

The Write News

February 2025

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoye, Editor

Mt. Diablo Branch

February 8th 2025 General Meeting with Nina Schuyler Making Metaphors and Other Stylish Moves



Nina Schuyler's short story collection, *In this Ravishing World*, won the W.S. Porter Prize for Short Story Collections and The Prism Prize for Climate Literature, will be published by Regal House Publishing in 2024.

Her novel, *Afterword*, was named a Notable 100 Book in the 2023 Shelf Unbound Best Indie Book Competition. *The Translator*, won the Next Generation Indie Book Award for General Fiction and was a finalist for the William Saroyan International Writing Prize. *The Painting*, was a finalist for the Northern California Book Award. Her book, *How to Write Stunning Sentences*, was a Small Press Distribution bestseller, and her new craft book, *Stunning Sentences: The Creative Writing Journal with 80 New Prompts from Beloved Authors to Improve Your Style*, was published by Fiction Advocate in November 2022.

She teaches creative writing at Stanford Continuing Studies, The Writing Salon, and for the independent bookstore, Book Passage. She writes a column about prose style for Fiction Advocate and reviews books for The Millions. She graduated from Stanford University with a B.A. in Economics with Honors, UC Law San Francisco, where she earned a J.D., and San Francisco State University, where she earned an MFA.

She lives in Northern California with her husband and two sons, where she hikes, bodysurfs, and writes in a small room, looking out at a tall palm tree.

[Please Register for this Meeting](#)

Metaphors...

... are like magical pleasure pills that help readers see the world anew. The critic James Wood said metaphors float a rival reality; it's the entire imaginative process in one move. The philosopher José Ortega y Gasset called them tools for creation which God forgot inside one of His creations. In this presentation, the primary focus will be trying out a unique strategy for making metaphors.

Attendees will:

- Develop an understanding of the power of metaphor
- Gain strategies to create metaphors
- Learn how to write original metaphors
- Learn how to write sentences that can easily contain metaphors
- Learn three techniques for writing sentences that invoke more style techniques

Location

Zio Fraedo's Restaurant
611 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, California

Cost

\$30 Members and \$35 Non-Members.

Includes a buffet luncheon. Pay at the door or online with PayPal when registering. You do not need a PayPal account.

Scheduled for February 8th, 2025

- 10:30 am Door Registration Opens
- 11:15 am Writers Table
- 12:00 pm Buffet Luncheon
- 12:25 pm Business Meeting
- 1:00 pm Main Speaker
- 1:00 pm Keynote Speaker

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch President's Message

On January 20th or 21st, 1,500 January 6th rioters were pardoned and freed. Whether you consider that a victory or an undermining of democracy matters little. This was a significant occurrence that should have everyone celebrating or outraged. But did it have any real significance? The answer is probably not, because the action was essentially meant to distract everyone, so they missed or ignored other important storied events going on at the same time.

Writers can learn from this living example, of how to weave multiple storylines so that the reader thinks they know what's happening, but they miss the meaningful detail until later. These events parallel John Barry's topic from the January CWC meeting. But here, the intent was to distract the reader while minimizing a more important storyline. John Barry talked about building tension through the interplay between two storylines.

I'm trying to point out that we are constantly bombarded with news reports and people's stories. These can be great examples of how to construct storylines and how to have them interact. Understanding these subtle underpinnings in reports and stories took me a while. But when I saw something, I wrote it down as an example for later.

Another consideration in this matter is that I have no interest in writing news reports or other people's stories. However, when I read them, I can gain much from doing so. Thus, I am incorrect if I ever identify myself as only a fiction or memoir writer. I am a writer! I happen to work primarily on fiction and memoir, but I can learn from all genres. I would also say that I can learn a kernel of truth from presentations on editing, publishing, marketing, and podcasting. I just need to be open and listen.

I apologize to members who have been confused by this message. I think in writing it, I'm still exploring my own understanding of the art of writing. I became a writer later in life than many of you did. I'm playing catch-up despite my age and natural ability (or lack thereof).

