



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

June 2020

VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

June 13, 2020, 12:30 – 3:00 pm

With a Trowel not an Ax: The Gentler Way of Editing

Featuring
Kevin Fisher-Paulson

Inside every journal, every letter, every grocery list, lies the seed of a great poem. Or great prose. But the idea will only grow so far on its own. The writer must be a gardener, ripping out the weeds, pruning the leaves and branches, snipping the buds, until only the best fruit is born of the harvest. With words, the term used is edit. But how to do this?

Kevin has a few suggestions:

1. Don't try to grow tomatoes with a pumpkin seed.
2. Grammar is more important than you think. Treat it that way.
3. Kill your darlings, but save them for transplanting
4. Make courageous friends



Kevin Thaddeus Fisher-Paulson lives with his husband Brian, their two sons, and their three rescue dogs in San Francisco. He is a columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. When not writing, he serves as Chief Deputy for the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. He earned a degree in American Studies from the University of Notre Dame in 1980 and subsequently studied writing with Dorothy Allison, Jessica Hagedorn, and Steve Abbott and has attended courses at the University of Iowa and the University of Oregon. His previous book *A Song for Lost Angels*. <<http://www.fearlessbooks.com/Song.htm>> was published by Fearless Books, and earned a Finalist status three times in two different independent publishing contests. It is now published under his own imprint, Two Penny Press. His new book, *How We Keep Spinning...!* is now available through Two Penny Press, Fearless Literary <<http://www.fearlessbooks.com/Literary.html>> and Amazon.

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

Branch website at: <http://cwcmtdiablo.org>

From President Linda Hartmann



Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that June ends another membership year, and now summer break beckons. We have much to look back on over the past year, and lots to look forward to. Although it may not seem so now, altering our lifestyles with the pandemic still afoot, sheltering in place most of the time, wearing masks as we run our essential errands, missing each other, our friends, and our loved ones, learning to embrace apps like Zoom, we do have much to look forward to.


To start, we have a great meeting planned for you on Saturday, June 13th, sign in on Zoom at 12:30 pm, with socializing in breakout rooms until 12:50 pm, when the business portion of the meeting will begin. This will include the election, with a vote on the slate of officers for the next fiscal year. One wonderful thing is having a say about who and how things run. This is your club, folks, so come on out, meet your candidates, and have your say in the direction of the club. Know whose boats you need to rock when you want to see change or present a new idea.

Next, you will meet a very interesting and popular speaker, Kevin Fisher-Paulson. He is a weekly columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and author of two books, *How we Keep Spinning* and *A Song for Lost Angels*. Read more amazing things about him in the newsletter!

Then stay tuned for a bit of polling, so we can hear from you about what you would like to see more of from your club moving forward.

Have you renewed your membership? If not, it is that time of year again! Although we cannot promise we will be back at Zio Fraedo's on a particular date, we can promise you another year of amazing Speakers, Workshops, and *Writers Table* topics! We have begun arranging the line-up, and if you have special requests, please let me know. Contact email addresses are on the branch website. There has also been an effort toward more inter-branch collaboration, so expect to be invited to some online meetings hosted by other CWC branches during the coming year! There are lots of new ideas we are trying to bring your way, and want to hear yours.

Did you know that the month of June gets its name from the Roman Goddess "Juno?" The name Juno means to rejuvenate, and "to aid". Juno's attributes include energy and creative power. My wish for you this June, and throughout the summer months, are rejuvenation for yourself, to safely aid those around you, energy to meet your needs on a variety of levels throughout this pandemic, and to embrace this time while sheltering-in-place by sparking that creative energy--put it toward your writing, take up painting, listing to your music, tend your garden, read that queue of books, or whip up something unusual with a strange concoction of ingredients in your kitchen! You get my drift... have a wonderful summer and make the best of our situation, for yourself and those close to you, and for our community.

Queue music please... 

We'll see you... in September
 We'll see you... in September.
 Have a good time, but remember
 There is danger, be safe and not blue
 We'll see you, in September
 When the summer's through.
 The coronavirus may keep you inside
 But during these months don't forget to write
 And let us see you, in September

"See You in September" by
 Sid Wayne & Sherman Edwards
 first recorded by the Tempos



***Watch for the September Issue of The Write News to see Our
 Upcoming Programs for fall 2020***

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Important Message to All CWC Mt. Diablo Members regarding the June 13 meeting!

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.



Attendees will be able to watch and listen on their computers, tablets, or smartphones assuming they have a camera, or they may listen through those devices. The last option is to phone in with a 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.

Schedule for CWC Mt Diablo June 13th Meeting:

- 12:30 – 12:50 pm Join meeting and socialize with other attendees.
- 12:50 – 1:15 pm Branch Business Meeting – Linda Hartmann, President
- 1:15 – 2:15 pm Main Presentation featuring Kevin Fisher-Paulson
- 2:15 – 3:00 pm Fun polling, Newsletter overview by Elisabeth Tuck, Newsletter Editor, and Recognition of members' writing achievements

Here are Zoom instructions to review:

1. 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.
2. Click on the link.
3. You'll see a screen asking you to "Open Zoom Meeting?" Say or click "Yes."
4. You may see screens asking to allow Zoom to access your microphone and camera. Say or click "Yes."
5. If you are early and the meeting hasn't begun, you'll see a screen telling you the meeting will start as soon as the host arrives. Leave the screen as it is.
6. 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.
7. Use Chat on the screen to ask questions.
8. If you aren't seeing or hearing anything at all, send Marlene a text, or call, at 925-212-1859.

