



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

December 2019

Saturday December 14, 2019—11:00 to 2:00

Win–Win: Writers Helping Writers

Festive Holiday Seated Luncheon

Special Meal Selection:

New York Steak, Salmon, Chicken Parmesan, or Pasta Primavera

THREE OF OUR OWN

Marianne Lonsdale, Colleen Gonzales & Charla Gabert



Marianne Lonsdale — Author Interviews

What I've learned from doing 9 author interviews published on Literary Mama.

How I landed my first interview.

Key learnings about how to do interviews.

Colleen Gonzales — Anthologies

The Whole Project - Remember you are part of a big picture.

Standing Up for Your Piece - Editors are there to help you shape the story you want to tell.

Improve Your Social Media / Promotion Skills - If you're a new author, or unfamiliar with the promotional side of publishing, working with a group can expose you to new learning opportunities.



Charla Gabert — Podcasts

What is a podcast, anyway?

How to record, publish, and promote your podcast.

How to use podcasts to promote your book.

Sign-in 11:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. **Members display and sell their books** until our Seated Luncheon
12 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. Speakers 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant: 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.
\$25 members, \$30 guests.

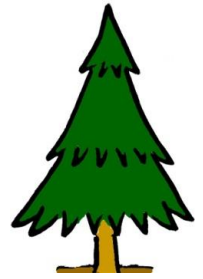
Reservation deadline: noon, Wednesday, December 11th. To reserve a spot, go to the CWC Mt. Diablo website at:
<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/> Website, <http://cwcmtdiablowriters.org>

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

Improvements to our #NewsFlash Policy



One important function of our venerable Club is to promote and advertise our events and member accomplishments to the world. We perform this through our monthly newsletters, web site pages, and regular #NewsFlash email distributions. In the past several months our Mt. Diablo board members have made significant changes to our #NewsFlash policies and procedures. All members should be aware of these changes because they affect you.



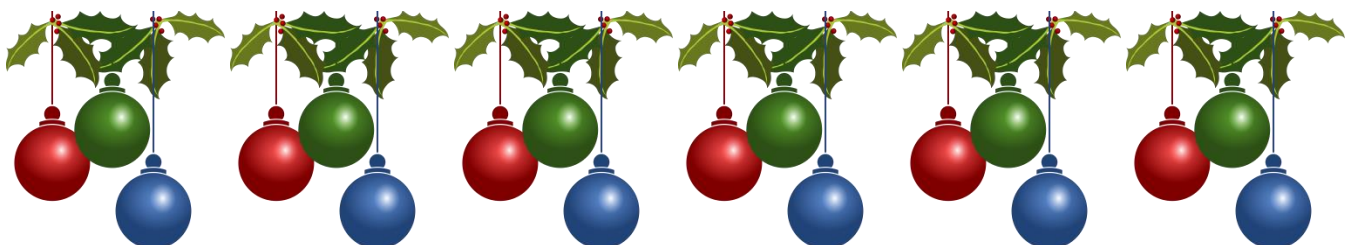
Why did our branch board make these changes? Historically, #NewsFlashes and their predecessor, TidBits, announced and promoted upcoming branch or Club events and regional events that our member writers would be interested in attending. Branch policy did not allow for member's personal events, such as book launch gatherings, new book availabilities, or other member announcements. The "Member Events, News, and Salutes" section of the monthly newsletter and our web site "Members Benefits" page announced private member news and events.

The branch board has decided to announce your private member events in our #NewsFlash emails also. Two #NewsFlashes, one near the middle of each month and one near the end of the month, will be dedicated to member announcements and events. If you are holding a book- or writing-related event or have writing-related news to share with the membership, email it to President@cwcmtdiablo.org

The #NewsFlash publishing team, Linda Hartmann and I, will accumulate member announcements and publish them in the next dedicated #NewsFlash if they conform to our publishing standards. Book launches, new book availabilities, or private writing workshops are good examples of qualifying content. Please give us plenty of time to promote your event or availability and keep the twice-per-month publishing schedule in mind.

