



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

May 2020

Saturday, May 9, 2020—12:30 to 3:00

Virtual Branch Meeting

Writers Table: Travel & Writing (1:15 – 1:45 pm)

Travel imbues your writing with authenticity & interest

Setting the Stage: When Destination Matters (2:00 – 3:00 pm)



Jill Hedgecock: Destination Writing and Research Tips

Jill is an award-winning author of two young adult suspense novels: [Rhino in the Room](#) and [Between-Shadow's-Eyes-Suspense-Novel](#). Her travel adventures have inspired novels set in Hawaii, Peru, and Africa.

She will focus on tips for researching techniques to write accurate destination descriptions. Her talk will cover:

- How to get the details right when you can't visit the place where your scene/poem/novel takes place
- Where to find resources to describe places that no longer exist
- Using setting to inform plot and develop characters

Bill Stong: Writing & Finding Expert Help

Bill Stong is a struggling—but optimistic—writer. His experiences living in Venezuela, South Africa, and Japan have developed into a historical novel set during the largest cultural exchanges in the history of the world: the 1500/1600 Age of Exploration (European), when the paths of Portugal, Spain, Japan, and England crossed around the world.

Bill will focus on tips for finding help in improving scenes and their content. His talk will cover:

- Finding organizations with the knowledge and resources to ensure your scene/poem/non-fiction piece has spot-on details
- Finding SMEs (Subject Matter Experts) with the right knowledge and willingness
- Having a "Council of Mentors"



Mt. Diablo Members will receive an invitation to a Virtual Zoom Meeting.

From President Linda Hartmann



Dear Members,

Is it really possible that it is time to wish all of you a Happy May Day? Well, then – **Happy May Day** to each of you and yours! This year is flying by. Did you know that nurseries are open? They are not open so that you can take flowers to your loved ones and neighbors. That is still NOT a good idea. However, nurseries are open because they have vegetable plants, seeds, and fruit trees, i.e. food. Gardeners in the Club, time to get busy planting.

I am happy to report that our **first virtual meeting** went relatively smoothly, and that as long as we continue to “shelter-in-place” we feel confident that we can keep our CWC-Mt. Diablo community together! We were able to bring in the amazing lawyer and writer, Helen Sedwick, as our Speaker, who presented on “Using Real People in your

Writing, Without Ending Up in Court,” with Jill Hedgecock moderating the thoughtful questions from the attendees during the Q&A that followed. The only hiccup we came across remains unexplained: Helen’s slide show did not launch, as it had done beautifully in two practice sessions. Odd. We continue working to figure that one out. In addition, the very exciting *Writers Table* took place on the topic of “International Writing: It’s a whole big world out there” moderated by Bill Stong, and featuring Dita Basu, Susan Berman, and Deborah Greenberg. Thanks to the panelists, who did a really super job, and to each of you who attended and participated, as your questions made a huge difference in enhancing the on-line experience! At one point there was an audience of 56 people, which is in line with a typical meeting at Zio Fraedo’s!! Very nice...

Our **next General Meeting** will take place on May 9th from 12:30 pm – 3:00 pm. There is more information about this in this newsletter. Of note, I will be using a part of the Business Portion of the Meeting to address the **Slate of Officers** that will be needed for the new fiscal year from September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. You will be (and are) encouraged to forward your nominations (or yourself as a volunteer) for position to Barry Hampshire, Chair of the Nominations Committee, at hampshireb@gmail.com. The actual vote for the slate will take place at the June meeting. Over the summer, should there be any **new officers or chair members**, they will learn as much as possible about their new roles and will begin them Sept. 1, 2020 officially after the July-August 2020 break. Should anything arise within the Club during this summer break, it will be up to the current Slate of Officers to decide how best to handle it.

I look forward to “seeing” you virtually at the next General Meeting. Look for details inside. Please know that guests will be welcome at this and ongoing virtual meetings.

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Important Message to All CWC Mt. Diablo Members – Please Read!



For our next monthly meeting, Saturday, May 9th from 12:30 to 3 p.m.:

Once again in acknowledgement of our shelter-in-place order and to keep our membership safe, we will host the May 9th meeting by Zoom video webinar.

Members will receive registration information via #NewsFlash from branch President Linda Hartmann. After you register, you will receive an email with the link to join the meeting on Zoom.

If you attended the April meeting, it will be the same. All attendees will be able to watch and listen on their computers or smartphones assuming they have a camera, or they may listen through those devices. The last option is to phone in with land line phone or non-smart phone and listen to the meeting.

Questions may be asked by using the CHAT function on Zoom from a computer or smart phone.