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





Member Events, News, and Salutes

Tell us about your news or event at:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/tell-us-about-your-member-spotlight/>

Judith Marshall

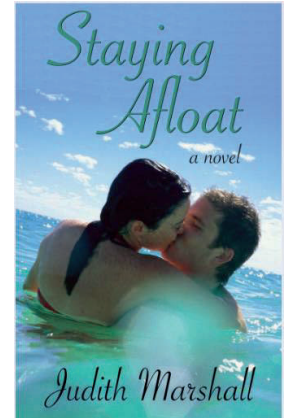
Staying Afloat reveals a year in the life of Crystal Larsen-Crawford, a 40-something wife and mother whose world revolves around carpools and cupcakes. But when her husband loses his job and shows no signs of looking for another, fault lines appear in their marriage.

With mounting bills and fear of a future with a chronically unemployed husband, Crystal searches for a job. Despite having been out of the workplace for over a decade, she lands the position of travel manager for a small dot-com company run by a handsome entrepreneur, who quickly takes a personal interest in her. Dazzled by \$400 business lunches and first class travel, Crystal is swept up in the swirl of the corporate world, and promising herself she can stop at any time, dives headfirst into infidelity.

With a climax that will astonish you, *Staying Afloat* offers an in-depth look at the boundlessness of human desire and the cold limits set by time and circumstance.

Staying Afloat is out in both print and as an ebook. Here is the link to the Kindle and paperback.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=staying+afloat+by+judith+marshall&crd=2SJUFJZ0DNC75&sprefix=staying+afloat%2Caps%2C253&ref=nb_sb_ss_i_4_14



Heidi Eliason



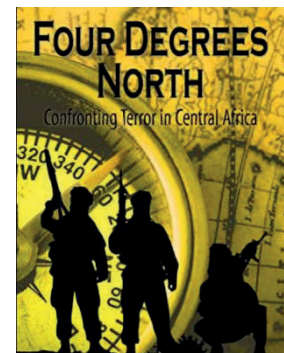
Heidi recently entered into a contract for the Korean translation rights to her memoir, *Confessions of a Middle-Aged Runaway*. An agent at EntersKorea contacted Heidi then proposed and completed the contract and wired the advance from the publisher, The Covered Book.

In time *Confessions* will be available to read in Korean!

Ken Kerkhoff



Four Degrees North, Confronting Terror in Central Africa is a historical fiction that exposes one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world. Ken Kerkhoff lived and worked in Cameroon, and has personal experience with and affection for its people and culture. This novel was released in April 2020 on both KDP/Amazon and IngramSpark.



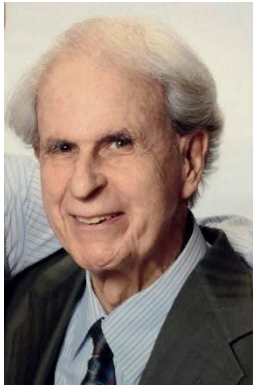
Member Events, News, and Salutes (Cont'd)

Charles Holmes

For Understanding Eyes, a book of poetry, is spiritual, autobiographical "look within the human spirit, a glance at the concrete of life."

Poems include: "Two Hearts," "Stepping With Light," "Blessings Of Age," "Inner Spirit," "Muddling On," "Whispers Within," "Power," "Quiet Courage," "Being Alive," "Radical Middle." "Two Great Spirits 96 Years Old," and "The Second Half of Life." Also, there are some profiles of extraordinary ordinary humans, "Bill Drury," (page 62) who, according to his son, frequently said, "You can know a person by the way he treats people who can't do anything for him," and "George W. Maloney" (page 85), "He was Goodness, Cheerfulness, and made Friendliness an art."

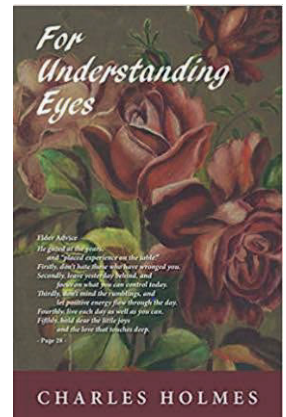
A defining gist is on **page 87**'s poetic effort, entitled



A POET...YES!

He wanted to give crumbs to
hungry minds,
his training,
not having fulfilling job,
empty feeling of abandonment,
hollow years of little emotional
support,
too much time alone,
hampering darkness in a world
where others seem to have light,

relatively no family support for many years,
mother afar a long time ago,
yet always there, as she is now,
(though gravestone reads 50 years gone),
she who kept him going when thunder sounded,
her kind, spirited way
 a memory and a model,
and he, a continuation of her heart,
with plenty of room for his surrogate grandson...
all have converged to guide his ready pen,
all have converged to guide his ready pen.



CWC Membership Renewal Time

As we approach the end of the CWC year, I want to remind you all that the time to renew your CWC membership is upon us.

