



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

June 2021

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

June 12, 2021

9:30 Sign-In - Survey and Socialization – 10:00 Writer's Table

10:55 Business Mtg. – Speaker 11:15 – 12:15

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

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

Writing Deeper into Theme

Featuring

Liz Tucker

There are many instruments contained in our "writerly toolboxes" that allow us to mine, sharpen, and ultimately strengthen our works on the thematic level. We'll take a look at excerpts from published works to identify and explore the narrative techniques used to deepen their respective artistic motifs. Whether we write fiction, memoir, poetry, drama, or creative non-fiction, theme matters. Exercises will be provided that apply to our works.

In this craft talk, we will discuss:



- What is **theme** and why is it important
- A word on **plot** versus **theme**
- The when, where, and how of developing and deepening theme
- Generative exercises to unearth and explore theme in our works

Liz Tucker is a sixth-generation Californian living and writing in the Sierra Nevada with her husband and two children. She is two-time finalist with *Glimmer Train's* Short Story Award for New Writers. Chapters from her novella, *Fault Lines*, were published in *The Bangalore Review* and the third chapter, "Panoramic Highway," received an Honorable Mention in the 2017 JuxtaProse Short Story Contest and published in the *JuxtaProse Magazine*, summer 2018. Her other works of poetry and short fiction have been published in a host of literary magazines, including: SFSU's *Transfer*, *Red River Review*, U. of Maine's *Aroostook Review*, *SNReview*, and *Tahoe Blues*, an anthology published by Bona Fide books. Her play, *Catch and Release*, was recently produced in the Truckee Community Theater's 10-Minute Play Fall Festival. When not carving words to page, Liz can usually be found anywhere outside: skiing, mountain biking, surfing, or just plucking away at her upright bass. She serves on the board of Adventure Risk Challenge, a youth leadership non-profit that empowers at-risk teens to make positive change through integrated literary and outdoor wilderness experiences.

<https://liztucker.wordpress.com>

\$5.00 for members - \$10.00 for guests

By registering you consent to be recorded during the meeting

***President's Message:* Linda Hartmann**

Write the Waves



Dear Amazing CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch Members,

Our board, committee chairs, leaders, and members have worked diligently to make the remainder of this fiscal year a memorable one for each of you. We have enjoyed some great speakers, workshops, Writers Tables, and Open Mic Nights! We hope that the members have benefitted from the knowledge gained and had as much fun as we did in the planning!

As with life, when one thing ends, it makes time and creates space for something new. This is happening with leadership in our club. During the June meeting, you will vote on a **slate of officers** willing to take on these roles. The slate does not preclude YOU from volunteering to run for any of these positions. It is simply that a slate of people willing to move forward is needed. We also need some new blood in committee positions. Some of the following starred positions are board positions; some are board-optional positions; for others, the chair needs to be a board member, but the committee members may or may not be board members.

Please raise your hand at the June meeting, or if you cannot attend, write to me at president@cwcmtdiablo.com if you are interested in learning more about any of the following openings:

Executive Committee Office of the Vice President: in training for over a year to learn the role of president

Monthly Newsletter Editor: this is a board position

Nominations and Awards Chair: this is a board position

Social Media Chair: Maintain Mt. Diablo presence on Facebook, Twitter, etc. this is a board position

***Outreach:** arrange panels from our branch to speak in bookstores, libraries or other appropriate venues often with the topic, "So You Want to Write a Book." It's a win-win as venues increase their foot traffic, and panelists may sell their books or arrange book launches.

***Open Write Nite:** {this is not its official name yet} Can be a monthly rotating chair with various topics, poetry, ekphrasis, games, quiet writes, genre writes, etc.

***Young Writers Contest Anthology Master:** April - Early May organizes the YWC anthology

***Young Writers Mail Merge:** April - Early May help with Certificates, Letters, Envelopes, etc. for YWC winners

***Scholastic Art and Writing Awards 2nd Juror Coordinator:** Late Dec - Mid Jan

Volunteering is a gift, not just to others but to yourself as well! A study by the Mayo Clinic found health benefits to volunteering, namely: lowering of mortality rates, decrease pain and may help you live longer. Volunteering can increase a person's social networks and buffer stress, reducing the risk of disease. Enjoying time spent in service to others gives a sense of meaning and appreciation. Volunteering helps you meet others, make friends, earn respect, and enhance relationships. Participation in common interests and shared time in existing causes allows opportunities to practice social and professional skills with others. It demands acts of esteem while teaching valuable skills, often then passed onto others. It also helps people stay mentally and physically active!

