



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

April 2023

April General Meeting

SCHEDULE

10:30 Check-in

11:15 Writers Table

12:00 Buffet Lunch

1:00 Featured Speaker

MEETING FEES

Members \$25.00*

Guests \$30.00

**Member price increases to \$30.00 at noon on April 5th*



Featuring: Andrea A. Firth

In A Flash

The Art and Craft of the Short, Short Story

April 8, 2023 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Zio Fraedo's Restaurant

611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA

What is Flash and what can you do with it?

Attendees will:

- Learn What Flash Is and Isn't and How it Breaks the Rules
- See Why and How Flash Shorts Are "Hot" From the First Sentence
- Discover Keys to the Flash Form: Urgency, Conflict, and *a Twist*
- Debunk the Myths About Flash—Like It's Easier to Write and that Readers Have Short Attention Spans
- Understand How to Approach Writing and Revising Flash and Leave What's Most Essential on the Page

Andrea A. Firth is a writer, journalist, editor, and educator living in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a contributor at *Brevity* Blog <https://brevity.wordpress.com/?s=firth> and the cofounder of Diablo Writers' Workshop <https://www.diablowriters.org/> where she teaches and provides editorial consulting. Andrea was a finalist for *The Missouri Review's* 2021 Perkoff Prize in nonfiction, and her essays are published in *Dorothy Parkers' Ashes*, *The Coachella Review*, *Motherwell*, *Please See Me*, and elsewhere.

Scan the code for more information or to register online.

Registration opens March 13, 2023.

Or visit the website: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/>



***President's Message:* Barry Hampshire**



When I was in school, a few years ago, I caused my mother much heartache. I wasn't the stellar student that she hoped I would be. In subjects like English Language and English Literature, I was particularly incompetent. That is not an unjustified self-criticism – it was my reality.

As a part of each week's homework assignments, we had to write a two page composition. Recognizing my lack of ability, I scribbled down two pages of unstructured nonsense before I left the classroom to save me having to do it at home where my mother may look at it. However the consistent end of term report cards indicated a major problem.

I received one compliment from one English teacher after reviewing one of my compositions. He had asked us to write about "Moving House." While everyone else wrote about packing boxes and loading trucks, I discussed jacking the entire structure off its foundations, putting it on a large trailer, and moving it down the road. My teacher said it was poorly written, but it had a novel view of the subject.

After I had failed my college entrance English examination twice, my parents sent me to a tutor. He was appalled at my inability to form consistent simple sentence structures. For three months, he had me read Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. If there was ever a book that would drive anyone away from ever reading another word, this was it. However, it did teach me to form sentences.

I did pass that exam on my third attempt with the lowest passing grade instead of my previous lowest possible failing grades.

Now, look what has occurred after some 65 years, I'm writing this message. It may not be the most eloquent or well phrased piece, but I can get the point across. And that is, believe in yourself. Don't listen to that doubting voice because it only knows the past. Look to the future and what potentially will flow onto the page that you will stare at before giving voice to a new idea.

Barry

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We're trying something new with Members Short Stories which aren't as short as had been intended. There are two stories this month that are each part 1. Part 2 will appear next month. We'll see what the reaction is to going back to old time serializing.

Welcome New Member(s)

New members or anyone who has yet to be introduced in the newsletter, please send me a pic and a bio so I can include you in this feature. Monthly deadline is the 20th.

Juanita Martin

In 2010, I became First Poet Laureate of Fairfield, California and the first African American poet laureate for Solano County. My memberships include Pen USA, Ina Coolbrith Circle, Poets & Writers, and Benicia First Tuesday Poets.

I have been a CWC member for 13 years, first with Redwood Writers 2007-2017, and Napa Valley Writers, 2019 – 2022. Overall, CWC has helped me gain exposure and valuable experience in writing articles, prose writing, poetry, and leadership opportunities.

I write nonfiction and poetry primarily. I measure success by completion of a project, publishing often and in new media and genre. I want to write more magazine or newspaper articles. In 2016, I published my first paid article called “Treasures of Sonoma County Cemeteries,” for *Sonoma Discoveries Magazine*.

I desire to write more memoir and flash fiction. I wrote and published my first memoir and flash fiction story, as managing editor for Napa Valley Writers, *Third Harvest 2021*.