Mt. Diablo has needed to adapt, given the changing circumstances in which we need to operate. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the March meeting while we charted a new course. I hope that the Zoom sessions have allowed you to feel engaged with the club. The Board will return our meetings to their normal format at Zio Fraedo's as soon as it is safe to do so. I think we all miss the camaraderie of face-to-face gatherings.

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

The names of members who renew before June 30th will be entered into a drawing. The name selected from the drawing entries will win \$25 toward lunch, once we return to Zio Fraedo's. The drawing will take place during our September meeting.

The renewal page can be found at the following link:

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

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2020/2021 meetings.

Barry D Hampshire CWC Mt Diablo Branch – Membership Chair

Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason

The purpose of these interviews is to help the members of the 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. If you would like to be interviewed, contact Heidi through this link: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

Lynn Goodwin

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

I joined years ago. I had published a series of articles in *Dramatics Magazine* and wanted to learn what published novelists knew. It's been at least 25 years. Scary!

2. How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing?

I get new ideas, and I learn how others see things. I found an excellent CWC critique group and got some first-hand publicity experience back when CWC sent press releases to print newspapers. I have also built lasting friendships.

3. You have published several books in different genres, as well as other work in numerous publications. In which genre or format do you prefer to write?

Great question but there's no clear-cut answer. I usually prefer the genre I'm working in. I love running Writer Advice (www.writeradvice.com), which has been serving writers since 1997.

4. Your books have won some awards. Can you share what that process was like?

Each award has a different process for submitting work. I did what they asked me to. The fact that so many different companies have given me awards says something positive about my writing.

5. You have several different publishers for your books. How did you find your publishers, and what was that process like for you?

The best publisher I've found is Koehler Books. I often Google the publishers of books I like—especially those sent to me to review. I looked for the publisher of an award-winning book Story Circle Network's *Gradle Bird*. My book *Never Too Late: From Wannabe to Wife at 62* met their criteria. I sent it to their acquisitions editor and it landed on the desk of a woman who'd been a finalist in one of my Writer Advice contests a couple of years earlier. She'd never seen anything like it, and she recommended it to John Koehler, who owns the company. They've been around a while and they have a solid, substantial business (<https://www.koehlerbooks.com/>).

6. Your website is called writeradvice.com. How do you help writers?

In addition to publishing author interviews, book reviews, and having columns about writing and marketing, we run four contests a year. As I respond to each submission, looking for what works and what trips me up, I reinforce what I know about taking a manuscript beyond its early stages. Writer Advice also has a manuscript consultation service which provides assistance with brainstorming, organization, developmental editing, copy editing, and beyond.

7. What are you currently working on?

I just finished an edit for an independent study student, and am proofreading the text and cover wrap for *Talent* (2nd edition coming out in Oct), and hope to spend time working on *Ruptured*, a sequel to *Talent*. I also have contest submissions to respond to. Every day I work on several things.

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

Probably the best contribution is my background as a drama teacher and director. I use a lot of acting exercises to help me develop three-dimensional characters. When I worked in an adult literacy program, I learned the value of shorter sentences for easier reading.



Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason (cont'd)

Lynn Goodwin (cont'd)

9. *What do you like about writing?*

I like the moments when the writing flows, when unexpected discoveries come as I am typing. There's something about this that I don't fully understand, but it's magical.

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

Maybe it's my husband, who reminds me that you don't lose until you quit trying.

11. *How do you define success as a writer?*

Success is in the eye of the beholder. A writer is someone who writes, and whether writing helps you solve personal problems or contributes to your income, you are a success. Having readers also makes you a success.

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

Sometimes it's hard to manufacture the clay (first draft) before I sculpt it (edits).

13. *Do you have advice for new writers?*

Write daily. Look for the themes that recur. There is more there.

15. *You have a new book coming out. Can you tell us about it?*

In *Talent*, Sandee Mason is convinced her life will change if she can just win applause for her talents—whatever they may be. She can't wait to accomplish something after living in the shadow of her big brother, Bri, who disappeared in Afghanistan months earlier. He left Sandee craving the same attention the town is giving him, even as she wrestles with feelings of loss. When her high school drama department puts on the play *Oklahoma!*, she knows that now is her chance to step out and be noticed. What will she learn about herself as she reaches out to the world?

16. *What are your future writing goals?*

We're in the midst of a pandemic, and I am getting older, so my goals are to tell more stories and find more clients who would like me to edit their work. I might want to do a Sandee Mason story about missing high school graduation because of Covid-19. I want to keep reviewing books. I'll keep doing the Writer Advice contests. I'd like to put together a collection of sentence starts, which I've been writing for a free-writing group over the last 15 years, and I'd like to turn that into a journaling book, maybe with some kind of optional workshop or one-on-one offered at the time of purchase. When *Talent* comes out, I hope I'll find lots of places to talk about it.



Lucinda Jackson

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

I remember as a parent always trying to get my son to network. Surprise—in a role reversal about a year ago, he set up a networking opportunity for me! He has a good friend whose mother is also an author and they thought we should meet. I contacted Jill Hedgecock, she invited me to a CWC meeting, and the rest is history.



Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason (cont'd)

Lucinda Jackson (cont'd)



2. *How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing?*

The main way CWC helps me is by giving me inspiration to keep writing by connection with other supportive authors.

