



The Write News

Mt Diablo

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

November 2020

VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

November 14, 2020

12:45- 1:00 pm Breakout rooms

1:00 - 1:45 pm Writer's Table

1:45 - 2:00 pm Business meeting -- 2:00 - 2:15 pm Break

2:15 - 3:15 pm Jane Cleland

Register online at <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>

Once registered, you will receive a link to join the Zoom meeting.

Mastering Plot Twists

featuring

Jane Cleland

The stories that keep people on the edge of their seats and up all night are filled with unexpected twists and turns. By integrating plot **T**wists, plot **R**eversals, and moments of heightened **D**anger (TRDs) at tactically sound moments, your stories will captivate readers with their I-can't-wait-to-see-what-happens-next unpredictability. When your plot twists come at the right moments, your pace will be quicker and the action more focused, and these are the nuanced, multifaceted books that sell, and that find a devoted readership.



Attendees will learn:

- The anatomy of plot twists
- Techniques to ensure your plot twists don't feel contrived or coincidental
- When to integrate a plot twist for maximum impact
- The role of plot twists in subplots—how many you should have and when they should appear

Jane K. Cleland writes fiction and nonfiction. Her bestselling and multiple award-winning Josie Prescott Antiques Mysteries are published by St. Martin's Minotaur and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. The 13th book in the series, *Hidden Treasure*, will be published in December. The 14th will be published in fall 2021. Her two nonfiction books on the craft of writing, *Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot* and *Mastering Plot Twists*, were published by Writer's Digest Books, now part of Penguin/Putnam, and both won Agatha Awards. Jane is also a contributing editor for *Writer's Digest* magazine. Additionally, Jane is a member of the fulltime faculty at Lehman College, part of the City University of New York, and offers custom workshops and webinars for MFA programs, writing conferences, and industry associations, including free monthly writing webinars in her "We're All in this Together" series.

www.janecleland.com.

Members' Meeting Cost \$5.00 – Guests \$10.00

President's Message: Linda Hartmann'**"Writing the Waves"**

Dear Mt. Diablo Creatives,

Is it really November already? A friend sent a photo from the Midwest this morning where snow had fallen surrounding a small lake that is now his new view. It looked so fresh and pristine. I was transported for a moment to a land with crisp, clean air, no ash or pollution, no red skies, coronavirus, or climate change, just the feeling of fantastic pleasure I obtain from watching snow fall, waking up to freshly fallen snow, hiking in the snow, downhill skiing or cross-country; bush-whacking, sledding - take your pick! Follow that with a hot beverage, a good book, and that is winter-wonderland for me.



I thought about this last evening as I had my first Halloween Zoom with family across the US. It was great fun to see them in their masks, and having our usual fun on Zoom together, until we began the "Did you hear about so and so who (Covid scenario)?" and the talk about what the local states, governors, counties, and hospitals are all doing, not doing or going through right now; then dinner and the news for me. I did this while contemplating the history of Halloween masks and costumes. My mostly fun roots with Halloween go way back, thus my interest in its history.

Historically, Halloween was associated with the end of the harvest and the start of the cold winter, a time often related to an increase in human suffering and death. The holiday was thought to have originated as a Celtic ritual, then festival, held Oct. 31 - Nov. 01, during the so-called Samhain (pronounced 'sow-in') celebration, which marked the boundary between the worlds of the dead and living. This boundary would become obscured, and the souls of the dead would roam the earth.

Sometimes referred to as "All-Hallows Eve," people would wear masks and costumes to impersonate the dead, to avoid recognition, and to protect themselves from the dead. They would go "mumming and guising" or house to house, reciting songs in exchange for food. They would receive offerings on behalf of the spirits. They believed that if the ghosts allowed their family and livestock to survive the winter, they expected rewards for the mortal's good fortune.

Now, we are wearing masks all year to save lives. Yet, well over one million people worldwide (226,000 of those from the US) have died from COVID-19. Way too many survivors are having to remember their loved ones in the harshest and saddest of ways. Having worked in an ICU for many years, always wearing a mask beats second-guessing where have I been? If you wear one every time you go out and do not relax your own rules, you are as safe as you can be.

Be smart. Be creative. Be kind to yourselves and others.

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Member Events, News and Salutes



This section of the newsletter is regularly open to members to submit information about milestones in your writing journey. Publish a book? Planning a reading at a bookstore or county fair? Speaking somewhere? Win an IPPY or other prize? Is your play being produced? The TV or movie version of your writing will be out soon? Let us know here. <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

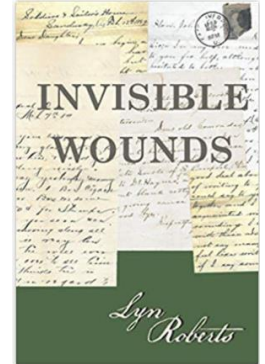
Lyn Roberts, Mt. Diablo Programs & Speaker, Online Systems, Hospitality
Lyn's book *Invisible Wounds* was published in September

Two men. Two wars, separated by more than 100 years. Lyn Roberts expertly reaches across the decades, interweaving the stories of a Civil War soldier and a Vietnam War medic. *Invisible Wounds* is a story filled with trauma, pain, and redemption that will leave you rooting for Steven and so many others like him.

