

The Write News



A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

May 2022

In-Person and Zoom BRANCH MEETING May 14, 2022

**Check-In 11:00, 11:15 Writer's Table, 12:00 Lunch
Business Meeting 12:45, Speaker 1:00**

Register online at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>
Once registered, you will receive a link to join the Zoom meeting.

The Power of Writing with Abandon

Featuring

Grant Faulkner (on Zoom)

One of the biggest obstacles any writer faces is finishing the first draft. As Joyce Carol Oates said, "Getting the first draft finished is like pushing a peanut with your nose across a very dirty floor." Enter [National Novel Writing Month](#), which has generated one of the most effective approaches to writing a first draft and bounding to new imaginative heights. This session will cover the power of diving in and connecting with others in a creative community. This is your year to finish the book of your dreams. Come prepared to write—with abandon!



We will learn how to:

- Banish our inner editor
- Take creative risks
- Set an audacious goal and a deadline
- Track our daily progress
- Connect with others

Grant Faulkner is the Executive Director of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) and the co-founder of the online magazine, *100 Word Story*. He published *All the Comfort Sin Can Provide*, *Fissures: One Hundred 100-Word Stories*, and *Nothing Short of 100: Selected Tales from 100 Word Story*. He has also published two books on writing, *Pep Talks for Writers: 52 Insights and Actions to Boost Your Creative Mojo*, and *Brave the Page*, a teen writing guide. Grant is also the co-host of the podcast [Write-minded](#) and the author of a weekly newsletter: *Intimations: A Writer's Discourse*.

Follow Grant on Twitter at [@grantfaulkner](#) and on Instagram at [@grantfaulkner](#).

In-Person – Members \$25.00 – Guests \$35.00

Zoom – Members \$10.00 – Guests \$15.00



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

Writing the Waves

"Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine." Anthony J. D'Angelo

The round of recent April showers was so invigorating that I nearly lost sight of the drought, even if for a single night of proper Midwestern-style downpour! The rainfall, indeed a direct result of rain dances by me and others. I delight at how well the dances work--once in a while! But not like they did when I was younger. I remember a lot more rain back in the day. Nevertheless, I have decided to continue with the rain dancing since one of my primary goals in life is to be an unremitting optimist.

Thus, I have decided to also dance for "word fall" as well. If my dances can conjure up an entire night of a drenching monsoon, think of what my dancing for word fall might do for the precipitation of words to fall from imagination onto blank pages before me as the muse sits by, tired, and watching, moving forward as inspiration drizzles enough for an umbrella.

Okay, I get it. One downpour does not cure a year-long drought. In much the same way, we all go through occasional droughts with our writing -- it is how we choose to deal with the dry spells that often brings us to our next big storm of scribbles. It is when the clouds burst that we change up our routine. We may decide it is time to clean out a closet or go through a drawer. Inevitably, we come across memories, imagining "back in the day," and our thoughts stray into writing a personal essay as a part of a book to pass on to our children or family. When the clouds darken, and the sky is lit by a jolting bolt of lightning, with even a wee bit of shock, inspiration may follow.

Sometimes, things can shift within the quietest of moments, as when amid noise, drought and low interference levels, our sincerest of selves surfaces. What is it then that we choose to do with our time? What shall we dance for next? Then comes the onset of tossing and turning, contemplating how we spend our time and prioritize our values. I may want to write the next chapter of a WIP (work-in-progress) at times like this, but it is often on the next chapter of my own life that I work.

We are nearing the end of another fiscal year together as a branch. Remember to renew your membership early to be automatically put into a drawing by the end of May for a nice freebie!

During this time of year, many of our branch members are deeply involved in the annual and hugely successful Young Writers Contest. The volunteers have read the students' submissions, identified the winning pieces, and are now preparing the certificates, mailings, the anthology, screen show, and the terrific ceremony planned for May 21st. This contest has been successful for 27 years, all due to the volunteers from our branch who make this happen! The students, teachers, parents, and our branch all look forward to this important annual event!

The sad news is that after many years of chairing this committee, Marlene Dotterer will be stepping down. Thus, we are in dire need of a new chairperson for the contest. Please consider this position a fun and rewarding way of giving back to your community. None of us wants to see this contest end after such a long, fruitful, encouraging, educational run!

Thank you, Marlene, for being the heart and soul of the YWC for so many years!



CRAFT

3 Editing Tips for Crisp, Emotive Storytelling by Chandrayan Gupta

<https://writingcooperative.com/3-editing-tips-for-crisp-emotive-storytelling-8dd3f8215b7c>

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Member Events, News, and Salutes



If you have a new publication, a book launch, an upcoming media interview, a column or published article, please write up a short announcement and let us put you in the newsletter. Gather up a picture of yourself and/or your publication and to submit, go to:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

The first 5 authors mentioned here are Mt. Diablo members who write for the online and paper magazine, *Diablo Gazette*. If I missed any other members, please let me know. The articles mentioned can be read in the April issue of the Gazette at: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/cec3939e55.html>

Fran Cain

Scotia and Humboldt County – Who Needs to Fly? Is Fran's article in her column "Journey-Man's Journey." About the piece, Fran says:

"During the pandemic, my husband and I have been taking short road trips to new places. The tiny town of Scotia in Humboldt County just off Highway 101 has a long history as being home to the once-largest Redwood mill in the world. It's a great jumping off point for exploring the area."