In conclusion, I am grateful to be your President, as I am exposed to the talent that this branch celebrates. I can humbly encourage all of you to maintain your writing schedule and keep the candle burning so that I may find my way.

Barry

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch

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Mt. Diablo Branch Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Upcoming Events

Sit in on a Zoom Board Meeting, Next meeting: February 7th, 3 pm
Mt. Diablo Meeting, February 8th, 2025 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
“Making Metaphors and Other Stylish Moves with Nina Schuyler”
OPEN MIC on Zoom, Wednesday, February 12th, 2025 7 pm to 9 pm
Writers Connection, Chicken Pie Shop, February 27, 2025 12 am to 1:30 pm
March 8, 2025: WORKSHOP: Joyce Thompson, *The Art of Storytelling*
April 12, 2025: Donna Levin, Creating a Writing Practice
May 10, 2025: Allison Landa, Developing Your Writing Voice
June 14, 2025: Maureen Studer (Sisters in Crime), *TBD*

Writer’s Helping Writers Fundraising

CWC’s motto is “Writers Helping Writers.” We help in obvious ways, with professional speakers, critique groups, sharing what works and what doesn’t, and other things. But we also know that a struggling writer needs a little more... practical help. We want to help you with that too.

Our branch has established this fund for any member who needs help with paying for a meeting or workshop, or with membership costs.

Just fill out the form below and our WHW committee will discreetly review your request. When approved, you will receive a coupon code to use when renewing your membership or registering for a meeting or workshop.

Your information is not shared anywhere. The Writers Helping Writers Fund relies only on donations for funding.

Please consider donating to this worthy cause in support of practical help to writers. California Writers Club is an IRS 501-3c designated non-profit educational organization. The Mt. Diablo Branch EIN Number is: 94-3068331. Please consult your tax advisor for the deductibility of your donation.

To donate: [writers-helping-writers/](https://www.writers-helping-writers.com)

Thank You To All Who Support This Important Writers Fund

Robert Poirier Publishes Hulls Cove and Other Stories



Robert Poirier has published his second book, *Hulls Cove* (and other stories), a collection of fifty-four fiction short stories representing mystery, war, humor, and science fiction literary genres. The stories, which vary from 100 to 5,000 words, are those he has written since joining the CWC Mt. Diablo Branch in 2018. This book, and his gritty thriller first novel, *The Killings at Hulls Cove*, are available on Amazon.

[Find this Book on Amazon](#)

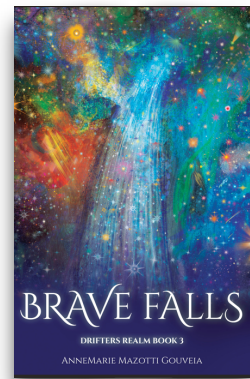
Annemarie Mazotti Gouveia *Brave Falls, Drifters Realm, Book 3* is out!



The paperback and eBook versions of *BRAVE FALLS, Drifters Realm Book 3*, were released on December 13, 2024. To learn more about *BRAVE FALLS* and the other books in the series, visit AnneMarie's website at:

<https://annemariamazottigouveia.com/>

BRAVE FALLS is currently available on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#), and will soon be released to online independent bookstores.



The Back Fence: Online Writers Discussion Group

Got questions about writing? Or answers? Connect with other writers!

As a member of the Mt. Diablo, Tri-Valley, or Berkeley branch, you are allowed to join and participate in The Back Fence Facebook Group's Online Discussion Forum. [The Back Fence](#) is a free private Facebook Group discussion board. You will need a Facebook account to access it.

CWC Mt. Diablo Open Mic on Zoom

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM — Online event

Details: Join us for Open Mic Night!

Note: Your RSVP on Meetup does not register you for this event.

Register online at:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/event/open-mic-night-on-zoom/>.

Sign up to read a five-minute segment from something you've written. It can be a work-in-progress, something already published, or that sheaf of poems you hid under the bed last ...

Hosted by: Lyn Roberts and Marlene Dotterer



Board Member Nominations for Annual Elections

At the June 14, 2025 Meeting, the attending membership will elect officers for the Mt. Diablo Branch Board for the upcoming CWC year.

