



The Write News Mt Diablo

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

October 2022



In-Person Workshop

October 8, 2022

10:00 – Check-In, 10:30 – Workshop, 12:00 – Lunch,
1:00 – Workshop Continues, 2:30 – Workshop Ends

CTL-Click Here to Register Online

Or scan the QR Code



Page to Stage: Public Speaking Skills *Every* Writer Needs *Back by Popular Demand!*

Betsy Graziani Fasbinder

Public speaking skills are learned in the body (not just in the mind) and the jump from our written work on the page to spoken presentations can feel like a big one for lots of writers.

In this workshop participants will learn how gentle feedback and small adjustments can instantly elevate their public speaking skills. We'll practice the skills, gather peer and facilitator feedback, and make adjustments that will help captivate listeners in presentations both formal and casual. Participants will enjoy a playful, supportive, interactive, skill-building workshop to help them to *gain and grow* the skills and confidence they need to speak to groups of ANY size about their books and ideas.

We will expand upon the introduction and overview offered by Betsy Graziani Fasbinder at the June 11th CWC meeting. In this workshop, we'll practice the skills, gather peer and facilitator feedback.

What we will Learn:

- **Delivery skills:** How to use powerful presence to effectively convey your message, connect to listeners, and manage nerves both for calm composure and energetic engagement.
- **Content Preparation:** Instruction on using a highly effective, efficient, and simple tool (The Story Map) as a method for selecting, and organizing a message of any length, for any audience on any topic.
- **Interaction Method:** we will overview a method for both encouraging and managing listener interaction.



Betsy Graziani Fasbinder 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 and non-profit organizations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Her book, *From Page to Stage: Inspiration, Tools, and Public Speaking Tips for Writers*, is an invaluable resource for not only writers, but all wanting to increase their speaking effectiveness to audiences of any size. She is a podcast producer and host, with *The Morning Glory Project: Stories of Determination* now in its third year.

In-Person – Members \$45.00 – Guests \$55.00

President's Message: Barry Hampshire

Sadly, I managed to be on vacation when our September meeting occurred. As a result, I missed a very fine main presentation by Duffy Jenner and Writers Table, given by Linda Hartmann.

But on the other side of this time conflict, there was my vacation. Who has not been the Banff and Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada? If you have not, then I recommend you add it to your bucket list. I spent the week hiking in the Rockies, they were spectacular. I was accompanied by my wife and another couple with whom we have an annual hiking trip. I was struck by the difference in our perspectives on the scenery.

My wife and our friends thought the mountains, glaciers, and ice fields were incredible and they seemed blown away by their size and majesty. On the other hand, I thought the scenery to have a more cozy and intimate feel. Neither of us were right or wrong, it was how each of us compared this Canadian experience with prior experiences. My companions had never previously witnessed even compact glaciers nestled between the shoulders of high mountains. Whereas, I had hiked in the Himalayas and explored the Khumbu Glacier, which started on the lower shoulders of Mt. Everest and stretched 25 miles away from it. I understood the difference between our perspectives of the scenery as just a matter of personal experience.

This realization seems an appropriate subject to discuss here. We are all writers and we describe a world or a location in our stories. I believe we will only fully engage with our readers when we describe the locale of our stories through the influences of our own memories, in addition to our imagination. What was it that stood out in our memory about a certain location on one particular day? How can we integrate it into our storyline?

I am disappointed when I read a phrase like "Alongside the road, there was a field." Did a mantle of early morning mist hide much of the field? Had the mid afternoon sun scorched the topsoil in the field to create a cracked web of fissures? Did thousands of bees buzz across the field from one wildflower to the next?

How can we sculpt a scene so that others can understand it as if they were in our heads? Only by doing so will our location, which may only be a backdrop to the real action, come alive. Can we write the backdrop with as much life as the characters in the scene? A blank green screen does not work as a backdrop in prose or poetry.

Such thoughts remind me of the wisdom that Al Garrotto shared recently in a Writers Table presentation. He discussed to use of the verb "to be." Ridding our work of the words "was" or "is" can be challenging, but locations or backdrops that are painted with care and active verbs, and not just plopped in place with "is" or "was", will force us to portray our characters and situation with even more depth and power.

I think I have pontificated for long enough. Have a great few weeks and I look forward to seeing even more of you at future in-person meetings at Zio Fraedo's.

