



# The Write News

## Mt Diablo

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

November 2019

## BRANCH MEETING AND LUNCHEON

November 9, 2019 - 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

### It Takes a Village

### *Marketing by Building Community*

featuring

**Janine Kovac**

**Who are the people** in your neighborhood and what do they have to do with your author platform? Learn how to nurture your everyday connections from your local library to your neighborhood café and how an authentic relationship can boost your success as a writer.

#### We Will:



- Find and cultivate relationships with organizations (bookstores, libraries, writing groups, businesses that are aligned with your material)
- Recognize the key signs that indicate a good reciprocal match
- Own the level of participation that suits your personality

**Janine Kovac** is the author of *SPINNING: Choreography for Coming Home*, a memoir about the death of a career but the birth of miracle twins. *Spinning* was a 2017 semifinalist for *Publisher Weekly's* BookLife Prize and the 2019 memoir winner of the National Indie Excellence Awards. A former ballet dancer and software engineer, Janine is the web maven for Litquake, San Francisco's literary festival, and the co-founder of Moxie Road Productions, a consulting firm that helps writers bring their ideas into the world. Janine is a recipient of an Elizabeth George Foundation Fellowship and an alumna of the Lit Camp, the Mineral School, Community of Writers at Squaw Valley, and Hedgebrook. She lives in Oakland with her family.

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**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, November 6, 2019** To reserve a spot, go to the CWC Mt. Diablo branch website at: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/> Website at: <http://cwcmtdiablo.org>.

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

## ***President's Message:* David George**

### **It Takes a Village – Including Editors**

I have participated for many years in both branch and state-level policy discussions about Club membership categories. The Club tries to keep them up to date with the times. For example, as State Board President in 2015, I authorized an initiative to completely overhaul qualifying criteria for promotion to our Active membership category. The effort resulted in all sorts of new publication credits for online and web-based published articles, blogs, stories, poems, and books.



Why did the Club leadership make the effort? There are two obvious reasons:

- 1) The writing world had changed dramatically and our members were publishing creative content all over the online world but receiving no Club recognition for their efforts
- 2) It remains important to me, and I suspect to you also, that you achieve the recognition associated with being promoted to our most honored membership category of Active, which means Published.

The largest remaining problem with our Club membership categories is that many of our most valued associates do not have publishing of their written works as their goal. Take editors for instance. Many, many of our members have polished their stories, novels, and memoirs with the excellent assistance of our editor members who don't write for publication, such as Elisabeth Tuck and Lyn Roberts. Careful, comprehensive, and time-consuming editing are invaluable and have resulted in far more professional and successful books than would otherwise be the case. But these indispensable contributors cannot be recognized as Active category members, according to our current guidelines.

I think this lack of recognition is a travesty and an oversight. Fortunately, the branch president (me) and/or the branch membership chair, Barry Hampshire has leeway to interpret these guidelines to serve the membership. In the cases of Elisabeth and Lyn, their wait is over. With the power vested in me, and as a de facto member of the accreditation committee, I hereby announce the promotion of Elisabeth Tuck and Lyn Roberts to Active category membership in the California Writers Club. Please join me in congratulating these two dedicated and hard-working members in their long-overdue promotions!

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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? Speaking somewhere? 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 here. <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

### Jill Hedgecock, Mt. Diablo Program Chair

Jill's article, "Writing Tips: Using Visual Inspiration for Your Story" landed in a coveted guest blog slot on October 2nd in the **Creative Penn blog** which reportedly receives 100k hits per day.

Check out Jill's great idea at:

<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2019/10/02/writing-tips-using-visual-inspiration-for-your-stories/>

Jill was interviewed by John Walter of **Doberman Planet** <https://www.dobermanplanet.com/> about

-her new novel, *Between Shadow's Eyes* which features a Doberman that sees ghosts,

-the breed,

-dog agility, and more.

Learn about Dobermans and more in Jill's interview!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKZfG5acRW0>

Jill Hedgecock's short essay, "Fifteen Photographs" about a friendship that developed between her and the adopters of one of her foster dogs was published in the India-based, on-line magazine, *The Daily Brunch*

<https://thedadlybrunch.com/2019/10/09/fifteen-photographs/>.

Jill's nonfiction piece entitled "Ruby: An Instagram Sensation and a Tribute to Her Breed" was published in

October's *Doberman Network Magazine* <https://thedobermannetwork.com/2019/09/ruby-an-instagram-sensation-and-a-tribute-to-her-breed/>.