I am also interested in writing more book reviews. I wrote poetry book reviews for the Napa Valley Writers newsletter, in 2019 and 2020. I also wrote a history book review for the Benicia -Vallejo chapter of AAUW's newsletter in 2021. I wrote a tribute article for the *Berkeley Times* newspaper in 2021, about the late Al Young, California Poet Laureate Emeritus, 2005-2008.

Currently, I write poetry for my book, *Quiet Intensity*. I authored *The Lighthouse Beckons*, a book of poetry. I am also published in *Rattlesnake Review*, *SoMa Literary Review*, *Blue Collar Review*, and others. In 2021 attended the Napa Writers Conference, studying poetry under Gillian Conley.



Chris Chandler



I read a notice in the *Alamo Danville Today News* about a California Writers Club meeting in Pleasant Hill and decided to attend in January. Inspired by the meeting's content and folks I met seated at my table, I became a member the following month. I have always been interested in creative writing; however, my writing experience has been limited to work related requirements.

I have a varied career and seldom have done anything in a linear fashion. I have held marketing, business development, strategic leadership, hospitality, and operational positions in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors including Disney Studios and the entertainment industry's Environmental Media Association in Los Angeles. I helped the American Cancer Society of San

Francisco establish its inaugural *Relay for Life* fundraising events and worked for a national restaurant group overseeing a team of event professionals. I recently retired after 14 years in the wine industry, having served as Executive Director of the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association.

The world of writing is new to me and I am delighted to have discovered this chapter of the California Writers Club. I look forward to supporting the organization and learning from its educational programs and each of you. If you are interested in the wine business or just the business of *tasting* wine, I am here for you!

Member Events, News, and Salutes



This section is regularly open members to write and submit their short announcement about milestones in their writing journey. Include a picture of yourself or your book. Publish something? Planning a reading at a bookstore or county fair? Speaking somewhere? Win an IPPY or other prize? Is your play being produced? The TV or movie version of your writing will be out soon? Let us know here.

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

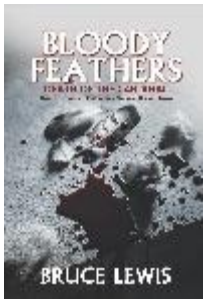
Mark Clifford

Mark will be a featured author at the Brentwood Literary Stroll, May 7, 2023. Hear Mark's story behind his epic treasure hunt adventure "Typhoon Coast." He'll share a glimpse into book two "Earthquake Coast." Mark also looks forward to answering questions about the real life heroes who turn trauma into superpowers on his podcast "Doc's Bone Yard Heroes for Hope: Thriving Beyond Trauma." THRIVE ON!

For more information visit <https://markclifford.com>



New book from **Bruce Lewis**. Author of the Kim Jansen Detective Series



Bloody Feathers—Death of the Cardinal

Releasing a new book is a significant achievement for an author, usually a year in the making, from the first word on paper to the final book. In the past 14 months, my publisher, Black Rose Writing, has released my first three novels: *Bloody Paws—Plight of the Homeless Human Strays*, *Bloody Pages—Haunted by a Family Secret*, and this week, *Bloody Feathers—Death of the Cardinal*.

I'm unsure why, but I often tell people my books are NOT bloody. However, while they aren't slasher books, most have a scene or two with some blood. After all, they are crime thrillers.

An author friend warned me about killing dogs in my debut novel, *Bloody Paws*, so no dogs are injured or killed. You must read the book to discover how I named it. Or send me an email at

BloodyThrillers@gmail.com , and I'll tell you. 😊

Each novel deals with a theme: Paws (the tragedy of homelessness), Pages (intergenerational violence), and Feathers (species preservation). The story themes are a launching pad for my crime thrillers rather than platforms for preaching.

I hope you enjoy my new book. It is available as an eBook and paperback at independent bookstores, [Barnes & Noble](#), [Amazon](#), and my publisher, [Black Rose Writing](#).

National Poetry Month: How will you Celebrate?

—by **Juanita J. Martin**

In April 2023, as in previous years, starting on the 1st we will celebrate National Poetry Month.

Why do we celebrate poetry? On the heels of the success of Black History Month and Women's History Month, the Academy of American Poets, along with teachers, publishers, booksellers, and literary groups, decided it was time to celebrate poetry in a month-long awareness campaign.

This effort would not only serve to appreciate poetry in a greater way, but would increase readership, attendance at various poetry events, and open new doors in the literary genre. Since its inception, National Poetry Month has done all of this and more.