— Camille Minichino,
author of 28 mysteries



Invisible Wounds is a powerful portrait of one man's struggle to heal from the trauma of war; learning from the past, he finds courage to transform his life. When Steven discovers David Lane's Civil War letters, the similarities that haunt his own war in Vietnam set him on a path of redemption.



Lyn Roberts has worked as a writers' editor in a variety of business settings, from newspapers, to travel documentaries to forensic engineering. She has been an independent, literary editor for over 20 years and understands how difficult the act of creative writing can be. Available at Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Invisible-Wounds-Lyn-Roberts/dp/B08HTBB77V>

"It would be impossible to write a story such as this without a deep understanding of how human beings suffer from trauma and the absolute belief that we can heal."

Aline Soules

Aline's review of a book of poems titled *Refusal* by Jennie Molberg was published in the *Tupelo Quarterly* and is titled, "The Struggle of Spirit: A Review of Refusal: Poems." To see what a reviewer looks for in poems, read the following then click on the link to see the whole article.

The first poem, "Note," begins the journey by laying out difficult themes: suicide, abuse, self-loathing. The poem juxtaposes lines like "marrying for safety (two kids, three dogs, dying cat)," "Papers signed and unsigned," with

*The woman who pasted her face
over mine in our photos
and mailed them as proof of their affair*

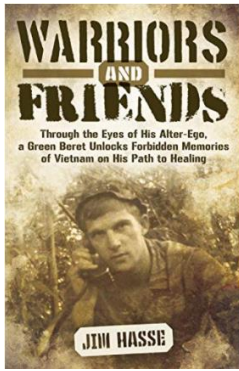
The "he" makes the "I" "smaller" by "cutting the air" around her, putting her in a box, origami-ing her, until she is as "small as a ring box," where

...I nestle there.

I fold and fold. I try to disappear.

<https://www.tupeloquarterly.com/the-struggle-of-spirit-a-review-of-refusal-poems/>

Member Events, News and Salutes cont'd



WARRIORS AND FRIENDS by Jim Hasse

38 Tales by a Vietnam Green Beret Who Lived the Horror and Humanity of War; and the Trauma Afterward

"The constant presence of death stunned me into appreciating life. Seeing other warriors fall, get up, and fall again, helped me to understand fate. I survived, and that put an exclamation point on my life." Jim Hasse, a former Vietnam Green Beret sergeant, shares 38 short stories of life before, during, and after war.

Real-life war stories and a dash of creativity blend into an unstoppable combination in Hasse's alter-ego, Jay Boone Hanson, who encounters events that will change his life forever. Eighteen-year-old Jay drops out of college and joins the army to fight the spread of communism. Hell-bent on seeing real action, he lands a coveted spot on an elite recon team, and for two years, dances with death and wins. He returns home, vowing to put it all behind, but PTSD doesn't let him.

Based on Hasse's four years in the U.S. Army where he trained in light and heavy weapons, covert reconnaissance, communications, and special warfare, this book paints an honest picture of the wartime years that shaped the lives of millions of Americans.

"Writing *Warriors and Friends* unlocked forbidden memories that I had kept hidden from myself and others for more than fifty years," says Hasse. "These stories reveal who I was back then and who I am today. They showed me that the dragon I had feared for too long has no teeth, no fire, and no power to hurt me."

Warriors and Friends is available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Warriors-Friends-Alter-Ego-Forbidden-Memories-ebook/dp/B08K3RTYF8> & other booksellers. For interviews, contact Jim at: jimhasse@hotmail.com 925.788.5266

SURVIVAL: Tales of Pandemics High Desert Branch's Anthology

The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club collected submissions statewide and compiled fictional stories of pandemics, real or imagined. As of November 1, 2020 this volume of tales edited by Jenny Margotta is available at <https://www.amazon.com/SURVIVAL-Pandemic-California-Writers-Club/dp/B08KHCPV8K>.

The inspiration for the anthology was that writing often puts fears into perspective. Members of every branch of the statewide California Writers Club were challenged to take their concerns about COVID-19 and turn them into fictional short stories. The result is twenty-five original stories from twenty-three authors. Some are upbeat, or romantic, humorous, or scary. The unifying resolve is: we are not giving up and we shall prevail.

Net proceeds will be donated to charities chosen by the 3 winning authors or to their branches.