I certainly appreciate your consideration! Have a wonderful summer break - the board will continue to send pertinent news your way!

We'll look forward to reconvening one way or another in September. Stay tuned for details!!

All my best, Linda



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Writers Table

June 12, 10 a.m. – Karen Stephen:

Creation and Value of Book Trailers



What is a Book Trailer?

It is basically an elevator pitch with illustrations and music, with four caveats:

Keep it brief

Make it original

Make it memorable

Leave the reader/publisher thinking “tell me more.”

The book trailer (pitch) is the very heart of marketing a book. It’s the heart of your product, and the heart of your brand.

Volunteer to Lead a Writers Table

These are short (40 minutes or so) informational or practice session on the craft of writing. Hosted by Mt. Diablo members, these sessions cover topics of interest to writers. Share a writing, publishing, editing, research, etc. skill. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writerstable/>

Join CWC or Renew Your Membership

If you renew before June 30 you will be in a drawing for \$25 toward the cost of meetings either online or in person.

To renew go to: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/renew-membership/> pay with Paypal or write a check to:
 CWC Mt. Diablo Branch. Mail, postmarked by June 30 to: CWC Mt. Diablo Branch
 P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507
 Attention: Membership

Call for Mt. Diablo's 2021-2022 Branch Officer Election Nominations

Barry D Hampshire
Membership Chair

At the next CWC meeting, June 12th, the attending membership will elect officers for the Mt. Diablo Branch Board for the upcoming CWC year.

Currently, the slate is as follows:

President	Linda Hartmann
Vice President	David George
Treasurer	Barry Hampshire
Secretary	Frances Stephenson



All members of the club can nominate themselves or another member for any of these four officer positions. If you have a nominee who you feel should be added to the slate, please first confirm that the nominee is willing to stand for the office. Forward the nominee's name and a brief description of the qualities that make them an appropriate candidate to me through the "Contact us" link on the Mt. Diablo branch website.

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/>

Alternatively, members can add a nominee to the slate just prior to the election at the June meeting. Again, the potential nominee should have confirmed they are willing to stand.

I look forward to the election of the officers who will guide the club over the next year.

Member Events, News, and Salutes



If you have a new publication, a book launch, an upcoming media interview, please write up a short announcement and let us put you in the newsletter. Gather up a picture of yourself or your publication and to submit, go to: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/> so we can celebrate you. If you have hobbies or interests alongside your writing, you may have found publications that would like articles on those pastimes. If so, let us know.

JD Blair

The sixth episode of my eBooks the "JANUS" detective series is now available from the Apple I-Books App and Amazon Kindle. This installment is *JANUS in Transit*.

Janus travels back to his old stomping grounds, Venice Beach, and mixes it up with corrupt politicians and a smarmy newspaper columnist and rekindles a long-lost flame. Just a normal rough and tumble into his past. Enjoy!

blairj28@gmail.com



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://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>



Joanna Kraus

What I like best about writing is entering another world, conducting the necessary research, and living with my characters. I don't mind letting the play or story sit for a while and then revisiting in order to revise, rewrite, and then rewrite some more.

Most difficult is finding a home for the project and trying to market it.

The following organizations hold meetings with professional speakers, workshops, and conferences that have been enormously helpful:

The American Alliance for Theatre and Education
The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
The California Writers Club
Published Writers of Rossmoor.

Also, vitally important is the feedback and fellowship of my critique group and the play readings and developmental workshops of scripts.

I was recently selected as a winner in the 2021 national competition of the Old Miner Children's Playwriting Contest. I also had a Zoom reading of *Champion* and hope to see its first production in 2022. Right now, I'm working on a draft of a chapter book.

As a teen I worked in the Children's Theatre of Portland, Maine, which was a marvelous training ground both in terms of work and observing audience responses. At college I studied Theatre Arts as part of my course load. Later, I was Assistant Director of the Children's Theatre of Baltimore, about whose history I wrote my doctoral dissertation. My two mentors, sadly now deceased, were Marghi Dutton in Portland and Isabel Burger in Baltimore.