The first National Poetry Month celebration was held in April 1996. Then-President Bill Clinton signed into history a proclamation that made National Poetry Month an annual event and permanent celebration of the art form. The signing of the proclamation solidified the importance of poetry to include its past and present poets to be recognized, as well paving the way for future poets and their diverse accomplishments.

In 2002, the academy held its first gala to raise funds to support National Poetry Month. It was called Poetry and the Creative Mind. Now it is a mainstay with various artists, scholars, and dignitaries who read their favorite poems.

You don't have to attend a gala hosted by Meryl Streep to celebrate the love of poetry. Officially or unofficially, you can simply write your own poetry, if you don't already do so. Other ways to celebrate are attending a reading of your favorite poet at a library or a writer's group.

Perhaps you can learn a new poetic form. Do you know what a kenning poem is? A kenning poem is a noun and verb or two nouns. These two-word phrases used instead of one, is called circumlocution or indirect speech. The most famous use of kennings shows up in the epic *Beowulf*.

Kennings are found in Anglo-Saxon and Norse Poetry. They are used to describe nature and mythology. In *Beowulf*, sky-candle is two words comprised of a base word and a determinant.

The base word is candle meaning light, heat and the determinant is location, the sky. Sky-candle is combination for "sun." More common kennings we use today are mind-reader, tree-hugger, fender bender or winter blanket.

Now that you know what kennings are, use some in your writing. Test your acuity and pen a poem to usher in National Poetry Month.

Did you know you can sign up for a daily poem or read and learn about it here?

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/poem-of-the-day>



Have You Had Difficulties Using PayPal When Registering for a Meeting?

by Marlene Dotterer, Webmaster and Online Systems Chair

You registered for our meeting, paid with PayPal, submitted the form, and received a confirmation email from us. Then you get to the meeting and find out your payment didn't go through and you need to pay at the door.

What's going on?

Or...

You fill out the form, choose PayPal, and submit the form, but you aren't taken to PayPal. You are taken back to our home page and later you receive a confirmation of your registration.

Are you registered or not?

Or...

You fill out the form, choose PayPal, and submit the form. You are taken to PayPal but you don't see the option to pay using your own card. You don't have a PayPal account, so how can you pay?

Why can't you add your own card number?

Here are the Answers

First, let me explain about the confirmations you get, even if the payment didn't work. The confirmations are sent automatically by the form software as soon as you submit the form. It only means we have your reservation. It does not tell us anything about your payment.

If we catch the error, we'll contact you. But we may not catch it in time. A way **you** can know if your payment did not go through, is to look for PayPal's confirmation telling you the payment has been made. **If you do not receive that notification, then your payment did not through.**

While these things happen to just a few of our members or guests, we wanted to know the answers, too. Was there something wrong with our PayPal code? So, I opened a support ticket with PayPal to find out what was wrong. We ran several tests, and they checked the code related to our PayPal Checkout system. None of our tests were able to recreate the errors. The registration/payment system on our end is working as it should.

Well, darn. It would be easier to find a problem that the technical people could fix!

The technician working with me understood that this makes things difficult for our members. He offered a few things to try if you are having trouble using our PayPal option. I have listed his suggestions below. But first, **here is a tip from one of our members who helped with testing:**

"The 'culprit' turned out to be a faulty modem, which ATT came out and replaced recently. So far, so good. We've not had any further trouble or issues with the new modem."

In my experience, internet companies rarely tell you it's time for an upgrade. You need to call them.

PayPal's Suggestions

If you are not being brought to PayPal after submitting the registration form:

1. Clear your internet browser's cache and cookies
2. Accept PayPal's website cookies if you haven't done so
3. Switch to a different internet browser
4. Restart your device and try again
5. Make sure your device is upgraded to the latest version, if applicable
6. Try using a different device

If you are taken to PayPal but cannot find where to enter your credit/debit card number:

Note: In all our tests, we were able to see the field for entering credit card number.

1. If you cannot see this field, try the steps above, with special attention to accepting PayPal's cookies. If you haven't done that yet, then there will be a box on the screen asking you to accept the cookies. It's possible the box covers the field.
2. Try scrolling down in the PayPal screen.

If you cannot find the field for your card number, please take a screen shot (or just take a picture of your screen) and send it to me at: me at: <mailto:webmaster@cwcmtdiablo.org> or go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/> and choose webmaster. Maybe I can help you further.