Winning authors: -1stPlace: "Fatal" by Violet Carr Moore, Tri-Valley
 -2ndPlace: "The Rose" by Susan Helene (Nack), CWC-Long Beach
 -3rdPlace: "Zander's Box" by Michael Raff, High Desert

Additionally Mt. Diablo had three pieces published in the anthology by the following 3 authors:

David George

Deven Green aka Deborah Greenberg

Bob Poirier

Be Interviewed

These interviews help Mt. Diablo Branch members get to know you, your work, and your thoughts about writing and the writing process. If you would like to be interviewed, let us know through this link:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

Fran Cain

How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing?

Pre-COVID-19 days, being in a room filled with other people who love to write was very inspirational. Now that we are meeting via Zoom where we are grouped more randomly, I'm meeting people I had not met before, and hearing some of their stories about their own inspiration. The CWC speakers are well chosen and cover a full range of topics, anything from grammatical guidance to how to get published.

What are you currently working on?

I'm working on a piece of historical fiction. It is a retrospective told in the first person and spans from the early 1900s to the 2010s. I'm best at writing short stories, but covering such a long span, this may turn out to be a novella, at the least.

Do you have published works?

I was first published with technical articles for non-technical people in the medical community through various medical association newsletters. I was published in an online magazine, *Mothering with Imagination*, and am working on a series of articles about the realities of families living with handicapped children. They stopped publishing, an unfortunate reality of our times. More recently, I freelance for a local online and paper newspaper, *The Diablo Gazette* (<http://www.diablogazette.com>). I have written personal profiles of people in the community, travel articles, restaurant reviews and book reviews. Coming in November, my short story "Full Moon" was selected to be published in the prestigious California Writers Club 2020 *Literary Review*.

Who or what has influenced you most as a writer?

I've been influenced by the many supportive people in my life. My mother was my biggest fan and cheerleader. My first published piece was an article I had written about my home state of Connecticut. She submitted it to the local newspaper without asking me. She passed away before I finished my first unpublished novel. I remember her asking, "What's gonna happen?" At the time, I did not have the ending so I couldn't satisfy her curiosity.

I've also been influenced by my critique group, Writers on the Journey. We are a small group who have been meeting biweekly for many years. We force each other, in as kind a way as possible, to improve our writing by picking out the good and offering advice where strengthening is needed. When it comes to critique groups, small is best. It keeps the workload manageable and creates a friendly, trusting environment to work within.

As far as authors, I have two recent examples of beautiful, inspirational writing. Amor Towles, in his book *The Gentleman from Moscow*, demonstrates how straightforward, simple language and detailed but not mind-numbing descriptions can be used to reflect a story about a charming, humble man. Delia Owens writes simple yet lyrical prose to weave a visual masterpiece in *Where the Crawdads Sing*. For a lesson in the proper use of adjectives and adverbs, this is the book to read.

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

Practically all of it. Number one may be the self-discipline to sit the butt down in the chair. I'm not a fast writer by any means. Which makes it all the more important to force myself into the chair and resist all the many distractions that pop up. Once I'm "in the zone" it's still a challenge to conjure up the scene and translate that into words. I really enjoy editing, so I find myself rereading what I've written even though the first draft is supposed to be the creative, flowing part. Weekly, I join a "shush and write" group via Zoom. Together we keep each other in our chairs.

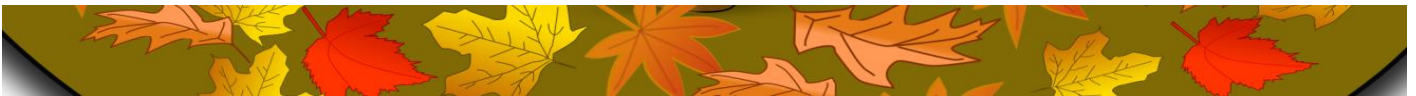
Be Interviewed cont'd

Do you have any advice for new writers?

Yes: Write. “Just Do It,” to borrow from the Nike ad. Take a class at a community college or online. There you will meet other writers who may, over time, help you. Join a California Writers Club branch close to you. The cost is low, and the speakers and workshops are excellent. If you cannot find a critique group to join, start your own. They help you and helping them will improve your own writing. And perhaps most importantly, write what you know. I started writing articles on computer security because I worked for many years in Information Technology. This gave me credibility. I write travel articles about places I’ve visited. My fiction is very loosely based on things I have experienced. For example, my “Full Moon” piece is set in a real place where I had been vacationing, yet what ultimately takes place is a figment of my imagination.

What are your future writing goals?

I write for the love of writing. Ideally, I will complete the piece I’m working on over the next year or so and, with a little help from my friends, get it published. Otherwise, I will continue to freelance for *The Diablo Gazette*, and hope for inclusion in future literary journals.



BOOKSHOP.ORG, a place to sell your book and earn a percentage, buy from other authors, and support independent bookstores.