3. *You published a book last year. What is the book about, and what was that process like for you?*

Just a Girl: Growing Up Female and Ambitious is the story of my struggles to succeed as a scientist and executive businesswoman in the male-dominated work world as I faced rampant sexism and harassment. I overcame shame and self-blame, learned to believe in myself, and became a champion for others. My book offers vital American history and solutions for societal change.

Writing a memoir was a wonderful process for me. It gives meaning to something that happened, and it doesn't go where you expect it to go—I highly recommend it! I made new discoveries about myself and about curing our society of sexism that are valuable to me and hopefully to my readers.

4. *The publisher of your book is She Writes Press, which is described as a hybrid publisher. What was that experience like?*

A hybrid publisher is the best of both worlds. You keep your copyright and your voice that you don't have with traditional publishing while at the same time learning a tremendous amount about the publishing business. You are a full partner, step by step, with your hybrid publisher in selection of title, cover, layout, etc. She Writes Press is a particularly good hybrid publisher because they have traditional distribution like major publishing houses.

5. *Do you have other published works?*

Yes, I've published numerous feminist articles—see my website <https://lucindajackson.com>—as well as book chapters and scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals.

6. *What are you currently working on?*

I'm writing my next book about finding freedom and identity and falling in love with my husband again in later life, after a hard-hitting career ends and the kids have left home.

7. *Your previous work and experience contributed to the writing of your memoir. In what other ways has your background or experience contributed to your writing?*

It's kind of funny, but being a scientist, researcher, and business executive affects my writing in this way: I can't help putting some passages in bullets, charts, or scorecards! So *Just a Girl* is a memoir with researched women's history at the end of each chapter and references at the end of the book!

8. *What do you like about writing?*

I like the discipline that it takes to put the whole project together. There are so many parts—the actual writing, publishing, and marketing—I find it all really challenging and fun.

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

My editor, Annie Tucker. She has taught me to be more honest, real, and succinct.

10. *How do you define success as a writer?*

Any writer who finishes a book or article that someone reads is a success.

Be Interviewed by Heidi Eliason (cont'd)

Lucinda Jackson (cont'd)

11. *What part of the writing process is most difficult for you?*
Getting the pieces organized so that all the names, dates, and events match up into a comprehensible, readable story. I tend to write a lot of scenes, then must figure out how they all go together and in what order so that I deliver a compelling story that makes sense.
12. *Are there any resources, tools, or events that you have found especially helpful for writing or publishing?*
The San Francisco Writers Conference, the California Writers Club, and the Nonfiction Author's Association have helped me meet others in the writing business and get started. So helpful!
13. *Do you have any advice for new writers?*
Enjoy the discovery—if you write, you will learn new things about life and about yourself.
14. *What are your future writing goals?*
To be an activist writer for change and empower women. Spinning off my first book *Just a Girl*, I work with companies to develop workplaces where women want to work—free of sexism and harassment. For my second book, I want to use it to redefine what older age looks like for women and help women find freedom and love later in life.

Our 2020 Young Writers Contest

By Marlene Dotterer

We've just wrapped another contest for middle school students in our county. This year's contest brought several special challenges, but before I discuss those, let's start with the fun part:

Total submissions: 316

Total number of schools represented: 27

Total number of students submitting: 200 (students could submit up to 3 entries each.)

We awarded 31 prizes in 4 categories in each of 3 grades.

In addition, our judges bestowed 27 Honorable Mentions.

These students are truly exceptional storytellers and poets. Congratulations to all of them! We hope they keep writing. See the table below for the list of awardees.

Now for those challenges I mentioned.

Challenge the First: Pandemics and shelter-in-place orders did not affect submissions or judging but had quite an impact on our presenting awards. We simply could not hold our usual awards ceremony. This event brings together all the winners, their families, and teachers, as well as several of our own members. Attendance might be as many as 130 people, from all over Contra Costa County. It's a high-energy, exciting few hours and fun for everyone. But obviously, such an event is far too dangerous during a pandemic.

We settled for congratulatory letters to the winners. We are mailing award certificates and checks to each of them. We have also created an anthology of the winning pieces and each student will receive a free copy. In addition, we offered parents the opportunity to order extra anthologies, which we will also mail. We asked for donations to cover the cost of shipping and several parents responded with very generous donations. We are grateful to all of them.

Our 2020 Young Writers Contest (cont'd)

We've ordered enough copies of the anthology for our CWC members to order, as well. Since we are non-profit, we can't sell it to you, so they are free for the asking. We do ask for a donation of \$3- \$5, especially if we mail your order. You may also pick them up in person from me (while maintaining social distance) or you can wait to pick them up at our first in-person meeting.

Challenge the Second: This year was our first attempt at running the contest using forms on our own website rather than the professional and expensive submissions program such as Submittable that we used in the past. Overall, submissions went very well. Still, allow me to resort to a saying from my mother's Texas background: "Hoo, dowdy, did we make some mistakes!"

We learned a lot about the process, however, and are working hard to prevent the same (and other) mistakes in the future. And a big "THANK YOU!" to everyone who scrambled to help us recover. This includes Aline Soules (Submissions Coordinator), Lyn Roberts and Chloe Laube, (Judging Coordinators) and all of our judges. These people are truly devoted to our contest and I am so glad they have my back!