Writers Helping Writers Assistance Fund

By Linda Hartmann

CWC's motto has always been "Writers Helping Writers." We help in obvious ways, with professional speakers, critique groups, sharing what works and what doesn't, events, and access to literary participation. But we also know that sometimes, a struggling writer needs a little more...practical help.

We want to help with that, too.

Our branch has established a fund for members to donate to provide practical assistance when help is needed with paying for a meeting workshop, or membership costs. Please consider a contribution in any amount to help someone going through a rough patch.

To donate or to request assistance from this fund, please use the link to this program on our CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch website or click on this link; <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writers-helping-writers/>

Donors may have their names listed in one of several literary-named categories or may remain anonymous. See the last page of this newsletter.

To request assistance, fill out the form and submit, and your request will be discreetly reviewed. When approved, you will receive a coupon code to use as a voucher when registering for the meeting, workshop, or when paying membership fees. Your information is not shared anywhere, so the process is simple and private.

The Writers Helping Writers Fund is funded through donations to this project only.

Donations are welcome at any time and are tax-deductible. CWC Mt. Diablo is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization, EIN: 94-6082827.

Looking for a Critique Group or Group Member?

Our branch critique group coordinator helps new members find a home in a critique group looking for members. Although the form at the link below is for members looking for a group, if your group has an opening, please go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/critique-groups/> and use the form to help you define any requirements you have. Some groups feel comfortable reading all genres, some restrict themselves to certain genres. Chloe matches members to groups.



Members' (Short) Works

See your writing in print! Send your **short** work to be included:

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

A NEW APPROACH. THIS MONTH WE'RE SERIALIZING THE SUBMISSIONS. LET ME KNOW HOW IT WORKS FOR YOU.



The Cilantro Project Part 1 by Robert Poirier



Eve, a female cougar, paused when she heard the crow cawing the warning. It was daybreak, and the woods were dappled with light.

"Did you hear," she chuffed.

"Yes," her partner Adam replied. "We have a couple of hours before they get here."

Eve pulled Seth, their six-month-old kitten, close to her so he could nurse. At six months and fifty pounds, the kitten's dark spots had almost faded away, but he would still nurse if Eve offered.

"We'll move on as soon as Seth finishes," Eve said.

Mike Janko's phone earpiece signaled when the cougars' GPS and VHS tracking collars were within a thousand yards. Janko, the lead tracker for the Cilantro Project, checked the load and operation of the M1911 .45 caliber pistol in his shoulder holster, then checked the operation of the Daninject JM Special dart gun. Each dart contained a five-to-one ratio of Ketamine Hydrochloride (KHCL) and Xylazine Hydrochloride (XHCL), with twice the recommended dosage for mountain lions of 100 to 140 pounds.

This JM Special model was fitted with a 49-inch rifled extension barrel giving the weapon an effective range of 85 yards. Janko carried a bandolier with six additional safety-capped, pre-dosed darts and two spare CO2 cartridges. He could reload a dart in 15 seconds.

Seth unlatched after a few minutes, stood, and followed Eve as they headed north, back to the Wildlife Reserve and Sanctuary Adam and Eve had been tranquilized and abducted from eighteen months before. As agreed, Adam patrolled the rear, alert for any trackers or wolves.

Hillary Hallman, a compact woman with long brunette hair pulled back in a ponytail, was the lead researcher who, two years before, had pitched the Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR) gene editing project to the sponsors, a wealthy group of Northern California cattle ranchers.

"Two young male and female cougars," she told them, "will be the subject of this project we call the Cilantro Project. Over 85 percent of a cougar's DNA is the same as those in humans. Additionally, the genes are often found in the same location as in a human. The project is patterned after the seven percent of people with a variation in olfactory receptor genes so that cilantro tastes like soap. The simplest analogy of the project would be the way a word processor is used to cut and replace a text string in a book. We will program the CRISPR-associated search engine to find the DNA string referencing taste in the primary gustatory cortex genome of both cougars and splice a segment that effectively says 'beef umami tastes like soap.'"

When Seth was six months old, after neither he nor his parents had rejected beef, the sponsors called a funding meeting.

"Unfortunately, a programming error sent the CRISPR search tool to the prefrontal cortex genome," Hillary explained. "That's the region associated with reason and language. As a result, Adam and Eve received a tremendous increase in cognitive ability, including the ability to understand human and animal language. These genetic changes were passed to Seth, their offspring."