Barry



Editor's note: The deadline for submissions to this newsletter is the 20th of each month Aug through May.

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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 significant prize? Is your play being produced? The TV or movie version of your writing will be out soon? Let us know here. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

From the New York Times Best Selling author of *The Missing Kennedy*, discover how the president's sister was lobotomized and was cared for by Elizabeth's aunt, a Franciscan nun. The author discusses Rosie's life and her own intimate experiences with Rosie, along with the history of the Kennedy's, mental illness, and her own family's experiences with a disease.

On **October 12** from 2:00-3:30 pm Mt Diablo member Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff will speak at Cal State East Bay, Concord Campus, 4700 Ygnacio Valley Rd, Concord.

It's free for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members and only \$10 for nonmembers. This is an IN-PERSON meeting. Register at www.scholarolli.com



Isidra Mencos



Come celebrate the launch of Isidra's book *Promenade of Desire—A Barcelona Memoir*. Kirkus Reviews describes it as "A lush memoir, and a richly detailed exploration of a pivotal time in Spain." Joyce Maynard has said that it's "Shameless, in the very best sense of the word."

WHEN: Saturday October 15, 2pm

WHERE: Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda

Read more about Isidra's book here: <https://isidramencos.com/book/>

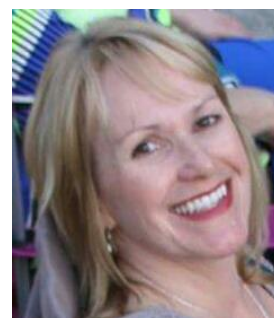
Isidra also had a guest blog post published in *Wisdom Well*, which is also a newsletter sent daily to hundreds of alumni from MEA (Modern Elder Academy). It's called "Writing on a Dare" — <https://wisdomwell.modernelderacademy.com/writing-on-a-dare>

Heidi Eliason

My book, *Confessions of a Middle-Aged Runaway*, was a finalist in the Readers' Favorite Book Awards (<https://readersfavorite.com/annual-book-award-contest.htm>) in the Non-Fiction - Travel category.

Contest results are published in two *Publishers Weekly* e-newsletters and a press release goes out to thousands of media sources, so it's good exposure. There is also an awards ceremony in November during the Miami Book Fair.

Read about Heidi's book here: <https://heidieliason.com/>



A Letter to New Members (And those looking for guidance through the CWC Mt. Diablo Branch)

To anyone who feels lost among the many opportunities and website links:

We hear you. We remember how it felt to walk into that first meeting, not knowing anyone, not sure you were in the right place. We remember feeling as if we didn't belong: that this was a group of published, experienced writers.

We have gathered a group of members ready to guide you and help you feel part of our community of writers, editors and fledgling writers. Our CWC theme is *Writers Helping Writers*, and we mean to keep that promise.

Our mentors will help you become familiar with the CWC website, show you how to find events and how to promote your own event. We'll help you find:




- Open Mic
- Writers Connection
- The monthly speaker meeting (and offer a friendly face to greet you)
- The Writers Table
- Board of Directors Meetings
- Scholastic Reading
- The Young Writers Contest
- Critique Groups
- News Flashes and the Write News (newsletter)
- Ekphrasis Opportunities (what the heck is that?)

We have put together a Mentoring Program for anyone who would like guidance.

Email Lyn Roberts at lyn@astound.net



Upcoming Programs

Nov 12 	Michael Barrington Jill Hedgecock Suzy Orpin	"One Sure Thing (That Always Works to Promote Your Work)" After the speakers give their one sure thing, we will take ideas from members at the meeting. AUTHORS: Bring your books for sale at this Nov meeting.
Dec 10 	Jordan Rosenfeld	"Building setting and scene" Buck-a-Book: Members bring books to sell for \$1
Jan 14 	Paul Zeidman	Writing and marketing
Feb 11	TBD	
Mar.11	TBD	
Apr 8	Andrea Firth	Flash fiction and non-fiction
May 13	TBD	
June 10	TBD	

If you've heard a great speaker on writing/publishing/editing, email our speaker chair, Mark Clifford, at programs@cwcmtdiablo.org



The Ekphrasis Project by Linda Hartmann

Create, Respond, Create

Authors and Artists collaborate

Artists inspire Authors; Authors inspire Artists

The terms **author** and **writer** are used interchangeably. A *member need not be published* to participate.