WINNERS of the 2020 YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST

PERSONAL NARRATIVE – 6 TH GRADE		
<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Madeleine Roytfeld: <i>Under the Waves</i> Teacher: David Wright Charlotte Woods Middle School, Danville	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Duke Coats: <i>Breaking Point</i> Teacher: Mrs. Dessoie Charlotte Woods Middle School, Danville Vishesh Verma: <i>The Melancholic ‘Mastiff</i> Teacher: Rebecca Ten Elshof Ironhorse Middle School, San Ramon
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Ananya Raghu: <i>When the Truth Washed Over</i> Teacher: Caresse Nguyen Windemere Ranch Middle School, San Ramon	
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Ananya Raghu: <i>Where it all Lies</i> Teacher: Caresse Nguyen Windemere Ranch Middle School, San Ramon	
PERSONAL NARRATIVE – 7 TH GRADE		
<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Kate Wang: <i>Freedom of Speech</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Sofia Ahrens: <i>America: The Land of the Immigrants</i> Teacher: James Flowers Joaquin Moraga Middle, Moraga Tiantian Yang: <i>The Green Fish Net</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Emma Wong: <i>Jin’s Gift</i> Teacher: Sue Ellen Thomas Orinda Middle School, Orinda	
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Joel Abbot: <i>Malentine’s</i> Teacher: Matthew Williams Prospect Sierra School, El Cerrito	
PERSONAL NARRATIVE – 8 TH GRADE		
<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Sanjana Selvarah: <i>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2</i> Teacher: Randal Hart Windemere Ranch Middle School	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Maya Bhatt: <i>The Year that Changed My Life</i> Teacher: Kimberly Simpson Diablo Vista Middle School Rhea Shetty: <i>The End of My World</i> Teacher: Mitchell Jensen Windemere Middle School
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Nethra Dhamodaran: <i>The Hidden Jewel</i> Teacher: Randy Hart Windemere Ranch Middle School	
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Yu Xin (Kylie) Wang: <i>Home Across the World</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne Joaquin Moraga, Moraga	

WINNERS of the 2020 YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST (cont'd)

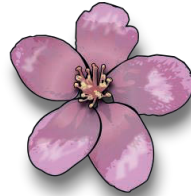
POETRY – 6TH GRADE

<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Sonya Sharma: <i>Absent Miracles</i> Teacher: Mrs. Bonnie Meyers Diablo Vista Middle School, Danville	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Isabel Lim: <i>Free</i> Teacher: Ms. McKenna Doris-Eaton School, San Ramon Sienna Wong: <i>The River, the Log, and You</i> Teacher: Danielle Montgomery Diablo Vista Middle School
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Liesel Yun: <i>Look at the Light</i> Teacher: Katherine Palmer-Collins Orinda Intermediate School, Orinda	
<u>3RD PLACE - TIE</u>	Cameron Choy: <i>Light</i> Teacher: Stacy McKenna Doris-Eaton School, San Ramon	
<u>3RD PLACE - TIE</u>	Kate Bertha: <i>Light</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn Doris-Eaton School, San Ramon	

POETRY 7TH GRADE

<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Dylan Martin: <i>Golf</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Doris-Eaton School, San Ramon	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Zoe Kim: <i>Marketplace</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon Sydney Mielcarski: <i>Glass</i> Teacher: Mari Mielcarski Homeschool, Walnut Creek
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Chloe Chung: <i>Mirrors</i> Teacher: James Flowers Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, Moraga	
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Kate Wang: <i>The Legend of the Seawever</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon	

POETRY 8TH GRADE

<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Yu Xin (Kylie) Wang: <i>All the Little Things</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne Joaquin Moraga, Moraga	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Molly Schinnerer: <i>Divorce</i> Teacher: Betsi Jamison Charlotte Middle School, Danville	
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Mayukhi Katagadda: <i>A Song Called Me</i> Teacher: Mary Blasquez Windemere Ranch Middle School		
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Thai Ryan: <i>Would You Give a Good Goddamn?</i> Teacher: Ernesto Minglana Sequoia Middle School, PH		

SHORT STORY 6TH GRADE

<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Liam Hancock: <i>Wyum's Pen</i> Teacher: David Wright Charlotte Middle School, Danville	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Duke Coats: <i>Oreo's Story</i> Teacher: Mrs. Dessoye Charlotte Wood Middle School Finnian Duggan: <i>The Secondaries: The Leap</i> Teacher: Lynda Rush Diablo View Middle School, Clayton	Darya Inamova: <i>What Lurks in the Obscure Sea</i> Teacher: Rebecca Thompson Stanley Middle School, Lafayette Jake Vensko: <i>Life Throws Challenges at You</i> Teacher: Heather Still Sequoia Middle School, PH
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Aanya Ahlawat: <i>Meat Pie</i> Teacher: Shauna de Silva Iron Horse Middle School, San Ramon		
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Aanya Ahlawat: <i>Eight Legged Things</i> Teacher: Shauna de Silva Iron Horse Middle School, San Ramon		

WINNERS of the 2020 YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST (cont'd)