Currently, the slate is as follows:

President: Barry Hampshire (incumbent)

Vice President: Michael Barrington (incumbent)

Treasurer: Marjorie Witt (incumbent)

Secretary: Dita Basu (incumbent)

All members of the club can nominate themselves or another member for any of these four officer positions. If you have a nominee who you feel should be added to the slate, please first confirm that the nominee is willing to stand for the office.

Forward the nominee's name and a brief description of the qualities that make them an appropriate candidate to me through the "Contact us" link on the Mt. Diablo branch website.

Alternatively, members can add a nominee to the slate just prior to the election at the June meeting, no later than May 2nd, 2025. Again, the potential nominee should have confirmed they are willing to stand.

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

Annual Mt. Diablo Branch Distinguished Service Award (DSA)

It's Awards Time!

Every other year, the Central Board of CWC presents the **Jack London Award (JLA)** to recipients chosen by their respective branches. The purpose of the award is to honor a member whose service to the CWC and/or a branch has been exemplary.

The annual Mt. Diablo Branch **Distinguished Service Award (DSA)** recognizes a member's extraordinary commitment and effort on an important branch project during the year.

In preparation for these awards, Mt. Diablo's board of directors is considering nominations of those members who have been particularly instrumental in helping our branch further its mission. When the nomination period ends, board members will choose the final winners by email vote, May 3rd – 8th. The JLA choice will be submitted to CWC for acknowledgment at the Central Board's 2025 Fall Corporate Meeting/Luncheon. All winners are invited to attend the luncheon. The branch covers their travel and luncheon costs.

The DSA winner's name will be announced in the June Newsletter and acknowledged at the June Meeting. The winner receives the DSA plaque, which lists all recent DSA winners. The winner may keep and display the plaque for one year.

Below is a list of previous winners of the Jack London and Distinguished Service Awards.

(Continued on Page 6)

Annual Mt. Diablo Branch Distinguished Service Award (DSA)

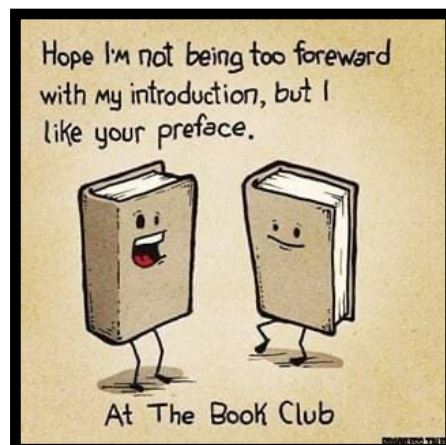
(Continued from Page 5)

Past Distinguished Service Awardees

2025: TBD
 2024 Michael Barrington
 2023 Barry Hampshire
 2022 Elisabeth Tuck
 2021 Marlene Dotterer
 2020 David George
 2019 Bill Stong & John Marvin
 2018 Jill Hedgecock
 2017 Judith Ingram
 2016 Danard Emanuelson
 2015 Lyn Roberts
 2014 Christa Fairfield & Jill Hedgecock
 2013 Barbara Bentley
 2012 Judith Marshall
 2011 Aline Soules
 2010 Catherine Accardi
 2009 Alfred J. Garrotto
 2008 Joanne Brown
 2007 Jack Russ
 2006 Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff
 2005 B. Lynn Goodwin
 2004 Agnes Moore
 2003 Igal Levy
 2002 Hunter Anderson
 2001 Laura Fischer
 2000 Al Villaire
 1999 Adena Reed

Jack London Awardees

2025: TBD
 2023 Jill Hedgecock
 2021 Linda Hartmann
 2019 Marlene Dotterer
 2017 Elisabeth Tuck
 2015 Barbara Bentley
 2013 Judith Marshall
 2011 David George
 2009 Joanne Brown
 2007 Camille Minichino
 2005 Al Villaire
 2004 Danard Emanuelson
 2003 Jack Russ
 2002 Denise Kalm
 2001 Alfred J. Garrotto
 2000 Bev Lauderdale
 1999 Liz Koehler-Pentacoff
 1998 Ray Martell
 1997 Joan Brennan
 1995 Pat Edwards
 1993 Ted Fuller
 1991 Mercedes Gardner
 1989 Helen McGrath