### David George



CWC President David George and program chair Jill Hedgecock attended Concord's Oktoberfest weekend on October 11th and 12th at the *Diablo Gazette* booth. David who writes the "Naked Gardener" column about organic gardening had a photo opportunity with the mayor of Concord, Carlyn Obringer.

Jill promoted her book, *Between Shadow's Eyes*, and talked with attendees about her book review column, "Bookends," and her dog-rescue column, "Ruby Dooby Doo to the Rescue."

*The Diablo Gazette* (www.diablogazette.com) publisher, David King, had an ice sculpture made in the image of Ruby from Jill's book cover. It was a fun and inspiring event.



(Ed note: Check out the *Diablo Gazette* or your local Patch.com for local activities then step away from your writing desk to participate. Writers need to get out there to observe and pick up fresh approaches to their work.



## Things to do

### Nov. 18th One-day Craft Workshop on Memoir

with **Aline Soules**

at OLLI (Osher Life Long Learning) in Concord  
California State University East Bay Concord Campus  
4700 Ygnacio Valley Rd, Concord, CA 94521  
(925) 602-6776

**10:30 am – 3:30 pm**

**Includes boxed lunch**



On Monday, Nov. 18, 10:30 am – 3:30, pm, Aline Soules will teach a one-day craft workshop on memoir. During the workshop, participants should plan on writing, either on new material or on a work in progress (poetry or prose), and enjoying conferring and sharing with fellow students. You will be guided through a pattern of mini-lessons, independent writing, and participation. This is a compact seminar where you'll go home with a boost to your inspiration and some practical advice.



### NEXT BOARD MEETING

Nov 14, 10-11:00 a.m. Zio Fraedo's

Come join us!



## Drawing for Mt. Diablo Members

**Print, cut out and fill in the coupon below** to 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.

**November 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.**



## ***Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Fundraiser: Judges Needed***

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a national **contest for students in grades 7 – 12** is coming up. The Scholastic organization pays our branch \$2,500 for up to 20 judges to read the submissions they send us. We can use this contest prize money for members, the Young Writers Contest, or general branch expenses.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is the largest, longest-running recognition program for creative teenagers. For nearly 100 years, the Awards have provided teachers with a unique opportunity to motivate and challenge students to become better writers. Students in grades 7-12 submit their works of visual art and creative writing reviewed by professionals to receive recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships. Some of our nation's most celebrated writers first discovered by the Scholastic Awards as teenagers include Truman Capote, Sylvia Plath, Joyce Carol Oates, and Stephen King.

We are planning two training session dates for judges in November. The time period for judging takes place during the last week in December and first week of January 2020, and will be performed via Dropbox. There will be training for those of you who have not worked with this program before.

### **Writing Categories are:**

Critical Essay	Dramatic Script
Flash Fiction	Humor
Journalism	Novel Writing
Personal Essay & Memoir	Poetry
Science Fiction & Fantasy	Short Story
Writing Portfolio (Seniors Only)	

We'll be signing up judges soon. Please consider participating in this fun and interesting contest.

For more information, questions, or to express interest, please contact this year's Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Chair, Linda Hartmann, at [lindadhartmann@gmail.com](mailto:lindadhartmann@gmail.com)

and feel free to browse these websites:

<https://www.artandwriting.org/>  
<https://www.artandwriting.org/affiliate/CA005W/>

Many thanks,  
 Linda Hartmann, Chair



### **Ray Bradbury: How List-Making Can Boost Your Creativity**

*How to feel your way toward something honest, hidden under the trapdoor on the top of your skull.*

### **Anne Lamott: Writing and Why Perfectionism Kills Creativity**

*"Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people. It will keep you cramped and insane your whole life."*

## *You in the Newsletter: Book Reviews*

*Educated* by Tara Westover

Reviewed by **Dita Basu**

I was awestruck watching a television interview with Tara Westover, the author of *Educated*. I came to know that as a young girl, the author had never gone to a school or to a doctor.

Coming from a staunch Mormon family, her ideas about the world were very different. Later, she taught herself to take an ACT test, got into Brigham Young University, then to Cambridge, and finally earned a Ph.D. from Harvard. The best-selling book is her journey through all these. In the library my waiting position was thirty-fifth, so I ordered the book from Amazon. I couldn't wait that long.

After reading, I felt like talking about the book, sharing it with the entire world. It touched me. I absolutely loved it. Once started I couldn't put it down and gobbled the whole 350 pages in two-and-a-half days.

