do a revised version of *How to Create and Sustain Groups that Thrive: Therapist's Workbook and Planning Guide*, and is continuing to work on her self-help book: *The Rollercoaster of Chronic Illness: How to Add Joy to the Ride*.

Sign-in starts at 11:00 am. Luncheon 12 - 12:45 pm. Speaker 1- 2 pm at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant: 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. \$25 members, \$30 guests. **Reservation deadline: noon, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019** To reserve a spot, go to the CWC Mt. Diablo branch website at: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/> and scroll down to register.

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

RESERVATION DISCLOSURE:

In accordance with our contractual agreement with Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, the club is charged for every reservation confirmed on the day before the meeting. *If you are not able to attend this meeting and do not cancel your reservation prior to noon on Friday before the meeting*, you will be asked to remit the \$25 member fee or \$30 guest fee no-show payment.

President's Message

Changes are in the Wind



You'll notice a few changes in our branch leadership this fall. It is my honor to be your president for the third time, but only for a few months this go around. Last spring, members of our board agreed to handle the presidential transition differently, a more kind and gentle approach. I have taken Linda Hartmann under my wing as "President-in-Training" while she learns the ropes. Linda will replace me in January or February and with your help, she will inject new enthusiasm and fresh ideas into our meetings and processes.

But first on behalf of the board and our members, I thank Marlene Dotterer for her three years of dedication and wisdom as our president among other important roles. Marlene led the effort to completely overhaul our branch website, brought fundamental change and cost savings to the Young Writers Contest, and MC'd branch meetings with wit and humility. And thank you to Judy Ingram, retiring from her Vice President's role as, sadly for us but happily for her, she is moving to Wisconsin. Judy has been "communicator-in-chief" for the past couple of years and invaluable in many other ways. Six combined cheers for Marlene and Judy for their dedication to the Club!

With Ageless Al Garrotto and Golden Bear Danard Emanuelson, I am now one of the senior advisors on our branch board, joining in 2006. These positions are not appointments for life like the Supreme Court. That is why we are grateful when new members volunteer to help guide the branch into the future. This past spring blessed us with four new board volunteers, Jim Hasse, Linda Hartmann, Barry Hampshire, and John Schembra. Jim is our new NorCal Group Representative, Linda has been elected Vice President and as I said is our President-in-Training, Barry is our new Membership Chair, and John jumped in to help out with the Young Writers Contest Awards ceremony and volunteered for our very important Writers Table programs committee. Big applause for these four and our continuing board members in their key leadership roles this year!

Change is good, for the most part, even for a venerable 110-year old organization like the California Writers Club. It keeps us all on our toes! Have a great writing year and please join us at all of our monthly meetings and workshops.

David

"EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN CWC, HAPPENS BECAUSE OF A VOLUNTEER"



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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 a book? Planning a reading at a bookstore or county fair? Win an IPPY or other significant prize? Is your play being produced? The TV or movie version of your writing will be out soon? Let us know here.

Judith ((Judy) Ingram

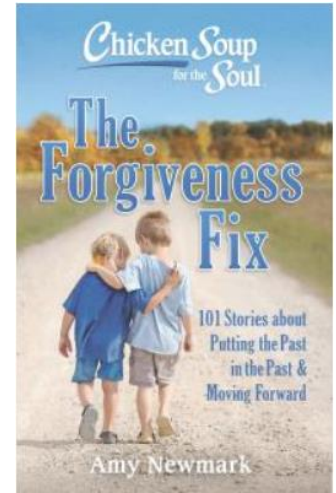
Judith will have stories published in two upcoming anthologies:



- The anthology *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Forgiveness Fix* accepted Judy's short story, "A Last Look," which recounts a final visit to the house where she grew up and experienced abuse and illustrates how allowing ourselves to love and be loved helps us forgive and move beyond old pain. The book will be released November 5, 2019.

- Inspire Grace* will publish Judy's true short story, "The Language of Grace," which describes how experiencing hardship gives us language to understand and speak into the

lives of others who have similarly suffered. The launch party is scheduled for December 2019.