Agenda for CWC Mt Diablo May 9th Meeting Webinar:

Action	Start Time	End Time
Registration (logging in)	12:30 pm	12:45 pm
President's remarks, business	12:45 pm	1:15 pm
Writers Table: "Travel & Writing: Travel imbues your writing with authenticity & interest." A Panel with: Jill Hedgecock and Bill Stong Moderated by John Marvin	1:15 pm	1:45 pm
Main Presentation/Q&A Setting the Stage: When Destination Matters Jill Hedgecock: Destination Writing and Research Tips Bill Stong: Writing and Finding Expert Help	2:00 pm	3:00 pm

Here are Zoom instructions to review:

1. If you have watched a webinar online, or used GoToMeeting, that's exactly what this is.
2. You don't need a Zoom account to join a meeting. You don't *have* to download anything, although you *can* download a Zoom app for free if you want to.
3. You can join a meeting on your computer, tablet, or phone.
4. To watch and hear the talk, you need a **camera** and **microphone** on your computer, tablet, or phone.
5. We will provide a link to join the CWC May 9th meeting webinar.
6. Click on the link.
7. You'll see a screen asking you to "Open Zoom Meeting?"
8. Say or click "Yes."
9. You may see a screen asking you to allow Zoom to access your microphone and camera.
10. Say or click "Yes."
11. If you are early and the meeting hasn't started yet, you'll see a screen telling you the meeting will start as soon as the host arrives. For this meeting, I am the host. Just leave the screen as it is. When I start the meeting, the webinar will automatically start.
12. You should be able to see the host on your screen. You might need to make sure your camera and microphone are ON. You will be able to turn your camera and microphone off (mute) also. I will troubleshoot problems as quickly as I can. Please don't give up if something is not working.
13. Use Chat on the screen to ask questions.
14. If you aren't seeing or hearing anything at all, send me a text, or call, at 925-212-1859.

Questions beforehand? Email me: cmdotterer@gmail.com.



Member Events, News, and Salutes

William Martin

My latest book was just published. *Life in an Ivory Tower: A Coming of Age Memoir (San Francisco: The Luxury of Eccentricity)*

"Sometimes the only way through is over the top."

You're nineteen years old and you just landed on your own in 1970s San Francisco.

It's a wildly eccentric place, perfect for exploring who you are, coming to terms with who you were, and creating who you want to be.

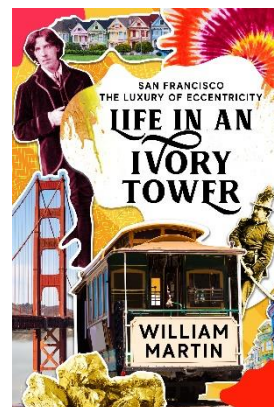
Trevor Oliver Taddich III isn't just trying to define who he is as an adult, he's learning how to live outside the shadow of his influential family, as a gay man refusing to be closeted.

Enjoy these memoir snippets that capture the anguish of becoming a man. They will leave you roaring with

laughter, remembering with fondness, and embracing the compassion of one of the most whimsical and wild decades of our time. Enjoy the entertainment as Martin turns *roman à clef* on its ear and into a modern, cutting-edge memoir with the frivolity and panache of a drag queen revue.

Life in an Ivory Tower is the first book in the series, *San Francisco: The Luxury of Eccentricity*, where San Francisco is as much a character as Trevor Oliver Taddich III.


The back cover photo is a painting of William Martin by Michael Hurson circa 1980. Find William's book at: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08762T2W2/ref=tsm_1_tp_tc



who



Our Upcoming Programs for 2020

<p>June 13</p> 	<p>Jennifer March Soloway/Literary Associate Victoria Piontek WORKSHOP <i>Query Letters</i></p>	<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>
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June 13 – No Writers Table due to workshop

Summer break in July and Aug

Sept 12	Kevin Fisher-Paulson	TBD
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We're always looking for great speakers. If you've benefitted from a speaker on writing/publishing/agents/editing, etc, email Programs Chair Jill Hedgecock at hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net



Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason

The purpose of the interviews is to help members of the California Writers Club, Mt. Diablo Branch get to know you, your work, and your thoughts about writing and the writing process. The interview content may be edited before publication in the newsletter.

David George



1. Approximately how long have you been a CWC member and why did you join?

I joined the CWC in January, 2004 as a member of the Berkeley Branch. I was encouraged to join at the time by my writing class instructor, Charlotte Cook, who was active for many years in the Club. I was quickly “volunteered” to be the Berkeley Branch Central Board Rep, then VP. In 2006, I transferred my primary membership to Mt. Diablo, but I held a dual membership with Berkeley for many years.

2. How has your CWC membership and participation on the board helped you or your writing?

Being on the board and president three times (and for three years as state organization president) has allowed development of many friendships with fellow writers all over the state, and relationships with professionals in our field who often speak or conduct workshops at our meetings.

3. You recently published a children’s book. What was that experience like for you?

I wrote *Granddad’s Garden – Stories of the Natural World* over a nine-year period while my own grandson was growing up from three to twelve years old. I would present to him two stories each year, one for his birthday and one for Christmas. The little boy in the story, Jeremy, is my grandson. The garden is my own slice of paradise in Lafayette where he and I explored nature together as he grew. It has been a marvelous and rewarding experience to finally see it in print, and I have been blessed with so many kind comments from its readers.

4. Do you have other published works?

I have published a handful of short stories, personal narratives, and poems over the years, several newspaper articles, and I am currently a monthly all-natural gardening techniques columnist for the *Diablo Gazette* – the *Naked Gardener*!

5. Do you have a website?

Fellow board member and publisher, Andrew Benzie, is currently building it. When finished, it will be found at “www.granddadsgarden.com.”