A collaboration of three organizations, the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club (MDCWC), the Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA), and the Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC) developed this creative ekphrastic project which will culminate in an exhibit of fine art works that have inspired literary works, and literary works that have inspired fine art works. The display may be enjoyed by the public and fellow art and literary enthusiasts during May 2023 in the Art Gallery at the Orinda Library, with a reception on May 6th.

Ekphrasis is the Greek word meaning expression. In this project we use it to mean art that describes or explains other art. Originally defined as a written description of a work of visual art as a literary exercise, our intention, although not new, is to expand this idea. For example, visual artists may respond in many creative ways to a literary work, or an author may respond to a visual work that inspires their imagination, emotion, and thought in writing.

Participation in this project is open to members of these collaborating groups shown above. MDCWC will manage submissions for writers, LAA for visual artists, and LAC will manage both for their members. If a Mt. Diablo CWC member wishes to enter as a visual artist, they must become a member of one of our collaborating organizations: LAA or LAC. Members of LAA wishing to enter as writer are welcome to join the Mt. Diablo Branch of CWC or LAC. See below for each organization's website.

Members of the groups must register through their respective organizations to be Initiators of or Responders to literary works or art works. Initiators will initiate one creative work each, either written or visual art, and for each initiated work, a Responder will respond in an ekphrastic (free and dynamic) way to the creative work in the alternate medium.

Responders are matched **randomly** with an Initiating author or visual artist by the Ekphrasis Committee which consists of members from each of the three sponsoring organizations. Responders respond to the work with their own inspiration. There are limits to the number of words and lines for authors and there are spatial limits for visual artists. Please see the respective websites for these details.

Click on one of these links to apply for membership if you are **not** a member of one of these groups:

- CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/join/>
- LAA <https://laa4art.org/join/>
- LAC <https://lamorindaarts.org/arts-partners/>

To read the Project Description, Register, or ask questions select the organization appropriate for you:

ekphrasis@lamorindaarts.org or ekphrasis@lamorindaartsalliance.org or <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/ekphrasis/>

Participation is limited, and first-come, first-serve. So, **time is of the essence. The dates below are critical for participation.** **The Four Categories Are:**

- 1 Initiator Artists
- 2 Initiator Authors
- 3 Responder Authors
- 4 Responder Artists

Eligibility

Pairings of Initiator and Responder will be done randomly by the Ekphrasis Committee.

Each participant is allowed a single submission, or a second one **only** if space permits. Thus, if an Initiator submission is accepted and the individual would like to also register as a Responder, they may do so, space permitting.

The Ekphrasis Project (cont'd)

--For tracking purposes, **you must register to participate prior to submitting your work.**

--**Fees** are accepted upon submission of finished works. Initial submission: \$20; Second submission: \$10
This is a two-part process. Dates below will clarify

Most importantly: Registration closes for: Initiators **October 28**
Responders **December 14**

Summary of Important Dates; Mark Your Calendars

2022

Now open: online registration for Initiators and Responders. **Reminder: first-come, first-serve. Initiators - please register early.** Initiators' creative works must be **submitted by December 15**, so they should register as soon as possible.

October 13: 6:30 – 8:30 pm: First Ekphrasis Workshop, live on Zoom. Initiator emphasis; all are welcome. Zoom link given with registration. Free. Initiator registration closes Oct. 28

October 27: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm: Second Ekphrasis Workshop, live Zoom. Responder emphasis; all are welcome. Zoom link with registration. Free. Responder registration closes December 14.

October 28: Initiators – Last date to REGISTER, Artists and Authors

November 1-5: Initiator Artists and Authors will be notified regarding their inclusion

December 14: Responders – Last date to REGISTER Artists and Authors

December 15: Final date for Initiators to submit work Authors' writings in MSWord format and Artists' pieces in JPG format

December 15 – 17: Responders will be notified of their inclusion by registration dates, and their matching with an Initiator.

December 16: Random pairing of Initiators' works with Responder Artists or Authors by the Ekphrasis Committee.

December 17 – 20: Artists and Authors notified of pairings

2023

February 1: Start date for submissions of final Responders' Images of artwork in JPG format or writings in MSWord format.

February 28: Deadline for Responders to submit: Responder Artists submit high resolution JPG images. Responder Authors submit final work in MSWord.

April 29, Saturday: Deliver original artwork to the Gallery. Installation.