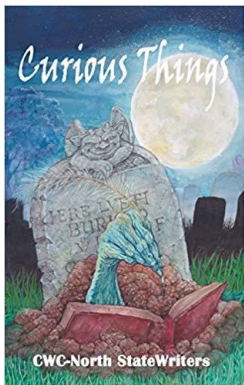
George Kramer

The Public Safety Writers Association (PSWA) awarded George an honorable mention in their 2019 contest for his yet-to-be-published novel *Liberty*.

Check out <https://policewriter.com/join/> for information about PSWA membership and writing competition if you write in the crime, mystery, and/or public safety genres. The organization is also open to illustrators, photographers, cartoonists, editors, and publishers. Published and non-published writers are welcome.



Jim Hasse



The North State Branch of the California Writers Club published *Curious Things: A Compilation of Curiously Disturbing & Sometimes Horrifying Stories*, an anthology of short stories. Board member Jim Hasse has two short stories in the book: "A Dream" and "Nothing to Fear."

"*Curious Things* is diverse, dark-humored, and deliciously bite-sized. This compelling collection of twenty-three short stories are just the remedy for a lazy weekend or a drizzly rainy day that begs for excitement. All have been crafted by the writers of the California Writers Club to thrill and terrify you to the last page."

https://smile.amazon.com/Curious-Things-Compilation-Disturbing-Horrifying/dp/1087284015/ref=sr_1_1?crd=1304N8ZR3AC1T&keywords=curious+things&qid=1567099569&s=gateway&sprefix=curious+things%2Caps%2C194&sr=8-1

Writers Table Sept 14

Making Your Child a Hero

Create a Children's Book!

- **Begins at 11:15 am** (there will be table signs directing you to the table)
- **Discussion Leader: Dot Edwards**
- **Summary:** Dot will discuss:
 - ▶ Why you might want to think about making a special child in your life the hero in his or her own story
 - ▶ Approaching the project: Warning, audience participation required here
 - ▶ Why I did it and what became of it



Dot recently published her first children's story, *Langston's Moon*, a picture book about a young boy who sees the full moon for the first time and believes it is a giant sugar cookie. When the moon dwindles to a tiny sliver, he fears a sky monster has eaten it and the moon will disappear forever.

Please join Dot on September 14, 2019 to learn about creating an illustrated children's story!

Upcoming Writer Tables

October 12 – No Writers Table due to workshop

November 9 – Writing a Memoir – *Is it for you? What is your story?*

Presented by: **Barry Hampshire**



January 11, 2020 – Police Procedures & Criminal Investigations: *Whatever You Want To Know About Policing!*

Presented by: **Bob O'Brien & John Schembra**

February 8 – Even When the Content is Not Precisely Your Genre,
You don't know what you're going to learn.

Presented by: **Kymberlie Ingalls & Elisabeth Tuck**

March 14 – No Writers Table due to workshop

April 11 – TBD

May 9 – No Writers Table

June 13 – TBD

If you have an idea to help writers in any phase of their endeavors, please contact Bill Stong or John Marvin at writerstable@cwcmtdiablo.org



How is the platform above the fireplace spelled?

How is the cloak one dons when honored spelled?

Meet Your 2019 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

Come join us! Observers and Doers Welcome.

