



The Write News

Mt Diablo

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

October 2023

Workshop October 14, 2023

Featuring: **Constance Hale**



DEEPENING CHARACTER

Storytellers—whether they are novelists, memoirists, or narrative journalists—know that characters are key to any great yarn. Readers love people, and writers must deliver through short sketches to longer portraits to full-length biographies. Yet developing characters is trickier than you might think. Especially minor ones, where few words must make an impression. Or narrators, when a few devices must do the work. Connie Hale, who has made the profile her preferred form, expands on a previous workshop she gave to CWC/Mt. Diablo, adding readings and exercises, as well as prompts from her book [Writing Character](#).

SKILLS YOU WILL SHARPEN IN THIS WORKSHOP

- Nailing character in three descriptive words.
- Rendering physical presence so that a reader might recognize a character on the street.
- Capturing inner life through observed behaviors.
- Understanding the paradox in the person.
- Treating yourself—author, narrator, first-person voice—as a character.



Constance Hale is an American writer and critic based in San Francisco. Her journalism has appeared in metropolitan newspapers and national magazines, but she is best known for her books on language: [Sin and Syntax](#), [Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch](#), and [Wired Style](#). She teaches writing and editing at Harvard and the University of California at Berkeley. After graduating from Princeton, Hale spent a number of years writing fiction and drama and performing her own solo pieces in San Francisco. She completed her master's degree from the Graduate School of Journalism at U California, Berkeley.

REGISTER ONLINE AT <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/>

LOCATION

Zio Fraedo's Restaurant
611 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

COST

\$45 Members and \$55 Non-Members. Includes buffet luncheon.
Pay at the door or online with PayPal when registering. You do not need a PayPal account.

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| • 9:30 a.m. | Registration Opens |
| • 10:00 a.m. | Workshop Part I |
| • 12:00 p.m. | Buffet Luncheon |
| • 1:00 p.m. | Workshop Part II |



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

President's Message: Barry Hampshire



Here we are. The dreaded air quality situation has returned to challenge us. It may cause us to stay closer to home, our computers, our writing. So all is not bad.

It is not bad, if we have something to say. But, well, . . .

When I find myself stuck, without a thought coming to mind, do I go into a self-judging tirade, eat a gallon of ice cream, walk ten miles, or crawl back under the bed covers? None of them, except the ice cream and walk do have some temptation value. How do I unstuck the stuck?

Everyone is different, and we each need to address the problem ourselves. And know that over time, this answer will change. Some will just start writing, even the Safeway shopping list. Some may list several possible outlines of the plot as it could progress forward. Others will hunker down and try to distract themselves in the hope that their glass of chardonnay will bring them inspiration.

I have tried various paths through this minefield. Thankfully, I have found a method that works in my current situation. I am writing a full length novel, which allows for this strategy. However, it does not apply easily if I am writing a short story. I will admit that my method is based on many repetitions of the same lesson by my writing coach.

I am beginning to understand that I need to know my main characters at a deeper level. That means I need to have written an extensive bio for each of them. What was their upbringing? Are they extroverts or introverts? Do they stay connected with their family of origin? Do they like spicy food or bland food? How do they talk, what is their speech style? There are so many details I need to consider.

I am certain that my writing coach is cringing, if they read this, as I have so much more work to do on this topic.

As little as I have learned in this regard, I already have come to realize that when I sit down to write my novel, I can take on the traits of someone suffering from dissociative identity disorder. However, it only lasts as long as I want, I control it. I am Barry. I am Rashid. I am Fatima. I am all of them, at the same time.

By staying in the head of my POV character, they will tell me how they will move the storyline forward, beyond this point at which I feel stuck.

This is how I move forward. Sometimes it means sitting in that stuck place for days or even weeks. But, something will bubble up and get the story back on track.

Have faith that deeper your commitment to your art will bring you the joy and delight of producing a written piece that you never knew you had in you.

Write on, be brave and who knows where it will take you.

Barry



COMING UP SOON:

On Monday, October 2, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.

Member **Phyllis Houseman** will read her story,

“Shadow Child,” which is part of the *Colossus: Body* anthology.