6. What are you currently working on?

I always seem to have a gardening column deadline looming! But I also have six more *Granddad’s Garden* stories complete—a good start for “*Granddad’s Garden Book 2 – The Teenage Years*”!

7. How have your background, previous work, and/or experience contributed to your writing?

I am a certified UC Master Gardener now, so my knowledge of gardening techniques and fascination with the natural world informs my writing (and columns.) My thirty-five-year high-tech sales career informed many of my short stories, exposing the ironies and humor of business life.

8. What do you like about writing?

Writing frees my mind to travel to and inhabit better worlds, more just worlds. I don’t do a lot of research and just let my writing flow. It helps me escape from our troubling times.

9. Who or what has influenced you the most as a writer?

In terms of pure, in-your-face writing styles, I love absorbing the works of Jack London and Earnest Hemingway. Their books had a heaping dose of the outdoors and of lessons learned by those who ignore nature.

Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason (cont'd) David George

10. How do you define success as a writer?

I've always only wanted to be considered a good writer—by other good writers.

11. What part of the writing process is most difficult for you?

I still have a lot of kinetic energy, even at my ripe age. So, sitting still long enough to write is challenging. I'd rather be outside working around my pond or planting my summer vegetable garden.

12. Do you have any advice for new writers?

I found it especially helpful to me to take writing courses early in my “new” career of writing from seasoned and professional instructors, then honing my craft with liberal input from my critique group writing peers. I would have never felt the confidence I now feel without their help along the way. My advice is to find a great writing instructor and a great critique group, then get to work. Don't write in a closet and then expect great results.

13. What are your future writing goals?

I don't aspire to be a *New York Times* best-selling author. I am comfortable challenging myself for the next sentence I write to be better than the previous. We'll see where that takes me.

Any member may be interviewed by Heidi for the newsletter.

Just follow the link: writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org to let us know you'd like an interview then see your name in print!

WRITERS TABLE – Travel & Writing: *Travel imbues your writing with authenticity and interest.*

A Panel with: Jill Hedgecock and Bill Stong & moderated by John Marvin

Does your short story, novel, or non-fiction piece have a scene that is not where you've ever been?

Our panelists share their experiences and provide insights & tips on travel *<even when you can't get there!>* and its awesome impact on your writing.

Please join us on May 9, 2020 as Jill Hedgecock and Bill Stong share their experiences with, tips for, and the intimate relationship between Travel & Writing. Moderated by John Marvin.



Jill Hedgecock



Bill Stong



John Marvin



Writers Table 2017-2020: A Thank You & a Dedication

We, John Marvin and Bill Stong, volunteered to be Co-Project Leaders for CWC Mt. Diablo Branch's *Writers Table* beginning with the 2017/2018 fiscal year.

We had no idea what we were getting into and perhaps no one else did either. For example, we were given the "Job Description" which mentioned report-outs to the Board of Directors. We asked what needed to be in those reports. Nobody knew. The answer to our question whether we could see a copy of an earlier report was: "Yes, there are."

So, armed with no report, the "Job Description," and our ideas, we jumped in.

It has been an awesome ride. We experimented; we learned a lot; we were able to meet members in ways we would not have before. We want to thank every member of the Mt. Diablo Branch for their enthusiastic support of *Writers Table*, their valuable feedback, their volunteering to host sessions, and—most importantly—their engaged attendance over the eighteen *Writers Table* sessions we hosted. **We also want to especially thank John Schembra for taking over as John (M) and I stumble off into the sunset.** Please give John (S) the same wholesale support that you gave us.

The talent, helpfulness, and downright friendliness of the Mt. Diablo membership is exhilarating. Thinking over the past three years and all that had to happen to make running the program so rewarding for us, we would like to dedicate those three years to Jil Plummer.

When we approached Jil to be on one of the panelists, she enthusiastically accepted. Somewhat later, before the session was in preparation, we received an email that, we think, epitomizes the person Jil was, the writer she was, and the spirit that makes the Mt. Diablo Branch so special:

Sep 24, 2019, 8:55 PM

Hi William, I was really enthusiastic about doing the writer's table but fear I must drop out having recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Not knowing if I'm going to be around very long best you find someone else now. perhaps my ghost will be sitting at the back of the room! Thanks for asking me
Smiles, jil

Sincerely,

John & Bill

Co-Project Leaders (soon to be retired)
CWC Mt Diablo Branch



The Young Writers Contest Thanks to Our Volunteers

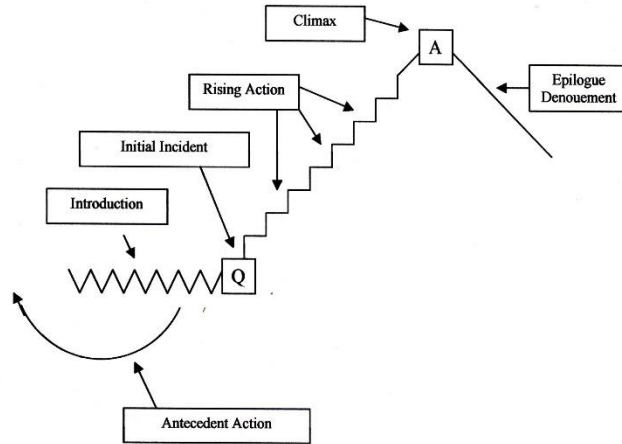
2020 YWC Judges by Category; Asterisk* = Team Coordinator

