

The Write News



A Monthly Newsletter
Elisabeth Tuck, editor

February 2020

BRANCH MEETING AND LUNCHEON

February 8, 2020 - 11:00 am to 2:00 pm



Keeping it Real:

Creating Tension with Believable Plot Twists

featuring
Rick Acker

Veteran suspense author Rick Acker provides tips for creating plot twists that work--and knowing which ones won't.



Rick's talk will include:

- The essential elements of believable twists that will keep readers on the edge of their seats.
- Red flags that warn you a twist won't work.
- A Hall of Fame: famous twists that worked & why
- A Hall of Shame: famous twists that didn't work & why

Rick Acker writes novels during his commute to and from his real job as a Supervising Deputy Attorney General in the California Department of Justice. His unit prosecutes corporate fraud lawsuits of the type described in his #1 bestseller, *When the Devil Whistles*. Rick has led investigations and lawsuits that made headlines in and out of California. 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. When Rick isn't writing or lawyering, you can usually find him with his wife, Anette, and their four children. They'll be exploring in the hills east of San Francisco, watching a good movie together, or, of course, reading.

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, Feb. 5, 2020.** 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

Meet our New President



Last March, our venerable branch faced a challenge. Marlene Dotterer, who had been president of our branch for three productive years, needed to step down in order to find more time to write. Elisabeth Tuck, another honored past-president, Marlene, and I met with Linda Hartmann at a coffee shop to discuss options. Linda was new to the branch board and did not have a full understanding of what it takes to manage branch operations. But she also brought to the meeting a great deal of enthusiasm, energy, and new ideas – good signs of leadership potential.



We all agreed on a mentorship plan for Linda. It included several members bringing Linda up to operational speed as quickly as possible without burning out her bright light of enthusiasm. That plan included Linda becoming our Vice President, who has visibility into all of the branch's operations, taking the role of "Communicator-in-Chief", responsible for regular NewsFlashes, managing our National Scholastic Contest judging, and helping out in several capacities with our Young Writers Contest (YWC.)

Whew! Linda accepted a lot of responsibility and time-consuming tasks. The good news is that she has successfully accomplished all she was asked to take on and is fully immersed in the YWC. In my leadership years, which go back to 2004 and include state leadership, I have not seen this type of mentoring plan work as well as it has at our branch. And the kudos belong to Linda.

As a result, we are on track for me to resign as branch president during the February meeting as planned, and for Linda to replace me as interim branch president. We will swap these roles quietly and without pomp, at least until she runs on the new slate of officers in our formal election by branch members in June. I and our other board members will continue our assistance and support throughout the spring, and into the future.

One really needs to be president of a well-run organization such as the CWC Mt. Diablo branch to realize how much talent, support, and responsibility exists in our seasoned board. And how much each one of us supports others in so many ways. I am confident that Linda will continue the history of successful leadership, with the competence of our current board members at her elbow. Please join me in welcoming Linda as our new president!

CONTENTS

- p. 3 Invitation to Join Board Meeting; Member Events News & Salutes: Jill Hedgecock
- p. 4 Our Upcoming Programs
- p. 5 Writers Tables
- p. 6 San Francisco Writers Conference; *Literary Review* Reminder
- p. 7 Young Writers Contest
- p. 8 Young Writers Contest Donor Page



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 sometimes 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: Feb 8, 10-11:00 a.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 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 and we'll put the info here. writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org



Jill Hedgecock and her dog Charlie appear in *The Bark* digital magazine along with Jill's article about dog agility training. <https://thebark.com/content/top-five-reasons-why-sport-dog-agility-awesome>



Jill writes many articles for magazines—even without pay. It's a good way to practice good writing and to get your name out there. Undoubtedly, the magazines don't come to her. Jill inquires or submits articles to publications looking for content.

Our Upcoming Programs for 2020

Click here to **sign up for the February 8 meeting**: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>

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 WORKSHOP <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	
----------------	-----------------------------	--

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

Drawing for Mt. Diablo Members

Print this page, write your name on the coupon, cut it out, attend the February 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.

February 2020 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: _____

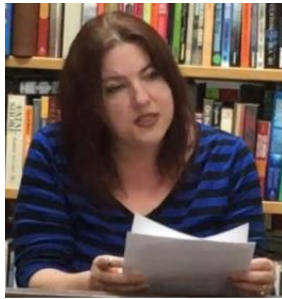
Must be present to win!

Writers Table for February 2020

Begins at 11:15 a.m.

