



The Write News

December, 2025

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoye, Editor

Mt. Diablo Branch

December 7th, Holiday Pot Luck — 12:00 pm to 3 pm PDT

CWC Mt. Diablo Presents Holiday Potluck



A Chance to Give Back:

Rather than have a gift exchange for ourselves, we are collecting donations to give to a charity. Bring food, grocery gift card, toys (new and unwrapped), or a check made out to the [Monument Crisis Center](#).

Join us on **Sunday, December 7th!** We will have an amazing time with:

- Holiday decorations
- Reading your stories
- Prizes
- Games
- Laughter
- LOTS OF FUN!

Location

Senior Center
233 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA

Registration Deadline: December 1, 6:00 p.m.

[Register Here by December 1st](#)

Cost

\$10.00 per person
Late Registration is \$15.00 per person

Bring a guest!

Have you written a holiday story? Bring it to read! (500 words or less).

President's Message

I cannot believe it is almost the end of another year. It has been one challenging year, and yet we still have topics to write about. I will admit that writing allows me to ignore reality for a few minutes and lose myself in an environment that I have created and can control. But let me drag you back to reality for a few moments. I need to do that because I have been remiss in not wishing you all the best for the holidays. Happy Holidays to All of You!

Having dealt with the formal section of this message, let me return to writing.

Do you find the chillier weather encourages you to stay in your seat, enjoying the warmth of those computer chips as they try to persuade you that AI could write a better story than you can? That is what high-tech companies would want you to believe. Some AI-generated stories may be good; however, many are garbage. It is the same issue writers face, making it harder to distinguish between writer-originated and AI-generated content.

I have come to recognize that human-written stories reflect, in some way, the author's own experiences, dreams, or fears. AI cannot do that because AI bots are simply plagiarizing previously published works. They have no understanding of intention, nor any grasp of what creativity entails, nor any human experiences.

It is interesting to note that there has been a shift in the general readers' view of the published work. A growing number of readers wish to consume the works that are from the minds of other human beings. If a human cannot prove that they created the work, then more readers will leave that book on the shelf. However, that brings us to a gnarly problem. How do human writers prove that they did pen their piece of work? It could be a matter of including copies of handwritten notes from the early stages of developing the storyline.

I hope that the current software to detect AI-generated work will outpace the apps that generate stories. Won't it be satisfying if AI can outsmart itself and flag its own fraudulent works.

Another thought is that we return to a pre-pandemic concept. If we promote more author panels at libraries and bookstores, we can spread the names of human authors, so that readers will support local writers.

This is not the time to be complacent. We each need to share ideas and come together to enact strategies to counter AI-generated stories becoming mainstream and an accepted medium of storytelling.

Write on and maintain a steady flow of newly created human-based stories.

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

DECEMBER 7

12:00 pm — 3:00 pm PDT

Pleasant Hill Senior Center[CWC Mt. Diablo Presents Holiday Potluck](#)**DECEMBER 12**

3:00 pm — 4:30 pm PDT

Open Mic on Zoom[CWC Mt. Diablo Board Meeting](#)**DECEMBER 17**

7 pm — 8 pm PDT

[Open Mic On Zoom](#)**DECEMBER 30**

12:00 PM — 1:30 PM PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way,

Walnut Creek, CA

[The Writer's Connection](#)

Open Mic on Zoom



Wednesday, December 17th, 2025

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM — Online event

Details: Join us for Open Mic Night!

Sign up to read a five-minute segment from something you've written, a work-in-progress, something already published, or that sheaf of poems you hid under the bed for the last year. Share it with writers and readers at our 90-minute Read Fest!

Not ready to read your work to a crowd? That's okay, we need an audience, too. Come and hear what others have to say. 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. This event is open to the public. Please bring your friends!

[Register for Open Mic on Zoom](#)

The Writer's Connection

Wednesday, December 30th, 2025,

12 Noon to 1:30 pm

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. From 12:00 Noon to 1:30 pm. Be seen, Be noticed, Be there!

Join us at:

The Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way

Walnut Creek, California 94523

Time: 12:00 PM — 1:30PM

[Register for The Writer's Connection](#)

What's Your Story Come, read and enjoy listening

**Friday, December 19th, 2025
12 pm - 2 pm**

**Walnut Creek Library
Las Trampas Room
1644 N. Broadway
Walnut Creek, California**

It occurs on the third Friday of the month. What's Your Story is a place to join other writers to read your short story aloud, or enjoy listening to others. Meetings are held the 3rd Friday of every month.