May 1: Exhibit opens.

May 6: Ekphrasis reception. Recitations in the Auditorium. Time TBD – Stay tuned!!

June 2, Friday: Ekphrasis Exhibit ends – last date for observing exhibition prior to takedown.

Questions? Email Linda Hartmann at ekphrasis@cwcmtdiablo.org



My teacher told me not to worry
about spelling because in the future
there will be autocorrect. And for that
I am eternally grapefruit.

You in the Newsletter – Short Story

TIMBER COVE

by

Robert Poirier



Kristin looked up from her laptop when she saw movement in the front security camera display. The camera covered the driveway in front of the cottage down to the ocean's edge. It was unusual to have visitors at the Northern California coast Timber Cove cottage. Mark was in San Francisco for the day, meeting with members of the FBI cyber security team.

On the display, she recognized Yasmine Rahmani as soon as she exited the white SUV. She wore the same dusty-rose hijab when Kristin first saw her in France almost thirty years before, while Kristin attended French language immersion school. They met at a party and had kept in touch with email, Christmas cards, and Yasmine's triennial business trips to meet with the expat Algerian community in San Francisco.

They were similar: girl-next-door pretty, trim figures, dark hair, whip-smart, irreverent sense of humor, and the ability to think and act quickly. Although Yasmine's Algerian French was markedly different from Kristin's American French, they bonded over the intricacies of the language. Yasmine explained that Algeria was the second-largest French-speaking country in the world and that French was a lingua franca, a bridge language, for the many Arabic dialects. It had been that way since the French colonization ended in 1962.

Yasmine was standing on the front porch when Kristin opened the front door. She was with two young girls and appeared very nervous.

"Yasmine, what a wonderful surprise," Kristin gushed. "And, who are these beautiful girls."

"Hello, Kristin," Yasmine replied. "These are my granddaughters; Sara, eight, and Maria, twelve. May we come in?"

"Of course," Kristin replied. "I'll make us some tea."

"I'm sorry, Kristin," Yasmine said once inside. "I must meet my husband at the San Francisco airport in three hours. I drove down from the US Coast Guard station in Fort Bragg and was hoping I could convince you to take care of the girls until I return about eight o'clock this evening."

She shifted to French immediately. "*The girls don't speak French yet. I think someone may be following me, and the girls may be safer with you than on the road with me.*"

"Of course," Kristin replied in French. "*Nobody will bother us way out here in the boonies.*"

Two hours later, Kristin was in the small kitchen making a simple dinner for the girls when she heard a vehicle approaching on the gravel driveway. She looked through the curtains as two men exited the car and placed a shoebox-size carton on the hood. She heard a ping on her mobile phone, checked, and saw a no-signal alert.

The men approached the front door and tried the locked, outward-opening, perforated-steel security door. Kristin, now highly alert, cracked open the inner wooden door.

"Can I help you?" she said.

"We are from the Algerian embassy," the older one said. "My name is Agent Mansouri, and this is Agent Haddad. Mrs. Rahmani has been in an accident, and we have been asked to pick up the children and take them to the consulate in San Francisco."

"Of course," Kristin said. "Just let me call to confirm this."

"May we come in while you do that?" Mansouri asked.

"Sorry. No," Kristin said. "I don't let anyone in the house while my husband is away. He is at the hardware store and should be back any minute now."

Short Story (cont'd)

Mansouri turned to Haddad and said something in a foreign language. Haddad shrugged and held his hands, palm upright, to show he did not understand. With a snarl, Mansouri raised his voice and spoke in French.

“Kill this bitch, then find the Zionist spawn and bring me their heads.”

Kristin slammed the front door, engaged the deadbolt lock, and scooped her car keys from the hook.

“Upstairs, quickly,” she said to the girls quietly but firmly.

Kristin turned on the TV in the bedroom, switched channels to display the security cameras, and used the car key fob to activate the car alarm as she watched Haddad retrieve a crowbar from the SUV. Mansouri pulled out a large revolver and fired twice at each door hinge while Haddad worked the crowbar on the security door.

“Girls, go into the closet and lie on the floor,” Kristin said.

Mark kept a Glock pistol in a gun safe beside the bed. They both were trained in handling and firing the pistol. Kristin’s first try at the three-digit keypad failed. She could see Haddad, holding a meat cleaver, approach the stairs. She cursed when the second try failed. She would have to wait for thirty seconds if the third try failed.