President:	David George	president@cwcmtdiablo.org
Vice-President:	Linda Hartmann	
Secretary:	TBD	
Treasurer:	Lucy Hart	
BackFence:	David George	
Central Board Rep:	Elisabeth Tuck	
Community Outreach & Member Benefits:	Judith Marshall	
Critique Groups:	Deborah Greenberg	
Dropbox:	Aline Soules	
Event Logistics:	Danard Emanuelson	
Helpful Editor:	Elisabeth Tuck	
Hospitality:	Lyn Roberts (chair), Andrew Benzie, Al Garrotto, Ann Damaschino, Barry Hampshire, Kymberlie Ingalls	
Membership:	Barry Hampshire	membership@cwcmtdiablo.org
MRMS:	David George	
Newsletter:	Elisabeth Tuck	writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org
NorCal Rep:	Jim Hasse	
Online Systems:	Marlene Dotterer (chair)	webmaster@cwcmtdiablo.org Website content, admin: MailChimp, MeetUp, and Submittable, Systems include MRMS, Back Fence, PayPal, Dropbox & social media. Lyn Roberts: liaison for members' web updates:
		events@cwcmtdiablo.org
		profiles@cwcmtdiablo.org
		memberbookcarousel@cwcmtdiablo.org
		memberspotlight@cwcmtdiablo.org
	Andrew Benzie updates	
PayPal:	Lucy Hart	
Programs & Speakers:	Jill Hedgecock (chair), Al Garrotto, Lyn Roberts, Elisabeth Tuck	
Publicity:	Ann Damaschino	
Reservations:	Dita Basu	reservations@cwcmtdiablo.org
Social Media Content:	Kymberlie Ingalls (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	
Writers Tables:	Bill Stong & John Marvin, co-project leads	writerstable@cwcmtdiablo.org
Young Writers Contest:	Marlene Dotterer	youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org



Check out the **Back Fence**, our Yahoo online forum for branch members and guests from the Tri-Valley and Berkeley branches.





<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/CWCBackFence/info?prop=eupdate>

At The Fence you will find topics of interest to writers. You can also sign up for Back Fence e-mail notifications.

Contact our Online Coordinator, president@cwcmtdiablo.org, for instructions on how to join.

Our Upcoming Speakers

2019

Sept. 14 	Dr. Ann Steiner How to Successfully Promote your Book	Dr. Steiner is a nationally recognized speaker, consultant, and author. Her 30 years as a psychotherapist, her popular keynote presentations, motivational speaking engagements, and teaching reflect her warmth, humor, and understanding. All these presentations give Ann the opportunity to share her message, publicize, and sell her books. Her latest book, <i>Help Your Group Thrive: A Workbook and Planning Guide</i> , Routledge Books, London, is written for anyone who leads groups--from work group leaders, to writers and critique groups as well as book and service clubs.
Oct. 12 	Angie Powers BREAKFAST WORKSHOP Topic TBD	Angie Powers has an M.F.A. in English and Creative Writing from Mills College, where she won the Amanda Davis Thesis Award for her novel, <i>The Blessed</i> . The Professional Program in Screenwriting at UCLA has certified her. She is the co-director and co-writer of the short <i>Little Mutinies</i> (distributed by Frameline) an official selection of the Palm Springs International Short Fest, and a quarter-finalist for the Nicholl Fellowship and Blue Cat Screenplay Competition. Twice she made it into the second round of consideration for Sundance Labs and was a CineStory Foundation semi-finalist. She wrote and directed the short <i>Hot Date</i> and <i>The Truth About Love and Panic</i> , a comedy about anxiety, both of which premiered at the Frameline Film Festival.
Nov. 9 	Janine Kovac Marketing by Building Community	Janine Kovac is a founding member of the writing group Write on Mamas and a contributing editor to the anthology <i>Mamas Write: 29 Tales of Truth, Wit, and Grit</i> . In 2016 she was awarded the Elizabeth George Foundation Fellowship from Hedgebrook. The following year she co-founded Moxie Road Productions with Tarja Parssinen, a consulting firm that helps writers bring their ideas into the world. Janine graduated magna cum laude from U.C. Berkeley in 2009.
Dec. 14 	Three of our Own Author Visibility: Ways to Gain the Confidence to Broadcast Your Work	Marianne Lonsdale is a frequent presenter at LitQuake and bookstore events as part of her involvement in the group Write On Mamas. She will give tips on how to present a successful book reading. Charla Gilbert is a podcast moderator of STFU: We Are Not Done Talking Yet and will speak about opportunities for authors via podcasts Colleen Gonzales is contributor to the anthology <i>She's Got This</i> that was a 2019 San Francisco Book Festival Award Winner in the anthologies category and will talk about gaining confidence in public through making presentations at group speaking events.

