



# The Write News

April, 2026

A Monthly Newsletter  
Denis Hoye, Editor

## Mt. Diablo Branch

### **CWC Mt. Diablo April 2026 General Meeting Featuring Lynda Smith Hoggan From the Bedroom to the Page: Writing About Sex**



Lynda Smith Hoggan is *Professor Emerita of Health and Human Sexuality* at Mt. San Antonio College in Southern California and an amateur martini taster.

Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Westwind UCLA Journal of the Arts*, *Story Circle Network* international women's journal, the anthology *Art in the Time of Unbearable Crisis*, and more. Her book *Our Song: a Memoir of Love and Race* was published in 2022 and earned a silver medal for memoir from *The BookFest*.

She blogs at:

[www.lyndasmithhoggan.com](http://www.lyndasmithhoggan.com)

#### **ATTENDEES WILL BE SHOWN:**

- Reasons to (and not to) include sexual scenes in writing
- Ways sexual scenes can promote theme, enhance character development, create mood/emotion, etc.
- Not surprising: language is everything!
- Curated readings
- Writing exercise (optional)

#### **LOCATION**

Pleasant Hill Senior Center  
233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA

#### **COST**

Members: \$15.00 (\$20.00 after April 4th)  
Guests: \$20.00 Pay online when you register or cash/check at the door. Coffee/tea and pastries included.

#### **SCHEDULE**

- 9:30 – Sign-in table opens
- 10:00 – Writing Activity or Member Interviews: TBD
- 11:00 – Feature Presentation
- 12:00 to 2:00 PM – After Hours Activities

## President's Message

It is challenging to try a new writing style. But it can be rewarding, if one persists. Recently, I have moved into writing short stories. It forced me to face certain issues that I had never confronted before. I should have addressed them earlier, as my writing coach(es) have often told me.

One of the first details I realized was that many writers, like myself, saw the short story as a genre in its own right. But it is not; it is a style of writing. Within any short story, all genres are permissible. One can write horror, romance, fiction, sci-fi, humor, memoir, mystery, or whatever. There is no single genre associated with the short story.

The key elements to writing a short story are: a concise narrative, very little backstory, straight to the inciting incident at the start, a need for a small number of characters and limited character development, faster-paced action, and fewer settings. It should be a tight story told in fewer than 7,000 words.

I find these restrictions to actually be useful guardrails that keep me focused. However, I still need to focus on a storyline. So, I tend to fall back on what is most comfortable as a subject matter – myself. Currently, I am preparing to publish my first collection of short stories – they are all memoirs. I am fortunate to have a plethora of short stories from my life, and only a few cause me any angst to commit to paper.

Why would I choose to challenge myself with a different writing style at this stage of my life? My answer is simply – if not now, when?

Write on and challenge yourself.

Barry

## CWC Mt. Diablo Branch

### Board of Directors

President—Barry Hampshire

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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.

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## Upcoming Events

**April 10th****Mt. Diablo Board Meeting**

3:00 pm — 4:30 pm PDT

[Register for Board Meeting](#)**April 11th****Mt. Diablo Monthly Meeting**

10:00 pm — 12:00 pm PDT

Pleasant Hill Senior Center  
233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA[Mt. Diablo Monthly Meeting](#)**April 15th****Open Mic Night**

7:00 pm — 8:00 pm

[Register for Zoom](#)**April 17th****What's Your Short Story**

12 pm — 2 pm PDT

Walnut Public Library

Las Trampus Room

1644 N. Broadway

Walnut Creek, California

[What's Your Story](#)**April 22th****The Writer's Connection**

12:00 PM — 2:00 PM PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way,

Walnut Creek, CA

[The Writer's Connection](#)

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## Open Mic Night on Zoom — April 15th

**Meeting will take place from: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM — Online event**

**Details:** Join us for Open Mic Night! \*NOTE: Your RSVP on Meetup does not register you for this event. Register online.

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 year. Share it with writers and readers at our 60 - 90-mi...

[Register for Open Mic on Zoom](#)

Hosted by: Barry Hampshire



## What's Your Short Story — April 17th

Meeting will take place from 12 PM — 2 PM.

If you are reading:

- Time yourself beforehand. Practice! A 2,500 word story will typically take 10/12 mins to read. The 15-minute limit is firm.
- We will use a microphone.
- Michael will introduce each reader. He/she will read the title and the genre.
- Feedback, if requested, will be given. **Note: feedback is part of your allotted 15 minutes.** Therefore, your reading time should be shortened.
- The next reader will be introduced etc.
- If time permits, we'll have final questions.