Bookshop.org—A Win-Win

By **B. Lynn Goodwin**

Want to support local bookshops without leaving home? You could visit their websites, but an alternate way is to go to Bookshop.org. They offer a great alternative with a big plus. If you buy a book from them, part of the money goes to independent bookstores.

Their mission is to keep the local independents alive and offer a small discount to shoppers. As their website says, “As more and more people buy their books online, we wanted to create an easy, convenient way for you to get your books and support bookstores at the same time.” That helps bookstores stay open for author signings, story times and reading advice.

According to Bookshop.org’s website, “bookstores are essential to a healthy culture. They’re where authors can connect with readers, where we discover new writers, and where children get hooked on the thrill of reading that can last a lifetime. They’re also anchors for our communities and the downtown areas of cities.”

Customers have a choice of supporting a specific store or having their money go into a pool to be evenly distributed among the indies. As of late October they had raised [\\$7,499,975.61](#) for local bookstores. Impressive!

I have to admit that my publisher, Koehler Books, <http://www.koehlerbooks.com>, listed my books there—not me. I first learned about them earlier in 2020, when they announced their presence through Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. I am proud of Koehler for connecting me there in addition to putting me on Amazon and other sites. You can take a look at my book at: <https://bookshop.org/books?keywords=Talent+B.+Lynn+Goodwin> if you are so inclined. It’s an interesting look at what other books have *Talent* in the title or B. Lynn Goodwin as an author. The virtual world meets the physical one in a win-win at Bookshop.org.

One of their perks is that authors can become affiliates and earn 10% on all of their sales. Learn how at: https://public-production.bookshop.org/documents/Bookshop_Author_Brochure.pdf.

It’s a pleasure seeing Bookshop supporting the few remaining physical bookstores. Check them out.

Contact Lynn at: Lgood67334@comcast.net and check out her offerings at: www.writeradvice.com

Lynn is the author of: *You Want Me to Do What? Journaling for Caregivers* (2008)
Talent (2011, second edition: 11/2020) a coming of age story
Never Too Late: From Wannabe to Wife at 62 (2017)

FINDING OTHER BRANCH MEETINGS

By Linda Hartmann, Mt. Diablo President

Have you hesitated to attend meetings offered by other branches in CWC? When we bring them to your attention in a Newsflash or any other way, we are increasing our inter-branch collaborations to bring more member benefits to each of you. There are a couple of ways you can get your own “jump-start” into seeing what other branches are up to and what their upcoming meetings will be. The first, is a very easy to navigate **NorCal calendar** on the following NorCal website link: <https://cwcnorcalwriters.org/>

This website is fun to browse and will show you lots of information about the various 14 Northern California branches of CWC. Click on the second button “Calendar” or <http://cwcnorcalwriters.org/events/> and you will see the scheduled, open events for the Northern California branches, which includes Mt. Diablo. On the right side of their home page, you can click on any branch and roam about that branch’s website.



To learn about **events happening in Southern California**, go to <https://calwriters.org/>. This is the CWC State Home Page. Here there are links for each of the 22 statewide CWC branches. The Southern California branches are listed below the northern, and although they do not keep a joint calendar, you can access each branch website to see what they have planned. I hope this helps.

Meanwhile, keep an eye out for Mt. Diablo Newflashes, and be assured that I check to ensure other branch’s meetings are open to us before we send the information! Enjoy that extra member benefit while we remain sheltered in and meeting virtually!

Remember that whatever the charge for a “member” to attend a meeting at any branch is the same price for any CWC member regardless of their branch affiliation. “Guest or non-member” prices may be higher for anyone wishing to attend who is not a CWC member. Think of all you can save and how many speakers you can learn from while we’re on Zoom!

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch Honors Lee Paulson’s Contributions

by David George

During the October 3rd CWC Mt. Diablo board meeting, Vice President David George requested that the Club do something special to honor long-time member, former president, and contributing board director, **Lee Paulson**. Lee was forced to drop out of an active leadership role three years ago when his wife of 25 years, Jan contracted Alzheimer’s disease. Sadly, Jan passed away last month.

Lee and Jan have generously contributed their money and efforts over the past 15 years to help strengthen the Mt. Diablo Branch and its Young Writers Contest (YWC). In 2010, Jan and Lee made a sizable contribution to the YWC to fund a new contest category and award – the Humor category. Since then, the annual Humor award has been presented to the most worthy middle school student’s submission, out of many received each year. The new category injected fun and energy into this important writing contest.

The Mt. Diablo board approved David’s request by voting to name the Young Writers Contest annual Humor award “***The Jan and Lee Paulson Humor Award***.” Lee has agreed to attend our November monthly Zoom meeting on November 14th to say a few words of acceptance. Please join us on November 14th to honor Lee, his loving wife, and their many contributions to our Club.



Lee is the author of at least 7 books, some business related and under his pen name, Jon Cory, 5 humorous novels.