There are several layers interwoven in this memoir. White supremacy, control of power, bullying, feminism, religion, and psychology. The lucid language was striking as was the frankness in her storytelling.

The vulnerability of the protagonist girl in this memoir, her desire to go back to her old life, to that dysfunctional family where she was beaten, traumatized, and brainwashed, broke my heart. I would whisper, "Please don't go back, Tara," while I kept turning the pages to see what happens next.

*Education* opens eyes. It educated her to review history with a different lens.

It's a beautiful memoir where as a reader I could understand how our family builds our core, the foundation of our values, no matter how wrong and warped they be, and how education reshapes that. Transforms even transcends us. What a price to pay!

Favorite excerpts:

"I could tolerate any form of cruelty better than kindness. Praise was a poison to me; I choked on it. I wanted the professor to shout at me. I felt dizzy from the deprivation." Pg 241

"The most powerful detriment of who you are is inside you. ...Remember Pygmalion...Until she believed in herself ...it didn't matter what dress she wore." Pg 242

"When the stillness shattered and his fury rushed at me, I would know that something I had done was the catalyst, the cause...There was hope in such superstition: there is illusion of control. Pg 283.

*Beautiful Ruins* by Jess Walter

Reviewed by **Stanford Stewart**

An epic novel that stretches over 70 years and 2 continents. Multiple loves lost, multiple lessons learned, multiple longings fulfilled or not. The primary feeling that I came away with was, "Hey, I could write this." Much like my criticism of Walter's short story "Famous Actor," I thought that this novel was too clever by half, the humor almost, but not, funny, that the gratuitous use of sexuality and sexual humor diminished the work of the novel, and the last chapter, like the snippets of post-story history at the end of a cinematic docudrama, was less than satisfying. If one more person responded by placing his/her hand over his/her mouth, I was going to scream - after noting the recurring use of this gesture to connote surprise, Walter actually used it twice in one half-page.

I held my hand to my mouth!

### **Stephen King: Writing and the Art of "Creative Sleep":**

*"In both writing and sleeping, we learn to be physically still at the same time we are encouraging our minds to unlock from the humdrum rational thinking of our daytime lives."*

## You in the Newsletter: Book Reviews (cont'd)

**On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft** -- Stephen King

Reviewed by **Stanford Stewart**

A very interesting book for several reasons:

- 1) The memoir section is terrible, and the author acknowledges that it was the most difficult thing he had ever written
- 2) The section entitled "On Writing," is quite good. It reinforced several of my preconceptions namely:
  - story is discovered, not programmed, or laid out, or storyboarded;
  - writing seminars and retreats are largely worthless, the criticism obtained there mushy and vacuous;
  - 5% of writers can make a living writing therefore other authors teach and give seminars with income as the sole motivation;
  - that a first draft of a novel should be done in 90 days then set aside for 6 weeks then revised with the formula SD = FD - 10% then and only then shared with your ID (ideal reader) and perhaps a few (very few) close advisors;
- 3) This book was in King's desk drawer marinating when he was nearly killed by an inattentive driver;
- 4) Reading is an integral part of the job of a writer. A book should always be at hand for grocery store lines, physician/dentist waiting rooms, the bathroom, etc., etc., etc.

This book should be close at hand for any/every aspiring novelist.

**Girl Most Likely** by Max Allan Collins

Reviewed by **B. Lynn Goodwin**

Did you show up to your ten-year high school reunion? As the sheriff of Galena, IL Krista Larson doesn't have much choice. She attended high school in Galena, and ten years later, she is the youngest female sheriff in the country. She goes to the reunion as herself not as the sheriff. After her date deserts her, she leaves early.

Her "frenemy," Astrid Lund, who was voted the Girl Most Likely to Succeed, is the center of attraction. Krista lost a boyfriend to the beautiful teenager, who has become a promising investigative reporter in Chicago. Surprisingly, she's at the reunion to make amends as much as to be seen. More importantly, she's there to set up interviews with classmates for an exposé about unreported sexual abuse. She asks to talk to Krista, but when Krista shows up at Astrid's apartment the next day, it's too late. With the help of her father, a retired detective, Krista faces her first major case. She must figure out who killed Astrid Lund, the girl who stole everyone's boyfriend in high school.

The story moves quickly through the typical suspects and plot developments of many murder mysteries—even having the guests who are still in town reconvene in the restaurant where the reunion took place. Although there's minimal psychological development, there are some lovely father-daughter moments between Krista and her father. It's a fun, easy read. I liked Krista's determination and her teaming up with her father. I was not as fascinated as the author by the clothing worn to the reunion.