TO BE CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

EVERYONE NEEDS AN EDITOR:

Following is the opening line of an email from a well-known writing teacher





Nearly every writer has been touched **Writers Digest**.

Ursula K. Le Guin on Art, Storytelling, and the Power of Language to Transform and Redeem

"One of the functions of art is to give people the words to know their own experience. Storytelling is a tool for knowing who we are and what we want."

Our Upcoming Speakers (Cont'd)

2020 (Jan. 11 and June 13 TBD)

Jan. 11	TBD	
Feb. 8 	Rick Acker Keeping it Real: Creating Tension with Believable Plot Twists	Rick Acker writes his novels while commuting to and from his "real job" as a Deputy Attorney General in the California Department of Justice. Rick has led investigations and lawsuits that made national headlines. Most recently, he and his team won a string of record-breaking judgments and settlements against the Wall Street players who created the toxic mortgage securities that triggered the Great Recession. Before joining DOJ, Rick was a senior litigator at Bingham McCutchen, where he worked on high-stakes litigation, including a fight between two owners of the San Francisco Forty-Niners and a multibillion-dollar international fraud case. Rick has law degrees from the University of Oslo and the University of Notre Dame, where he graduated with honors. In addition to his novels, he is a contributing author on two legal treatises published by the American Bar Association.
Mar. 14 	Penny Warner WORKSHOP Writing Dialogue	Penny Warner has published over 60 fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children which have been translated for 16 countries. Twice Penny has won the Agatha Award and was nominated for the World Mystery Anthony Award for Best Children's Mystery. She has appeared on dozens of national television show on stations including PBS, ABC, CBS and NBC. She has been teaching child development for over 30 years, writes a column for a local newspaper, and creates fund-raising murder mystery events for libraries across the country.
Apr. 11 	Helen Sedwick Using Real People in Your Writing Without Ending up in Court	Author and attorney, Helen Sedwick has represented small businesses and entrepreneurs for 30+ years. <i>Publisher's Weekly</i> lists her Self-Publisher's Legal Handbook as one of the top five resource books for independent authors. Helen is a member of the Board of Advisors of the Alliance of Independent Authors and a Contributing Writer for TheBookDesigner.com. Helen's blog coaches writers on everything from saving on taxes to avoiding scams.
May 9 	Jennifer March Soloway/Literary Associate Victoria Piontek Query Letters	Jennifer March Soloway is an Agent for Andrea Brown Literary Agency. She represents authors and illustrators of picture book, middle grade, and young adult stories. Although she specializes in children's literature, she also represents adult fiction, both literary and commercial, particularly crime, suspense and horror projects. Prior to joining Andrea Brown, Jennifer worked in marketing and public relations in a variety of industries. She has an MFA in English and Creative Writing from Mills College and was a fellow at the San Francisco Writer's Grotto in 2012. Jennifer regularly presents at writing conferences all over the country.
June	TBD	

If you've heard, or know of, a good speaker on writing or publishing, contact Jill Hedgecock:
hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net

Don't forget **Buck-a-Book** at the Sept 14 meeting. Bring your gently used books gently used books and to buy, for a dollar each, books they might like to read. This will be a book sale run on the honor system. Bring your books and your own bags, bring out your bucks, and browse and buy before lunch. Bag your purchases and any unsold books you brought and take them back home with you. Proceeds will go to our Young Writers Contest.

How are your Annual Club Dues Spent?

YOUR MONEY AND WHERE IT GOES

Every spring we start reminding members about “renewal dues” and you wonder why it is such a big deal that you renew before September 30th and how is all of that money spent? The branch uses some of the dues to support our monthly programs and workshops, but some of your dues is also sent away. We belong to something bigger than ourselves called CWC Central, or the State organization. Central pays for services and benefits (see below) for all 22 branches of the California Writers Club.