[Register for What's Your Story Group](#)

Call for Judges: Scholastic Awards & Young Writers Contests

CWC-Mt. Diablo needs your help once again this season. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to be judges for the Scholastic Awards Writing Contest in December 2025 and the Young Writers Contests in March 2026. Each contest has a Judging Period of 2 weeks; training will be provided. Judges must have computer skills and a keen eye for critical reading. We are especially seeking members with a background in education. Volunteers may contact Quynh Trinn at: nqq.trinh@gmail.com for further details. Maholo!

Writers Helping Writers

CWC's motto is "Writers Helping Writers." We know that a struggling writer occasionally needs a little help. Our WHW fund is available to any member who needs help with paying for a meeting or workshop, or with membership costs. Just visit our website and complete this form <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/whw-form/>

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.

CWC Fundraising

We wish to acknowledge our generous donors to one (or both) of our established funds through Nov 8th for this fiscal year (7/1/25-6/30/26).

Writers Helping Writers supports writers who may need financial help to attend meetings or pay for membership. We thank the following members for their donations to this worthy cause: LaVonne Taft, Nancy Chan, Barry Hampshire, Robert Poirier.

Young Writers Contest supports Contra Costa County middle school students with cash prizes in short story, poetry, and essay/personal narrative. Contest submissions are free. We celebrate and present awards in May and thank the following members for their donations: Colleen Gonzalez, Nancy Chan, Barry Hampshire, Robert Poirier.

Please consider donating to one of our funds either at a meeting or via our website at:

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writers-helping-writers/>

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

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.

Here is a news item

Michael Barrington's short story, A Long Day's Journey into Night, has just been accepted for publication by CafeLit Magazine, UK. Last year Michael published 22 articles fiction and nonfiction. His goal this year was to reach 24. With this latest acceptance, he has finally achieved that number. Good news for Michael!

Michael Barrington Ph.D., Author

www.mbwriter.net



Contact Marlene Dotterer

cmdotterer@gmail.com



Job Descriptions

Click on the Title
Below

[Webmaster](#)

[Web Special Assistant](#)

[Norcal Representative](#)

Be Interviewed in the Write News

Here's a chance to sit down with a cup of coffee and your fellow Writers. We want to learn about you. Choose questions from the list below to tell us about yourself. Try to include a mix of personal and professional.

Interview questions with sample answers in color

1. What do you like about writing? *The process of developing a story by creating distinctive, interesting characters through dialogue and action, creating descriptive settings, and developing page-turning plots.*
 2. What part of the writing process is most difficult for you? *Finding the time to write and avoiding distractions or the right environment to write.*
 3. Are there any resources, tools, or events that you have found especially helpful for writing or publishing? *My current writing group, writing books and magazines, Writer's Digest courses, and other writing courses.*
 4. What are you currently working on? *Fiction novel; genre – crime/spy thriller; entitled Czech Mate (placeholder).*
 5. Who or what has influenced you the most as a writer? *Elmore Leonard, Graham Greene, William Boyd, Michael Connelly, Steven King.*
 6. How have your background, previous work, and/or experience contributed to your writing? *I'm a retired lawyer, having worked for an international corporation for 35 years.*
 7. Approximately how long have you been a CWC member? *Just joined a few days ago.*
 8. How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing? *Too early to tell.*
 9. Do you have published works? *Not yet.*
 10. Do you have any advice for new writers? *In writing a first draft, "[D]on't look back until you've written an entire draft, just begin each day from the last sentence you wrote the preceding day. This prevents those cringing feelings and means that you have a substantial body of work before you get down to the real work which is all in . . . the edit." (attributed to Will Self)*
 11. How do you define success as a writer? *Getting published.*
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Request for Writer's Table

Andrew Benzie (Writers Table Chair) is currently seeking presenters for the first half of 2026 year. Dates available are 01/10/26, 03/14/26, and 05/09/26. Please contact Andrew for more information at: andrew@andrewbenzie.com

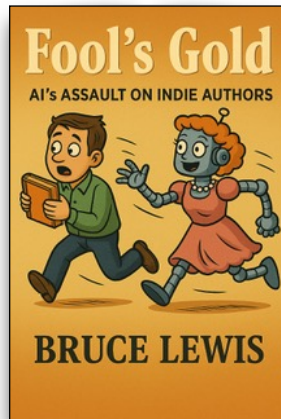
CWC Writers Table Program, First Half of 2026 [01/10/26, 03/14/26, 05/09/26]

Invitations to sixteen possible presenters were sent out this week. I hope to let the board know of the finalized schedule at the December board meeting.