Fran describes several intriguing sights and places to walk and hike in the area as well as Humboldt County's historic Scotia Inn reopened with new owners as the Scotia Lodge. Read Fran's article on p. 16 of the Gazette.



Michael J. Barrington

Michael's article "The Man-of-Steel is Retired in Clayton—Who Knew?" Michael begins: "Gary Boswell is a tall, grey-haired, soft-spoken man, but get Boswell talking about construction and he becomes a different person. With Superman-like hyperbole describing his life's work, there is not a bridge plus a few of the most iconic buildings in the Bay Area that Bowell has not help erect - feats so significant to our local infrastructure that it helped catapult the Bay Area into one of the world's greatest economies." Michael has recently agreed to do a monthly review like this. Read the rest of his article and see a photo on p. 8 of the Gazette.

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

Colleen Gonzalez

“Screen Time” a regular movie review column by Mt. Diablo member, Colleen Gonzalez, who reviews the Oscar-nominated film, *Drive My Car*, a three hour movie streaming on HBOMax and based on a short story by Haruki Murakami. She describes the film as quiet but one that will grab ahold of you. Read Colleen’s review of the movie on p. 10 of the Gazette.



Jill Hedgecock’s regular column “bookends” reviews *Somebody’s Daughter*, a memoir by Ashley C. Ford. Read her review on p. 10

“Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue” is a regular column by Jill about the local world of dogs and other animals in conjunction with ARF (Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation.) Read this column on p.15 of the Gazette

And don’t overlook David George’s regular column “The Naked Gardener.” David is a certified Master Gardener who encourages us to have chemical-free, healthy gardens of flowers and/or vegetables. See David’s article “Spring Into Action” on p. 9 of the Gazette.



Be Interviewed

Harlan Hague by Heidi Eliason



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

Around ten years. I was a member of the Mt. Diablo Branch and drove over from Stockton for meetings. I served on the board and was treasurer for a number of years. When the San Joaquin Valley chapter in Stockton was founded, I moved my membership there. Since I am moving to Concord soon, I have moved my membership back to Mt. Diablo.

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

The speakers at meetings are certainly helpful, but my primary purpose and benefit is the association with kindred spirits, talking with people who enjoy doing what I do, writing.

3. What have you written and has any of your work been published?

My books have been published by a university press, commercial presses, and self-published at KDP Amazon.

Be Interviewed (Cont'd)

4. How did you find your publisher, and why did you decide to publish some of your work yourself?

I wanted the best scholarly publisher for my history and biography and settled on University of Oklahoma, which is considered one of the two or three best publishers for scholarly books in the American West. When I turned to the West in fiction, I settled on Five Star Publishing, one of the top publishers of western fiction. After a few volumes, I became impatient with their lengthening intervals between submission and release and turned to self-publishing with KDP Amazon. Later, I moved back to commercial publishing with Wolfpack Publishing, which has a short interval between submission and release. Wolfpack has republished eight of my novels and released an original book last December. I am working presently on a manuscript which they will publish before the end of the year.

5. Do you have a website?

Yes. I am working on combining two websites, harlanhague.us and softadventure.net. The latter is a record of my travel and travel writing and will be a section on the new website, harlanhague.us. I am looking for someone to complete the merge.

6. What are you currently working on?

A novel, *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*, a western that includes time travel between 2022 and the last half of the nineteenth century. I expect to finish by June, and Wolfpack has promised a release before the end of the year so I can enter award competitions. I am an award-competition junkie.

7. In which genre(s) do you write?

American West fiction, though I have also published history and biography and have three novellas, two set in Japan and the U.S. west coast, and one set in Belize.

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

I have been writing for decades. I taught United States history and, while teaching, wrote articles that published in scholarly journals. While teaching and after, I traveled extensively (about eighty countries and proved Earth is round) and wrote travel articles that published in newspapers around the country. The L.A. Times published just about everything I sent. My research experience for my history courses carried over to provide background and place for my western fiction. My tour of duty while in the Navy in Japan and subsequent travel in Japan served as inspiration and background for my books set in Japan.

9. What do you like about writing?

As for fiction, the opportunity to create an alternate world, similar to the real world, but different when I so choose. The fictional world often is more interesting and satisfying than the real world.

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

The opportunity to create, to tell a story that didn't happen in a landscape that doesn't exist except in my imagination, though the landscape and the story may appear familiar to the reader.