<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>MEMBER PAYS</u>	<u>BRANCH KEEPS</u>	<u>BRANCH PAYS</u>
<u>STATE</u>			
Renewed Members	\$45.00	\$25.00	\$20.00
New Members	\$65.00	\$35.00	\$30.00

Our branch monthly meeting and workshop charges almost exactly match the restaurant food, room, and equipment usage costs. So, there is no money left over to pay monthly speaker or workshop leader fees, brochure and flyer copying, web site and other software costs, bank fees, and other on-going branch expenses. The same is true for annual Central expenses. That is why renewal dues are so important.

Partial list of membership benefits:

Branch Dues Portion:

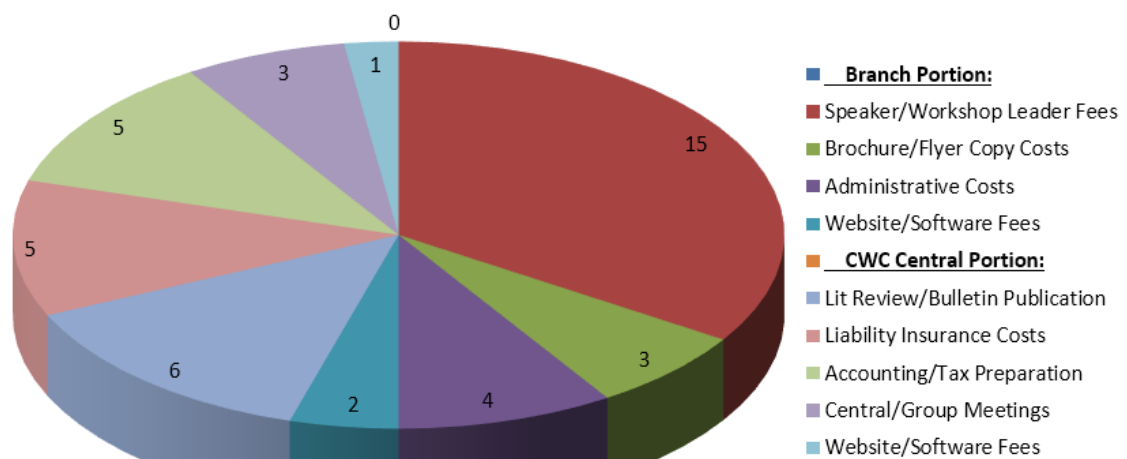
- The monthly Mt. Diablo Branch newsletter, *The Write News*
- Fascinating and informative monthly meeting speakers
- 2-3 annual writing skills or marketing workshops
- *The Back Fence* members-only bulletin board
- Valuable emailed writing-related *News* announcements

Central Dues Portion:

- Professional Accountant's fees
- Annual IRS and California FTB tax filing services
- Liability Insurance to cover all Club-sponsored events such as our meetings and workshops
- Directors and officers liability coverage to protect board members from lawsuit damages
- Publication and distribution of *The CWC Literary Review* for all members
- CWC branch and state website and software costs
- An annual central board of directors meeting
- 3-times per year meetings of the NorCal Group and CWC South branch representatives
- Communications, coordination, and policy-making across the 22 branches

Generous member donations each year cover our annual Young Writers Contest costs and do not drain branch funds. So, help the Club by getting your annual dues in on time, and continue to be generous with your YWC donations.

Annual Member Dues Breakdown 2019-20 (in Dollars)



It's money well spent!

Still Time to Renew and Always Time to Join Mt. Diablo CWC

Please visit <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/membership/>

If **renewing**, click and follow the instructions to use PayPal to pay or

Pay by check: Make your \$45 check payable to “CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch” and mail to:

CWC- Membership, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA-94507.

Pay by credit card: Please provide the following information:

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date (month/year) _____

Name as it appears on the credit card _____

Billing zip code _____ Security code on back of card _____

Renewal is \$45 annual membership, \$25 for dual membership.

If your address has changed, please note the change so it can be updated in branch records.