Join the **free Zoom**:

<https://zoom.us/j/92511448102?pwd=NzdmRFExTkVwclRiYUh2cXB CNTBWdz09>

Meeting ID: 925 1144 8102

Passcode: 515067

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

Welcome New Members

New members, please send a jpg picture of yourself and whatever other info you'd like to share so members can recognize you at meetings and start a conversation! If you would like some interview questions to get you started, just ask: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

Phil Scimonelli

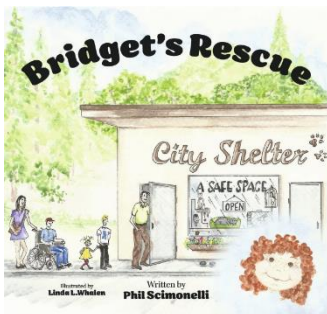
Hello,

My name is Phil Scimonelli. I attended my first California's Writers Club meeting on September 9th, 2023.

I was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1958. My family moved to North Hollywood, California when I was 8 years old. I grew up in the San Fernando Valley and graduated from California State University Northridge with a Liberal Arts degree and Teaching Credential. I taught for the Lancaster School District for 30 years and upon retirement, my wife and I moved to the San Francisco East Bay.



My passion for teaching started in Child Development where I specialized in reading to children from age three to six. Combining my educational experience with my love of dogs, led me to write and self-publish *Bridget's Rescue*. I believe passionately in the pet adoption process as the best means to save an animal and acquire a best friend.



Bridget's Rescue is a story of a multi-generational, interracial family on a quest to adopt a dog. After Grandma Rose explains the importance of animal shelters to her granddaughter, Bridget, the family decides she is old enough to help with a family pet. As Bridget prepares for pet adoption, she learns many important elements of the process. One of which is the importance to consider the entire family when choosing a dog. After a few important introductions, she finds the one!

To see our board of directors and committee chairs, go to:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/board-of-directors-committees-awards/>

We're always glad to welcome volunteers to assist with all this branch does. It's a great way to make friends, add to your resumé, feel good, make a difference, etc.

Welcome New Members (cont'd)

Eugene (aka: Gene) Larkin

I was born and raised in northwestern Iowa. In early 1970, after completing two years in the Peace Corps in the interior of Brazil, I came to The San Francisco Bay Area.

Background: Soteria House (Soteria is Greek for salvation/deliverance) was a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) research program, loosely based on R.D. Laing's Kingsley Hall in London. It was located in a residential neighborhood on N. 13th Street in San Jose. The goal of the research was to measure the effectiveness of treating young adults who had been diagnosed as acutely schizophrenic and in need of hospitalization in a community residential setting, without the use of psychoactive drugs. Measured outcomes over eight years showed it to be a more effective and humane treatment model than the control group which had been hospitalized and heavily medicated.

In 1971 and 1972 I was directly involved in Soteria House, first as a volunteer and later as staff. I left Soteria House to go to San Francisco to help establish Diabasis, a similar, Jungian based treatment program with renowned Jungian Psychiatrist, John Weir Perry. In 1974 I was brought back to the Soteria Project to establish and become the Program Director of Emanon, the NIMH-funded replication study of Soteria House in San Mateo.

Soteria House has now become the generic name for this treatment modality. There are now several independent and state funded Soteria Houses in the United States. There are also Soteria Houses in Italy, The U.K., Sweden, and Israel.

My book, *Seeking Soteria: Being in Process* is scheduled to be published in spring of 2024. It is a memoir of my personal experience at the original Soteria House, what events led me there, and its profound and lasting impact on me.

Some interview questions and answers:

What do you like about writing?

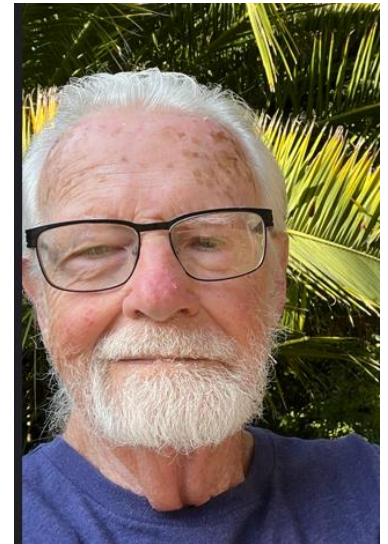
Writing, for me, is an open door into the unconscious. It allows me to connect with that quietly independent part of myself that would, otherwise, remain distant. That connection allows me to elaborate emotional perceptions of which I was, essentially, unaware. I especially delight in those moments when I seem to be an outsider witnessing my own writing and, only later, come to an understanding of what I have written.