She took a deep breath and tried a third time as the cleaver slammed into the bedroom door. She let out her breath as the safe sprang open. The pistol was in her hand as the cleaver struck the door again, opening a hole near the locked handle. Haddad reached in, opened the door, and stepped inside, holding the cleaver in one hand and a small semi-automatic pistol in the other. Kristin snap-fired a round just as Haddad spotted her and raised his gun.

Haddad yelped, dropped the cleaver, lost his balance, and toppled backward down the stairs. She heard the big revolver boom and then Haddad’s voice.

“You killed me, you arrogant prick,” Haddad screamed in French. Kristin heard the smaller pistol fire three times and the big revolver once more. Glock in front of her, she approached the stairs cautiously and peered down. Mansouri was a few steps down on his back, arms to his side. Blood covered his chest from an oozing hole in his throat. Haddad was crumpled at the bottom of the stairs with a large piece of his face missing. Blood and gore covered the walls and the steps.

She put the Glock in her waistband, picked up Sara, told her to close her eyes, and carefully picked her way down the stairs.

When she returned for Maria, Mansouri lifted the revolver from his side. Blood frothed from his throat as he tried to speak. He pulled back the hammer, pointed the handgun at her chest, and pulled the trigger.

When Kristin heard the “click” of the hammer striking a spent cartridge, she drew the Glock and shot Mansouri twice in the forehead.

By now, a few of the neighbors had gathered outside the cottage. Two of them carried pump-action shotguns.

“We called the police as soon as we heard the alarm,” the nearest neighbor said when Kristin and the girls staggered out of the cottage. “They told us not to go in until they arrived.”

“This looks like a cell phone signal jammer,” a nerdy neighbor said, pointing to the box on the SUV. He fiddled with it for a few seconds. “Now it’s turned off.”

Kristin called Mark. “Can you call one of your FBI friends?” she said. “There are a couple of dead Algerian terrorists in the cottage, and I have temporary custody of two young girls while I’m waiting for their grandmother to return.”

Short Story (cont'd)

Mark, two FBI agents, an Algerian Counterterrorism (CT) agent who had been briefing the FBI in San Francisco, and six members of the FBI Hostage Rescue Team arrived in a gloss black UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter forty minutes later. The FBI had arranged for another helicopter to pick up Yasmine and her husband at the San Francisco airport.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you the whole story, Kristin," Yasmine said when she arrived. "I never thought you or my granddaughters would be in danger here."

"Mansouri was a founder of a rabidly anti-Israel, Algerian Al-Qaeda movement," the Algerian CT agent said. "We think they planned to kill your granddaughters first then wait until you and your husband arrived to kill you. We are not sure why."

"I think I know why," Yasmine said. "Maria was given an Ancestry subscription a year ago by one of her classmates. I intercepted the results and discovered she was one-eighth Ashkenazi Jewish. I did mine and found out I was half Ashkenazi Jewish."

Yasmine's husband spoke. "I was a government minister in Oran. Our daughter and her husband were killed in an automobile accident last year. We have been taking care of the girls since then. The Algerian CT agents briefed us two months ago that we were in danger. My contacts in America arranged for a humanitarian visa for the four of us. Yasmine and the girls came over immediately. I had to settle government and financial affairs before leaving."

"Algeria and two other countries have a bounty on Mansouri." The Algerian CT agent said to Kristin. "I will help you collect the bounties."

Kristin turned to Yasmine. "Somehow, it only seems like justified karma that Mansouri, an anti-Semitic terrorist, should pay for the girls' education. I would like you to have the money for their college fund."



Things to Do

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 writer, published or not, interested in a freewheeling, nonjudgmental, welcoming, and relaxed environment..

When you register, let us know if you want to be a reader. The first seven people to sign-up will be given a slot to read for five minutes. If we have more than seven requests to read, we'll start the list for the next event.

We'll have time for discussion, but please remember, this is not a critique session! Talk about what you liked, not what the author can do better.

Join us **October 26** over lunch if you wish

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

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

(plenty of parking in front and alongside the east side of the bldg.)