Email me if you have questions about other types of candidate announcements. The board has authorized the branch president to determine the suitability of member announcements. Feel free to take advantage of our newest member benefit – full branch email communications! And don't forget to also send your info for the newsletter to writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org

**REMEMBER TO BRING BOOKS YOU'VE WRITTEN TO
DISPLAY AND SELL AT THE DECEMBER MEETING.**



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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.) We meet 10:00 -11:00 before regular meetings unless there's a workshop. This is your branch too, and volunteer organizations can always use helping hands and new ideas.

Next board meeting: Jan 11, 10-11:00am Zio Fraedo's.



To communicate with a branch chair go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/> and find the most appropriate category to contact.



Member Events, News, and Salutes



If you have an event, news, or a salute to share, please send to

writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org

Writers Table Schedule for 2020 thru June:

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, Susan Berman, Deborah Greenberg

May 9 – No Writers Table due to workshop

June 13 – Travel & Writing: *Travel imbues your writing with authenticity and interest*
A Panel with: Barbara Bentley, Jill Hedgecock, Bill Stong



Writers Table History

How appropriate that Barbara Bentley will be on a panel for us in June 2020 since she was the one who came up with the idea of Writers Tables when she was secretary. Lee Paulson was president at the time and held several meetings to gather new ideas for the branch. As seen in excerpts from Barbara's email below show, she had her thinking cap on. Lee then implemented the idea of Writers Tables and Bill Stong and John Marvin have continued with excellent programs. Following are excerpts from Barbara's original thinking on the plan.

The "panel" is not a panel—if that makes sense—Writers Tables could be an informal area (Writing Spoken Here) where several members can share information about their writing journey. It could foster conversation and education: more benefits for our members. It's true that the time before the meeting is for social interaction. And for us long-time members it's just that. But what about a new member? Or a guest who's alone? It's hard to approach strangers, especially ones talking in a group, and feel part of the conversation. It's nice that we have our official greeter but once someone is inside the room, the new person may feel intimidated. Writers Tables are a way to provide interaction for people who may come alone or are new to the group, or for members who just would like to pick up some pointers from someone with whom they normally wouldn't talk.

The germinating thought is to have a table where two to three pre-selected members can have a sign with their name and genre/expertise. Table participants could include someone looking to form a critique group or someone looking for members with the same interest (say poetry, for example.)

It may be a way to provide an additional benefit to members who have something to share but who may/may not be published and, if published, not part of the December program.

Cheers,
Barbara



Unsplash: Free Photos You can Use by Marlene Dotterer

As writers and publishers, we are always looking for photos to use on our website, blog, or book covers. Elana O'Laskey of the Lamorinda Arts Council told me about a website where you can find free photos as well as the permission to use them.

<https://unsplash.com/>

Joining Unsplash is free; using photos is free. You don't have to credit them, but it's kind to do so. Here's a link to their "License" page and a print out of what it says below:

<https://unsplash.com/license>

"All photos published on Unsplash may be used for free. You can use them for commercial and noncommercial purposes. You do not need to ask permission from or provide credit to the photographer or Unsplash, although it is appreciated when possible.

More precisely, Unsplash grants you an irrevocable, nonexclusive, worldwide copyright license to download, copy, modify, distribute, perform, and use photos from Unsplash for free, including for commercial purposes, without permission from or attributing the photographer or Unsplash. This license does not include the right to compile photos from Unsplash to replicate a similar or competing service.

Questions? [Read our FAQ.](#)"

I do suggest you read the FAQs, especially regarding book covers. If the photo you want to use shows someone's face or has a visible brand name or trademark, you may need more specific permissions.

Check them out and see if they'll be useful for you.



Drawing for Mt. Diablo Members

Print, write your name, 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.

December 2019 coupon

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

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.





2020

Our Upcoming Programs

Jan 11 	Victoria Zackheim <i>The Acorn: Turning Ideas into Prose</i>	<p>We've all been struck by that acorn—that nut of an idea—but what to do with it? We'll explore how one little idea....an acorn of an idea...can be nurtured and developed into many media. Does that idea about Grandmother's jewelry, or the indiscretion you never wanted revealed, or the risk you took when you were beyond middle age work best as a short story or poem, a feature film or a documentary, an essay, memoir, novel, theater play?</p>
Feb 8 	Rick Acker <i>Keeping it Real: Creating Tension with Believable Plot Twists</i>	<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>
Mar. 14 	Penny Warner <i>Writing Dialogue</i> WORKSHOP	<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>
Apr. 11 	Helen Sedwick <i>Using Real People in Your Writing Without Ending up in Court</i>	<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>
May 9	TBA	
June 13	Jennifer March Soloway/Literary Associate Victoria Piontek <i>Query Letters</i>	<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>