**Winner of 1st Prize in the California Writers Club
(Northern Branches)
“Holiday Writing Contest”**

It has been a long time since we have heard from Al Garrotto on the Write News. At the January, meeting I had the good fortune to sit next to Al and asked him to submit a poem for the February issue. He was kind enough to provide us with this award winner from the 2024 California Writers Club Holiday Writing Contest for the Northern Branches. Please enjoy!

Untitled

Alfred J. Garrotto

T’was the day after Christmas and, all through my house,
the mess was atrocious. I felt like a louse.
I gave not a gift, not a card to my kids, or even my spouse.
No sign of Santa, neither tree nor a wreath.
Had I morphed into Scrooge? A wretched old geezer...
like dour Ebenezer?
I crawled back in bed, now a frigid old freezer...
My door flung wide open! A kiddie invasion.
“Merry Christmas, Daddy! Let’s open our gifts!
Come— See what we got you! We do hope it fits.”

© 2024 by Alfred J. Garrotto

Darlene Kapur's poem, "Daddy's Girl" is in CWC's Best of the Best: 2024 Literary Review

Darlene Kapur's award-winning poem, "Daddy's Girl" was voted for inclusion in CWC's Best of the Best: 2024 Literary Review. Her artwork is featured in CWC's *Vision and Verse* for 2024. Her short story, "Andrew Pelley's Stellar Year" was chosen for "*One Universe to The Left*," and her poem, "Alms" will appear in CWC's *Smalls*, a collection of short poems.



Darlene Kapur began writing poems and stories in her early teens. She majored in journalism and worked as a speechwriter and editor before returning to short stories. Her debut book of stories on India, *In Any Given Room*, was published in 2022, followed by *A Year Without Men*, published in 2023. Kapur's prize-winning poetry, stories, and photography are featured in *Persimmon Tree*, *Vision and Verse*, and the anthologies *Ink Spots* and *One Universe to The Left*. Her poem, "Daddy's Girl," was voted for inclusion in Best of The Best, 2024 Literary Review by the California Writers Club.

<https://www.idkapur.com/>

An Important Note from Mt. Diablo's President and Treasurer

We appreciate your signing up in advance for our monthly meetings as this helps with our commitment to Zio Fraedo's. We call the restaurant Friday morning before the meeting to give them a headcount and are billed for that headcount, plus any additional walk-ins. In January, we paid nearly \$100 extra for no-shows who registered to pay at the door. Please help us by:

- Signing up before Friday morning.
- Notifying us before Friday morning if you need to cancel to avoid being billed.
- Pay by PayPal or credit card online if at all possible (we will refund if canceled before Friday).
- Note if you sign up by Wednesday noon, you will save the \$5 fee for late registration.
- On the day of the meeting, if you find you cannot attend, please text (925) 212-5392 so we can close out the sign-in table.

Walk-ins are welcome, but the Board may consider adding an additional \$5 fee if members have not registered. This would mean walk-ins would pay \$40 for a general meeting and \$55 for a workshop. We recognize life happens and schedules change. But registering for a meeting (or canceling if necessary) lessens the load for the volunteers who organize the meetings.

Condolences to AnneMarie Mazotti Gouveia

On Sunday, January 5th, CWC Board Member and Co-Chair of the YWC, AnneMarie Mazotti Gouveia, and her husband Tom Gouveia, regrettably held a Celebration of Life for their daughter Christie Gouveia (Age 35). CWC sent two beautiful floral arrangements to express our deepest sympathies and condolences for their loss and wish her family peace and healing during this time.