Things to Do (cont'd)

Read and judge for The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

Contact Vice President Linda Hartmann <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/> to read and judge for **The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards**, in early January 2023. The club earns a substantial amount if we have 15-20 judges of teens' writing in the following **categories**:



Critical Essay	Personal Essay and Memoir
Dramatic Script	Poetry
Flash Fiction	Science Fiction and Fantasy
Journalism	Short Story
Humor	Senior Portfolio (for graduating seniors only)
Novel Writing	

Sit in on a board meeting

Meet the people who make this branch run. Ask questions.
Make suggestions. Next meeting: November 4, 2 pm on Zoom
Contact branch President Barry Hampshire for the agenda and link:
<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/>



You in the Newsletter!—Book Reviews

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 author do a good job with scene, character, or story or all three?

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://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/> select Write News

Please no advertising your books. Newsletter policy doesn't allow it, but you certainly may review a fellow member's book you enjoyed.

Join the Fun with Open Mic on Zoom

Each reader has five minutes to introduce and read their piece then there are two minutes for questions and answers. Feedback is all positive; what you liked about the piece, what resonated, or what you enjoyed. It is a fun and exciting way to practice reading aloud and to hear some feedback.

The session scheduled for October is: Wednesday, Oct 12th, ZOOM - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

To register to get the Zoom link: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/register-for-open-mic-night/>

Things to Do (cont'd)

HELPFUL EDITOR

This is an offer from a professional editor for Mt. Diablo branch members.

The plan: Monthly, I will accept the first 5 members who email me **two** pages of their prose work, preferably (but not necessarily) the first pages of an article or book. I am not qualified to edit or comment on poetry. I will edit as comprehensively as possible. Beginnings are crucial to your readers, or if you're struggling with something somewhere else in your work, maybe I can help.

You MUST:

- Follow the directions below. I'll be strict about this because if you want to be published traditionally, win contests, or have anything accepted anywhere for publication, you must follow directions. This is practice.
- Attend a meeting to receive the edits.

Directions:

Email your submission to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/helpful-editor/> 10 days in advance (or earlier) of a meeting you plan to attend.

Place "Helpful Editor" in the subject line.

Your pages must be 12 point, Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1" margins all around

Do put your name and on both pages

In the email, make sure you say which meeting you plan to attend.

Before the meeting I will read carefully for readability and copy edit issues, and mark good points and weaknesses.

Your pages will only be returned if you attend a meeting. No excuses.

If you have to miss the meeting, let me know and get your edits at a later meeting.

I am not looking for clients. I just want to offer some help. Disclaimer: I'm not perfect. Even editors need editors. Also, there are disputes among editors as to what works and what doesn't. Mt. Diablo has a good track record of quality pieces being accepted for *CWC Literary Review*. Let's keep that going by continuing to learn all we can about writing well!

Dominican University programs

Saturday, October 15th & Sunday, October 16th: 10 am to 2 pm PDT on Zoom

Writing for Health and Healing: Join Dominican University's MFA in Creative Writing Program for a virtual writing retreat centered on the craft of writing as a form of healing and will feature lectures and workshops on a range of topics in narrative medicine, with time to generate new writing. We extend a special welcome to healthcare providers and teachers. By participating in the retreat, Registered Nurses can earn 5 continuing education units (CEUs) and Credentialed Teachers can earn 0.5 CEUs. Register through [Eventbrite](#).

Saturday, October 22nd: 2 to 4pm PDT

Join Dominican University's MFA in Creative Writing Program in celebrating *Storms of the Inland Sea: Poems of Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiving*, edited by Margaret Stawowy and Jim Cokas and published by Shanti Arts. Unique and long-overdue, this is the first poetry anthology to address the caregiving aspect of Alzheimer's and dementia, whether it be for a parent, partner, spouse, friend, or patient. This reading includes poets from the SF Bay Area and beyond. Register through [Eventbrite](#). The reading will be held on the Dominican campus in San Rafael.

Sunday, November 6th, 3 to 5pm PST

Join Sixteen Rivers Press and Dominican University of CA for an evening focused on the joys and challenges of writing across languages. Poets Robert Hass, Brenda Hillman, and Matthew Zapruder will speak along with Sixteen Rivers poets Terry Ehret and Marjorie Agosín. Translators Nancy Morales and Celeste Kostopulos-Cooperman will join the panel. This event offers a wide variety of works both famous and brand new that illuminate the art of communication across borders. Register through [Eventbrite](#). The event will be held on the Dominican campus in San Rafael.