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

That is a hard question to pin down. I have favorite writers such as John Gardner, Paul Auster, John Barth, and Cormac McCarthy. And then there are the Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Mario Vargas Llosa whose imaginative capacities simply take you to another level of reality. Finally, there are the poets, Whitman, Dickinson, Heaney et al. who show what the soul is capable of attaining.

What are your future writing goals?

That question is my primary reason for joining California Writers Club. As I come to the end my seventieth decade, I am wondering if I want to add a new persona to my Being and just exactly what that entails. My hope is that by being with other writers I will develop a better understanding of that process.



Bonnie Garmus was 64 when *Lessons in Chemistry*, her first novel, was published last year. This followed receiving 98 rejections from literary agents. The book has sold over 2.5 million copies, spent a year on the New York Times bestsellers list, and is soon to be released as a limited series on Apple TV, starring Brie Larson.

Never stop writing!

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://cwcmt Diablo.org/newsletter/>

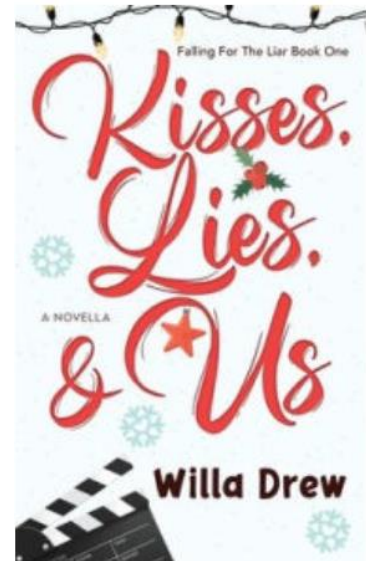
Willa Drew

Come to my book signing!

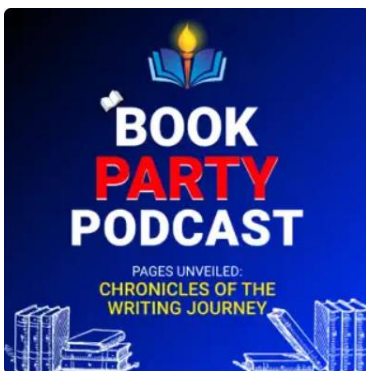
Willa Drew is not one, but two writers of fun, flirty fiction full of feels. Lovers of emotional scenes, (don't tell anyone: someone always cries as we write them) dramatic scenarios, (don't blame us, the characters insisted) and the best the world has to offer like eclairs and butter tarts (don't ask us to share, but we'll point you to the recipes.) Our young adult and new adult romances have every flavor. Angst? Check. Secrets? Of course. Risk taking? You bet. Expect slow burns, heart flutters, soul mates, first loves, and swoon-worthy kisses.

Barnes & Noble
Plaza Escuela
1192 Locust Street, Walnut Creek

Sunday, October 15th 2-4 pm



George Cramer



Podcast Interview of George Cramer and His New Book *New Liberty*

[The Feed Of The Official Book Party Podcast](#)

Listen on Apple Podcasts

Book Party Podcast enjoyed sitting down with George Cramer to discuss his new book, *New Liberty*.

This story isn't all black and white. You'll love this dark urban crime novel because it digs into more than just greed and power. This one will keep you turning the pages.

George Cramer is an enrolled descendant of the Karuk Tribe of California. After spending about forty years in law enforcement and private and corporate investigations, he was laid off. He didn't think he had an interest in writing fiction but took a writing class at the local senior center, and fell in love with creative writing.