SHORT STORY

6th Grade Ceci Pugh*
Lyn Roberts
John Marvin
Marianne McBride

7th Grade Jill Hedgcock*
Wendy Blakeley
Barry Hampshire
John Schembra

8th Grade Chloe Laube*
Richard Black
Robin Gigoux
Phyllis Houseman
June Gatewood

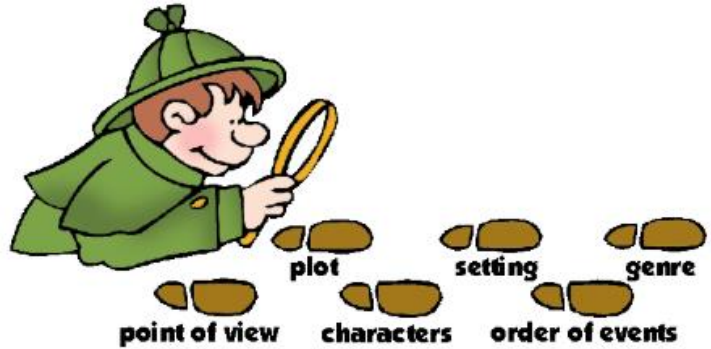


PERSONAL NARRATIVE

6th Grade David George*
Fran Cain
Charla Gabert

7th Grade Margie Witt*
Dita Basu
Ken Kerkhoff

8th Grade Elisabeth Tuck*
Linda Hartmann
Suzy Orpin
Chris Stafford



HUMOR All Grades Susan Berman
Susan Lawson

POETRY All Grades Aline Soules
Anne Damaschino



Aline Soules managed intake and setting up the submissions in our branch DropBox. **Lyn Roberts** and **Chloe Laub** assembled and managed the judging teams. **Marlene Dotterer** is processing winning entries and making awards.

Unfortunately, there will be **no award ceremony this year**. First, second and third place winners will receive checks and honorable mention notices will be mailed as well.

Check out page XX to see the names of members who have donated to our Young Writers Contest and note the fact that, together, several parents of contestants have donated \$180.



Slate of Mt. Diablo Branch Officers for 2020-2021

Thank you to Barry Hampshire, the CWC Mt. Diablo nominations chair, for pulling together the following slate of officers for the fiscal year September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 for Mt. Diablo members' consideration. Voting will be conducted during the June 13 meeting.

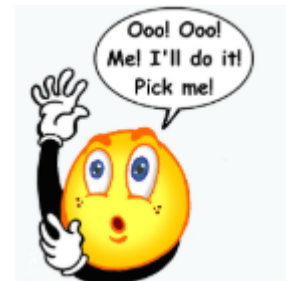
President:	Linda Hartmann (incumbent)
Vice President:	David George (incumbent)
Treasurer:	Lucy Hart (incumbent)
Secretary:	Greg Coplans (new)

We wish to thank Judy Ingram and Dot Edwards for stepping in as secretaries and doing incredible jobs during a time of great need for the Board.

Greg Coplans has some well-suited experience for the office of secretary; primarily 13 years as secretary to the board of the corporation he worked for, followed by secretary and board member for the nonprofit, We Care Services for Children, until just a few years ago.

Anyone may volunteer to run for any of these roles. We ask that you announce your interest in running at the May 9, 2020 meeting, or by contacting Barry Hampshire at hampshireb@gmail.com to learn more about the roles and responsibilities involved, or to announce your candidacy.

This slate above or an amended one will be presented at the June 13, 2020 general meeting for the members' final vote.



CWC Membership Renewal Time

As we approach the end of the CWC year, despite COVID-19 hampering our attempts at normalcy while we try to stay safe, I want to remind you all that the time to renew your CWC membership is fast approaching.

I appreciate that the club has needed to adapt given the changing circumstances in which we need to operate. Unfortunately, we did have to cancel the March meeting while we charted a new course. I hope that the April Zoom session has allowed each of you to feel engaged with the club. The Board will resume club meetings in our normal format as soon as it is safe to do so. I think we all miss the camaraderie of our face-to-face gatherings. We will return to those meetings when we can.

The renewal page will be available on the CWC Mt Diablo website on May 1st. Please sign up and keep the club strong, vibrant, and a place where writers can come together to encourage each other.

The renewal page will be found on and after May 1st at the following link:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/renew-membership/>.



A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit.

Richard Bach, author of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, 1970

Your Mt. Diablo Website: More Than Reservations - Part 2

by Marlene Dotterer

Let's continue with the exploration of our website! Last month, we talked about the menu bar, membership renewal, and the Our Authors page. This month we'll concentrate on just one tab on the menu bar: **THE MEMBER BENEFITS TAB.**

The Members Benefits section exists for members to get the word out about their career and marketing endeavors. Clicking on the menu button brings you to a page with links to various sub-pages representing specific benefits for members. Select the benefit you wish to use.

Another way to get to a specific page is to hover your mouse over the menu button, then select the benefit you want from the drop-down list.