Things to Do (cont'd)

Alamo Women's Club COAT DRIVE November 16

The Elk Grove Writers Guild presents: a Holiday Seminar Saturday 11/5/22 from 12 Noon to 5 PM, at District 56, 8230 Civic Center Dr. Elk Grove, CA.

Elaine Faber will teach the Do's and Don'ts of writing

Judith Startston will talk about Writing Better Dialog

Gini Grossenbacher will do a workshop on how to write Descriptive, Dynamic settings

Three excellent classes for \$45.00. Register now at <https://egweg.org/holiday>. Hope to see you there. For information, email me at loyholder77@gmail.com, Sacramento Branch



THINGS TO DO are informational only and do not imply endorsement of product or services.



How Emphasis Changes the Meaning



I never said we should kill him.
I *never* said we should kill him.
I never *said* we should kill him.
I never said we should kill him.
I never said we *should* kill him.
I never said we should *kill* him.
I never said we should kill *him*.

A priest, a rabbit and a minister walk into a bar.
The bartender asks the rabbit "what'll ya have?"
The rabbit says "I dunno. I'm only here
because of Autocorrect."



Young Writers Contest

First Place 8 th Grade Short Story



“A Frosted Flake” by Kamilynn Luu

Sequoia Middle School, Pleasant Hill

Teacher: Ernesto Minglana

“Buổi sáng tốt lành!” I screamed as I got back from the store.

“No, no, no! English only!” my mama screamed back with her thick Vietnamese accent.

I unloaded the items I brought back from the store like pho noodles, chicken thighs, Hoisin, and cha lua. My mama entered the kitchen in khaki shorts and a striped tank. She had white, authentic Vans on, too.

“Look, con gai, I went Old Navy. Now we fit with Americans!” she exclaimed. I didn’t want to correct her grammar since she was so happy. Ever since we immigrated to San Francisco from Vietnam, all my mama has ever wanted to do was fit in. She got a job at Bank of America and has already caught onto some trends from her co-workers. Though, I always wanted to keep our roots from Vietnam alive, like a dying tree in need of water. Mama says we shouldn’t speak Vietnamese, but it was like a secret code here in San Francisco. For me, it has always been hard to let things go. When I was five, I punched my mama for getting rid of my favorite socks.

For immigrants like us, learning the language is the biggest hindrance. I learned English in Vietnam from watching American cartoons, but my mama was still learning. I’ve started to give her lessons, but progress is slow. I never want to forget my home, but mama was more than fine for forgetting it.

I sat on the cold leather couch and munched on some dry Frosted Flakes. The sugar melting onto my tongue as all that was left was the plain flake. I started to think that America was like cereal. You lick off the sugar, and it’s so yummy, but when you get to the real thing, it’s not as good.

“Bye, Mama, I’ll meet you at your work.” I said as I kissed her on the cheek.

I grabbed my Jansport backpack and got on my skateboard. Riding through the dirty streets of San Francisco wasn’t the same as Vietnam. Here, I see trash, homeless, rats, and angry Priuses. Though, the cherry on top was the view of the Golden Gate Bridge. The crisp wind nipped at my face as I sped through the streets. In Vietnam, the streets are filled with markets, the smell of authentic Asian food, and tourists on mopeds. It was very different here and hard to accept a new state of living.



As I entered San Francisco Intermediate, I went to the bathroom to get away from all the kids looking at me.

“Oh my gosh, is the new girl wearing the Jordans from 2014?!” whispered a kid.

As I walked into the empty bathroom, I leaned onto the sink and touched up my hair. Adapting to America was hard and everyone was so judgy. Thank God I have a mask on to hide the pain in my face. I was ready to get to art class when I heard something.

BOOM! BOOM!

I heard screams and crashing. It was gunshots! I scrambled to lock the bathroom door then I ran into a bathroom stall. I put my feet on top of the toilet and hid like I saw in the safety videos.

Run.

Hide.

Fight.

Young Writers Contest (cont'd)

Adrenaline rushed as I started to cry tears of fear. My breathing was in intermittent intervals as I was breathing so fast, I was afraid I was going to faint. I clutched my backpack as I tried to be quiet. More gunshots filled the air.

“Shoot me! Shoot me you bastard!” I heard a teacher yell.

I only saw school shootings on TV. Tears dripped onto my corduroys like rain as my fingers trembled with fear. I took out my phone but put it back afraid it would make even the slightest noise. My heart was beating so loud, I was afraid it was going to jump out of my chest.