Volunteering With CWC Mt.Diablo

By **Linda Hartmann**, Mt. Diablo President

CWC-Mt. Diablo needs volunteers. We always need help with something, if not now, in the near future. Volunteering allows you to connect to others in your community with similar interests, and to make it a better place. It is a two-way street, it can benefit you as much as the causes you choose to help. Here at Mt. Diablo, we have many things going on, that will speak to a variety of personality types. Dedicating your time helps you become more involved, make friends, expand your network, and advance your civil expertise.

Have no fear, you can go slowly or dive right in. Either way, we will always have your back. You can dip your toes in the water and take on a small commitment to see how it feels, or try on a larger, more robust role. We will train and help you.

There are temporary, short-run commitments, such as contest judge. Others are higher-level officer and other board commitments. A wide range of roles fit somewhere between those two, such as working on an ongoing committee, being a coordinator, being a chair position on the board, etc.

CURRENT POSITIONS OPEN:

- ❖ **Newsletter Assistant** - Current Newsletter Editor, Elisabeth Tuck is looking for someone to help.
 - The newsletter is written once/monthly x 10 months/year
- ❖ **Young Writers Contest** – Certificate Creation & Mailing Assistant
 - Creating certificates for winners (approx. 30) and students with Honorable Mentions (approx. 20 - 40)
 - Preparing envelopes, mailing certificates, cover letters to students with Honorable Mentions
 - Time frame for tasks: April 17 - May 10
- ❖ **Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Contest** - Coordinator-in-Training
 - Oversees with the Chair all aspects of training jurors, ensuring jurors assignments are given fairly, deadlines are met, etc. Works with Region-at-Large in communicating issues. Works with judges/jurors to see that all assignments are completed in a timely way; ensures team aspect if a judge cannot finish and another judge has additional time, or enlist back-up judges as needed.
 - Judges/jurors – will be needed for this contest, or for back-up.
 - Students: grades 7-12, eleven categories, all of US, its territories, and Canada
 - Timing: Training for judges late November or early December; Reading period for assigned panels Dec. 18, 2020 - Jan. 11, 2021
- ❖ **Board Secretary** - Officer position - Interim Acting position through June 30, 2021
 - Attend monthly Board Meetings and take minutes for distribution, feedback, and finalization.
 - Request job description if interested; can be altered to a degree for an interim position.

PLEASE CONTACT president@cwcmtdiablo.org IF INTERESTED!! THANK YOU!!



Literary Review 2020

Has anyone received their copy? They were mailed a couple of weeks ago, but I sure haven't seen mine. Those selected to be in were notified last month. For the last two years there has been no feedback to authors from the readers. 28 written pieces were selected from the 300 submitted. Additionally there are photos submitted by members.

2021?

I have volunteered to be the editor for the 2021 issue and David George has agreed to be the intake manager. This year feedback will be an option. If you don't want it, you can opt out when you submit. If you appreciate comments from the judges, I think that's a good sign. As a member of my critique group says, "If you don't tell me what needs to be fixed, how can I improve?" Not everyone wants to hear others' opinions of their work. However the majority of the central board agreed that the mission of CWC is education—for those who want it.

I am looking for judges for short story, poetry, memoir, essay, and humor. You may submit even if you are judging. Submissions won't open until Dec 1. It's not decided yet how long the submission window will be open. More to follow

Young Writers Contest First Prize Winner

POETRY – 7TH GRADE



1st Place

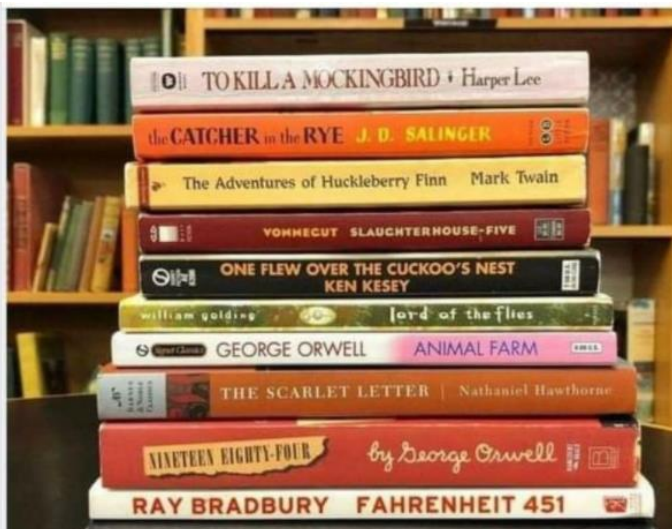
“Golf”