SHORT STORY 7 TH GRADE		
<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Marilyn Jia: <i>Background Girl</i> Teacher: James Flowers Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Connor Huard: <i>Pirates, Diamonds, and Ceiling Plaster</i> Teacher: Shelley Sirmans Diablo Vista Middle School Sean Kwok: <i>Dustnight</i> Teacher: Kathleen McCabe Charlotte Wood Middle School
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Milena Wendler Luengo: <i>My Closest Friend</i> Teacher: Nancy Vargas Pleasant Hill Middle School	Franklin Liu: <i>The Teddy Bear Traveler</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn Dorris-Eaton School Aiden Park: <i>Goose</i> Teacher: Debra Atwood Gale Ranch Middle School, San Ramon
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Serafina Hwang: <i>She Was My Light</i> Teacher: Sonja Wesser-Singh Foothill Middle School	
		Sean Kwok: <i>The Satebreaker</i> Teacher: Kathleen McCabe Charlotte Wood Middle School Milena Wendler Luengo: <i>The Little Death Threat</i> Teacher: Nancy Vargas Pleasant Hill Middle School
SHORT STORY 8 TH GRADE		
<u>1ST PLACE</u>	Kush Rajesh: <i>Living on the Edge</i> Teacher: Sara Opeyany Gale Ranch, San Ramon	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Antong Cao: <i>In This Silence Between Us</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Allison Fujikawa: <i>Fragments in the Dark</i> Teacher: Mary Blasquez Windemere Ranch Middle School
<u>2ND PLACE</u>	Meghan Boyle: <i>The Greenhouse</i> Teacher: Lynette Gonzales Iron Horse Middle School	Malena Mayell: <i>Slowly Dying</i> Teacher: Brian Vedder Korematsu Middle School, El Cerrito Sophie Mo: <i>Time of Our Lives</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon
<u>3RD PLACE</u>	Lyena Monis: <i>Pops</i> Teacher: Brian Brown Adams Middle School, Brentwood	Yu Xin (Kylie) Wang: <i>Fly</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne Joaquin Moraga
HUMOR ALL GRADES		
1 st Place	Kush Rajesh: <i>Living on the Edge</i> Teacher: Sara Opeyany Gale Ranch Middle, San Ramon	<u>HONORABLE MENTION</u> Zoe Kim: <i>Banderbon</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker Dorris-Eaton School Joshua Leung: <i>Hold Your Horses</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn Dorris-Eaton School Luke Narido: <i>The Chair</i> Teacher: James Flowers Joaquin Moraga Middle
2 nd Place	HENRY TAI: <i>My Salute to the Colonel or: If You Love It, Then You Should Have Put a Wing on It</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon	
3 rd Place	Drew El-Sharif: <i>Wild Goose Chase</i> Teacher: Ms. McKenna Dorris-Eaton School, San Ramon	

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)



Many thanks to 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.

Members' Short Works

McKinnon

By Bob Poirier

San Francisco Homicide Inspector Lauren McKinnon walked into the middle apartment of the three-story Chestnut Street building at 1:30 in the morning.

The victim was sitting upright in bed with a sheet covering the upper part of her torso. There was a small entry wound above her left eye.

McKinnon spotted one of the forensic techs adjusting a picture of the Mona Lisa.

"Please don't touch that until I've cleared the crime scene," she said.

The tech backed off with a muted apology. McKinnon nodded in response.

Lauren McKinnon was only a couple of years out of receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of San Francisco when she attended a lecture by a San Francisco Homicide Inspector at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art where she was an assistant curator. The fit seemed perfect to her. She could use her honed training in attention to detail to spot discrepancies others might miss, and the salary would be almost twice what she was currently making.

She applied for and completed the 34-week Police Academy Training Course and the 17-week Field Training Program. Two years later she was promoted to a 0380 Inspector in the SFPD Homicide Detail.

McKinnon leaned over the bed and studied the body.

"What brought you to this," she said quietly.

"Looks like the boyfriend shot her," the tech volunteered.

"Hmm," McKinnon responded. This was the fifth suspicious death the team had worked together. They knew they could speak freely around her.

When she finished examining the body, McKinnon turned to the officer who was first on the scene. Her name tag read "Sloan."

"Where's the boyfriend, Officer Sloan?" McKinnon asked.

"His name is Jack Wilson," Sloan replied. "We put him in the other bedroom to quiet him down. Officer Murphy is with him."

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

McKinnon by Bob Poirier (cont'd)

"Okay," she said. "Please bring Mister Wilson out."

They brought him out to the bedroom. As soon as he saw the body, he started to moan.

McKinnon spoke softly to him. "You are not a suspect, but we have to read you your Miranda rights and verify that you understand them before we can continue."

Sloan read the card and verified Wilson understood his rights.

"Now, Mister Wilson, please tell me what happened,"

"I went into the bathroom to take a shower, and when I came out, she was like this," he sobbed.

"Did you touch anything?" McKinnon asked.

"I picked up the gun to put it on the table," he said.

Crap, McKinnon thought. *He's pretty but dense. Any gunshot residue results will be screwed up.*

McKinnon continued. "Do you have any idea why she would want to take her own life?"

"No," he said emphatically. "I just gave her a ring and asked her to marry me."

McKinnon looked at Sloan and Murphy. "Did you see a ring?"

"There was no ring," they said together.

McKinnon's eyes went back to the Mona Lisa picture.

Something's not right, she thought.