## 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? Does the book go deeper than one foot in front of another? Are there cultural, literary or historic references? Is there any philosophy or thinking about life and living? Does the author set scene and outline characters well? Are there interesting subplots or asides?





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://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

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

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS for 2019 & 2020

<b>Dec. 14</b> 	<b>Three of our Own</b>  <b>Author Visibility: Ways to Gain the Confidence to Broadcast Your Work</b>	<p><b>Marianne Lonsdale</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Charla Gilbert</b> is a podcast moderator of STFU: We Are Not Done Talking Yet and will speak about opportunities for authors via podcasts</p> <p><b>Colleen Gonzales</b> is a contributor to the anthology <i>She's Got This</i>, which was a 2019 San Francisco Book Festival Award Winner. She will talk about gaining confidence in public through making presentations at group speaking events.</p>
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### 2020

Jan 11	TBD	
<b>Feb. 8</b> 	<b>Rick Acker</b>  <b>Keeping it Real: Creating Tension with Believable Plot Twists</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Mar. 14</b> 	<b>Penny Warner</b>  <b>WORKSHOP Writing Dialogue</b>	<p>Penny Warner has published over 60 fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children, 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 stations including PBS, ABC, CBS and NBC. For over 30 years she has taught child development, writes a column for a local newspaper, and creates fund-raising, murder-mystery events for libraries across the country.</p>
<b>Apr. 11</b> 	<b>Helen Sedwick</b>  <b>Using Real People in Your Writing Without Ending up in Court</b>	<p>Author and attorney, Helen Sedwick has represented small businesses and entrepreneurs for 30+ years. Publisher's Weekly 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.</p>
<b>May 9</b> 	<b>Jennifer March Soloway/Literary Associate Victoria Piontek</b>  <b>Query Letters</b>	<p>Jennifer March Soloway is an agent for Andrea Brown Literary Agency. She represents authors and illustrators of picture books, middle grade, and young adult stories. She specializes in children's literature. Jennifer also represents adult fiction, both literary and commercial, particularly crime, suspense, and horror. She has worked in marketing and public relations in a variety of industries. Jennifer has an MFA in English and Creative Writing from Mills College. In 2012 she was a fellow at the San Francisco Writer's Grotto. Jennifer regularly presents at writing conferences all over the country.</p>
June	TBD	

If you've heard a great speaker on writing/publishing/editing, email Jill Hedgecock at [hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net)





## ***Attend the Mt. Diablo Writers Table gathering at 11:15 before the meeting.***

Brought to you by **John Marvin & Bill Stong**

### **November 14**

Join our discussion before lunch on Saturday for a practical and personal topic:

#### **Writing a Memoir - *Is it for you?***

*What is your story?*

#### ***Logistics:***

- **Begins:** 11:15 a.m. (there will be table signs directing interested members to the table)
- **Topic:** *Writing a Memoir - Is it for you?*
- **Discussion Leader:** Barry Hampshire
- **Summary:** Writing a memoir – is it for you?  
 “You may think not, but most of you are writers and I believe every writer has a memoir in them. So, what is a memoir?  
 How do you begin the journey?  
 What are the steps?  
 How do you face that doubting inner voice?  
 Why would people read it?  
 What is your story?  
 There are many unknowns, but overcoming them is extremely rewarding. If I can do it, then I have confidence that you can too. Overcoming the hurdles of writing a memoir has opened my world as a writer to avenues that I never thought possible.”

Please join Barry Hampshire as he shares his journey—figuratively and literally—to writing a memoir.

**December 14** – No Writers Table due to our festive seasonal meeting

**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** – International Writing: “It’s A Whole Big World Out There”  
 A Panel with: Dita Basu, panelist TBD, panelist TBD

**May 9**– No Writers Table due to workshop

**June 13**– TBD





## 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 Oct 2019

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

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

**Linda Hartmann**

**James Hasse**

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

**Kathy Urban**

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

**Lee Paulson**

**Howard Weissman**

**Susan Lawson**

**Bill Stong**

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

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

**Judith Ingram**

**Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff**

**Fran Cain**

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

**David Alpaugh**

**Patty Northlich**

**Robert Poirier**

**Dita Basu**



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:  
<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/young-writers/>

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: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/young-writers/>



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

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS ANNUAL  
CONTEST**