Dylan Martin

Teacher: Melissa Parker

School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon

Here we are at the first tee.
 The air fresh and the wind strong
 The wind is cold and sharp, yet refreshing. The ground is soft
 and moist from yesterday's rain. I tee up my ball with
 ease and prepare for my first swing. I hear a delicate
 TING as I hit the sweet spot. The ball cuts the air with
 great speed. A slight slice, but a fine shot it is to me. I get
 into the cart, filled with exhilaration to see where it landed.
 It went further than expected and a little to the left. It
 Lies in the rough, waiting to escape the massive
 jungle of grass. The sun breaks through the
 clouds and is now beating down on me. I
 take the shot and it lands eighty yards
 from the green. A dark blue pond,
 hungry for golf balls, lies between
 me and the flag. My nine is eager
 to take the shot, so I let it. The
 metal shaft is cold, yet my hands
 are warm. My arms and my
 club are as light as a feather as I
 hit the ball. It lies on a light
 green, smooth carpet that the flag sticks
 the ball and I hear it enter the hole. out of. I putt



These are the most-banned books from public libraries and schools in the US

You in the Newsletter: Short Works

Members, See your writing in print

Send your **short** works (up to 750 words, preferably less) to be included in the Mt Diablo branch newsletter to: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>



"Mother"

Fiction by **Bob Poirier**

The rustling branches woke Patrick's consciousness.

"Damn," he thought. "She sent me back as a tree."

"It's your fault," Barry interjected. "You're the one who said Mother's butt was the size of New Hampshire."

"Yeah," Patrick countered. "But you're the one who laughed."

"Be quiet, you idiots," Dolly shouted. "What have you gotten us into?"

Patrick from Ireland, and Barry, from England, were killed in a duel in 1825. Mother linked Dolly with them because she was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Patrick and Barry had been at each other's throats since their first midshipman year aboard the USS Congress, a wooden-hulled, three-masted, heavy frigate in Norfolk harbor. Finally, three years later, after a drunken shoving match at a pub near the ship, they selected seconds and agreed to a dawn duel at a nearby meadow.

They met at dawn with their seconds who provided two braces of matched and charged, .50 caliber dueling pistols. The opponents agreed to select one of each pair, take eight paces apart, aim, and wait for the selected second to say 'fire' before discharging their pistols. Experienced marksmen, they were mortally wounded in the first volley. As they fell, they fired one more volley, which went wild and struck Dolly, a Nicolas Poussin style landscape artist who was painting the sunrise over a meadow a short distance away.

"It's out of my control," Mother had explained to Dolly. "Because you all died at the same location and time, your spirits will be linked forever."

Their assigned role from the beginning was to protect nature. Dolly became the handler, or Nanny, as Mother put it. Mother thought it amusing that Patrick and Barry, who hated each other in life, were now inseparable and dependent on each other in death. The three made an efficient team.

"Here's our assignment," Dolly explained in the tone of talking to children. "You are in two cultivar trees, about 20 feet apart. The cultivars are a cross between a fast-growing Elberta peach tree and a hardy, long-lived pomegranate shrub. The cultivar will produce fruit in the first year, have a wider temperature tolerance range, and last for well over a hundred years. It could help reduce food insecurity in many developing countries."

"Someone is trying to sabotage this project," Dolly continued. "Mother needs you to stop them."

"We're trees," Patrick protested. "How are we supposed to do that?"

"Mother said we would figure it out," Dolly said.

"Something's wrong," Barry suddenly interrupted.

"Someone wearing a Zero Population Growth t-shirt is trying to girdle your trunk with a wire garrote," Dolly said urgently. "Patrick, you have to help him. If the girdle cuts through the xylem and phloem layers, Barry will die. Patrick, use your lateral roots to break through the soil and grab his leg. Barry, do the same to his other leg with your roots."

They put all their energy into pushing their lateral roots toward the assailant. In less than a minute, their roots had reached the assailant, broken through the surface, encircled both legs, lifted him off his feet, and dangled him, head down, a couple of feet above the ground.

"Now, pull them apart," Dolly urged.

The assailant screamed as his legs approached 45 degrees.

"Make a wish," Dolly said lightly as the assailant continued screaming.

"That is enough," Mother broke in sternly. "Let him go."

You in the Newsletter: Short Works cont'd.

Reluctantly, Patrick and Barry released him. The assailant fell on his head, then rolled over and sat, wailing uncontrollably and clasp his groin.

"Very funny," Mother said in a disapproving tone. "Now, bring your roots back under the surface."

The wailing resulted in several 911 calls. "These two trees tried to kill me," The assailant said when the first responding police officer arrived a few minutes later.

"Yeah, right. I see it all the time," the officer dismissively replied as he cut the wire garrote. "Serves you ZPG people right. Another quarter-inch deeper and the girdling would have killed the tree. Consider it tree self-defense."

An instant later, Dolly, Patrick and Barry were in front of Mother. "That was nice work," she said. "Patrick and Barry, what did you learn from that assignment?"

Patrick and Barry looked down sheepishly. "It's not nice to fool with Mother Nature," they said simultaneously.