11. How do you define success as a writer?

Good question. The pundits say success is based on following the rules of writing. Others say success is defined by sales. There is truth in both claims. Read any bestseller, and you will see evidence that the writer paid scant heed to some rules. Contrary to the pundits, for example, readers like a narrative enriched and flavored with adjectives and adverbs.

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

Organizing my day and not letting chores interfere with writing time.

Be Interviewed (Cont'd)

13. What kind of research do you do, if any, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a story/piece of work?

I am probably unlike most writers in that I do little research in depth before beginning a manuscript. Usually, I begin a manuscript and pause for research when it is called for. This is not the best technique, and I do not recommend it.

14. Are there any resources, tools or events that you have found especially helpful for writing or publishing?

Attend meetings of writers' groups, like CWC. I also attend annual meetings of Western Writers of America and read their publications.

15. Do you have any advice for new writers?

Write! Write! Write! Every day. Well, take Sunday off, if you must. Join a critique group. Finish the manuscript! The biggest problem faced by beginning writers is the inability, or reluctance, to finish a manuscript. The manuscript is finished when the writer says it is finished. Well, after you have written at least 65k words.

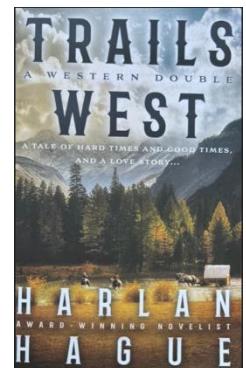
16. What are your future writing goals?

Write! Write! Write! I used to finish two or three books in a year. Now it is one or two per year. The important thing for any writer it to write. I have a friend, younger than I, who has published best-sellers that have been translated and sold in half a dozen countries. She has been working on a new manuscript for two years and is making no progress. I have been a member of critique groups in which members have been poring over finished manuscripts for years and simply will not pronounce them finished. I had a friend, a distinguished professor, who worked over and over on a manuscript that he simply would not pronounce finished. He died. His colleague, with his widow's blessing, submitted the manuscript for publication, and it became one of the most prestigious histories in its field.

17. You have had great success with book sales on Amazon. Do you have any recommendations or tips on how other authors can sell books?

If you are investigating commercial publishers, ask them what sort of promotion they do. They will probably respond by asking what sort of promotion *you* plan to do. But promotion should be a dual responsibility.

If you are self-publishing with KDP Amazon, the website has programs for promotion that some writers have had some success with. I have never used them, but they are worth investigating. Most of my sales on Amazon are through the Kindle Unlimited feature. The author enrolls their titles in the program, and the reader pays a monthly subscription to read a million titles. The author receives a tiny royalty for each page read. In one month, one of my titles recorded readership over 600,000 pages.



CRAFT – One Letter Can Make the Difference

To **flesh** out something is to give it substance, or to make it fuller or more nearly complete.

To **flush** out something is to cause it to leave a hiding place, e.g., "The birds were flushed out of the tree." It can also be used figuratively, as in "flush out the truth."

Young Writers Contest

Young Writers Contest Marlene Dotterer

This year's contest is nearing the finish line. The winners for the 2022 Young Writers Contest have been selected and notified. Excitement builds as our dedicated volunteers prepare for the upcoming

Awards Ceremony on May 21st.

This is our 27th Young Writers Contest. Submissions have grown, as well as the number of schools participating. This year, we received 377 submissions from 238 students at 26 schools.

Below is a list of our judges and other volunteers who make this contest happen. I am grateful for all of them! Check back next month for the list of winners.

JUDGES AND COMMITTEE

*Denotes Team Captain

SHORT STORY 6TH GRADE

Cecilia Pugh*
Lyn Roberts
John Marvin
Cindy Leonard

PERSONAL NARRATIVE 7TH GRADE

Marjorie Witt*
Ken Kerkhoff
Anindita Basu

SHORT STORY 7TH GRADE

Jill Hedgecock*
Barry Hampshire
John Schembra
Marianne McBride

PERSONAL NARRATIVE 8TH GRADE

Linda Hartmann*
Suzy Orpin
Chris Stafford

SHORT STORY 8TH GRADE

Chloe Laube*
Richard Black
Stanford Stewart
Phyllis Houseman

HUMOR ALL GRADES

Susan Berman*
Chloe Laube

PERSONAL NARRATIVE 6TH GRADE

David George*
Fran Cain

POETRY 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH GRADES

Aline Soules*
Ann Damaschino
Janet Clark

THE YWC COMMITTEE

Aline Soules, Submissions Coordinator
Lyn Roberts and Chloe Laube, Judging Coordinators
Cecilia Pugh, Awards Ceremony Coordinator
John Marvin
John Schembra
Linda Hartmann

ASSISTANTS TO THE COMMITTEE

Andrew Benzie, Anthology Cover Design
Heidi Eliason, Printing
Cindy Leonard, Award Ceremony
Alfred Garrotto, Program

With heartfelt thanks to the Board and Members of the Mt. Diablo Branch



The Mt. Diablo Distinguished Service Award (DSA)

The Mt. Diablo Branch DSA may be given once a year to a member whom the majority of the board agrees has provided outstanding service to the membership in an area or areas of great benefit to the branch, either with an extraordinary effort during the current year or for cumulative service of at least two years. See past awardees at: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/board-of-directors-committees-awards/>

Unfortunately this article about **Marlene Dotterer garnering this award in 2021** wasn't published. So read here of Marlene's accomplishments! Congratulations, Marlene and many, many thanks.