Upcoming Programs

Nov 11		Roy Mash	The Art of Diction
Dec 9		Holiday Story Results	Readings from the stories
Jan 13		Mai-Lee Chai	
Feb 10		Brook Warner	TBD
Mar 9		Amanda McTigue	Workshop:
Apr 13		Eric Elfman	Flash fiction and non-fiction
May 11		Karen Grassle	
June 8		Joint Book Team	What was the experience like?

If you've heard a great speaker on writing/publishing/editing, email our Speaker Committee chair, Michael Barrington, at programs@cwcmtdiablo.org



Summer BBQ

Now that the Joint Book Venture group (the team currently co-writing a mystery novel) have made such good progress on the project, Michael Barrington decided to have a BBQ to celebrate. He invited the group and several others associated with the project to his home in Clayton for an afternoon of fun, food, and frolicking. An enjoyable and entertaining afternoon was made special with several members reading flash fiction and poetry.

This is an example of how participating in branch events and projects can have the secondary benefit of an enjoyable social gathering.



Ekphrasis 2023 Exhibition and Reception Report to the Membership

Linda Hartmann

Ekphrasis is a term and activity developed by the-Greeks to mean a detailed written description of a work of visual art. The term has come to mean that one medium of art relates as an observer to another medium by defining and describing its essence and forms from that viewer's perspective and imagination. The viewer who is writing about the visual art may see it differently than the artist intended or others observing the same piece of art.

In 2022 it was proposed to have an exhibition in Contra Costa County that would be a two-way ekphrastic effort. Writers would respond to visual art, and visual artists would respond in their own medium inspired by authors' written works. This included short works of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, memoir, or any other genre.

Ekphrasis Report (cont'd)

Participants from Mt. Diablo included Michael Barrington, Dita Basu, Wendy Blakely, Ginny Burns, Fran Cain, Stephanie Denman, Marlene Dotterer, Dot Edwards, Colleen Gonzalez, B Lynn Goodwin, Jennifer Granat, Barry Hampshire, Linda Hartmann, Jill Hedgecock, Phyllis Houseman, Joni Keim Treadwell, Ophelia Leong, Bruce Lewis, Joan Lieberman, Senait Mesfin-Picigallo, Robert Poirier, Stephanie Rickman, Sharanya Roy, Meghan Joyce Tozer, and Margie Witt,

After more than a year and a half of planning, organizing, holding five workshops with PowerPoint presentations, and sifting through the logistics for three non-profit groups to collaborate, the Ekphrasis Exhibition was installed on May 1, 2023 in the Orinda Library Art Gallery. The exhibit opened on May 2nd, and on May 6th an unprecedented attendance of over 300 people attended to celebrate the event according to the Honorable Mayor Inga Miller of Orinda who opened the program.

There were over 100 creative works in the gallery. Each Initiator Author or Initiator Artist was paired with a Responder Artist or Responder Author in a blind fashion. Responders created their inspired response to the writing or visual artwork without knowing who created it. In this way, each work inspired someone working in a different creative medium to develop **what the piece inspired** them to create in response.

This was the first time works of this nature have been exhibited in Contra Costa County. The exhibition remained until June 1st, and people continued to flow in and out of the gallery after the opening.

During the reception, a program of speakers was held in the auditorium. Emcee Linda Hartmann welcomed Sue Farmer, President of LAC, to open with a greeting and to introduce the Honorable Mayor Inga Miller of Orinda to make introductory comments. This was followed by three pairs of ekphrastic artists and writers, each presenting their work, followed by a question and answer period, to help the audience understand how the process came together.

The works will be on-line until May 2024 for viewing or purchase at:

<https://lamorindaarts.org/product-category/ekphrasis/>

(Click on the Visual Art Work image to see the Written Pairing)

An anonymous donor provided the Audio/Visual recording of the program via Desired Effects, and is available for viewing on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2w8r4eQZBg&t=3517s> (A few of the questions and answers are difficult to hear as the speaker was not close enough to the microphone. To be corrected next year.)

The program lasted just over an hour, and throughout the program and reception there were beverages and light fare available, much from in-kind donors. The artists and writers were available for questions and conversation.

Details of the financials from 2023 have been presented to each of the collaborating boards.