If you are a member and there are no changes to your information, you can just mail a check or credit card info to the address below or hand it in to the membership chair, David George, or the treasurer, Lucy Hart, at meeting check in. Please indicate **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

To apply for a **new membership**, an application is required and a copy of one of your stories or articles published or unpublished. The directions on the membership page on the website explain more. Go to the bottom of the middle column on the membership page and click on **Let's Start**.

Donation to the Young Writers Program

Add the amount to your \$45 membership renewal and indicate the donation.

Security Note: Membership information is not made public at any time.

If you have questions, contact David George via email at davegeorge7@comcast.net

Deadline to renew without penalty is Sept 30.

Renewal Year: 2019-2020

Revised 5/1/2018

Print and cut out the coupon below 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.

September 2019 coupon

MT. DIABLO CWC MEMBERS ONLY

PRINT THIS PAGE. CUT OUT THIS COUPON. WRITE YOUR NAME BELOW.

**DROP COUPON IN THE BASKET/HAT/PAPER BAG AT THE MEETING
CORRESPONDING TO THE DATE ON THIS COUPON.**

**ONE COUPON WILL BE DRAWN EACH MONTH TO WIN \$25 CREDIT
TOWARD**

A LATER MT DIABLO BRANCH MEETING.

Your name: _____

Must be present to win.

A Little Free Editing?

Elisabeth Tuck

HELPFUL EDITOR – A professional editor will accept the first 5 members who email me two pages of their work, preferably (but not necessarily) the first pages of an article or book, and I will edit (copy and content editing) as comprehensively as possible. Beginnings are crucial to your readers, or if you're struggling with something, maybe I can help. I will meet with you before or after the meeting to give you the edited pages and/or if you have questions.

You must:

- Follow all these directions. (If you want to be published traditionally, win contests, or have anything accepted for publication, you must follow directions, so this is practice.)
- Attend a meeting to receive the edits.**
- Be willing for me to discuss something I've noted that might be of interest to others.

Email your submission 10 days in advance (or earlier) of a meeting you plan to attend (12 point double spaced with 1" margins, white paper, and normal font)

Make sure you say which meeting you plan to attend.

I will read the pages carefully before the meeting and mark them up, showing you good points and misses.

If you have to miss the meeting, sign up to join a later month's group and get your edits at a later meeting.

I am not looking for clients. I just want to offer some help.

Disclaimer: I'm not perfect. Even editors need editors—witness this newsletter which I don't have time to have edited as I usually do! Let's continue that by learning all we can about writing well!



Mt. Diablo Branch Website:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org>

Where to find emails to contact branch committee chairs:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/>

CWC Statewide Website:

www.calwriters.org

Attend a Board Meeting



This is YOUR branch. Extra minds and hands are 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.) We meet 10:00 -11:00 before regular meetings, not workshops. This is your branch too, and volunteer organizations can use new ideas and helping hands.

Next board meeting: September 14, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Zio Fraedo's.



You in The Newsletter!—Book Review Edition

Joanna Kraus

Somewhere Inside: One Sister's Captivity in North Korea and the Other's Fight to Bring Her Home (2010)
biography by Laura Ling and Lisa Ling (William Morrow)

This is a wrenching story of how one moment and one inch at the North Korean/China border results in nearly a five-month imprisonment in North Korea and a sentence of 12 years of hard labor. It is the story of 2 sisters, one the journalist imprisoned, and the other an American journalist who fought valiantly to bring her sister home before it is too late. It's also an account of amazing inner strength and unexpected moments of sympathy from the captors. We get a glimpse of international politics--a nightmare that can only be resolved by a presidential secret mission. It is as suspenseful as a top mystery, and is a devastating, true account. Highly recommended.



William Martin

Giovanni's Room (1956) By James Baldwin

I can't believe I've gone this long without reading James Baldwin. What an amazing man, and a life and what a force of nature for social justice. I love how he chases after complex, tormenting questions and wraps his arms around them and just holds them.