Come, Read, and enjoy listening at CWC Mt. Diablo's new Short Story Reading Group!

### The What

- This is not a critique group. A reader will be given feedback only if requested.
- On average six/seven readers will be allocated 15 mins max. to both read their short story and receive feedback.
- There will be no 'walk in' readers.
- But walk in listeners, YES.

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

## The Writer's Connection — April 22th

Meeting will take place from: 12 Noon to 1:30 pm

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 topics: 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. Please Register so we can have the venue prepare a large enough table for us – Food and Beverages are encouraged and are on your own dime! Delicious!

Join us at:

**The Chicken Pie Shop**

**1251 Arroyo Way**

Walnut Creek, California 94523

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

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## 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://cwcmtdiablo.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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## 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, "Don'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?
12. *Getting published.*

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## Here are three places to find an agent or a publisher:

[Literary Market Place](#)

[Writer's Market: The Most Trusted Guides to Publishing](#)

[Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market 33rd Edition](#)



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## Writing and All That Stuff

**Michael Barrington**

I've often been asked, and more often asked myself, why do I have to write, but write I must! There is no question about it. I used to say to myself, "I write because I have to." But is that the truth? What is driving me to spend hours each day putting words onto paper? Am I just a dreamer, aimlessly frittering away my time?

So, I had my astrological profile scrutinized. Perhaps I could learn something there. Eureka! Yes. Among many other traits, Leos are prone to write. There's good company out there: J.K. Rowling of Harry Potter fame, James Baldwin, Emily Bronte, Ray Bradbury, Suzanne Collins, and Alexander Dumas. Wow! But me?

My Ancestry profile shows that I am more than 50% Irish, and maybe that's a place that needed exploring. After all, the Irish have the reputation as "story tellers," and I have both maternal and paternal Irish connections. The genetic connection! So, what is all this writing stuff? Neither of my parents was a writer, but both were avid readers, which they did every day of their lives. They ensured that from a very early age my sisters and I were enrolled in the local library. They were both gifted musicians— any writing relationship there? And both had beautiful penmanship. It was only late in life that I discovered my mother had kept a journal for years. Ahah. So, I can check that box; she needed to write!

I have a sister who is a published author and writes both fantasy and poetry. Another is the family archivist and journalist. I have a niece who writes poetry and has published a novel (romance). Another is a published historian and researcher. My grandniece is also a published writer of short stories. Does it all come down to genes?

I am convinced that my maternal grandfather caused this epidemic. With just an eighth grade, rural education, and speaking English as a second language, he left Ireland and sought his fortune in Manchester, UK. Determined to be a gentleman, he took advantage of educational opportunities, attended night school and became a voracious reader. But here is where the genetic connection gets interesting. He was the landlord of The Shamrock Inn for thirty-six years, and while serving the local communities including huge numbers of Irish immigrants, he became known as a "storyteller," a "Shannike," (my poor translation from the Gaelic)!

So, is this what has been driving me—genes?

When I sit down at my computer, the room is quiet, but my mind is anything but. The moment my fingers hover over the keyboard, the voices begin. Characters press forward from somewhere just beyond thought, each one impatient, insistent, almost indignant at being ignored. They crowd around the edges of my imagination, talking over one another, each trying to tell me who they really are. One wants to explain the wound he has carried since childhood. Another interrupts, eager to confess the secret she has hidden for years. A third laughs loudly, pushing his way into the scene, declaring that the story is really about him. Their voices overlap and jostle like people in a crowded room, each demanding to be heard first, each certain their history matters most.

I sit there, listening, half amused and half overwhelmed, trying to decide which one to follow. Sometimes I feel less like a creator than a reluctant host at a gathering I did not entirely plan. They

arrive with their pasts already formed—their disappointments, their triumphs, their small peculiar habits—and all they want is the chance to step forward and live on the page.

At moments like that, I feel as if I am two different people. One of me sits quietly at the desk, practical and deliberate, arranging sentences and choosing words with care. The other moves freely among these restless figures, hearing their whispers, sensing their moods, and letting them unfold their stories. Yet somehow the two selves work together. One listens; the other writes. And out of that strange partnership, the voices slowly become characters, the characters become stories, and the empty page begins to fill.

And yet there is a third person in the room.

Just when the voices are at their loudest—when a wounded soldier is trying to confess his past and a defiant young woman is insisting the story belongs to her—another presence clears his throat with quiet authority.

It is the practical one.

He reminds me that the dishwasher is finished and needs emptying. The garbage should really be taken out before it smells. There are errands waiting, ordinary duties that have nothing whatsoever to do with tragic heroes or secret histories.