Changes planned for Ekphrasis 2024 have just begun, and the exhibition will hang in the Art Gallery of the Orinda Library for two months instead of one; May and June 2024. We will try to increase the finances available for the program through fundraising, donations, and/or grants. We would like to obtain enough funds and volunteers to publish an anthology of the event pairings for sale during the exhibition and on-line. Ekphrasis pairings will be traditional and one-way with Initiator Visual Artists and Author Responders only. Two workshops will be offered after the kick-off period, and slides from same will be on each organization's website.

We hope to have a larger core committee for 2024, particularly as participants begin to enroll, and the work increases dramatically. The volunteers were amazing and the event could not have happened without them in 2023, and we will need more of them for a smooth 2024. The in-kind donations were so appreciated from individuals who brought beverages, and snacks both sweet and savory. Local businesses such as Diablo Foods and Orchard Nursery donated some food and flowers, making the event so inviting and beautiful.

We thank each of you who participated in the Inaugural Ekphrasis Exhibition! From our perspective it was a wonderful experience and very successful project.



Members' Short Works

See your writing in print! **100 words or less.** Practice being brief.

Send your work to: writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org



Bill Stong

"I love you, Mommy!"

On a rotating basis, we pick up one grandchild early some morning and spend the entire day together. From time to time, we take photos and text them home.

One day, I asked our 5-year-old granddaughter if she wanted to add emoticons.

She nodded. "I love Mommy."

Her tiny finger hovered over the scrolling sea of emojis. A smiley face 😊, a hug 🤗, then a unicorn 🦄

When she liked one, she poked it. A kiss 😘. A heart ❤️.

"Maybe that's enough."

"One more." Her finger wavered. "Oh! Chocolate!" 🍫

"Oops! Maybe we don't send that one."

© 2023

Bob Poirier

"The Mayor "

The mayor made a cup of tea and glanced out the window. Floyd, the senior patrolman, was escorting a handcuffed, tall, dark-haired man into the police station.

"Damn," he murmured. "My chickens have come home to roost."

He hurried down the stairs and across the small courtyard separating the city administration offices from the police station.

"Hello, Floyd," the mayor said. "What do we have here?"

"It's nothing, Mr. Mayor," he smiled. "He wouldn't tell me who he was when I stopped to question him. I'm bringing him in for vagrancy."

Floyd flinched when the mayor put his prosthetic hand on the policeman's shoulder.

"It's 1978, Floyd. No law against being poor in this state," The mayor said in his most lawyerly voice. "In fact, I know Patrick, and I'll be happy to take him off your hands."

Floyd stiffened, and the mayor could see the veneer of civility fade. His eyes were cold and dead. The same eyes the mayor remembered from another country and another time. He had long suspected the "friendly cop" facade was just the front for a mean-spirited bully.

"OK, Mr. Mayor," Floyd said as he removed the handcuffs. "It's your call."

"Goodbye, Mr. Policeman," Patrick said softly as he rubbed his wrists. "Perhaps our paths will cross again."

Members' Short Works (cont'd)

The mayor took Patrick to his office, asked the receptionist to hold his calls for the next hour, and closed the door.

"*Dia duit, Eamon*," Patrick said in Gaelic.

"English, please, Patrick. And may God be with you as well. I call myself Sean now. What do you want?"

"The Council wants you to come back and train a new group of volunteers," Patrick said. "We have no one with your skills."

"I'm sorry, Patrick. I have a new life here. After the council split in 1969, and I lost my left hand in the Derry operation in 1970, I've come to realize that violence only leads to more violence. If I had stayed in the old country, I would be dead or in Maze prison. No, my world is here now. Despite the flaws, it's a world of peace and love. There is no room for old hatreds. Please tell the council I have no wish to cause harm to anyone."

Patrick looked at the mayor carefully. "The council anticipated that," he said, standing.

He pulled a Gerber four-inch folding knife out of his pocket and flipped it open with his thumb.

"I have orders to ensure your silence," Patrick said, smiling coldly. "You know too many secrets."

The mayor had been anticipating a visit like this and was prepared.

He brought his right hand up from under the desk. The M1911, cocked and locked, pointed at Patrick's chest as he came around the desk.