Please let me know of anyone I should contact to be a possible presenter.

Thanks, Andrew

Hi All, Bruce Lewis Here



I just took a few weeks off from novel and short story writing to see if I could help sound the alarm about the tsunami of email scams targeting authors. I get a dozen a day, all telling me that my books are so good I deserve everything short of a Pulitzer. The come-ons are outrageous and funny. This one from Eleanor Catton (fake name) will make your day:

“I hope this finds you in a moment of unhurried thought. I wanted to tell you how much I admire your work, its craft, courage, and the way it lingers in the mind like a well-tended garden, revealing something new with each return.

“If you’re open to it, I’d be grateful for the chance to ask a few questions about your process, and would approach any exchange with the respect your time deserves.”

My antidote for author scams is this book (very short), which includes conversations—some contentious—with scammers posing as librarians, book clubs, literary agents, and even best-selling authors whose identities have been stolen. Included are tips on recognizing scams and protecting yourself.

Right now, I’m in conversation with more than 50 scammers who think I’m about to pull the trigger and send them money. After I agreed to send \$2,000 to promote five of my books, I waited a few hours and sent a note: “Sorry, but my 97-year-old mother-in-law fell, broke her hip, and has no health insurance. She needs my book marketing money to help pay her medical bills.” I lied. My mother-in-law is 97, but healthy. The scammers response will shock you.

One fraudster, who identifies herself as Salley K, claims she is the organiser (British spelling) of the Old Bat Book Club in London. For \$105, her group of 150 readers will buy, read, and review my book. When I asked for a link to a web page, she/AI screwed up. It’s a Meetup group called the Crazy Old Batty Book Club in Colorado. Yes, Salley’s picture is on the page with her photograph (AI-generated, no doubt). I confronted her. How she is explained is a maze of lies.

I hope you’ll get a copy (in preorder now with a release date of 12/9).

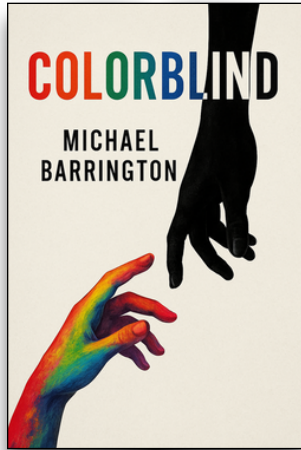
Thanks,

Bruce Lewis, Author

P.S. - the book will be free to all CWC—Mt. Diablo Branch members.

[Bless Me Father FOR YOU Have Sinned](#)

Website - bruce-lewis.com



Michael Barrington's 13th book, a historical novel, *Colorblind*, will soon be released. It will be available on Amazon and a short video can be watched on YouTube.

In the Lancashire village of **Bamber Bridge**, in England, the arrival of **600 Black American soldiers** in January 1943, brings music, laughter, and life to a community wearied by war. The villagers—kind, working-class, and fiercely independent—welcome the soldiers without hesitation. They drink together, dance together, and share a spirit of equality. But harmony soon collides with hate. **White US Military Police** resent the camaraderie between locals and harass Black troops for dating local women. Several serious relationships develop. The MPs attempt to **impose segregation** in the pubs and streets of the village—something neither the townspeople nor the GIs will accept. As an act of defiance, the three local pubs post signs saying, “We serve Black soldiers only.”

Confrontation between MPs and Blacks explodes. On the night of June 24th, a **five-hour shootout** terrifies the villagers. By dawn, three Black GI are shot in the back; one fatally. The US Army moves swiftly to arrest the culprits and remove all traces of the event.

Amid the turmoil, deeper stories unfold, of romantic relationships and deep friendships. **Cat Caton**, a badly burned and disfigured RAF pilot, meets **Billy Crossland**, a **sensitive, and intelligent Black soldier**, traumatized as a boy watching the Ku Klux Klan burn his uncle alive. A deep friendship develops. When **Billy is shot during the battle**, and dies of his wounds, Cat's fragile world collapses. Consumed by grief and guilt, he takes his own life.

The US military courts-martialed **35 Black soldiers**, handing down harsh sentences, while **no white MPs were punished**. The official record calls it a “disturbance.” A complete press blackout was enforced. But a **local reporter**, risking his career, begins putting the pieces together—determined to tell the true story. As he uncovers the lies and silences surrounding the event, he and discovers not only an act of racial violence, and complicity by both US and British military authorities, but also the courage of those who stood together against injustice—Black soldiers, English villagers. However, cannot publish all his findings due to a complete press blackout.