Members' (Short) Works (cont'd)

The Cilantro Project Part 1 (cont'd)

The sponsors decided to pull the funds, neuter the three animals, remove the chips detailing the project, and release them into the wild outfitted with tracking devices. When the meeting broke, the sponsor's attorney asked Mike Janko to stay behind.

"We can't afford to let this project's results and plans get out to the media," he said to Janko. "The optics would be disastrous. So the first chance you get, put all three cats down and bring me the chips."

Hillary overheard part of the conversation. She assigned herself the midnight shift, unlocked the cougar enclosure, and spoke to Eve.

"They mean to kill the three of you," she said. "The sanctuary where we collected you is about a fifteen-day walk."

"Keep the ocean on your left," she continued as she patted Eve's left shoulder.

"And don't kill any humans, or they will hunt you down and destroy you."

The three cougars left the enclosure shortly after midnight and headed into the deep woods.

Janko's earpiece beeped rapidly an hour after dawn. He used his phone GPS monitor to trace the route the cats had taken, indicating the three cats were bedded down 200 yards away.

Janko crept forward upwind of the cats until he spotted the male dozing on a rock outcropping about 30 yards away. The dart hit just behind Adam's shoulder. The hot pink stabilizer stood out against the light cinnamon-colored fur. Adam jumped and chuffed a warning. Eve immediately leaped on Adam's back and bit the dart, releasing the pressure and stopping the tranquilizer flow. She pulled the dart out with her teeth. Both animals turned toward Janko and stalked him.

Janko fumbled while loading the dart gun, threw it on the ground, and drew the M1911. He knew his hand-loaded ammunition could take down all three animals.

The thought flashed, *Where the hell is that third cat*, as he brought the pistol to bear on the male.



TO BE CONTINUED

One More Race Before We Die Part 1

By Michael Ellis Banister



Mike Gagliano, AKA The Necromancer, a mildly successful magician on the Las Vegas-Miami-New Orleans circuit, woke up with a jolt. As he sat straight up in bed, his first impulse was to check the front door to see who was there shouting at him. Then he realized, or thought he realized, it must have been a dream. But just to be sure, he got up, staggered to the living room, and looked out the front door's little peephole. Nothing and nobody.

Gagliano's "magical" specialty was raising the dearly departed, or at least their voices and apparitions, on stage in front of well-paying, intoxicated, and perhaps gullible patrons. Sometimes, he almost fooled himself, if he fooled anyone else. Like the time in Vegas when he conjured up the recently departed uncle of a tearful young man who seemed very sure, or at least hopeful, that Gagliano could bring back his uncle's reassuring voice, if not an image.

Gagliano often asked himself how it was that occasionally one of his conjurations would seem real even to himself. That incident in Vegas shook him up pretty badly; the apparition seemed much more present than the usual hazy and ill-defined images his assistant would project onstage using a highly sophisticated secret hologram machine.

Members' (Short) Works (cont'd)

One More Race Before We Die Part 1 (cont'd)

But the weirdest thing about the dream voices he heard just now was their sense of urgency as they spoke.

"Listen up, Mikey," one voice kept saying.

The other voice, a little deeper and with a stronger Jersey accent, kept saying, "Tomorrow night, tomorrow night we'll talk."

And just as weird was the fact that Gagliano recognized the voices. How many times in the past year had he heard them? They—at least the ones he heard on TV and radio—were the voices of Mario and



Riccardo Mescola, a couple of Hoboken brothers who were the reigning champs of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, the gold standard of the stock car racing circuit.

The last time Gagliano heard of the Fratelli Mescola, as they liked to call themselves lately, was in the grandstands watching the tenth and final race of the Chase for the Sprint Cup last Saturday. The race, which took place at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway on North Las Vegas Boulevard, was as exciting as any stock car race Gagliano had ever seen. The only blemish to the experience—a very big blemish—was the horrific crash halfway through the race. The Mescola brothers were right behind the lead car, driven by Firooz the Ferocious, when that driver lost control of his car as the three of them were approaching 200 miles per hour on the straightaway. Both brothers' cars were hit by the out-of-control lead car, and crashed into the safety wall. Both cars suffered moderate damage, but the drivers—the Mescolas and the lead driver—suffered fatal injuries.

Gagliano, an avid racing fan, was devastated, of course, as was the entire stock-car racing audience. The brothers and Firooz Esfahan, their top competitor, were one race away from cinching the Sprint Cup title when this crash ended the race and ended their lives. The crash was so dramatic and tragic that the organizers postponed the repeat of the race for a month.