Here's what you'll find:



Author Resources

This page is very much in progress. It is supposed to be a list of editors, book designers, publishers, marketers, and other writing-related vendors. These vendors are either CWC members of any branch or they are recommended by CWC members.

DO YOUR OWN VETTING of a business before hiring! CWC does not endorse or guarantee the work of any business listed here. To list your own business or recommend a business to list: Click on the link "Click here to tell us about it!" Fill out the form and submit it.

Events

Use this page to find or post upcoming local events of interest to our members. These are often your own author events, such as readings, book launches and signings, etc. They can also be community events such as contests, street fairs with author tables, writing workshops or conferences.

If you know of an event, or are hosting one of your own, let us know by clicking on the button, "Add an Event."

If you are looking for something to attend, be sure to check this page.

Member Spotlight

This page is your chance to highlight milestones and celebrations. Have you signed with a publisher or agent? Got a book coming out or an article or story in a magazine? Have you received an award for your writing? Let us know about it here by clicking on the button, "Add Your Spotlight News."

Critique Groups

Improve your writing by joining a critique group. Mt. Diablo member, Deborah Greenberg, will work with you to find or build a group that meets your criteria. Click here to send Deborah your information.

Write News Newsletter

Our newsletter is another great place to spread the news about what's going on in your writing life. Anything you've posted on Events or Spotlight should also be sent to our newsletter editor. You can find that link on the Members Benefits page or by clicking on the menu tab for Newsletter.

Also - use the newsletter to get your writing in front of readers. Submit a story, poem, or article at any time - the editor is always looking for content! Please follow all guidelines for appropriate topics and word count.

Helpful Editor

If you'd like a professional editor's opinion on your work, here's a chance to get feedback. Elisabeth Tuck is our "Helpful Editor." Clicking on this button takes you to a page with guidelines on what and how to submit, along with a link to submit your pages.

Your Mt. Diablo Website: Part 2 (cont'd)

BackFence Forum

This is a Yahoo group forum for members in Mt. Diablo, Tri-Valley, and Berkeley branches. Clicking this button brings you to instructions for joining. You'll need to have a Yahoo account.

That wraps up the **Members Benefits** section. I truly hope this is useful for everyone. Your homework for this month is to use one or more these benefits. We look forward to hearing from you! Also, please let me, or any board member, know if you have suggestions for any part of our website.

Next month I'll talk about the Home Page. You'll be surprised at how much is there.

Contra Costa Health Officer Issues "Cover Your Face" Order

A health department order in Contra Costa County requires anyone working at or visiting an essential business, such as a grocery store or gas station, to wear face coverings to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The order, effective Wednesday, April 22, 2020, also requires public transit and government workers to wear masks when they come close to others, or where the public is likely to be present.

Members of the public must mask when they:

- work at an essential business
- are inside an essential business, such as a grocery store
- visit a healthcare provider or facility
- wait in line for or ride public transportation



Businesses must take reasonable measures, such as posting signs, to remind visitors about masking, and **not serve customers who do not observe the order**. Workers do not need to mask if they are alone in a personal office but must put them on when others enter.

"We now know that a significant number of people with COVID-19 lack symptoms, or become infectious before they start showing symptoms," said Dr. Chris Farnitano, a county health officer. "That is why we all need to start wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where it's sometimes hard to maintain physical distancing, such as standing in line at the store. Stay in place, maintain your space, cover your face. "One key way the COVID-19 virus spreads is through respiratory droplets that people expel when they breathe or sneeze. By masking and observing physical distancing, we can help protect everyone in the community."

The new order does not extend to people driving in personal vehicles alone or with members of their households. Contra Costa residents are encouraged to continue to observe safe physical distancing when they go out to exercise or for recreation. When outside, everyone must carry masks or face coverings and use them whenever they come near six feet of others outside their own households. The new order does not replace the county's stay-at-home health order or the need to maintain physical distancing, wash hands frequently, and cover coughs and sneezes – all fundamental to reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The order does not require children 12 and younger to wear masks. Children 2 years old or younger must not wear them because of the risk of suffocation.

Masks with one-way valves for easy breathing do not qualify as face coverings under the order because they can release respiratory droplets into the surrounding air.

Visit <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/> to read the order or for more information about COVID-19. Visit the Centers for Disease and Control for [video instructions to make and use cloth face coverings](#).

To read this article in full, go to <https://cchealth.org/press-releases/2020/0417-Cover-Your-Face-Order.php>

Members' Short Works

Broken Coffee Cup – by Bob Poirier



Sharon hung up the phone, stared at the broken coffee cup on the kitchen floor, and tried to remember what had triggered the argument.

“You should pick your battles,” her mother counseled when Sharon first told her of the abuse problems.

Funny how it always comes back to being my problem, she mused.

They had been married for almost a year when he first hit her.

“What did you do to provoke him?” her mother asked.

Oh, he was sorry, and cried, and bought her a new diamond and said he would never hurt her again. And she let him back into her life.

The child came almost a year later. She thought it would bond them, and it did – for nearly a year. Then, in a fit of rage, he broke her arm.

This one cost him a new car and a few sessions with a marriage counselor for them and a VA counselor for her.

Sharon was fresh out of junior college on a tennis scholarship when, on a whim, she had stopped at an Army recruiting office near Sun Valley Mall and signed up for a two-year commitment. She still carried shrapnel from a Humvee IED.