Marlene Dotterer

by Linda Hartmann written in Spring 2021

Marlene has been our branch Webmaster for several years taking over from a paid non-member and overhauling then reworking the site to suit changing times and branch activities. It means Marlene is constantly keeping our site up to date. Any new program we initiate requires her to create forms for registration, track registrants, send out Zoom links, and build website design to draw attention to branch news and opportunities. Marlene keeps our branch calendar, manages Zoom break-out rooms, and is part host, recorder, and keeper of the recorded files. She chairs the virtual practice/planning committee meetings that led to our first successful hybrid meeting in October 2020.

She hosted Central Board Zoom meetings during the pandemic and that's well beyond branch duties!

Marlene established and oversees our Meetup ads which bring in new members.

For many years Marlene has been Chair of our Young Writers Contest for Contra Costa County middle-school students who submit in four different categories. In 2020 she assisted in changing the submissions method from Submittable to a system she developed that uses our website, and is saving the branch a considerable amount of money. She ensures the coordinators have enough jurors, assembles the anthology for the winners, creates certificates for all winners and honorable mentions, mailers and labels, procures the prizes, and makes a very personal slideshow to play before and during the captivating (yes, even on Zoom) ceremony for the winning students, their parents, and teachers.

One of Marlene's personal goals that harmonized with branch and state goals for more community outreach was met by establishing Open Mic nights, co-chaired with Lyn Roberts, for members and guests. In a warm and relaxed setting authors read approximately 5 minutes of their works, while others listen then provide positive feedback, Q&A, and encouragement. It has become a pleasant way for members to get to know each other and socialize, and to become familiar with what we are writing. It is a comfortable way to get a taste of reading for an audience and to try out new material. This idea had been brewing pre-coronavirus and is now in full swing.

Marlene helped to create and track a Voucher Program so that members could invite a guest and give them \$10.00 off on a General Meeting or Workshop. She makes herself available to others, is a wonderful mentor, is often the first to step-up to help, and works more hours than most people cannot wait to retire from! She is also extremely understated, and many do not know half of all she does, without complaint and with skill most of us only dream of having. The branch would sink without her. As a former membership chair, past branch president for three years, and, then saving the Young Writers Contest, her resourcefulness has never run dry. This is a most-deserved award.



Mt. Diablo Distinguished Service Award (cont'd)

Distinguished Service Award 2022 – Elisabeth Tuck!

by David George.

Our long time member, branch board member, past-president, and branch newsletter editor, Elisabeth Tuck is this year's Distinguished Service Award winner – Yay! I've known and admired Elisabeth since meeting her in a writing class in 2003. This was before either of us became members in the CWC. It is my honor to mention many of the reasons why Elisabeth is our DSA winner this year.

Elisabeth joined the Mt. Diablo branch in 2009 and soon joined the board of directors. She has worked hard on behalf of the branch membership ever since. She was our branch Vice President then President for 4 years, and for one year was the Program Chair and since has participated on the committee for over 10 years to help find high quality monthly speakers and workshop leaders.

For the past 8 years, Elisabeth has also participated in leading the state CWC organization as both the Mt. Diablo Central Board representative and as a Club officer in the Secretary position. She is now directing her 4th statewide CWC Literary Review edition as Managing Editor. These are huge and generous contributions at both the branch and state levels of our organization.

But most of you know Elisabeth from her years-long dedication as our newsletter editor. She revitalized our monthly offering with featured creative works, poetry, new member profiles, and other innovations to keep the newsletter a fresh and compelling read open to as many branch members' articles as possible. Elisabeth is an avid reader herself and a professional editor we can all trust for honest and helpful feedback. She offers Helpful Editor. She will read two pages of members' works and give detailed feedback. See:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/helpful-editor/>

Mt. Diablo board members look to Elisabeth for her experience, intelligence, intuition, and caring attitude, as she always keeps our member's interests in mind. Please join us in congratulating Elisabeth for this long-overdue honor!

Cats don't even let statues read in peace



OPEN Positions within the Mt. Diablo Branch as of May 2022

Job Descriptions and Mentoring Are Available for Each Role!

What would YOU like to do for your branch?
The branch only works when members volunteer.
Please contact President Linda Hartmann if
interested at <mailto:president@cwcmtdiablo.org>

Executive Committee:

Vice President: - Follows and trains one year+ to learn the roles and responsibilities of the president, substitutes for the president as needed, and aspires to become president The VP is part of the Executive Committee that include the President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Board Chairs

***NorCal Representative** - attends quarterly meetings with the representatives from the 14 Northern California Branches and acts as liaison between our branch and NorCal. NorCal plans Leadership Conferences, participates in local festivals, conferences and writerly events to represent CWC at a booth, sharing information with the public. The rep reports to the board and encourages general members to participate in these activities.