The rest of his day, a rare overcast day in Las Vegas, was difficult for Gagliano. Dreams like that were a curse, a plague on Gagliano's condition as a light sleeper. And the fact that his dream featured the Mescolas made it even harder to stay asleep. Only it definitely didn't feel like a dream at all. It almost felt like he could have spoken to them after they spoke to him—that is if he hadn't been startled into waking up.

After a listless performance at his evening show at the Venetian Hotel and Casino, Gagliano felt too tired to attend the after-show party or do anything else except head up to his room. It was a little after 11 p.m., normally too early for him to even consider falling asleep. But tonight was different; he had no doubt he would fall asleep practically as soon as he hit the sheets.

He did just that, but woke up almost immediately when he remembered what the Mescola brothers said in his dream the night before.

Then he noticed that he wasn't really awake; he was still asleep, but had entered into some kind of alert dream state. He was no longer in bed, but was sitting in an overstuffed chair in a garishly appointed lobby or reception room. Opposite him sat Mario, Riccardo, and Firooz. They were quietly laughing among themselves and having a drink. When they saw that Gagliano had "awakened," they set down their drinks and got serious.

"Okay, guys, here's our boy, Mike. Say, Mike, howzabout doin' us a favor?" Riccardo was staring intently at Gagliano.

"The brothers and I have a favor to ask of you," Firooz said. We learned you were in the audience just as we crashed and were killed. I guess you could say we have some unfinished business."

"We didn't actually see you in the stands, Mike," Mario added. "We found out you were there a few hours later, when you were doing your show at the Venetian. Spooks like us, we get a kick out of shows like yours. You're famous up where we are now! Hey, Rickey, remember when we heard about the show where the dude wanted Mikey to call up his uncle on stage? The uncle told us about it right after our crash. Said we should contact you and see if you could help us."

Members' (Short) Works (cont'd)

One More Race Before We Die Part 1 (cont'd)

Riccardo nodded his head vigorously and smiled.

Gagliano looked from one man to the next, then looked around the room, at his hands, felt his legs and face, and finally accepted the fact that he was really there, there, that is, but still in bed at the Venetian dreaming about dead race-car drivers.

"Okay, gentlemen, what exactly do you think I can do for you?" Gagliano said. "I've never been to medical school, and anyways I doubt the best doctors in the world could bring you three back to life. Did you see that crash? Oh, sorry, of course you did!"

"You see, Mike," Riccardo said, "it's like this. We want to finish what we started, the race, that is, and we hear you're the guy who can help us."

"Help you do what? I've never even sat in a race car."

Mario made a motion to a shadowy person in the background, who approached the group.

"Another gin and tonic, if you don't mind." The waiter literally disappeared and reappeared seconds later and handed a drink to Mario.

"Here's what we'd like you to do for us, Gagliano. Stage one of your shows. The biggest ever. One that will outclass every magic show ever done or ever will be done. Except this time, your show will feature the real deal."

"What do you mean the real deal?" Gagliano asked.

Firooz spoke up. "Mario means that you pull a few strings to convince the NASCAR folks to hire you to set up a kind of pre-race memorial to the three race-car drivers who were killed in the 10th race of the season, that is to say, us, the very guys sitting here talking to you in this lobby of our hotel."

"Yeah?" Gagliano said. "What kind of memorial? Do you have something in mind? Are you asking me to put on one of my magic shows or what?"

"Yeah," Riccardo said. "Set up all your special effects stuff around the starting line of the racetrack, you know, the lights, fog machines, hologram projectors, the whole nine yards. Even set out our damaged cars at the starting line. We'll do the rest."

"And what exactly is the rest?"

"Why, a race, of course, a kind of last lap, so to speak," Riccardo said.

"Are you saying you want me to create a massive illusion of you three in your wrecked cars doing a lap around the track?"

"Not exactly an illusion," replied Mario. "Well, I guess it would be an illusion of sorts. An illusion of an illusion, if you will. We hear you're the guy who can pull it off. Or pull us through, to be more precise."

"Look, we'll take care of the illusion part," Firooz said. "Just like the dude's uncle did in that show of yours. You're famous, and for good reason. We have faith in you. We'll even pull a few strings with our acquaintances at NASCAR."