“You shouldn’t have to put up with this,” the VA counselor said. “After a combat tour in Afghanistan, and a Purple Heart, you are more than capable of taking care of yourself.” And, in a conspiratorial whisper, “Anything you do to protect yourself will be blamed on combat flashbacks.”

But her husband insisted he was a changed man, and she let him back into her life.

“I won’t let you hurt me again,” she warned.

It was at breakfast; it was always at breakfast.

He wanted the same breakfast every morning – fresh, cold, no-pulp orange juice, two slices of golden-brown toast with one pat of butter on each slice; two eggs over-easy cooked in butter in a 10-inch, six-pound, Lodge cast iron skillet, and freshly brewed coffee.

The coffee was the most critical part of the breakfast. He wanted the pot heated up and emptied before starting the brewing process. Only two cups at a time, so it remained hot.

The smallest thing at breakfast could set him off. He would wordlessly set aside the plate, stand up, and leave the table and the house. She could expect a phone call when he arrived at work, outlining what she had done wrong and how she could correct the problem.

He always ended the call by saying the same thing, “Your clumsiness has ruined my day. Someday it will be the ruin of you.”

Fast forward three years.

It was a Thursday morning after their weekly date night, which consisted of a cheap Chinese take-out dinner and watching a pornographic video. Date night was also his night for sex, culminating with him grunting on top of her for a few moments and then falling asleep. The child would have a date night sleepover with her mother, who lived a few blocks away.

She was making him breakfast before he left for the BART train, and made the mistake of not completely emptying the coffee pot after preheating it.

“This is terrible,” he screamed as he flung the coffee cup on the floor. “Can’t you get anything right?”

Sharon was at the island sink near the kitchen table. She had to go past him to reach the other side of the island. When he stood and started to undo his belt, Sharon realized how serious it was. She scuttled past him as he took off his belt and swung it at her retreating back. The buckle prong caught her on her right shoulder blade and raked a furrow down and across her back. Sharon felt the blood start to pool in the small of her back. She winced from the pain but kept moving around the island.

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

Broken Coffee Cup – by Bob Poirier

“You’re only making it worse for yourself,” he snarled as he followed her. “Stop and take your punishment.”

Sharon had practiced the move. When she reached the large sink, she snatched up the plastic bottle of blue dish soap and squirted the liquid on the floor behind her. When he turned the corner of the island and reached the pool of detergent, his feet went out from under him, and he slipped hard into a sitting position. She could hear his coccyx crack.

“You bitch,” he screamed. “You’ll pay for that.”

While he struggled to get up, she picked up the heavy cast iron skillet and backhanded him on the side of the head.

All those years of tennis practice paid off.

His eyes nearly popped out of his head as he slumped back into a sitting position. The snarl was replaced with puzzlement as he tried to focus on her.

“Die, you miserable prick,” she screamed as she watched the light go out of his eyes. His head fell forward, blood streaming down the left side of his face. His arms fell to his sides as he took several gasping breaths and died.

Sharon heard the sirens and quickly dialed her mother to ask if she could take care of the child for a few days.

Crap, she thought as she dialed. My mother will probably blame me for this too.



I thought to write something today by Kymberlie Ingalls

I thought to write something today because... why not? But I don’t know what to say, and I’m trying to convince myself that I’m not alone. That there are writers worldwide staring into this abyss known as The Quarantine and wondering how to use our words. I expect that there will be a whole new genre to come out of this mess, and people writing stories they never knew they wanted to tell.

It’s odd, being at home yet feeling like a sitting duck. We go for an essential grocery run or my husband requires an occasional trip to a hardware store for a household repair. People having deliveries and taking chances. At any given time, the virus can show up, and we’ll never know from where it came. It’s a faceless enemy, and most of us don’t know how to process that concept. We tend to react by extremes - positivity (denial) or negativity (fear). I have one friend who posts online a handful of times a day with all of the silver linings we need to look for. Another posts throughout each day with the weight of doom on her shoulders.

Then there are the realists like myself. Debates rage on about staying at home, because who in your family do you want to sacrifice? They don’t cotton too well to my response; money rules the world, so which of your family do you want to save?

But this realist is also a philosopher, and I can’t help but wonder what the lesson is here. My belief is nothing happens without reason - meaning that the Universe, God, whatever deity you believe in is slapping us hard with a wakeup call. What is different for you now? Do you think more about your family and friend relations? Maybe you’re finally getting more sleep, or realizing you have been working beyond capacity. Has your creativity found new direction? Perhaps you’ve rediscovered something or someone you used to love. It could be that Mother Earth has finally had enough, needing to breathe for a minute.

Look for the lesson.

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

I thought to write something today by Kymberlie Ingalls

Know that you are not alone, even when it gets lonely. Take care of yourselves. I know with everything in my heart that some stresses are always with us, but I promise whether it comes through joy or tragedy that the lesson exists.

"Hey hidee hi, the good lord willing the creek don't rise and life goes by like the fireflies and the devil sits with a grin."