She recalled her USF Fine Arts courses. The original *Mona Lisa*, painted in 1503 by da Vinci and now hanging in the Louvre, is 30 inches high by 21 inches wide. This picture, a little larger than the size of the original, was a poor copy in a cheap, thick wooden frame.

It's the eyes, she thought. *The left one is looking off to her left, but her right eye is not quite tracking with the left.*

She took the picture off the wall and put it face down on a small coffee table.

"That's the problem," she said. "Someone put a piece of black electrician's tape on the back of the picture to cover up a hole on the right eye."

She could see the impression of a small circle around the tape. "Who knows anything about wireless or Bluetooth micro video cameras?" She asked.

One of the techs raised her hand.

"What would be the range of a camera this size?"

"Probably 50 feet or so, given the thickness of the walls."

McKinnon looked at the ceiling and then turned to Sloan and Murphy. "Come with me."

The bottom apartment was empty. McKinnon and the officers walked up the concrete stairs to the third-floor apartment. McKinnon knocked on the door.

A small, thin man, probably in his mid-50's, wearing a burgundy velvet smoking jacket over grey dress slacks, answered the door. "Can I help you, officers?"

McKinnon identified herself and the two officers and showed him her badge.

"Yes, sir," she said. "We're investigating a suicide in the middle apartment and we're hoping you can help us, Mister ...?"

"I'll try," the man said hesitantly. "My name is Gerald Kelly. I own the building."

"Would you mind if we come inside, Mr. Kelly?" McKinnon asked.

He hesitated just long enough at the request.

I got you, she thought.

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

McKinnon by Bob Poirier (cont'd)

"The apartment is a mess," he said lamely.

"We don't mind," McKinnon said accompanied by what she hoped was a warm smile.

He let them in.

"It's department policy now that we read the Miranda rights to anyone we interview. I hope you don't mind if Officer Sloan does that?"

"Well, okay," he said.

After the Miranda rights were read and acknowledged, McKinnon began.

"Do you know the young lady in the middle apartment?"

Sloan interrupted. "Would it be okay if I use your bathroom?"

Kelly hesitated for a moment. "Yes, of course."

McKinnon looked at Kelly. "Sorry for the interruption. Could you answer the question, please?"

"Her name is Emily Cook. She is a wonderful girl. I help her with her computer and television from time to time."

Sloan returned. "Mister Kelly, it looks like you tried to flush some electronics down your toilet."

Kelly's shoulders slumped, and his face turned ashen.

"You'll feel better if you get out ahead of this and tell us what happened," McKinnon said.

The words gushed out. Kelly told them how he put the camera on the picture back, pointed it towards the bed, and hung the picture on the wall for her. How he watched the proposal, and when the boyfriend took a shower, he rushed down and let himself in with a key she had given him.

"I brought a gun my aunt gave me because I intended to shoot myself if she rejected me," he said. "When she laughed at me, I took the pistol out of my pocket, picked up a pillow to muffle the sound, and shot her."

With this, Kelly suddenly stood and moved a few feet away from them, putting his hand into the right pocket of his dressing gown.

McKinnon quickly stepped aside and out of the line of fire of the two officers.

"Mr. Kelly," she said quietly. "I want you to think very carefully about the next few seconds. We all carry and are qualified with Sig Sauer .40 caliber pistols. If any of us think you are pulling a firearm out of your pocket we will all shoot you. Do not think you will die quickly. At this range the bullets will go right through you. The ricocheting bullets will destroy most of the art and antiques. Your sphincter and bladder will release making a hell of a mess on this white carpet. The EMTs and forensic folks will be looking at you in disgust."

"Please turn around, slowly remove your hand from your pocket, then put your hands behind you. Officer Sloan will arrest you, and no one will be hurt. Do you understand these directions?"

Gerald Kelly quietly murmured his understanding and complied with the directions.

After he was handcuffed, McKinnon reached into his dressing gown pocket and retrieved a small silver semi-automatic pistol, identical except for color to the one in the dead girl's apartment.

"His and hers pistols," she announced to the officers.

"Thank you," she said as she shook hands with Sloan and Murphy. "My report will mention all the help you provided,"

That might be my personal best, McKinnon thought as she walked down Chestnut to her car on Franklin. Ninety minutes from arrival to solving the homicide. I'll be back in bed before my wife wakes up. Damn, I'm good.

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

Betrayal at Sand Creek by George Cramer

The First People trusted you
to protect
to feed our people.
You betrayed The People.

Soldiers stole the food the Great White Father sent
To nourish our people,
Our children, our future.
Soldiers betrayed our people.

Instead, soldiers raped our women,
Beheaded our children.
Butchers, six-hundred-seventy-five strong.
Butchered, two-hundred weak and starving.

Your soldiers slaughtered our people.
You failed the Great White Father.
You betrayed our people,
We died for your sins.

We died for your sins.

The Annulment by Bob Poirier

It was the third week in January, shortly after their second anniversary, when Sharon realized she had to get out of the marriage. A doctor diagnosed her suspected urinary tract infection as Chlamydia.

Sharon was a plain, small, timorous woman. Her nickname since childhood had been "Squeak," a term of endearment to everyone except Sharon.

She was young, not yet 22, when they married. Her husband was 11 years older. She thought they were in love. Now she realized it was just a con. He had convinced her he came from money, just like she had, so there was no need for a prenuptial agreement. They eloped and married in Reno.