He is unmoved by the urgency of fictional lives.

While the characters protest and try to drag him back to the glowing screen, this third self stands firmly in his imagination's doorway and points toward the kitchen. He has a schedule, a sense of order, and a belief that life must continue in its sensible rhythms.

And he always has the last word.

“Later,” he says to the characters crowding in his head. “I’ll come back later.”

So, I take care of my chores. I step back into the simple machinery of daily life. Tomorrow I will play golf. And all the while, somewhere behind the ordinary business of living, the voices will still be waiting—patient, persistent, prepared, ready to begin again the moment I sit down at the computer.

I never met my grandfather, yet I feel his presence in a way that is difficult to explain. He was, by all accounts, a genuine Irish storyteller—the sort of man who after serving his customers a beer, could hold them there with nothing more than his voice and a well-spun tale.

I know him only through the stories others have told about him, but there is no doubt his influence lives in me. Perhaps it is simply the inheritance of blood. I carry his genes, after all. Or perhaps something less tangible travels quietly through families—the impulse to shape events into stories, to notice the small human moments that give life its color.

It may be coincidence, or something more deliberate, that I bear his name. Sometimes I wonder if that alone carries a kind of quiet expectation, as if a fragment of his voice found its way forward through time.

I never heard him tell a story, yet when I sit down to write and the characters begin to speak, I cannot help but feel that somewhere in the background there is an old Irish storyteller smiling, leaning on the bar, pleased that the tradition—however faintly—has continued.

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## Call for Mt. Diablo's 2026-2027 Branch Officer Election Nominations

At the June CWC Meeting, the attending membership will elect officers for the Mt. Diablo Branch Board for the upcoming 2026-2027 CWC year. Currently, the slate is as follows:

- President: Barry Hampshire (incumbent)
- Vice President: Michael Barrington (incumbent)
- Treasurer: Marjorie Witt (incumbent)
- Secretary: Vacant

Would YOU like to be a Branch Officer?

All members of the club can nominate themselves or another member for any of these four officer positions. If you have a nominee whom you feel should be added to the slate for any of the above roles, 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 Quynh Trinh, Nominations Chair, through the "Contact us" link on the Mt. Diablo branch: website. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/>

Alternatively, members can add a nominee to the slate just prior to the election at the June meeting. Again, the potential nominee should have confirmed they are willing to stand. We look forward to the election of the officers who will guide the club over the next year.

-Quynh Trinh, Nominations Chair

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Your Turn, Can You Think Of A Caption?

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## Two Critique Opportunities for Writers

If you're looking for thoughtful feedback in a supportive setting, your CWC branch is offering two separate ways to connect with fellow writers and strengthen your work.

### Drop-In Critique Group Sessions

**Following the General Meeting April 11 | Pleasant Hill Senior Center | 12:00–1:00 p.m.**

Do you want feedback from a small group of friendly writers on a writing idea or a piece you're currently working on?

These sessions will immediately follow the CWC branch meetings on the second Saturday of each month through June. Just stay at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center from **12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m.** for a **Drop-In Critique Group Session**. A group facilitator will be present.

Participants may:

- Discuss a writing idea
- Ask specific craft questions
- Read aloud approximately **1,000 words** (or more, time permitting) in any genre

Both beginning and experienced writers often find this an encouraging way to receive supportive suggestions. This session is open to **non-CWC members**, provided they attend the earlier branch meeting.

You might participate if you're wondering:

- Does my short story idea have appeal?
- Which of these two openings works better?
- Is my draft engaging, and how can I improve it?
- How can I strengthen its character portrayal?
- Does inserting backstory at this point disrupt the flow of the plot?

### New Ongoing Memoir Critique Group Forming

**In-Person | Concord–Walnut Creek Area — Time & Date (TBD)**

A new ongoing, in-person Critique Group is forming in the Concord–Walnut Creek area with a focus on **memoir in its varied forms**, including:

- Short-story memoir
- Personal and memoir essays
- Braided or mixed memoir pieces
- Memoir incorporating research or historical context

Hosted by CWC member **Beatrice Weber**, possible meeting times include:

Saturday afternoons, Sunday mornings, or Sunday afternoons.