I was fortunate enough to marry a man who was a Second Night Theatre Critic and attended theatre with him on Broadway in New York City and on the West End in London and saw what makes a show shine--or not. As a child who began reading at five, I always loved books, took an outstanding class in children's literature at Columbia University, taught by Leland Jacobs, eventually taught a class myself at the State University of New York, and for two decades wrote a column reviewing children's books for the Bay Area News group. All of the above inspired me and helped me develop skills in craftsmanship.

When I moved to California, I joined CWC and have appreciated the speakers and the camaraderie of the members over the last twenty years.


Twenty of my plays have been produced/published and my books have been both trade and hybrid publications. For specifics, please see my website www.joannakraus.com

My advice to new writers is to write from the heart, write what you care about, and be prepared to rewrite many times.

Success for me isn't monetary rather it's the knowledge that I've told a story that has meaning for others which can stimulate change or bring comfort.

Future writing goals include investigating the cardboard cartons in my closet of unfinished manuscripts to see if I want to pursue and develop some.

Upcoming Speaker for 2021

<p>September 11</p> 	<p><u>Alan Brennert</u> Researching Your Novel: Reality Matters</p>	<p>Brennert is the author of multiple historical novels, including his new novel, <i>Daughter of Moloka'i, Palisades Park, Honolulu</i> (chosen one of the best books of 2009 by <i>The Washington Post</i>), and <i>Moloka'i</i>, which won the 2006 Bookies Award, sponsored by the Contra Costa Library, for the Book Club Book of the Year and has sold over 600,000 copies since publication. It was also a 2012 One Book, One San Diego selection. He has developed screenplays for major studios, as well as miniseries, pilots, and television movies. He won an Emmy Award and a People's Choice Award for his work as a writer-producer on the television series <i>L.A. Law</i>, and his short story "Ma Qui" was honored with a Nebula Award.</p>
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Mt. Diablo takes a break in July and August. If you hear of or experience a good speaker, go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/> to recommend the person

Things to Do

Speak or Listen at Open Mic Night



The votes are in and it's unanimous:

Open Mic Night is

FUN and Inspiring!

Be prepared to have your socks knocked off,
because when you hear
what our own member-authors have written,

you'll be **amazed**

blown away, actually, by the talent in our club.

See and hear for yourself.

Read your work by signing up

AND LISTEN to others, just REGISTER!

Next Open Mic Night is Wednesday, June 16 from 7- 8 p.m.

on Zoom of course.

To attend, register online at

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/register-for-open-mic-night/>

Or just open the website <https://cwcmtdiablo.org> and click on the link.

It's that easy, and it's free!



Things to Do (cont'd)

START NOW TO POLISH SOMETHING FOR THE 2022

CWC Literary Review

There were 300 submissions to the Literary Review this year with the breakdown being over 100 poems and the rest narratives. Memoir and fiction were the greatest numbers in narratives and the tone was lighter overall this year which was greatly appreciated by the judges and we hope will be by readers.

Around 130 submissions came in close to the April 15 deadline. I recommend you get your submission in early next time when the judges are fresh and not pressed for time!

It will likely be late August-early Sept before the 2021 Lit Review is published. Although the judging is over, there's still a lot of work to do to get polished pieces printed and mailed.

Elisabeth

Members' (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/>



Dinner for Two

By Jerry Blair

In front of the mirror he wished for more and questioned what was behind his dimming eyes. He carried stubble of beard because the shaking was too much. She slipped a blouse over her head and wondered what could be done about the sagging skin at her chin and worried about the mustache she had acquired.

He put on his blue sweater with the hole in the sleeve and a stain from yesterday's meal while she tried to hide the rips in her hem and studied her face, creased with resignation.

They shared the tube of lotion trying to hide aging spots on the backs of their hands and with one last check in the mirror he helped her with her tattered coat and turned off the light. The mission closed its doors at eight and their one full meal of the day was waiting.



“If you have any young friends who aspire to become writers, the second greatest favor you can do them is to present them with copies of *The Elements of Style*. The first greatest, of course, is to shoot them now, while they're happy.”