***Social Media Chair** - develops and maintains Mt. Diablo presence on Facebook, Twitter, etc. Chair is a board position and may choose to work with a committee.

***Writers Table Chair** - board member involved with canvassing and tracking members' interest & availability to be discussion leader for a Writers Table session on a writing related topic. Can work with or without a committee to help them. Currently there is a small committee.

Young Writers Contest which occurs in the Spring for a limited period. *The Chair is year round.*

ABOUT the Young Writers Contest: The YWC is a branch contest, established in 1995, for middle-school students regardless of public, private or homeschool, throughout Contra Costa County to submit their writing for recognition, certificates, cash prizes, and inclusion in a printed anthology of the winners' works. **The contest needs volunteers if it is to continue.**

***YWC Chair** - Responsibilities include:

- Organize the committee and provide start dates and deadlines for their tasks: publicity, submissions, judging, award ceremony venue, catering, printed program, prize package preparation, anthology, and slideshow.
- Approve expenditures.
- Send an email to teachers on **the Constant Contact list**, announcing the start date of the contest and another email at the end to thank them for participating.
- Receive and answer emails from students, parents, and teachers. Technical issues would be **passed on to me.**
- Work with the webmaster (me) to approve letters and forms to be sent to winning students and parents.
- Supervise and organize to make sure all the tasks are completed on time.

YWC Anthology Coordinator Organizes and assembles the documents and formatting for the annual YWC Anthology of winners (April - Early May)

YWC Mail Merge helps with Certificates, Letters, Envelopes, etc. (April - Early May)

YWC Slideshow Producer - (mid-April thru mid-May)

YWC Judges/Jurors - A team of jurors each year takes part in reading and judging the work submitted by the students in middle-school throughout Contra Costa County divided by school grade and category of writing submissions. It is great fun! (Mid to late March thru mid-April) Usually takes a few days or so of reading depending on your pace. Jurors do not need to be board members.

(The anthology and slideshow are amazing additions made over the last few years. A new chair would be free to discard them and make their own plans for the ceremony and prize packages.)

OPEN Positions within the Mt. Diablo Branch (cont'd)

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Open Positions: (Dec-Jan)

ABOUT Founded in 1923, The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards funded by the Scholastic publishing company and donors, administered by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, is a competition which recognizes talented young artists and writers from across the United States and its territories. The branch earns a significant monetary amount if we assemble a specified number of judges.

Awards are given to students age 13 through high-school senior for exceptional writing. There are 11 different writing categories. The winners are celebrated locally and nationally (at Carnegie Hall) with medals, scholarships, publications, exhibitions, and a few residencies. Students are from schools throughout the United States and territories as well as U.S. military schools worldwide. Many successful writers began with Scholastic Awards, such as Stephen King, John Updike, Bernard Malamud, Joyce Carol Oates, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Joyce Maynard, Ken Burns, and Amanda Gorman. The Awards program turns 100 in 2023. Just think of the celebration and guest speakers!

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Coordinator - Assists Scholastic Chair in making appropriate assignment to judges, helps recruit judges, is involved in training judges how to access their assignments for reading, trouble-shoots with judges and chair as needed, tracks timelines for the group (mid-December - mid January.) Ideally this person will be in-training for the Chair position the following year!

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Judges/Jurors - A team of jurors each year takes part in reading and judging the works submitted by students. Whenever possible, jurors are assigned the category/ies they have chosen. Readers elsewhere are also judging the same works for equity and fairness to the awards. The highest ranking then float to yet another tier above the initial groups of jurors for additional review for awards. Jurors do not need to be board members.

*Some of these roles are board positions ; the ones with **without asterisks** are **board-optional**; for others, the chair needs to be a board member, but the committee members are optional. Contest judges/jurors (terms used interchangeably) are not required to be board members, though many of them are. Please contact President Linda Hartmann for any questions or if you have an interest in any of these positions at <mailto:president@cwcmtdiablo.org>

Thank you for your consideration!

Call for Mt. Diablo's 2022-2023 Branch Officer Nominations

by **Andrew Benzie**, Membership Chair

At our June 11th CWC meeting, the attending membership will elect officers for the Mt. Diablo Branch Board for the CWC year July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023. Currently, the slate is as follows:

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

Members of the club may 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://cwcmtdiablo.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.

Members' (Short) Works

Members, See your writing in print!

Send your **short** works to be included in the Mt Diablo branch newsletter to:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>



Black Sea Raid - Bob Poirier

The phone rang as Parker was scratching the Irish setter's ears.

"Bob Parker speaking," he answered in a deep voice, a holdover from his US Navy days.