"*Dia duit*, Patrick," the mayor said as he released the thumb safety and shot his brother twice in the center of his chest.

Small Mercies by Dennis Lehane Book Review by **Frances Stephenson**

Dennis Lehane, author of the novel *Small Mercies* (2023), has written a riveting story set in South Boston, Massachusetts, at the time the city schools were under a desegregation order. In June of 1974, the U.S. District Court ordered a city-wide busing plan between the heavily black high school in Roxbury and the predominantly white South Boston high school. The District Court Judge orders that the plan be in place by the beginning of the school year in September. This ruling contributes to the explosive feelings of racial hatred in the South Boston neighborhoods.

At the story's center is the protagonist, Mary Pat Fennessy, a forty-two-year-old mother who is searching for her daughter, Jules. Her seventeen-year-old high schooler does not return home after spending the night with friends. Worried that Jules is in danger, Mary Pat contacts her older sister, Big Peg, and learns that Jules was last seen with George Dunbar, a drug dealer. Mary Pat is alarmed because she lost a son to heroin use and cannot bear to lose another child. She sets out on a relentless search for her daughter.

The author creates powerful scenes in his story where the reader is brought into the time and place of the setting. In turn, each scene deepens the reader's understanding of the protagonist, Mary Pat, as well as the true colors and motivations of the antagonists in the novel. As the plot unravels within each scene, unexpected revelations are peeled off one by one, disclosing new truths. These truths drive the story forward.

Small Mercies is an engaging thriller, entertaining as well as heartbreaking, and hard to put down.



Things to Do

(The following items are informational only and do not imply endorsement of any product or service)

You in the Newsletter!—Book Reviews

Writers should be readers. What are you reading? What genre is it? Would you recommend it to others and why? What worked? What didn't work? Why?

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.

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 **November 29** (over lunch if you wish)

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

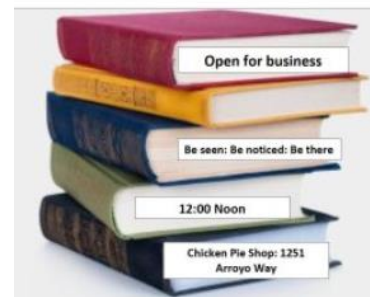
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

(Parking along the east side of the bldg or paid street parking in front.)

WRITERS CONNECTION



Read and judge for The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

Contact Quynh Trinh at <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contact-us/> to read and judge for **The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards**, in late Dec 2023-early January 2024. The club earns a substantial amount if we have 15-20 judges of teen 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	

It's interesting and eye-opening to see what young people around the country are writing.



Things to Do (cont'd)

Sit in on a Zoom board meeting

Meet the people who make this branch run. Ask questions.
Make suggestions. Next meeting: October 13, 2 pm
Contact branch President Barry Hampshire for the agenda and link:
<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/>



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, the 18th, 2023 from 7-8 pm.

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

HELPFUL EDITOR

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

The plan: Monthly, I will accept the first few members who email me **two** pages of their prose work 2 weeks in advance of the following month's meeting, 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 on both pages

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

Before the meeting I will read carefully for content 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!



Things to Do (cont'd)

CONTRABAND and CROOKS:

Working Dogs in the World of Police, Fire, & Search and Rescue

Bob Calkins

Callout Press

Ferry County Search & Rescue
Republic, WA



FREE Zoom Presentation for CWC-Mt. Diablo
Branch Members!!

Wednesday, November 1st, 2023 @ 7:00 PM
Mark your calendars!

Backstory: At the 2023 Public Safety Writers Association Conference **George Cramer** won a unique prize: a presentation from Bob. George then reached out to many different writing groups to win this prize on a first-come, first-serve basis. Linda Hartmann wrote in and won this exclusive from George for our CWC-Mt. Diablo branch.

George wrote the following about having seen Calkins present:

"Bob Calkins is an expert on working dogs in police, fire, and search and rescue. I have seen his presentation twice, and it is unbelievable what the handlers and their dog partners can do."