Gagliano was trying to digest everything he had just heard, when he noticed the three of them, along with the hotel lobby, were starting to fade away. The next thing he was aware of was his alarm clock going off in his hotel room. He sat up, looked out the lightening sky, and buzzed for room service.

TO BE CONTINUED



FOR EXCELLENT WRITING TIPS:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/meeting-materials/> and

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/previous-writers-table-topics/>

Upcoming Programs

2023

May 13 	Joey Garcia	Marketing
June 10 	Laurie McLean the genius behind the SFWC	Finding agents

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

We break over July and August and resume in September

Things to Do

Mt Diablo CWC Book Festival Set for June 24 - **Sign up Now**

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch Members, follow this link for more information and to reserve one of 38 spots available to participate in our book festival: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/cwc-mt-diablo-book-festival/>

- Sell your books
- Advertise your related writing services (book design, editing, etc.)
- Gain experience marketing your work
- Increase your readership
- Enhance the image of the California Writers Club—Mt. Diablo Branch
- Establish a connection with the public library for future events
- Enjoy the camaraderie and have fun

1-3 p.m., Saturday, June 24, Lafayette Library, Tatzin Community Room

Cost to reserve a place: \$25

Bruce Lewis
Event Coordinator

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 **April 20 12:00 pm–2:00 pm PDT**

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 ARROYO WAY

Walnut Creek, CA

To Register:

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



Things to Do (cont'd)

10 authors in 10 businesses/restaurants.

Tickets \$5 on sale online at

<https://brentwoodlibrary.brownpapertickets.com>.

For more info contact Kim Giuliano at

cakgiuliano@gmail.com.

Mt. Diablo members' names are highlighted

Michael Barrington – His experiences traveling the world as a missionary priest and then member of Rotary International have enriched his variety of books.

T.L. Bequette – He is a criminal defense attorney who has written two Joe Turner Mysteries, and the first one received numerous awards.

Mark Clifford – His experiences in the Marine infantry and over 25 years as a Police Officer have enriched his writing as a journalist and fiction author, and he helps survivors of trauma through his podcast.

Jim Hamilton – He is a writer of non-fiction, a memoir, and relationship self-help who strives to help people enhance their lives by improving the way they connect with others.

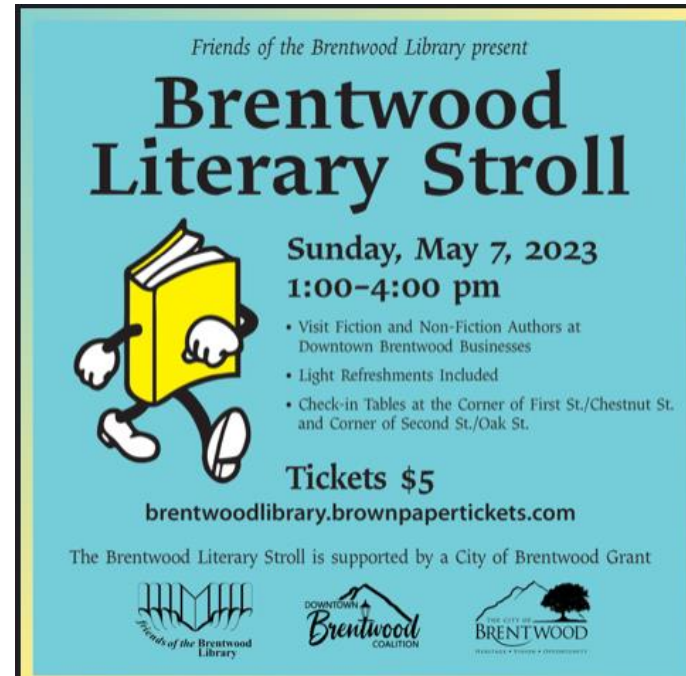
Carol Jensen – She has taught classes and written several books on the history of Eastern Contra Costa County.

Josephine Mele – Her sense of humor, travel experience, and love of food make her fiction and non-fiction an enjoyable read.

Dana Mentink – She is a national and Publishers Weekly bestselling author of more than 40 mystery and romance novels.

Gail Tsukiyama - A bestselling author with seven novels that have earned her many awards. Her latest historical novel will be published in June.

Dallas Woodburn – She is an award-winning author of fiction, non-fiction, and plays, and host of Thriving Authors Podcast which helps women write and publish books.