"Hello, Cheng."

"Hello, Admiral," Parker chuckled. "It's been a long time since I was a Chief Engineer."

"A long time, indeed, Bob. And it's just Barry Cassidy now. So I'll get right to the point. We read the recent short story you wrote about the Black Sea ships. We want to discuss this with you in person. Are you available now?"

Parker hesitated. "Well, yes, I guess."

"Okay," Cassidy said. "We're outside your house now."

Admiral Barry Cassidy, as tall and straight as Parker remembered, now with a salt and pepper buzz cut and a trimmed beard, offered his hand when he saw Parker. Two non-descript, athletic-built, middle-aged men in dark suits were with him.

"These are US Marine Corps Logistics officers," Cassidy said. "They are geniuses at procuring things."

"What about my short story?" Parker asked when all took their seats at his kitchen table.

"What do you know about the Javelin FGM-148 missile?" Cassidy asked

"Complete, it weighs fifty pounds, is four feet long, contains 1.3 pounds of high explosive, and can be fired line-of-sight or over-the-top."

"Why do you think the missiles can be used against Russian ships?" Cassidy continued.

"Most of the thirty Russian ships in the Black Sea off Odesa are old and probably poorly maintained. The hull, especially toward the stern, will be thinner from years of electrolysis corrosion made worse by the high salinity of the Black Sea. In direct attack mode, a couple of well-placed Javelins at or near the waterline would open some large holes in the hull and drop the stern quickly before their damage control folks could repair the injury."

"How would you set up the attack?" Cassidy asked.

"Wait until the dark-of-the-moon phase when its light is absent from the nighttime sky," Parker replied and then went into detail about how the mission could proceed.

"Approach the back of the fleet from the southern Ukraine coast to the target ship's stern on rough-water, fiberglass Personal Water Craft (PWC) outfitted with a 36-volt electric trolling motor on the transom. Equip each PWC with an ABS thermoplastic resin pipe cage with four Javelin systems, two on each side, and twin, ten-gallon auxiliary fuel tanks to augment the twenty-gallon main tank.

"Meanwhile, a pair of similarly outfitted PWCs will approach the fleet from the northern Ukraine coast. The fleet commander will send two or three Russian *Raptor*-class patrol boats to investigate a possible threat. When the patrol boats close to three thousand yards, the PWCs will fire the Javelins, configured for top attack mode, and then turn and head for the coast at high speed.

"When the stern Javelin PWCs see the explosions, they will fire two Javelins at the target ship sterns, split up, and head out to sea using the trolling motors. They will stop when a thousand yards away, check for pursuit, configure the remaining Javelins as top attack mode, and fire on any combatant following or within range. Then start the PWC engine, jettison the trolling motor, and head for shore. Any questions?"

Members' (Short) Works (cont'd)

Ten days later, Parker perched on a modified, three-person Kawasaki PWC and shuddered as wave spray stung his face. It was three hours before astronomical dawn on the third day of the dark of the moon, and he wondered again how the Admiral talked him into traveling to Ukraine to oversee the Javelin PWC project. He amazed himself further when he agreed to take the place of a kidney-stone inflicted PWC pilot volunteer. It had been a grueling three-hour trip from the Ukraine mainland to the fleet location and another forty-five minutes on the trolling motors to get into attack position.

There were five flat black Javelin PWCs, all with Command Launch Units (CLUs) in night mode and direct attack mode, quietly bobbing off the stern of three combatants and two *Alligator*- and *Ropucha*-class landing ships, waiting for explosions from the two front-facing Javelin PWCs.

Suddenly two *Raptor*-class patrol boats stopped dead in their tracks from explosions that lit up the sky. Parker peered through the CLU, used his left hand to put the CLU crosshairs in the center of the target ship's stern, and used his right hand to pull the fire trigger. There was minimal recoil as the top left missile jumped out of the tube, ignited the propellant, and headed for the target. He quickly switched the connector to the top-right missile and repeated the process to launch the second missile at the stern. He watched as both missiles exploded, and the stern sank very quickly. He could hear the alarms sounding, calling the damage control crews.

Parker used the trolling motor to move a thousand yards to the open sea. Before starting the Kawasaki motor, he turned back to the fleet and peered through the CLU, looking for pursuing ships. A large shape, silhouetted in front of the burning patrol boats, crossed his bow. Parker recognized the bow-mounted Close-in Weapon System (CIWS) and the four side-mounted missile launchers.

Holy crap, He thought. It's the Moskva.

The 500-foot-long guided-missile cruiser Moskva, the fleet flagship, was traveling at full speed to the safety of the open sea. Parker switched the connector to the bottom-left missile, confirmed the CLU seeker was in direct attack mode, lined up the crosshairs on the heat source, and pulled the fire trigger. A few seconds later, the explosion opened up a large hole at the ship's waterline. The cruiser listed to the left and slowed slightly.