FREE Zoom Meeting for members of CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch Members

Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 7:00 PM via ZOOM

Mr. Calkins will present for one hour, but is willing to stay for up to two hours to ensure that participants have their questions answered. Register for the event at the following link, and the Zoom information will be e-mailed to you:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/contraband-and-crime-working-dogs-in-the-world-of-police-fire-search-and-rescue>

Note: The presentation will not be recorded, nor slides made available.

Dominican University Creative Writing program

Story and Song: Finding Direction and Momentum in the Music of our Words

Wednesday November 1 6:00 - 8:00pm PDT

Online via **Zoom**. Link will be sent via email to registrants.

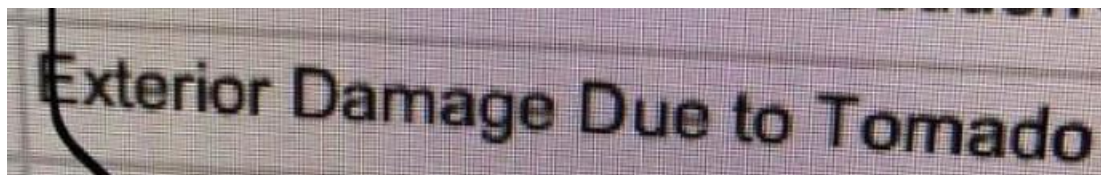
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/story-and-song-finding-direction-and-momentum-in-the-music-of-our-words-tickets-700080298017>

Sometimes it's a slog to write a scene, and sometimes a poem just feels flat. Tuning our ears to language can help us find new possibilities in our writing. In this **free online workshop** with Rachel Richardson, we'll look closely at the sound of the language we're using, and the rhythmic devices we can lean into to enliven our writing, amplify meaning, and find where we need to go. We'll try a few techniques together.

Led by Rachel Richardson, author of two previous books of poems, *Copperhead* and *Hundred-Year Wave* (both Carnegie Mellon University Press), co-founder of the Berkeley literary center's Left Margin LIT, and Bay Area Book Festival poetry advisor. Her works appeared in the *New York Times*, *Yale Review*, and *Kenyon Review*. Registration required.



Spacing Matters



Young Writers Contest

What is the Young Writers Contest?

The Young Writers Contest has been a part of Mt. Diablo's annual schedule since 1995, a contest that has become a trusted part of the Contra Costa middle and home-school community, and a vital part of our mission to educate and engage the community in writing.

The contest is open to middle school students whether a public, private, or home-schooled student. They electronically submit writings in the categories of short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative, and humor. We organize volunteer readers in the branch to read, confer, and rank the submissions. The first second and third winners in each category for each grade receive cash prizes at a celebration in their honor. There the winners may read from their pieces. Families, teachers and branch members are all welcome, and there are smiles and cameras clicking everywhere in the room.

In recent years we've assembled for sale a booklet of the winners' submissions.

To volunteer to help or read/rank, please go to: <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/young-writers-contest/>



Mail to: CWC Mt. Diablo Branch P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507 Attn: Young Writers 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 to CWC Mt. Diablo, a branch under the CWC 501(c)(3) tax exemption 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 August 2023:

J.K.ROWLINGS STAIRCASE CIRCLE (\$1000 +)

Lilly Gwilliam

GEORGE ORWELL'S FUTURE FORUM (\$750 – \$999)

ROBERT HEINLEIN'S UNIVERSE (\$500 - \$749)

HARPER LEE'S SYMBOLS (\$250 - \$499)

TONI MORRISON'S MEMORIES BAND (\$100 - \$249)

DEAN KOONTZ THRILLER TEAM (\$50 - \$99)

Bob Poirier

MARK TWAIN'S ADVENTURES PARTY (\$25 - \$49)

Sandra Hall, Sherida Bush, June Gatewood, Dita Basu

RICHARD WRIGHT'S UNDERGROUND SUPPORTERS (up to \$24)

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MYSTERIOUS ANONYMOUS SQUAD (any amount)

Squad Member One (\$765)

All program expenses are supported by individual donations to date.

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

Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name Address _____ City/State/Zip _____ Phone E-mail Amount enclosed: \$ _____

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

Or make a check payable to: CWC Mt. Diablo Branch.

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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT FUND!