SISTERS IN CRIME NORCAL IS HOSTING THE 2023 SPRING AUTHOR SHOWCASE

Mark your calendars for this event—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC Questions? ggarroll43@gmail.com

Saturday, May 20, 1 pm

Orinda Books

276 Village Square, Orinda, CA 94563 Lots of parking

This will be both an in-person and Zoom event. (Zoom invite information to come.) And here are 12 outstanding CWC and Mystery Writers of America (MWA) authors who will reading from their latest books:

CWC Authors:

Ana Manwarring

Cindy Sample

Claudia Long

George Cramer

MWA Authors:

Cara Black

Heather Haven

Janet Dawson

Katherine Hyde

Leslie Karst

Nannette Potter

Thena MacArthur

Vinnie Hansen

Don't Write Like This

Copied from Nextdoor (when you write, reread what you've written before you hit enter.)

"...by a man wearing a ski mask which fled on a car waiting for him." (So did the ski mask run away or did the assailant rip it off and throw it on top of the waiting car? Did the assailant get away?)



"In the last 72h, I saw two SUV-like cars with tinted windows, beaten up" (Must have been a spectacle watching two cars get beaten up. Must have been some mighty assailant.)

"The car was bound to MacArthur through the side street." (Bound with duct tape to MacArthur? How do you bind a car through a side street?)

"Told two employees **which** were more sympathetic and thanked for the information." (Who thanked who?)

EVEN WRITING A RECIPE can be a problem if you don't think it through. So what's the beef in the instructions below?

-Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a standard 12-cup muffin.

-Add the almond flour, baking soda, cinnamon, sugar, and salt to a medium bowl.

A novice baker or even a harried one might think the flour, etc. go in the muffin tin. Why not change the second instruction to:

To a medium bowl add the almond flour, baking soda, cinnamon, sugar, and salt.

This says the same thing but alerts the baker to use a bowl before listing the ingredients that go in it! This example is probably a stretch but shows that the author must consider whether they have written in the best way possible for the reader who does not know what's in the author's head.



Young Writers Contest Fundraising

The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch

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



DONATIONS A/O March 2023

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

Lily Gwilliam
Susan Berman

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

Cindy Leonard
David George in honor of Jan & Lee Paulson
Linda Hartmann

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

Ken Kerkhoff

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

Karen Clayton
Stanford Stewart
Linda Force

Buck-A-Book
Liz Pentacoff

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

Marjorie Witt
Marianne Lonsdale
Patty Northlich
Chloe Laube
Sherida Bush
Bob Poirier
Linda Force

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

June Gatewood
Barry Hampshire
Lynn Goodwin
Jana Haertl
Jane Bloomstrand
Judith Ingram
Ann Steiner

Colleen Gonzalez
Corrienne Heinemann
George Cramer
Jerry Blair
Juanita Martin
Deborah Greenberg

Contra Costa County middle school students who enter the Young Writers Contest are eligible for cash prizes in short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative, and humor. Contest submission is free. Check our branch website for details: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers/>

In May the Mt. Diablo Branch hosts an awards ceremony to honor the students--if there's no pandemic! All program expenses are supported by individual donations and grants.

Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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

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

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

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

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS ANNUAL CONTEST

Writers Helping Writers 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 practical assistance to writers. Your tax-deductible gift will appear in the Mount Diablo CWC newsletter every month in the year you donate. You may remain anonymous if you prefer!

DONATIONS as of March 2023:

<u>J.K.ROWLINGS STAIRCASE CIRCLE</u> Lilly Gwilliam	\$1000 +
<u>GEORGE ORWELL'S FUTURE FORUM</u>	\$750 – \$999
<u>ROBERT HEINLEIN'S UNIVERSE</u>	\$500 - \$749
<u>HARPER LEE'S SYMBOLS</u>	\$250 - \$499
<u>TONI MORRISON'S MEMORIES BAND</u>	\$100 - \$249
<u>DEAN KOONTZ THRILLER TEAM</u>	\$50 - \$99
<u>MARK TWAIN'S ADVENTURES PARTY</u>	\$25 - \$49
<u>RICHARD WRIGHT'S UNDERGROUND SUPPORTERS</u>	up to \$24
<u>AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MYSTERIOUS SQUAD</u> (Anonymous) Squad Member One (\$765)	any amount

All program expenses are supported by individual donations to date.

Check our branch website for details: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/writers-helping-writers/>

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://cwcmt Diablo.org/writers-helping-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: Writers Helping Writers

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT FUND!