February 8, 2020 – Even When the Content is Not Precisely Your Genre: *You don't know what you might learn.*

Presented by:



Kymberlie Ingalls



Elisabeth Tuck

Have you ever scanned the title of an event and thought “not my genre” or, if you’d prefer a more literary turn, “not my cup of tea.” If a person with those thoughts then wanders off to do something else or nothing at all, they won’t know what they’ve missed. Sure, a topic might not be exactly what you’re looking for, but as Elisabeth points out, “Even if you’re not writing children’s books, what if you are going to include children in your writing in whatever genre you write?” Expand that thought and understand that you can learn from any activity, presentation, experience you have.

Not a poet? Listen to a poet speak about poetry and see how they pick words carefully, express emotion, set scene. All those abilities are needed for whatever kind of writing you do.

Not a travel writer? Listen to a travel writer and learn how to make setting come alive.

And so it goes!

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

June 13 – No Writers Table due to workshop





2020 SAN FRANCISCO WRITERS CONFERENCE

LOCATION: Hyatt Regency Embarcadero

Main Conference: Thursday, February 13th through Sunday, February 16th, 2020

Celebration of Craft, Commerce and Community for Writers

<https://sfwriters.org/>

Keynote speakers: Jonathan Mayberry, Walter Mosley and Brooke Warner

Because the **California Writers Club's** (CWC) mission statement mirrors that of the SFWC, we are able to reach out to many of the same writers who are seeking help, support and encouragement in their writing by providing them with information about CWC.

This is CWC's eighth year at the conference as an exhibitor. We display our eye-catching banner, a tri-fold display of some of our member authors' book covers, and our CWC brochures.

Initially this year the conference offered the Club 2 passes for the all-day Saturday poetry summit. Due to Carole's negotiations, they are now offering 2 passes per branch. Travel, accommodation, and food expenses will be the responsibility of the attendees.

CWC will staff an Ask-the-Pro booth where attendees can briefly ask questions and obtain answers.

Additionally, CWC will staff a panel discussion titled, "Book Written, Conference Attended, Notes Taken...And Now What? The Big Unknown: Plan for It and Succeed."

Panelists include Kim Edwards, Sacramento
 Kristen Caven, Berkeley
 Darlene Frank, SF Peninsula
 Carole Bumpus, moderator

Literary Review Reminder

The deadline for submission is February 29, not March 1

Warning: As of 1/23/2020 the state website, www.calwriters.org, is down and being worked on frantically. That gives you time to polish your submission!

Mt. Diablo Branch's Young Writers Contest 2020

Marlene Dotterer



The Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club proudly sponsors this annual contest 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.

Happy Young Writers Contest to everyone! Yes, it's that time of year again and all the YWC elves... er... volunteers have been busy getting everything ready for opening day. Posters, in both paper format (thank you, John Marvin) and digital, have gone out to schools and parents. An email announcement went to a few hundred teachers throughout the county. I am already receiving emailed questions from interested students and teachers. One teacher wants to use our contest as an assignment for her classes - 184 students! I asked her to please let the students choose their own topics so we don't end up with 184 versions of "I like Orange." Trust me. It has happened.

If you are new to our branch, you may be wondering what the Young Writers Contest is. The Mt. Diablo branch has hosted this contest every year since 1995. It's open to all middle school students who live, or attend school, in Contra Costa County. We offer cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in four categories: Poetry, Humor, Personal Narrative, and Short Story. We usually have around 300 - 400 submissions. These are judged by our own members who volunteer for the job and spend two weeks in April reading their assignments and deciding on winners. In May, we hold a special award ceremony for the winners, their families, and teachers. That is always exciting and fun.

Chloe Laube, under the tutelage of Lyn Roberts, is busy recruiting judges and assigning them to categories. We are planning two training sessions for judges, covering both the judging procedure and the use of Dropbox to access the submissions.

That last bit is a big change this year. We've been using the submission program, Submittable.com, to handle the entries. Sadly, last year their prices shot up and past our budget. Aline Soules (our YWC Submissions Coordinator) and I (YWC Chair and Resident Geek) spent a few weeks creating and refining a comparable program using our own Mt. Diablo website. It's not as fancy as Submittable but it should do what we need, hopefully without confusion for the students.

The catch is this means our judges must use Dropbox to access the submissions they will be reading. Not everyone is familiar with Dropbox, so I've promised to work closely with the non-geeks to make sure their judging experience is a good one. I'm hoping they'll all love Dropbox once they have it. Dropbox users know they will find plenty of uses for it, right?

Submissions opened January 15th. I'm really looking forward to this year's contest.



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**

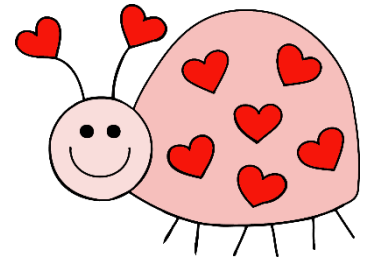
The John Steinbeck Society (\$250 - \$499)

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, CA94507 Attention: Young Writers Contest