Another instant later, they were in the bodies of two five-year-old, seven-feet-long, 200-pound Sumatran tigers in the Thirty Hills rainforest in Sumatra. They chuffed as they paced around.

"Looking good, Barry," Patrick chuffed.

"Looking good, Patrick," Barry chuffed.

"If you two are through preening, I have our next assignment," Dolly scolded. "There are five orangutan poachers near us in the preserve. They have bedded down for the night. There is only one poacher on watch, and he is half asleep. I will direct you to them. You take care of them any way you like. As a bonus," she continued after a brief consultation with Mother. "You can eat whatever you catch."

"I'm hungry," Patrick said. "Let's go get these poachers."

"Eulogy"

By J.D. Blair

Critics called him a "genuinely fresh talent," even though he had been writing prose for over forty years.

Despite his claims that he graduated with a master's degree in literature from Harvard there is no evidence that he finished college. At Penn State where he dabbled in drama and at Harvard, transcripts show large gaps in his attendance at both institutions. They do show increased interest in extracurricular courses dealing in the occult and martial arts, nothing approaching literature.

He refused to bow to pressure from professors and mentors to complete an MFA regimen and opted instead to, in his words, "take the low road" to literary success. Because he never sought out an MFA program, acceptance of his work was hard to come by. Rejections from *The New Yorker* alone numbered in the fifties. Whether he achieved his literary goals only time will tell. As yet his name has not appeared among the pantheon of American literary giants like Faulkner, Hemingway, Roth, Steinbeck, or Salinger.

In an early autobiographical essay published in an obscure Harvard newsletter, he confessed that during his teen years he spent hours writing pornographic poetry in the storage attic of his fathers Olathe, Kansas, clothing store, "masturbating among the plastic ladies." In subsequent interviews he admitted to becoming orgasmic while reading a critique of the letters of T.S. Eliot. What he found sexually arousing in the Eliot papers is anybody's guess.

Writers should be readers. What are you reading? What book would you recommend to others and why? What worked? What didn't work? Why? Does the book go deeper than "one foot in front of another?" Are there cultural, literary, or historic references? Is there any philosophy or thinking about life and living? Does the author set scene and outline characters well? Are there interesting subplots or asides?

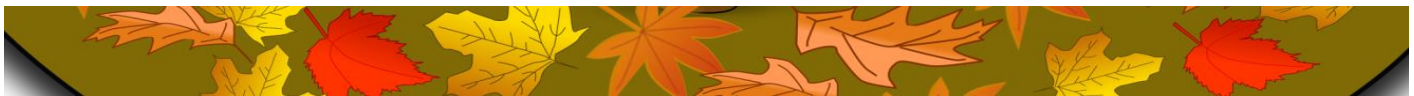
So here's the challenge and opportunity to member-writers of all genres, send me some short(ish) book reviews to put in the newsletters. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

You in the Newsletter: Short Works cont'd

These adolescent episodes laid the groundwork that eventually led to the sexually explicit essays he exchanged with Henry Miller and Jack Kerouac in the early '50s. He was a regular attendee at the Esalen Institute in California and often stayed at Miller's home in Big Sur. Miller introduced him to Kerouac who in turn introduced him to the San Francisco drug culture that became such a large part of his literary focus extending into the seventies. Their published exchanges were met with critical ridicule at the time and most were banned. They appear almost quaint in light of today's literary mores. There was an anthology published during this period titled *Psychedelic Pornographic Prose: Seeing Sex from the Far Side*. With diligent research excerpts can be found in small underground publications.

After missing a chance at the Nobel Prize for literature in 1994 he confessed to having difficulty with the word "literature," for years spelling it "literature."


He died at 72 with his fingers on the keys of the Royal typewriter he used throughout his career. His final sentence, "He was a teaser stallion whose seed and talent are frittered away in fruitless pursuits," is perhaps a fitting epitaph for a "genuinely fresh talent."



UPCOMING PROGRAM for 2020

Dec. 12 	Penny Sansevieri <i>Top 9 Things to Do to Make Your Book Successful</i>	Sansevieri is CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc. and adjunct professor at NYU, a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. Her company is one of the leaders in the publishing industry and has developed some of the most cutting-edge book marketing campaigns. She has written at least 10 books on marketing your books. See them at https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/600109.Penny_C_Sansevieri
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2021

Jan 9 	Frederick Foote <i>How to Write Diverse Characters</i>	Frederick served in the United States Air Force for over three years; retired from the State of California in 2001, and taught at California Community colleges for over ten years and at a traditionally black college in South Carolina. His first short story was published in 2014 and since then he has had over 80 stories and poems published. In October 2015, Blue Nile Press published his book, <i>For the Sake of Soul</i> —a collection of short stories set in the South, Central California, and the 1960s Viet Nam and Civil Rights era.
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If you've heard a great speaker on writing/publishing/editing, email Jill Hedgecock at hedgewriter@sbcglobal.net



Aid vs. **Aide**—What Is the Difference?