Just then, someone pounded on the bathroom door. I jumped and put a hand over my mouth to quiet my scream itching to come out. More tears streamed as I clutched the dirty bathroom stall. The shooter was pulling at the door handle but it didn't budge. Now, salty tears were flowing faster than the Nile down my face as my body scrunched up tighter. The shooter knew I was in here. More pounding continued, but he walked away after a couple moments. I pulled my face away from my knees and felt my eyes swelling from the tears.

I heard a cruiser pull up with its siren wailing. Relief washed over me but I could still hear the shooter's voice.

“Come out, come out wherever you are! I ain't gonna hurt you.” he said teasingly.

The shooter was definitely a kid. His voice was deep and sinister like Darth Vader. There was a deafening silence for a moment but then I heard shouting.

“Police! Drop the weapon! Put your hands up and we won't shoot!” yelled an officer.



Minutes drifted by like hours but I didn't want to move. Glass shattered as the officers shot through the doors. Stagnant as I was, I wondered if anyone had died. Cold shivers coated my body like paint. I covered my ears hoping it would drown out the chaos. I was so cold and just wanted to go home. It would be stupid to get out of the bathroom now and risk the chance of getting shot. I saw movies where the people waited until nightfall to get out of hiding. I brought my knees to my face as I waited.

“Chúa cứu chúng ta.” I prayed quietly.

My feet had cramped from being so tense. Everything felt so surreal but I reassured myself that I was going to get out of this alive. My crying had slowed down and I started to think more clearly. America was like a Frosted Flake. Not as good as everyone made it sound. I wanted to leave and feel my mama's warm embrace. She was probably worried sick. Knowing America, the shooting is already broadcast on live news. Why did we come here? Why did we have to leave our peaceful home?

This would have never happened in Vietnam.



Two quotation marks walk into a “bar.”

An oxymoron walked into a bar, and the silence was deafening.

A malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.

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P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507
Attention: Young Writers Contest

Gerald (Jerry) Wilson Vaught

August 14, 1940 - July 28, 2022

Published by the East Bay Times on Aug. 28, 2022.



Gerald Wilson Vaught (Jerry) bragged about being married to Cheryl Vaught for 55 years. They parented Kevin and Katherine.

Jerry was proud of achieving high academic excellence, having a BA from Arizona State University and a master's from UC Berkeley. This was in spite of his mother, who forbade education beyond high school. She forced him to attend a non-academic high school course in carpentry. This limited the classes he could study in English or other languages. The carpentry worked well for Jerry because it allowed him to qualify for high-paying union jobs and save money for college. As a carpenter intern he won a contest for building a better little house than the other statewide entrants. For the rest of his life, he loved working with wood.

After earning his BA, he married and moved to Lafayette,

California, where he worked for a Big Eight accounting firm and earned his CPA certificate before embarking on a master's degree. He was renowned as CFO at St. Francis Hospital in San Francisco for 16 years. He then continued his career at the Port of Oakland.

Retirement was a relief after so many years of near sleeplessness and toil. He adored wine, tacos, and gags, as well as both funny and lame jokes. Also, he loved reading, travel, learning languages, and exploring other cultures. In retirement he took writing classes and wrote a novel based on his life.

Jerry was beloved as an honest, kind, and outstanding husband, father, and citizen.

* * * * *

In 2019 Jerry published *Twentyhundred* believed to be loosely based on his life. It's a satirical odyssey about a Dan Wilson from a boyhood in Depression-era Arkansas, meandering through the Southwest, and arriving as a man with high aspirations atop Nob Hill, San Francisco. The irreverent Dan and his brother Jeremiah suffer their mother's obsession to make them preach holy-roller, hellfire and brimstone, talking-in-tongues, snake handling and the Book of Revelation apocalypse coming December 31, 1999.

This tale is knife sharp with laughs that lay bare the hardscrabble, born-again culture of backwoods Arkansas and the effete San Francisco truffle-nibbling, wine-sipping, upper crust society. Jeremiah becomes a TV evangelist with a Lord Land Pearly Gates roller coaster to volcano hell then heaven while "sinner" Dan is focused on learning the ways of wineries, old money Nob Hill, and winning the love of his life before she yields to a planned from birth blue-blood marriage mistake. *Twentyhundred* has contrasts, comedic scenes, and a tender love story.