©□April 15th, 2020 Lyrics: The Firefly Song / Alan Jackson



The HIGH DESERT CWC Branch Announces a Short Story Contest

by Bob Isbill

The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club announces that it will conduct a short story contest with cash prizes on or before December 1, 2020, in an anthology collection. The contest is open to all CWC members in good standing.

The theme of the stories will be about pandemics, past, present or imagined in the future that affect characters in your story and their involvement in and reaction to those disasters. A pandemic, as defined in the theme, is an outbreak of a deadly disease that affects a significant portion of the world's population.

Stories are strictly fiction. Although real-life tales of what you did during the Covid-19 pandemic would probably be interesting, this project is limited to fiction. No memoirs, biographies, essays, or poetry. No politics, no proselytizing.

Maximum word length is 5,000. We will accept **two submissions per member with a non-refundable fee of \$15 per submission**. Pre-published entries are okay as long as you fully own the right to publish it.

Deadline for submission is June 30, 2020. Winners will be notified on, or before, December 1, 2020. Prizes are \$150 for first place, \$100 for second place, and \$50 for third place. In addition, all net profits from the book made through December 31, 2020 will be divided equally among the winners. Checks will be made payable to a charity of the respective winner's choice, or to their branch. Choice will be up to each winner. Those checks will be distributed in January of 2021.

Note: This is not a fundraiser for HDCWC. It is the intention of the branch to give away any and all net profits.

"We offer this opportunity in recognition of the cathartic effect of writing, that in times of disaster, writing is healing and satisfying as we use our minds and hearts to explore ideas and concepts," stated Dwight Norris, President of HDCWC. "When we write we understand things better and bring understanding to our readers as well."

We also recognize that the current pandemic is a tragic event that warrants documentation. Even though the submissions are fiction, they will still provide a legacy, through the imagination of our writers, of this historic occurrence.

Submission guidelines and full details of this project may be found on <https://www.hdcwc.com/cwc-anthology---2020-guidelines-and-forms.html>

Canceled Events

Following are some events previously suggested in the newsletter.

Bay Area Book Festival

previously scheduled for early May

Learn more about the festival's cancellation in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) and [Berkeleyside](#).

[Help the festival return stronger than ever!](#)

Check out our year-round [Women Lit speaker series](#) featuring Eimear McBride, Louise Aronson, and more to come!

Alamo Womens Club Author's Faire

"In light of the Corona Virus Pandemic, **we are cancelling our Sixth Annual Authors Faire scheduled for May 20.** We have rescheduled it with Round Hill Country Club for **Thursday, November 5th, 2020.** We hope that you will join us then."

<https://www.alamowomensclub.org/events/2019-07/sixth-annual-authors-faire>

Board Meetings with Members

The board is meeting online which is difficult as is. If the shelter-in continues, either as an order or an advisable path, we may figure out whether we can invite members to join us. And certainly if you have a specific issue you'd like to bring up, contact our president Linda Hartmann @ lindadhartmann@gmail.com



Zio Fraedo's

[\(925\) 933-9091](tel:(925)933-9091)

611 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Open for Takeout

This is it. The day your dogs have all been waiting for. The day they realize their owners can't leave the house and they get you 24/7! Lol. Dogs are rejoicing everywhere. Cats are contemplating suicide. 😂

We thought we'd have flying cars by 2020.

But no, here we are teaching people how to wash their hands

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 April 2020

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

Susan Berman

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

David George

Linda Hartmann

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

James Hasse

SEVERAL PARENTS OF SUBMITTERS

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

Judith Ingram

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

Danard Emanuelson

Fran Cain

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

Kathy Urban

Sherida Bush

Marianne Lonsdale

Susan Lawson

Chloe Laub

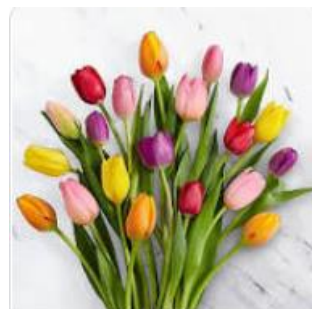
Helen Hunt Jackson Group (\$25 - \$49)

David Alpaugh

Patty Northlich

Robert Poirier

Dita Basu



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

Lee Paulson

Marjorie Witt

Howard Weissman

Bill Yarborough

Bill Stong

Lyn Roberts

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: youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org

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 Memoriam

Susan (Susie) Elizabeth Wilson

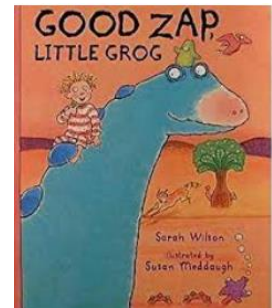
(The first three paragraphs are a tribute from a member who wishes to remain anonymous.)



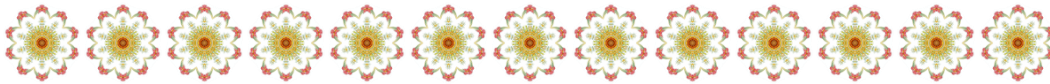
Long-time CWC member Susie Wilson (Sarah Elizabeth Wilson) passed away on March 26th. She was the author and/or illustrator of over 30 books for children, two nonfiction books for adults, newspaper comic panels, a children's newsletter, and poetry. Her books include The Golden Kite Award winner, *George Hogglesberry: Grade School Alien*, *The Day That Henry Cleaned His Room*, *Good Zap*, *Little Grog*, and *Love and Kisses*.