Parker switched the connector to the bottom-right missile, changed the CLU seeker to top attack mode, lined up the crosshairs on the cruiser's pilothouse, and pulled the fire trigger. The Javelin missile hit the pilothouse, exploded, and the ship immediately veered hard left, T-boning the nearest landing ship.

Time to get the hell out of Dodge. Parker jettisoned the trolling motor and twisted the PWC throttle to mid-range. The Kawasaki leaped ahead. He backed off the throttle, maintained an average speed of twenty-five miles an hour, and headed to safety. Two hours later, he arrived at Katranka, on the Ukraine coast, 120 miles south of Odesa and 30 miles south of Lebedivka, his departure point.

Twenty-four hours later, at his home in Northern California, a news ticker flashed across the bottom of the television screen.


"Russian Black Sea Fleet crippled. Guided Missile Cruiser, Moskva, fleet Flagship sunk. Russians insist fire detonated ammunition."

"Right," Parker muttered, knowing he engineered the entire attack but was happy to keep his role secret.

The next day Parker received a visit from an independent maritime publisher working for the US Special Operations Command. The publisher offered Parker fifty-thousand dollars to produce a covert, lessons-learned, after-action report of the Black Sea Raid, as the news media had started calling the operation.

"Barry said you should do it," the publisher said.

Upcoming program

<p>June</p> 	<p>Betsy Graziani Fasbinder in person <i>How to Be the Best Ambassador for Your Book: Pitfalls to Avoid, Practices that Pay Off</i></p>	<p>Betsy is an award-winning, genre-jumping author, a licensed psychotherapist, and an in-demand communications trainer. She has coached public speaking for the reluctant and the downright phobic in fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations, throughout the U.S. and abroad, working with executives, as well as with authors, activists, entrepreneurs, politicians, and thought leaders.</p>
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Some Things to Do

Looking for a Critique Group?

Chloe Laube

As a member benefit our Mt. Diablo branch facilitates the formation of critique groups. We also connect writers with existing groups looking for additional members. All groups are independent, self-governing, and not sponsored by CWC. If you are seeking a group or want assistance in establishing a group, please send an email indicating your needs and genre to Chloe Laube at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/critique-groups/>

Still open is a member is offering to host a new group for poetry and another for fiction, historical fiction and possibly other.

Writers Connection is a social place where like-minded people, hapless authors and creative geniuses can come together and chat about the one thing they all have in common: the compulsion to write. It is open to any CWC member published or not, interested in a freewheeling, nonjudgmental, welcoming, and relaxed environment. Content will include a potpourri of any writing or associated topic: news items, agents, publishers, bouquets & brickbats. Membership is open ended, limited only by space, and people may come and go as they please. Short readings are welcome.

Join us **May 18 12:00 pm–2:00 pm PDT**

Chicken Pie Shop
1251 Arroyo Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(plenty of parking available)



To Register:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/register-for-writers-connection/>

Writers Table May 14: Gather at Zio Fraedos, or online right after sign-in begins

So, your work has been published—Congratulations.

Now comes the hard part—promotion.

Unfortunately, most publishers do a minimal amount of promotion, leaving the bulk of the work to the author. We will share and discuss some easy, effective ways to promote that won't break the bank. Self-promotion is the most effective way to get awareness of your work out there and will help increase sales. It can be time consuming but necessary for your success. There will be time for Q & A, so come prepared to participate. Your questions will make the session better.



John Schembra spent a year in Vietnam in 1970 as a combat M.P. That experience provided the basis of his first book, *M.P., A Novel of Vietnam*. After Vietnam, he became a police officer retiring as a sergeant after nearly 30 years of service. John has six published novels in the mystery/thriller genre. Read more at www.jschembra.com or contact John at toto@pacbell.net.

Michael Barrington, originally from England, lives in Clayton and is a newbie to CWC. His first book is a memoir of ten years spent in Africa as a missionary priest, *The Bishop Wears no Drawers*. He has written three novels, one currently in translation for the French market. His wife Annie Jacquemet, a painter, designs the covers of his books.

Some Things to Do (cont'd)

Leading and Finding Solutions: Women in the Workplace and in Retirement



May 10, 2022 7:00 PM via Zoom

Lucinda Jackson will speak about empowering women in the workplace and in our next acts. She'll give ideas for leading and overcoming gender barriers in your career—and then post-career, how to take those same strengths into planning and actualizing your next act, retirement.

To RSVP – [Click Here](#)

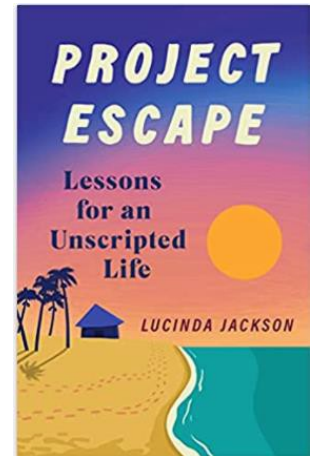
As a PhD scientist and global corporate executive, Ms. Jackson spent almost fifty years in academia and Fortune 500 companies. She has published articles, book chapters, magazine columns, and patents and is featured on podcasts and radio. She is the founder of LJ Ventures, where she speaks and consults on energy and the environment and empowering women (and men!) in the workplace and in our Next Act.