Summer break in July and Aug

Sept 12	Kevin Fisher-Paulson	
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If you've heard a good speaker on writing or publishing, contact Jill Hedgecock: hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net

**Scholastic Art & Writing Awards
Fundraiser for our branch
-Marlene Dotterer**



Autumn and early winter bring more than just holidays. It's also time to help judge the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, a national contest for students in grades 7 – 12. This is our fourth year participating in the contest. At last count, fifteen of our members have signed up to help judge the entries. We could use a few more volunteer judges or back-ups in case we need more help.

Not only is this a great opportunity to interact with people in the national level of the writing industry – it's also a way to earn funds for our branch. The Scholastic organization pays our branch \$2,500 for our participation. The branch uses these funds for our local Young Writers Contest for middle school students.

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 for professionals to review. The students receive recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships. Scholastic Awards discovered some of our nation's most celebrated writers when they were teens including: Truman Capote, Sylvia Plath, Joyce Carol Oates, and Stephen King, and others.

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)	

Linda Hartmann is coordinating judges for the contest. If you can help, please email her at lindadhartmann@gmail.com. Be sure to tell her which categories you prefer to read.

Linda and I will teach you how to navigate Scholastic's online system and provide criteria for judging. It's fun and easy! Your work is done online and on your own schedule. The judging period runs from December 28, 2019 – January 10, 2020.

Thank you to everyone who can help. The funds you earn for the branch help us put on an exciting and enjoyable Young Writers Contest and awards ceremony for Contra Costa middle school students.

All the best for the season to all

Call for Submissions – No Agent Required!

Vinspire Publishing (Judith Ingram's publisher) is looking for romances featuring mature couples—ages 45 and older. Most sub-genres are welcome, including romantic suspense, contemporary romance, inspirational romance, and historical romance. Vinspire publishes only clean romances; no erotica, please.

VP will be open for *un-agented* submissions beginning January 15, 2020. For details and complete submission guidelines, visit <https://getvinspired.wordpress.com/2018/12/20>.

MEMBER BENEFIT

Members of CWC-Mt. Diablo,

Please take advantage of the new FREE benefits and invite interested writing friends to join you for these exciting and educational events. We are writers who help writers. Join us to share and enjoy others sharing with us. If you have feedback, please share that.

Ideas for additional Writing & *You!* sessions that would interest you? Let Bill and John know!
We are doing our best to make your membership matter. Enjoy!

Writing & *You!* Two New Sessions in December 2019 described below

Diagramming 101 DATE: Saturday Dec. 7 TIME: 10 AM- noon

Self-Publishing Through Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)

DATE: Wednesday Dec. 11

TIME: 6-8 PM (evening)

LOCATION FOR BOTH EVENTS: JFK/National University Room 116
100 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

COST: Free as a benefit of CWC membership. Bring your interested friends!

RSVP to either:

william.a.stong@gmail.com

jsmarvin8484@gmail.com



Diagramming 101: John Marvin and Bill Stong- *A picture yields a thousand right-on-the-money words.*

In your writing, have you ever become stuck on something that had to be figured out, or you weren't moving on? Did your brain seem to have stripped its gears? Bring that problem to this seminar.

Sometimes the right diagram, chart, or thought-process can help work through these roadblocks. Being specific about the pieces of the puzzle can help break the logjam and get you back on track.

The session contains:

- An overview of the techniques that can help with various writing challenges.
- Examples
- Interactive activities focused on using the most techniques—all using examples from *your* writing.

Have a problem that has you stumped? Bring it along. Maybe the group can shed some light on it!

Bring a pen or pencil, paper or parchment, laptop, tablet, iPad (+ your fingers or a stylus)

Your creativity and, BYOP: Bring Your Own Problem.

Self-Publishing Through Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP): Andrew Benzie

Topics covered will include cover design and branding, interior layout, ISBN numbers, pricing and royalties, print-on-demand, KDP, Amazon, Ingram Spark, and eBooks.