2025 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Contest a Huge Success

This 2025 contest season CWC Mt. Diablo was fortunate to have 19 members volunteer to help out with Judging the annual Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Contest for our region. Collectively, CWC Mt. Diablo judged:

- 1200 entries, earning the club a \$2500 Honorarium from the Alliance.
- An additional 650 entries, earning us another \$600 Honorarium.
- Total Honorarium of \$3100 will go into our General Fund.

We are truly grateful to work with such a generous group of writers who donated their time.

Al Garrotto

AnneMarie Gouveia

Barry Hampshire

Brian Shea

David George

Dore Ripley

Fran Cain (Wotj)

Jill Hedgecock

Ken Kerkhoff

Linda Harttman

Lori Armstrong

Lucinda Jackson

Marlene Dotterer

Mary Ann Turner

Michael Barrington

Phyllis Wachob

Quynh-Uyen Trinh

Richard Black

Senait Abraha

Suzy Orpin

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/scholastic-art-writing-awards-contest/>



Writer's Resources

10 Fiction Magazines Paying up to \$500 Per Story

[10 Fiction Magazines Paying up to \\$500 Per Story](#)

29 Publications that Pay for Writing on Food & Drinks

[29 Publications that Pay for Writing on Food & Drinks](#)

15 Calls for Pitches Directly from Editors

[15 Calls for Pitches Directly from Editors](#)

30 Magazines Publishing Literary Fiction

[30 Magazines Publishing Literary Fiction](#)

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Accepting Submissions

For Vol. 28 open Dec. 1, 2024 and close March 1, 2025

The issue will be released late April/early May, 2025. *We accept only email submissions.* Please send your work as a single attachment (MS Word, PDF, or RTF) to steamticketjournal@gmail.com.

Please indicate in the subject line whether your submission is poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or artwork. Please submit only once per submission period until you hear from us.

Poetry: Send three to five poems (as one attachment). 50 line maximum per poem.

Fiction and Creative Nonfiction: 5,000 words max. Flash-fictions encouraged. Generic genre pieces (sci-fi/fantasy/romance) might find better audiences elsewhere. Manuscripts should be double-spaced and include author's contact information.

Artwork: We welcome photographs, drawings (lead, pen and ink, charcoal etc) on any subject. Please send as JPEGs or TIFFs and include titles for each piece. NOTE: Accepted artwork will be reproduced in black and white. Include a brief bio and your mailing address.

Payment is in contributor's copies. Simultaneous submissions are accepted. Please inform us immediately if submitted work is accepted elsewhere. We do not consider submissions of previously published work in any form (including prior internet publication).

Steam Ticket acquires only first serial publication rights of accepted work. Copyright is asserted on behalf of the author, and all reprint rights revert to the author upon publication.

[Steam Ticket Submission Guidelines](#)

Three Drabble Stories from Robert Poirier

The Visitor

The Anunnaki's first mistake was punching in New Guinea instead of New York. His second was transposing the year from 1960 to 1690. Too many glasses of Sumerian wine, he thought.

His spaceship shimmered away before he could correct the error.

He ended up in western New Guinea dressed in a crisp blue suit, with a satellite laser remote control, ready to conquer the world. Unfortunately, the Asmat tribe he encountered conked him on the head, roasted him on a spit, and ate him.

The disappointed partakers groused he tasted like chicken, and his shrunken head looked weird.

The Library Painting

Inspector Priscilla Peacock solved the killer's identity from the inscription below the library painting, "Boer War General Septimus Dijon Grey-Poupon."

Her discovery was short-lived by a loud explosion behind her.

Peacock grabbed a heavy candlestick from the bookcase, turned, and hurled it. Her axe-throwing hobby paid off. The candlestick knocked the attacker unconscious before he could line up the Webley revolver for another shot.

"It was a tontine will," Peacock explained. "Colonel Mustard, disowned at twenty by his family, was his boarding school nickname. He killed the others to be the sole heir to the mansion, his boyhood home."

The Burger Joint

On their first date, Michael took Linda for a burger after the coed soccer game. He only had enough money for one order of burger and fries, so he told her he wasn't hungry.

She looked at him thoughtfully, stood up, and retrieved a plastic knife from the condiments section. She carefully cut the burger in half and gave half to Michael. Linda touched his hand and smiled. "We will share everything forever," she said.