The schedule and frequency will be determined by participants with coordination with **Beatrice Weber**. The branch helps you to find and form critique groups, but these are autonomous and are not operated by or under the authority of the California Writers Club or its Mt. Diablo Branch. Member participants can belong to more than one group. For further information, answers to your questions, or to indicate your availability preferences, contact the CWC Mt. Diablo Branch Critique Group Facilitator at:

[CWCwaynerez@gmail.com](mailto:CWCwaynerez@gmail.com)

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**Poetry Session**  
**12:00 – 1:00 on Sat, April 11th**  
**at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center**

We will hold our poetry meeting immediately after the next General Group meeting, from approximately 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. We will begin by reading poems submitted by group members. Each participant will read their poem limited to five minutes. Given that this is our first meeting, we will make exceptions if the group agrees and keeps time in mind. After we read the poems, we will discuss and agree on additional items to include in future sessions. Some things that are prohibited include: Critique, Advice, Interpretation, and Comparison.

Some reasons to participate:

- Do you have an idea for a poetry lab?
- Do you wish to have a poetry writing sprint?
- Do you wish to concentrate on poetry craft?
- Do you wish to work on Line breaks as breath, image vs. abstraction, white space, visual poetry, or sound and repetition?
- And remember these ground rules:
  - The poem belongs to the poet.
  - We respond to what *is*, not what we would change.
  - Silence is a valid response.
  - No hierarchy of experience.
  - Confidentiality is absolute.

We will discuss any and all suggestions for new ways to make this an ongoing, engaging, and productive forum that supports creativity, collaboration, and the continued growth of our group.

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**Share your Book Review!**

Use the Newsletter Submission Form to send in your 250 word (or less) book review. We always accept reviews of member books.

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**Share your Good News!**

Have a book launch event coming up, a recent publication, an award or any exciting writing milestone? We want to celebrate with you. Share your news with the club using our quick online form. Your submission may be featured in the next issue of the Write Newsletter.

The submission form for either a book review or good news is: [Click here to Submit](#)

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## CWC Branch Presidents & Central Board Reps

The Building Better Branches Leadership Conference 2026 Write the Future: Strengthening



Branches for the Years Ahead is set. This email is to provide you with all the necessary information to make sure the day runs smoothly and the attendees (and the branches) get the most out of the experience.

To that end, here are the pertinent facts, information required, and deadlines for signing up:

- Date: Sunday, April 26, 2026
- Time: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Location: Zio Fraedo's Restaurant @ 611 Gregory Ln. Pleasant Hill
- Cost: Conference & Lunch = \$50 per attendee
- Who Should Attend: Current & potential board members & other volunteers with a desire to grow the branch
- Registration and Payment Arrival Deadline: March 23, 2026

How to Register & Pay: Registration and payment must be done at the branch level. One person in the branch MUST act as the coordinator for each branch. The coordinator will: register the attendees, supply attendee board titles (if any), include attendee email addresses, and pay the cost (using branch funds, i.e. credit card or check) via <https://calwriters.org/building-better-branches/>. Note: This link takes each branch to a hidden page on the CWC website. The payment can also be paid via check payable to California Writers Club and sent to PO Box 1186, 1015 Riley St., Folsom, CA 95763. Note the BBB Leadership Conference on the check Notes line. \*Please Note: All payment must have arrived to CWC either via ePay or snail mail no later than March 23, 2026 to ensure enough food has been ordered.

To register online, copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://calwriters.org/building-better-branches/>

- Questions: Direct to Conference Director, Geri Spieler at [gspieler@Gmail.com](mailto:gspieler@Gmail.com)

The conference is a great place to share innovative practices that not only benefit members and strengthen branches but also can be used for individual growth. There will be time for networking with fellow CWC members. CWC recommends that branch attendees carpool when appropriate to continue the day's sharing.

Since CWC would like as many branches to participate to ensure a fulfilling day with lots of viewpoints, if any branch has concerns or budgeting issues, please contact Geri Spieler ([gspieler@Gmail.com](mailto:gspieler@Gmail.com)) individually as soon as possible so she can assist where possible. All assistance will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Thank you for all your effort in making your CWC branch the best it can be.

Geri Spieler  
BBB Leadership Conference Director

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## The Gull

### A Short Story by Robert Poirier

Sean Murphy was on his lunch break, eating a Subway sandwich while bird-watching in his car on the wharf. Floating ice covered the bay surrounding the wharf. Fourteen inches of fresh snow covered the ground. It was cold, colder than a well-digger's butt. As Joey on *Friends* said, "So cold, you can cut glass with your nipples."

He watched as a large seagull, specifically a Great Black-backed Gull and twice the size of the more common American Herring Gull, landed at the end of the wharf about fifty feet away and picked at a load of discarded fries. White and black, with a red dot on the lower yellow bill, and three front webbed toes and one back-facing toe on each pink leg, the gull did a little dance trying to separate the frozen fries.