Aid as a noun means "help" or "assistance." As a verb it means "to help" or "to assist."
An **aide** is an assistant, a noun and never a verb.

Resources for Writers

By **Barry D Hampshire**, CWC Mt Diablo Branch - Membership Chair

Other members of the committee: Linda Hartmann, Marlene Dotterer, Elisabeth Tuck, Lyn Roberts, and David George.

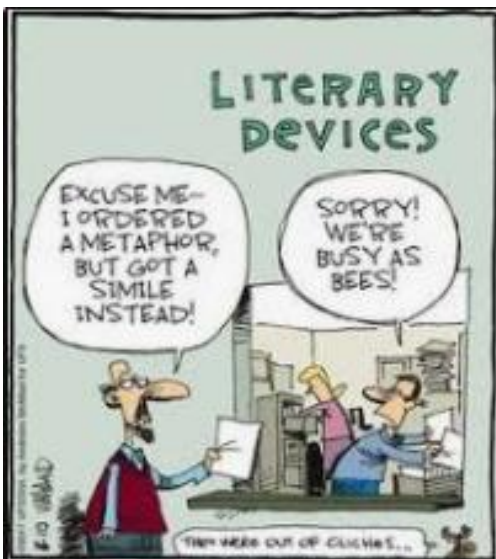
On September 26, the Mt. Diablo branch held our first “Resources for Writers” presentation. The Board recognized that even though packets of information are distributed when new members join, new members still had no simple way to understand all the resources that the club has to offer. We further realized that was often true for well-established members, too. A sub-committee was formed to prepare a way to orient members to the resources available to them through our branch and the Club.

We agreed that it would make sense to have an interactive, online gathering rather than a formal meeting, so the title for it was “Resources for Writers; A Virtual Kaffeeklatsch and Member Orientation, Featuring Delectable Bites of Information for New Members and Old-Timers. BYOB”

The Zoom kaffeeklatsch covered topics such as the history of the CWC and the Mt. Diablo Branch, a web-surfing tour of the branch website, the state website, our newsletter, *The Write News*, the Back Fence Yahoo discussion group, The Young Writers Contest for middle school students, as well as opportunities to become more involved in the club through volunteerism. So that they could pay attention without the need to take notes, the participants were sent the presentations via links. The presentation was well-attended and well-received by over two dozen participants. In fact, the main theme of the comments following the presentation was to repeat the presentation for others.



One of the largest takeaways from the Zoom session was the enthusiasm with which everyone engaged in the opening introductions and sharing with each other about their current writing projects. It demonstrated how much our members miss the opportunity to mingle and exchange ideas, as with our previous in-person meetings. For now, we need to continue gathering via Zoom, using the break-out rooms for socializing and planning more “Resources for Writers” presentations to help members stay engaged, connected, and aware of the many benefits the branch offers.



Young Writers Contest Fundraising

Sponsored by

The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch



Please consider joining one of the following donor clubs to benefit our programs in support of young writers. Your tax-deductible gift will appear in the contest program in May, and in the Mount Diablo CWC newsletter every month in the year you donate. Or remain anonymous if you prefer!

DONATIONS since 1/2020

JACK LONDON FOUNDER'S CIRCLE (\$500+)

Susan Berman

David George In honor and support of the **R. Lee Paulson** Humor Award

THE JOHN STEINBECK SOCIETY (\$250 - \$499)

David George

JOHN MUIR MEMBER CLUB (\$150 - \$249)

Danard Emanuelson

Several Parents of Submitters

Linda Hartmann

INA COOLBRITH LAUREATE CLUB (\$100 - \$149)

Judith Ingram

Patrick Hancock

Elizabeth Pentacoff in honor of **Susie Wilson**

Aline Soules in honor of **Ina Coolbrith**

MARY AUSTIN WRITERS CLUB (\$50 - \$99)

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HELEN HUNT JACKSON GROUP (\$25 - \$49)

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THE GERTRUDE ATHERTON GUILD (\$10 - \$24)

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Laura Blackwell

Al Garrotto

Susan Lawson

Chris Stafford

Robin Abbott, YWC parent

Pavan Kumar Katragadda

Linda Todd

Joanna Pace



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 submission is free. Check our branch website for details:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers/>

In May the Mt. Diablo Branch hosts an awards ceremony to honor the students--if there's no pandemic!

All program expenses are supported by individual donations and grants.

Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ My donation is in honor/memory of: _____

To pay via PayPal click "buy now" on the Mt. Diablo website: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers/>

Make a check payable to: *CWC Mt. Diablo Branch*. And mail to: CWC Mt. Diablo Branch

P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507

Attention: Young Writers Contest

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS ANNUAL CONTEST