Dorothy Parker



The older I get the more I appreciate fossils



Young Writers Contest 2021

Young Writers Contest 2021

By Marlene Dotterer

The Young Writers Contest has been a regular part of Mt. Diablo's yearly schedule since 1995. My mind boggles when I think about it. It takes a lot of dedication from many, and varied, volunteers over the years to keep such a program going. Yet, since 1995 - 26 years - I am only the third or fourth person to take on the chair position for the contest. Those earlier chairs did the bulk of the work to build the contest. When I took over in 2015, I inherited a fully-grown and well-funded program, its many parts made to work in harmony and produce a contest that has become a trusted part of the Contra Costa middle school community.

The previous co-chairs, Elizabeth Koehler-Pentcoff and Jill Hedgecock, had also brought the program into the digital age - a Herculean task by any measure - with a beautiful set-up on Submittal.com. I basically just had to copy what they did.

YWC has changed over the last few years. We moved the awards ceremony from its traditional place on the calendar as the branch's May meeting, to its own event date on the third Saturday of May. It's no longer a fancy banquet at Zio Fraedo's but is now held in another venue with catered food. This has not made a huge difference in the branch's expense, but it does help the expense for the families of the winners, as they no longer have to pay for lunches for extra guests. We've stream-lined the ceremony, making it shorter and without a key-note speaker. This lets us focus on the winners, giving them a chance to read from their winning pieces.

This year, we held the ceremony on Zoom. While the event is much more fun in person, I think everyone had a good time. It was fun to see the kids in speaker view as they read their pieces. I hope we see some of them next year, in real life.

Please take some time to peruse this year's winners' works and read them on our website at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/2021-winners/>. You will be delighted and impressed.

If you would like a copy of this year's anthology of winning pieces, please email me at youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org. Let me know how many copies you want and where to mail them. Or you can pick them up - either at my house or an arranged meeting place.

We do ask for a donation (\$2 - \$5) to YWC to cover the cost of printing and postage. It's on the honor system. Donate through PayPal at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers/>, or send a check to our treasurer at:

CWC-Mt. Diablo
P.O. Box 606
Alamo, CA 94507

It may seem that the Young Writers Contest happens in the background, without a lot of bother to the general membership. But this contest is a vital part of our mission to educate and engage the community in writing. I hope we can keep it going for another 26 years.

peek



peak



pique

Irritation or resentment from a slight, especially to one's pride.

2020 Young Writers Contest First Prize Winners

(In September we will begin featuring the 2021 winners' submissions.)

PERSONAL NARRATIVE – 8TH GRADE

1st Place

Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2

by Sanjana Selvaraj

Teacher: Randal Hart, Windermere Ranch Middle, San Ramon

I rolled my eyes as I stood on the faded green welcome mat. Golden leaves flurried past my feet, restlessly swept into piles only to be scattered seconds later by the freezing winds. I really wished I was at home instead, hungrily gobbling up sweet ladoos and watching Twilight Sparkle galloping through the magical land of Equestria. Instead, I was forced to be here by my mom. She insisted that I would absolutely love playing the piano. But I know myself better. Wouldn't I know if I wanted to play music? But being a naive five-year-old, I was easily bribed by the promise of a doughnut from Happy Doughnut. I could have stood there scowling for hours but soon the door was swung open by a stout Chinese woman, face clear of wrinkles.

"Come in," she exclaimed. "Joey is waiting for you in the piano room!"

I smiled half-heartedly before trudging past her along the slippery-slick tiles of the hallway with soft, inconspicuous steps. As I walked, I peeked at the numerous trophies and family portraits with fleeting glances because I knew I wouldn't be back. Upon entering the piano room I could smell the unmistakable odor of pine emanating from incense sticks in the corner of the room. The young woman whom I perceived to be Joey patted the fluffy black chair next to her.

"Come and take a seat. Let's start your class."

With a heaving sigh, I slumped into the seat.

"So, have you ever played piano before?" she inquired.

"Of course not, I'm only 5 years old!" I exclaimed, feeling annoyed. "I don't even want to play the piano," I add under my breath.

"Well, I can't promise that you will love the piano." She smiled warmly before adding, "But I can promise that you will change your mind about it by the end of class."

We'll see about that. I thought to myself.

"I'm going to play one of my favorite pieces for you: Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2," Joey said.