A grizzled gray/black coyote was also watching the gull from a hill near the wharf. About four feet long and weighing about forty pounds, it was slowly creeping up on the bird.

The gull first noticed the coyote when it was about thirty yards away. It tried to lift off with several fries in its beak, but couldn't get off the ground.

Murphy grabbed his binoculars and zoomed in on the gull. The tip of one of its back-facing toes was frozen in the ice.

The coyote noticed it too.

When he started filming the encounter with his cell phone, the gull looked up at him.

"Put down the phone. I could use a little help here," bellowed in Murphy's head.

When the coyote was about ten yards away, the gull sat on the ice-frozen back toe. It was just enough warmth to melt the ice around the toe. The coyote, realizing the gull was escaping, sprinted to within a few feet and sprang at the climbing bird, raking its left wing. Both fell into the cold water.

The gull recovered quickly and rose out of the water as the coyote swam for the shore, about a football field away. Coyotes are strong swimmers and would not have had a problem making the hundred-yard swim, but the gull turned around and perched on the coyote's head, forcing it under the water. The coyote came up, sputtering, and furiously swam for the shore. The gull repeated the dunking and then flew off.

Murphy stopped filming and was trying to figure out how to send the encounter to his email address when he noticed the gull returning. It was carrying a golf ball-sized beach stone in its beak.

The gull soared higher, then dropped the stone on his windshield, cracking it diagonally across his field of vision. To add insult to injury, it flew back and defecated on the windshield. The bird returned once more, landed on the hood, and stared at him through the damaged and soiled windshield.

Murphy shouted, "I'm sorry."

The gull nodded once and took flight.

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## News from Critique Groups

Your CWC branch offers help in forming and finding Supportive Feedback and Discussion Groups for Writers ("Critique Groups"):

### **Memoir, Personal Essays and related subgenres**

Hosted by Beatrice Weber <[beatrice@beatriceweber.com](mailto:beatrice@beatriceweber.com)>

In-person or online

### **SciFi**

Hosted by Patrick Kelly <[patrickkel11@gmail.com](mailto:patrickkel11@gmail.com)>

In-person

Contact either of the above for group details or ...

### **Drop-in Critique Group**

In-person, 12:00-1:00 after April's CWC Branch Meeting at Pleasant Hill Senior Center

Any genre. Discuss your ideas, share/read a piece.

Hosted by Wayne Reznick <[CWCwaynerez@Gmail.com](mailto:CWCwaynerez@Gmail.com)>



## **Michael Barrington is awarded the Mercer Cup**

The Lancashire Authors Association is one of the oldest and most prestigious in England, founded in 1909, founded the same year as the California Writers Club. It has its own specialized library of over 2,000 books, many long out of print, and covering all phases of Lancashire literature. There is also an electronic database available for researchers. An annual competition is held for several categories of writing: flash, short story, dialect, and poetry. The Mercer Cup is presented to the short story (1500 words) winner and it is held for one year. There are smaller awards for second and third places.

I am doubly happy about this award since as a writer and winner it will expose my work to a large audience including local press, radio and TV..

In 2025 I was awarded second place, and this year 2026 I was the winner for a short story entitled "Ernest." I submitted two pieces, and my alternative story, "Crash" gained "honorable mention."

The photo is of the Lord Mayor holding the actual Mercer Cup. I cannot be there for the actual awards ceremony, but when I visit later this year, I will receive my certificate and have a photo taken with the cup!

# HOLOGRAPH

**Sunday April 19, 2026**

**RED MEN'S HALL**

**431 Georgia St Vallejo CA 94590**

**DOORS OPEN 1PM - READINGS START AT 2PM**

**FREE Admission RedMenSamoset22.org**

**CASH BAR Non-Alcoholic, Beer, Wine, Spirits**

**Hosted by**

**Erik Soto**

**Featuring:**

**Gillian Conoley**

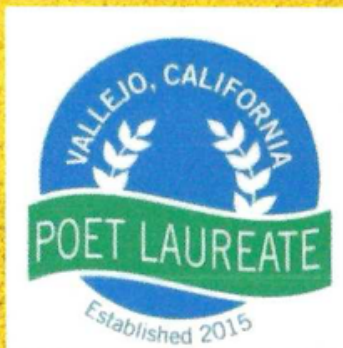
**Eli Coyle**

**Courtney Cliften**

**Jacalyn Eyvonne**

**Oswaldo Vargas**

**David Hakim**



holograph, noun: a document wholly in the handwriting of its author.