Her father hired a private detective who uncovered the seedy side of his life and a string of infidelities. "What can I do now?" she asked her father and the family attorney.

"There is no prenup," the attorney said. "The marriage was consummated. You've commingled the money. There isn't much you can do."

"But I have a plan," he continued. "It will take a couple of months, but if you're willing to bide your time and bite your tongue, and you have acting chops so I think we can pull it off."

She spent the next several weeks as the perfect wife. Every night, when her husband returned home from a weekly poker game, or tennis or golf, she made him a double martini, just the way he liked. She never questioned where he had been or what he had been doing. After the fourth week of increasingly strong martinis, she asked him to sign some insurance papers the attorney had drawn up.

The attorney told them, "This insurance policy is to make sure there are sufficient funds, about three million dollars, to keep the survivor solvent until the trust documents clear."

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

The Annulment by Bob Poirier (cont'd)

There were eight pages for them to sign, with a pink Post It marker for her and a blue one for him. She went through the document and signed in her appropriate places, announcing what she was doing, and removing the pink markers as she signed.

After the second double-strength martini, and distracted by the thought of a multi-million-dollar payout, her husband, without reading the document, signed all the spaces indicated by the blue markers.

She threw a birthday party for her husband in early March, inviting her father, the attorney, the private detective, and three witnesses from the law firm. Five girlfriends the private detective had discovered were in another room.

"I have a birthday toast," Sharon announced to the attendees after serving dessert. On cue, the girlfriends entered the room. Her husband's eyes furtively darted around the room as he wiped his sweating brow.

"During the past month," she continued. "My father has quietly taken back everything he has given me. The last pages of the insurance papers you signed agreed with this transfer of assets. I am penniless. You have exactly what you started with."

She handed him a set of documents. "These are annulment papers stating you committed fraud by misrepresenting yourself."

"This isn't fair, Squeak," her husband whined. "You know I've always loved you and only you."

With this statement, the girlfriends stood up and left the room. One of the law firm witnesses handed each girlfriend an envelope containing five hundred dollars.

Her husband, red-faced and sweating profusely, watched the departure scene, and then spun to Sharon.

"My name is Sharon," said his wife quietly, staring at her husband.

"You bitch," he screamed furiously. "I'll kill you."

He lunged across the table and put his hands around her neck. The detective grabbed the husband by his hair, pulled him off Sharon, threw him against a wall and held him there.

"Everything has been video recorded," the attorney added. "I am confident the police will interpret your attack on Sharon as Corporal Injury on a Spouse under California Penal code 273.5, with imprisonment up to four years in state prison. The detective was lawfully protecting his client."

"Or," he continued. "You can sign the annulment agreement, accept a \$5,000 cash payoff, and leave immediately. Other than the two suitcases of clothes by the front door, you are to take nothing from the house or the property. All financial ties to the family are severed. Any attempt to contact Sharon, or contest this annulment agreement, will result in the immediate delivery of the video recording to the police. A taxi waiting outside will take you to the bus station. What'll it be?"

Her husband signed the agreement, pocketed the envelope with the cash, and left the house.

After the guests left, the attorney turned to Sharon.

"Nice bluff," he smiled. "With the marriage annulled, he has no claim on your assets. We can shred those phony asset-transfer documents now."

SEE YOUR WRITING IN PRINT (up to 1000 words, preferably less.)

Send your **short** works to be included in the newsletter to: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

The HIGH DESERT CWC Branch Announces a Short Story Contest

Challenge Your Imagination! Deadline for Short Story Fiction is June 30th

Cash prize incentives are being offered for the best entries in the High Desert CWC Branch statewide pandemic anthology short fiction contest which **closes June 30, 2020**. Full details may be found on www.hdcwc.com.

The 2020 anthology theme is a pandemic—past, present, or imagined—that affects 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.

CWC members in good standing may submit up to two entries of no more than 5,000 words each with a \$15 non-refundable entry fee per story. Winners (judged blind) will receive cash prizes as outlined on our website.

We're looking for good, imaginative writing to go into a book of collected short stories with a pandemic theme. The HDCWC realizes these are difficult and frequently tragic times. We also realize that writers living in bizarre times are capable of producing exceptional stories about those things in good, creative fiction.

Check out the details and send in your entries ASAP!



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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 program 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 May 2020

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

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

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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 (not this year due to Covid 19!).

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

** Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name _____ Address _____

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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

Roberta Alexander

Alexander, an East Bay writer and editor who transformed herself through the times, died May 1 in Van Nuys after a long illness. She was 76.

Projecting an image of no-nonsense toughness and reason, served her well working in newsrooms, where a hard-boiled world view was often worn as a badge of courage. But the facade hid other aspects: She raised two daughters, quilted, took piano lessons and wrote endlessly, from children's literature to mysteries.

In addition to her writing, Alexander was a copy and layout editor at East Bay newspapers including the *Contra Costa Times*. After retiring in 2007, Alexander continued to write. While her post-retirement freelance work spanned business coverage to culture stories, she also wrote reviews of mystery novels for the *East Bay Times* and *The Mercury News*.

While not a CWC member, nevertheless Alexander attended our meetings and reviewed some mystery books authored by locals.

In addition to her daughters, Alexander is survived by two grandchildren.