For the past sixty years, on their anniversary, they go to a burger joint where she splits the meal for them.

Robert Poitier



Happy Valentines Day!

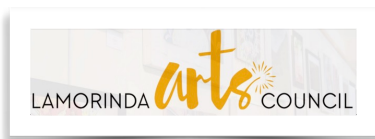


The Writer's Connection

Come share what is happening in your life as a writer: the successes, the rejections, anything goes. Want to read something, wonderful, bring it along. Let us know about any book or story you are reading, like it or not, share it with us. Had a rejection that meant something, tell us about it. Want to give a book away, do so.

This month write a piece of Flash Fiction (100 words or less), using one or both of these prompts:

1. Joyce recognized the man right away, she just couldn't remember his name.
2. When anyone on town needed help, they contacted Rocky German.



Art Embraces Words

Lafayette Library, Art and Science Room
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd
Lafayette, CA 94549

2:00 – 3:30 PM with reception following in courtyard

2025 DATES:

- Saturday May 17
- Saturday July 12
- Saturday October 25 Costumed Halloween Event

<https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words/>

Art Embraces Poetry

Town Hall Theater
3535 School St.
Lafayette, CA 94549

1:30 – 3:30 PM with reception following
with a 3-minute Open Mic session from 2:30-3:30 PM!

2025 DATES:

- Saturday, March 8 “Women’s History Month”
- Saturday, April 5th “National Poetry Month
- Saturday, August 23rd TBD

<https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-poetry/>

Poetry For The Ages

Town Hall Theater
3535 School St.
Lafayette, CA 94549

12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM Enjoy complimentary coffee, tea, and cookies

2025 DATES:

- Tuesday, April 29th “National Poetry Month
- Tuesday, October 7th “All Hallow’s Eve”

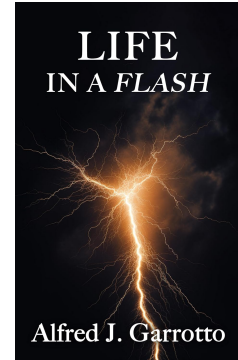
<https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees/public-art-committee/programs>

Al Garrotto Releases *Life in a Flash*

Whether writing fiction or poetry, our best creations burst forth when love escapes the prison of our critical minds and reluctant hearts... when an unplanned thought, word, or action flashes across the author's mind-scape having emerged from our hitherto muted, creative depths.

Both flash writing and poetry tap into that instinctive, unexpected inspiration that cries out for expression. Random thoughts give way to random words, till that moment—unspoken, undreamt—bubbles to life inside the author, who wonders, “Where did that come from?” Who knows where it came from? Who cares? Grasp the moment. Enjoy the ride.

[Al Garrotto *Life in a Flash*](#)



Young Writers Contest Submissions Are Now Open

CWC Mt. Diablo is pleased to announce that the submission period for the 2025 Young Writers Contest (YWC) is now accepting submissions online. This contest is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders who live and/or attend school in Contra Costa County.

- Submission categories include:
 - Poetry
 - Short Story
 - Personal Narrative
 - Humor in Poetry, Short Story, and Personal Narrative

Our YWC committee is busy screening all submissions in the meanwhile. Special thanks goes to our YWC Screening Committee: Ceci Pugh, Cindy Leonard, Marlene Dotterer, Margie Witt, AnneMarie Gouveia, and Quynh-Uyen Trinh for helping with the screening process.

1. The deadline for submissions is March 21.
2. CWC Judging Period commences March 30-April 6.
3. Winners will be notified via email on April 7.
4. An Awards Ceremony will be held on May 17.

We are always looking for more Judges! Please contact Lyn Roberts if you are interested in being a Judge at: lynzcwc@gmail.com or contact Quynh at: youngwriters@cmcmtdiablo.org.

For more information on the Young Writers Contest and how to submit, visit:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers-contest/>

Quynh-Uyen Trinh & AnneMarie Gouveia 2025 YWC Co-Chairs