How to Self-Publish: With the availability of the Internet, print-on-demand technology, and electronic book formats, there has never been a better time for authors to publish their work. Andrew will discuss the steps involved to self-publish your book. Topics covered will include cover design and branding, interior layout, ISBN numbers, pricing and royalties, print-on-demand, KDP, Amazon, Smashwords, Ingram Spark, and eBooks. Andrew will also provide tips for online marketing strategies including websites, blogs and other social media.

Join us for an evening presentation, discussion, and Q&A

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 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: 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



In Memorium

Jil Plummer

On October 19 this year, Jil held a successful launch of her fourth book. Although she was suffering from brain cancer, she welcomed everyone and took pleasure in signing books. Jil had decided against treatment for the cancer and passed away in November 21, 2019, shortly before her birthday. There was a private celebration of her life on the 23rd.

Originally a Vancouver Island, Canada native, Jil and her husband traveled the world for his work as a photographer. They had the privilege of living in several countries some of which became the inspirations for settings in Jil's books.



Following is a tribute to Jil written by Dita Basu

"The last leaf has fallen," Margie Witt wrote us in an email on November 21, 2019. "Jil passed away this morning. A couple of days ago Jil looked out the window, staring at the auburn foliage of a tree in her garden. "

"Remember that O'Henry story 'The Last Leaf?'" Jil asked.

Margie Witt, our dear friend and a neighbor of Jil's who visited her regularly with In and Out burgers and soft boiled eggs in hand, (just the way Jil wished) noticed that the single leaf of that tree that had been hanging tight, had fallen.

Six years ago, it was my first day at CWC. I was shy and uneasy entering a room full of strangers, partying. A lady in red ringlets and a big smile invited me to sit next to her.

"Jil Plummer," she said, stretching out her hand.

I was looking for an editor, a critique group, and some good writer friends. Jil gave me all.

She invited us--five writers and critique friends--into her Lafayette home. Pendragons she named us.

We all looked forward to these Wednesday afternoon meetings every other week. There would be a bowl of popcorn beside our seats and Jil's open arms. Always.

A tribute to Jil cont'd

Even at the end, when she could not sit with us and curled up in a sofa in the next room, she insisted that we came to her home. She loved hearing our voices, listening to our reading and chattering.

She gave me confidence in my writing voice. As a bilingual, bicultural writer, when I felt shaky she gently corrected my preposition flaws, the 'in' to 'on' and so on but cautioned me, "Don't you lose your accent, Dita."

She pointed to my strengths that I was unaware of and guided me how to polish and shine them when I cringed with hopelessness. And not just me, Jil was marvelous at finding the strengths in each of us. We all felt it. All five of us. Later, from the people who knew her closely, I learned that it was Jil's style.

There were times when I felt worried for my wonderful friend handling that sickness, living all alone. Jil had no children, no siblings -- a lonely widow -- I thought. She smiled guessing something. Her blue eyes twinkled.

"I'll be fine, Dita. Don't worry," she said one day touching my arm. Moments later she sprang up, "Bring your *payesh*, that Indian rice pudding thing you make," clapping like a little girl.

"Let everyday be an adventure" was her motto. That was Jil. With humor and zest she told us stories of training horses in England, her marathon running ventures and off-Broadway shows in New York.

How wrong was I thinking that she was all alone! On November 23rd, Jil's birthday, two days after her passing, her neighbors threw an impromptu celebration for her in the Leigh Creekside Park in Lafayette. I was not familiar with the place, but chatters of a huge crowd from blocks away steered me to the right spot.

People from all walks of life whose souls she had touched and illuminated flocked and shared stories. Those stories, though very different, all had the same message, the same theme: Jil was deeply interested in me, what I was doing, about my life, my family. She was thoroughly interested in life.

Our Pendragon writer friend Ken Kerkoff summed it up nicely from another angle. "**Jil taught us an important lesson about writing. Unless you are deeply interested in the characters around you, how would you write those three-dimensional characters?**" She showed it with her life.

I feel honored that I met her and will cherish her gift- the memories of these six years



(Ed note: If you walk the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail between Foye and Hawthorne Drives, Lafayette you'll pass a **tree laden with birdhouses**. That is at the back of Jil's house. The collection may have begun with her husband placing one there then walkers adding the myriad now on view.)