A former social worker and art teacher, she was a co-teacher to CWC's children's writing workshops through the Young Writers Program. As an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, she was instrumental in starting the famed Golden Gate Conference that's held every year at Asilomar.



If you were fortunate enough to sit near Susie at a CWC luncheon, you'd have soon discovered what a kind, giving, and humble person she was, in addition to mentoring so many writers. With her great sense of humor and quirky creativity, she was beloved by both children and adults and will be greatly missed.



From Patricia Newman "Meet Sarah Elizabeth Wilson" <https://www.patriciamnewman.com/kidlit-creators/sarah-elizabeth-wilson-the-rhymer/> Undated

Sarah Wilson wrote and illustrated her first story at the age of four. She remembers putting it together in a small book with help from her mother. By the age of five, Wilson pecked out simple stories on her father's typewriter. And in second and third grade, a few of what Wilson dubs her "little poems" were published in a newspaper and a children's magazine. According to Wilson, "I can't remember a time when I wasn't writing." But in fourth grade, a visiting art teacher planted the seed in Wilson's mind that she could write and draw for a living. "Max was such a gift," Wilson says of the visiting teacher. "He's why I'm so willing to go into schools to speak to kids."

Wilson plays with words as a form of entertainment. She carries a little notebook and scribbles down funny word combinations or words that sound good together. Sometimes she gets a title idea, sometimes a story idea. "There is so much stimulation from every direction, ideas come faster than I can get them down," she says. "Trying to catch them is like catching milkweed down."

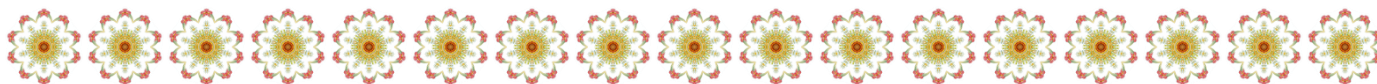
The artist in Wilson visualizes her stories as she writes the words. "It's like I'm watching a movie as I'm writing," she says. Even when she doesn't illustrate her own stories, Wilson knows what her characters are wearing, how they're moving, and the expressions on their faces.

The idea for *Big Day on the River* (Holt, 2003) began with a girl named Willie who wanted to raft down a river alone. "I made up relatives to love her and interact with this idea and started imagining what might happen from there," says Wilson. As she replayed the "movie" of *Big Day on the River* in her mind, she dropped some scenes and added others. "I had a wonderful time playing with the words and dialogue in *Big Day*. People have asked what part of the country the particular way of speaking comes from, but it was all imagined." In Wilson's opinion, Willie is one of her strongest characters. She's adventurous and wants to be independent, but her overprotective relatives are reluctant to let her go.

In Memoriam (cont'd)

Susan (Susie) Elizabeth Wilson

According to the soft-spoken Wilson, one of the perks about her job is visiting with children in schools and bookstores, talking about the books she writes. "I am committed to writing for children," she says, "but I want them to know that I don't pull ideas out of the air and have them accepted. I have to work at it. I may make mistakes and throw stuff away, but I know in the end I'll have something I'm happy with." Whenever she talks to children, Wilson thinks back to the visiting art teacher who made such a difference in her life. "If this is something they want to do, I want them to know they can do it," she says.



Susie's biography on Goodreads

I was born in Syracuse, NY, but most of my early growing up was in Maine and Massachusetts. My mother was an artist and librarian. My father was a Naval engineer who also worked in electronics and liked to put together small inventions, ship models and toys. Each of my parents had a wonderful sense of humor and fun, which made for a lot of happy memories. There were always stories to enjoy around the dinner table, and we sang when we drove anywhere.

We moved a lot with the Navy. I went to 12 different elementary schools and four high schools, which didn't seem unusual at the time. Every spring and fall, I'm still ready to go somewhere and meet new people, although I've lived in Northern California for a long time now. My husband is an architect, and we have two grown children, a son who lives nearby, and a daughter who has special needs and lives with us. No dogs or cats, but we live on a hill and share our back yard with deer, raccoons, possums, skunks and squirrels.

I've been writing and drawing for as long as I can remember - folding, stapling and gluing small books together. I have a BA degree from Ohio University, which let me have a double major in both English and art, and a Diploma in Spanish Studies from the University of Madrid. When I have time, I paint. I also doodle a lot and fill up small notebooks with word play and ideas. I keep two daily journals, one in pictures (cartoons, really), and one in writing. This has been fun.

I've written and/or illustrated over 30 books for children; two non-fiction books for adults, two newspaper comic panels, a children's newsletter, "The Letter Bear," and assorted poetry. I've also worked as a freelance artist and taught workshops. On a nine-to-five schedule, I've been both a medical social worker and a children's art teacher.

Books are a joy, and I feel fortunate to be doing the same kind of happy folding, stapling, glueing and drawing which I loved at the age of five. I'm grateful for The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, for all of the creative people around me, and for my enthusiastic fifth grade art teacher who thought I could be published some day, "...If you'll just keep working and working and working at it!"