Ms. Jackson is also the author of two memoirs: *Just a Girl: Growing Up Female* and *Ambitious* about her struggles to succeed in the male-dominated science world and *Project Escape: Lessons for an Unscripted Life* about the challenging transition from career to retirement.

Connect with Lucinda Jackson or find her books at: www.lucindajackson.com



DANVILLE-ALAMO-
WALNUT CREEK
(CA) BRANCH



THE BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL 2022

Saturday and Sunday, May 7th and 8th

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. both days

The Bay Area Book Festival takes place Saturday and Sunday, May 7th and 8th. Indoor author programs will fill multiple downtown Berkeley venues. The Outdoor Fair, with an adult program stage, children's area, and a couple hundred exhibitors and food vendors, will take over Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center Park.

Each year, this free event draws some 50,000 people, 300 authors or speakers and 160 vendors. CWC will be an exhibitor. If you would like to volunteer in the CWC booth, please contact <mailto:keith.garboury@gmail.com>



NorCal Leadership Conference

NorCal is planning a leadership conference for **October** this year. Currently they are looking for a location. These conferences have helped train volunteers who are already in volunteer positions or who are considering volunteering for their branches. If you are interested in helping with the conference or being an attendee, contact Andrew Benzie through the "Contact us" link on the Mt. Diablo branch website.

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/>

Some Things to Do (Cont'd)

San Francisco Writers Conference (SFWC) July 21-24th



Due to Covid the conference has been postponed to July.

If you had made reservations at the hotel, contact the hotel to ensure your reservations are changed.

The date for the Summit for Poetry and Screenwriters is **Saturday, July 23rd**. Let Linda Hartmann know by 5/31 if you are interested in entering a lottery drawing for a free ticket to one summit (indicate which) at <mailto:president.cwemtdiablo.org>

Advertise in the CWC Statewide Bulletin

Reach hundreds of fellow writers with your message. Selling a book, a service, or other specialty? Use the *CWC Bulletin*!

Check out our brief advertising video now! Pass it along. [Advertising Special \(www.hdcwc.com\)](http://www.hdcwc.com)

Bob Isbill risbill@aol.com (760) 221-6367
CWC Director of Advertising & Promotions

An Easy Way to Discover Speakers Other Branches Are Offering

From Jordan Bernal, president of the Tri-Valley Writers branch

As of January 1, 2022, statewide CWC branches' meetings with speakers have been added to the "Event" page on the state website: <https://calwriters.org/events/> or via the first page on the Mt. Diablo website: <https://calwriters.org/events-month/month/2022-01/>

Keep in mind that branch meetings happen throughout the month and postings on any given day will not include all 22 branches' speaker meetings for that month.

There are also a plethora of interesting pages and posts on the state website that might interest you.

Through June the **Marin Branch is offering our meetings free to members of any branch** and only \$5 for non-CWC members. Please help us spread the word. Here's our upcoming lineup.

5/25 Jordan Rosenfeld - Writing the Intimate Character

6/22 Mary Buckham - Writing Active Hooks: or How Many Hooks Are Enough?

More info at cwcmarin.com/events or go to www.calwriters.org find the Marin branch listed and check out their programs.

Please register at www.cwcmarin.com/events for the Zoom Link.

Diane Vickers, Program Chair

Some Things to Do (Cont'd)

Speak or Listen at Mt. Diablo's Open Mic Night

Please [register](#) to attend. See our [Events Calendar](#) for upcoming events.

Zoom Open Mic

Wednesday or Thursday after the second Saturday of the month. Our next meeting is **Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

Join us for our virtual open mic session. Sign up to read or as part of the audience. We'd love to hear your work!

Readers have 5 -7 minutes for reading and Q&A.

This event is open to the public. All writers are welcome to read or listen in.



"I don't understand it—no matter how much I drink coffee, play on my phone, refresh my e-mail, look up things online, go to the kitchen for snacks, message my friends, scroll through Twitter, and play with the cats, I still can't get any writing done."

Young Writers Contest Fundraising

Sponsored by

The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch

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

DONATIONS A/O April 2022

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

Judith Overmier

Susan Berman

David George In honor & support of

R. Lee Paulson Humor Award

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

Linda Hartman

Cindy Leonard

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

Ken Kirkhoff in honor of **S. M Pejathaya**

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

Kathy Urban in honor of **Susie Wilson**

Elizabeth Pentacoff in honor of **Susie Wilson**

Judith Marshall

Aline Soules

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

Uyen Chau Nguyen

Marianne Lonsdale

Robert Poirier

Patricia Northlich

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

Janet Clark

June Gatewood



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

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.

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