Before I could even comment about how the name sounded like the word nectarines, she had gracefully raised her hands to the piano, and the music began to flow from her fingertips. The snide remarks that were on the tip of my tongue were immediately stolen by the music that filled the room. Listening to it, I felt like I was hearing the song of a siren; any rational thought I had was gone in an instant as I let my mind flow with the ethereal crescendos, diminuendos, and the hint of a melancholy soul that lingered behind every note. To my surprise, I felt my own emotions reflect the same sadness in the Nocturne. When Joey's fingers finished their long and emotional dance, I felt myself returning to the real world. "Did you like it?" she questioned, one eyebrow quirked upward.

"I loved it, it had a beautiful flow!" I exclaimed. That was the least I could say about the beautiful piece. It made me imagine a beautiful full moon rising over a cliff as a sophisticated young woman pirouetted, the moon watching her silently.

"Well, I wonder where the sullen girl I saw before went?" she pondered out loud in the same know-it-all voice that all grown-ups seemed to develop.

"I want to play it!" I said.



2020 Young Writers Contest First Prize Winner (cont'd)

1st Place

Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2

by Sanjana Selvaraj (cont'd)

She laughed before replying, “That might be just a little too advanced for you. First, try to learn your scales.” Begrudgingly, I nod my head and allow her to hold my tiny tanned hands in her large pale ones and place them on the piano. This is when my adventure began. But my adventure was not that of dragons, mermaids, and princesses. Mine was an adventure through time. It was an adventure of emotion and self-discovery.

After my class was done and I had learned about the different notes, I left Joey’s house and got into my dad’s car before I quickly slammed the car door shut and put on my seatbelt.

“Well, you look excited, little monkey,” my dad said as he looked at my face in the rear-view mirror. I couldn’t keep the smile from spreading across my face as my whole body felt alive with excitement.

“I’ll tell you if I like the class when I get my doughnut,” I replied. Five minutes and a glazed doughnut later, I’m enthusiastically babbling about what I learned, how nice Joey and her mom were, and about the Nocturne that Joey had played. I promised myself that by the time I graduated high school, I would be playing the Nocturne better than Joey herself. What I did not know back then is that every beat and emotion that my body would go through while playing would seep into my being, and any negative thoughts, pressured feelings, and memories that stubbornly refused to fade from my mind would disappear, even if it was for just a few minutes. Maybe the piano wasn’t so boring after all.



1st Place

Freedom of Speech

by Kate Wang

Teacher: Ben Wayne, Joaquin Moraga Middle School, Moraga

Guns fire in the distance. The command for open fire is raw in everyone’s minds. The Chinese protests had been going on for weeks, students and workers calling for a democratic China and freedom of speech in Tiananmen Square becoming a regular sight. When the troops arrived, everyone held their breath, waiting for the government to make a move. They were the chess master; we, only pawns in their vicious game.

It was a massacre. The army had come in with tanks and assault rifles. The citizens had no chance. Hundreds were killed that night, thousands more wounded.

The next day, there was silence. There was no more shouting, no more gunfire, and no more screams of those being shot. All of China was in mourning. And for what? Speaking up for their beliefs? Advocating the changes they envisioned?

My father was seventeen during the Tiananmen Square Massacre, still in to high school in Beijing and living a couple miles away from a nightmare. This was the reality that he and my mom faced growing up in China. As a second generation American, I listen to these horror stories with a sense of finality. I know I am lucky to live in America, a country where freedom of speech is a right.

In the U.S., people complain about the government freely, and there’s always a part of me that wants to shush them, whispering “Someone might hear!” I guess that’s my Chinese background. But here, even the president is vulnerable, can be impeached as easily as a Senate vote.

I grew up in this world of equality and freedom where others might disapprove of what I have to say, but will always fight for my right to say it.

And that is what freedom of speech means to me.



Young Writers Contest Fundraising

Sponsored by
The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch

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

DONATIONS A/O June 2021

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

David George in honor of Lee Paulson
Susan Berman

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

Robert Lane

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

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

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff in honor of Susie Wilson
Kathy Urban in honor of Susie Wilson
Aline Soules in memory of Ina Coolbrith
Linda Hartmann Danard Emanuelson
Judith Marshall

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

Lynn Goodwin
Uyen Chau
Patty Northlich

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

Daniel Cheung
Nanette Cooper Mcguiness June Gatewood
Marlene Dotterer
Robert Boyle George Cramer

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

Lee Paulson Dennis Yee
Marjorie Witt Johnathan Singh
Ravinder Ramchandani Al Garrotto
Maya Das 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/>

Or 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