I adored this book. I adored this book. I'm saying it twice because I'm going to bring up issues I had with it, but that does not mean I didn't adore it. What an important book! First off, I love that it is kind of a bisexual retelling of *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway. I feel that *Giovanni's Room* speaks to every page of Hemingway's book. The protagonist David is a male version of Brett, the woman in *The Sun Also Rises* who draws all sorts of people to her, and all she does is confound their lives and bring pain through her inability to love.

David has this problem big time. This book is frustrating because it is told from David's point of view and David is so philosophical, deep, capable of beautiful observations, touching, perceptive and insightful, but he is stuck. He himself knows it but he doesn't make excuses for it. After you've read about 100 pages, you're like... "David you are brilliant so get it together and get moving." The actions he takes in this book are just so painful for the reader because

We just feel he can do better. And maybe the brilliance and importance of this book as a social document is it shows how much brilliance got all twisted up in the era where it was so hard to be bisexual and so hard to be gay. And a Black Man. Maybe this book is a document about the cost and consequences of oppression to the world. Because in reading this book you just know that if David had been whole, there is so much he could've offered the world.

Rachel Carson on Writing and the Loneliness of Creative Work

"If you write what you yourself sincerely think and feel and are interested in... you will interest other people."

You In The Newsletter! (cont'd)

Marianne Lonsdale

Heavy: An American Memoir (2018) by Kiese Laymon

Heavy knocked me sideways with the original writing, great story, and layers of emotional complexity. Laymon, a professor of Creative Writing at the University of Mississippi, writes of his experience growing up as a black boy in Jackson, Mississippi. He does such a good job showing how he has prospered in his academic career, and how damaged he is emotionally, which plays out in his relationships, and his addictions of eating and gambling. He shows that many of us are neither good nor bad, or accomplished or not, but occupy a spectrum over time. I was particularly touched and intrigued in how he demonstrates how the positive and negative impacts of his family and friends while growing up play out in how he treats people today. His struggles are not obvious to those around him and yet they are constant. I saw him speak at the Bay Area Book Festival last May and he was as direct and complex as his writing.



Stanford Stewart

The Kings of Big Spring: God, Oil, and One Family's Search for the American Dream (2018) biography by Bryan Mealer

A most interesting retelling of a family story that impinges on my memories of my hometown, Big Spring, TX. Although the family stuff drags a bit, the story of Raymond Tollett, Cosden Refining President and contemporary of my father, and the rise of Big Spring in the 1950s and 1960s is right on. Cosden under Tollett's leadership becomes a Fortune 500 company and the fact that it headquartered in Big Spring brought prestige and recognition that belied the town's population of 32,000 at its peak. Beyond Tollett's decline into alcoholism and the takeover of Cosden by American Petrofina is the story of Big Spring's resultant decline aided by the closure of Webb Air Force Base. However, the most gripping story in the book is that of Tollett's son-in-law's, Grady Cunningham's, attempt to emulate the old man, initially succeeding in the oil business on the back of his wife's trust fund, spending wildly, and ultimately failing on a grand scale consistent with every previous cycle of oil boom and oil bust. The fact that the author's father was directly involved and the author a witness to much of the madness makes the book remarkable.



You in the Newsletter?

Writers should be readers. What are you reading? What book would you recommend to others and why? What worked? What didn't work? Why? One of my recent favorites was *A Gentleman in Moscow*, a novel by Amor Towles. I liked his use of history and philosophy of life. As we watched the main character settle in, we saw what seemed like everyday things for a man of his stature. Later in the novel, we realized how important/useful these items were to him. I enjoyed the layers of story and many characters.

So here's the challenge and opportunity to member-writers of all genres, send me some short(ish) book reviews to put in the newsletters. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

Please no advertising of members' books. Newsletter policy doesn't allow it.

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 Mount Diablo CWC newsletter every month in the year you donate. Or remain anonymous if you prefer!

DONATIONS A/O Sept 1, 2019

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

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

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

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

Judith Ingram

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

Fran Cain

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

Kathy Urban

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

Patty Northlich

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

Lee Paulson

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.

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

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

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Attention: Young Writers Contest



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