Resources for Writers this Month

First Come the Book Submissions

[Publishers in San Francisco](#)

[Publishers by Fiction genres:](#)

[33 Best Book Publishers in California \(Links to Submissions\)](#)

Then the Magazine Submissions

[27 Magazines That Accept Submissions from Freelancers](#)

[15 Magazines That Accept Freelance Writing Submission](#)

[23 Popular Magazines That Need Freelance Writers](#)

And Next Education Articles for Writers

[Voice in Writing: How to Find Yours](#)

[Surviving and Thriving as a Writer in the Age of AI](#)

[How to Improve Your Writing Skills: 15 Simple Tips](#)

[Finding the Best Creative Writing Blogs on the Internet](#)

[A Comprehensive Guide to Creating an Effective Author Website](#)

Join us with a cuppa and settle in for expert writing advice, writing and publishing tips, book reviews, and your questions answered!

That's It for this month, tune in for more in January!

A Short Story from Robert Poirier

The Nun

The nun stopped at the corner and noticed the white car was still keeping a one-block distance from her. She had done nothing to attract attention but decided not to take any chances.

She had not worn a habit in years. The only outward connection to the order was the large wooden rosary she wore as a necklace. A black KN95 face mask from the COVID times diverted attention away from her face.

She walked into a grocery store as soon as she turned the corner.

"Excuse me," she said. "I think someone is following me. Is there a back entrance I could use?"

She exited the store, walked two blocks to a BART station, and caught the next Yellow train to the Concord station.

Her husband met her at the station.

"How did it go?" he asked.

"Fine," she replied. "I have the interior plans down pat, and I've plotted the escape route."

"Are we still on for tomorrow morning?" He asked.

"Should be fine," she replied. "It's one of the last paydays for the Social Security and welfare folks who don't have direct deposit, so the bank should have a lot of cash on hand. Do you still want to go through with it?"

"I'm ready," he said. He smiled. "I was born ready."

They took separate BART trains to San Francisco and entered the Wells Fargo bank shortly after opening.

While still in the habit, without the wooden rosary necklace, she walked up to the security guard, smiled through the black mask as though she was going to ask a question, and threw a handful of ground red pepper into his face. He screamed and put his hands to his face. She quickly unsnapped the leather holster strap, pulled his revolver out of the holster, removed the bullets, and put them and the revolver into a trash receptacle.

Her husband, also wearing a face mask, pulled a five-round .32 caliber starter pistol from under his coat and fired one blank round into the ceiling.

"This is a stickup," he shouted. "We will be gone in two minutes. Just do as you're told and no one will get hurt."

He walked in front of the five tellers, handing each a dark plastic bag.

"Unwrap the money packets, put the loose bills into the bag, then show me the empty till."

The nun handed the guard a small bottle of water.

"Sit down and be quiet," she said. "Splash this in your eyes every few seconds. The pain will stop in about ten minutes."

They exited the bank 90 seconds after entering and walked one block toward the BART station. She was now wearing her husband's coat, and he was wearing a loose-fitting, dark fleece full-zip hoodie he had worn under the coat, along with a black beanie.

While walking behind him, she removed the white postulant veil and put it in a collapsible Macy's shopping bag along with the plastic bags of cash. She pulled up the black skirt and hooked it in her waistband. She appeared to be a late-twenties student in jeans, a now-yellow face mask, and a ball cap further shielding her face. They descended the BART station steps a minute apart and took trains away on separate lines. They changed trains at the next station and, sitting on the side away from the platform, headed north on the Yellow Line.

An announcement came on her train as it approached the Embarcadero station.

"There will be a police presence on the Embarcadero platform for the next thirty minutes. This train will not stop at Embarcadero. Please change trains at West Oakland and return on the next southbound train."

She busied herself with her phone and looked up once as the train proceeded slowly through the station. BART police, along with the bank security guard, were interviewing everyone on the platform.

Her husband got off at the Orinda station, retrieved the car, and picked her up at the Lafayette station.

Five minutes later, they were on Highway 680 heading south. Twenty minutes later, they were on Highway 580 heading east, just one of the 150,000 cars that go through the Altamont Pass every day.

"We should be in Nevada in about three hours," the husband said. "I think we netted about \$6,500."

"Not bad for a 48-hour visit, a few hours of scouting work and three minutes of excitement," she said. "I have only one question."

"What's that?"

"Next time, can I go as a hooker?"

