



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoyer, Editor

October, 2026

Mt. Diablo Branch

The Writer's Journey: Moving Beyond the Draft A Mt. Diablo Workshop with Gala Russ — October 10th



GALA RUSS
ROMANCE AUTHOR
BOOK COACH AND
PUBLISHING STRATEGIST

Gala will focus on strengthening scenes, identifying weak spots, and developing a revision strategy that works.

You'll learn how to:
Evaluate scenes with purpose
Spot missing elements in your story
Move beyond endless editing
Create a roadmap for revision

Because finishing a draft isn't the end
of the writing journey.



Gala Russ is a multi-published romance author, book coach, and publishing strategist who helps writers move from overwhelm to clarity. She works with:

- Brand-new writers to show them that starting (and finishing) a book is possible and what steps lead from a book idea to a finished draft
- Genre authors who want to strengthen romantic subplots so readers root for the couple
- Draft finishers who need a clear roadmap for editing and publishing: traditional or indie
- All writers to market their books in a way that complements their interests and budget
- Writers ready to indie-publish their work

In the past four years, Gala has published nine books—from young adult to adult, closed-door to wide-open door—including two trilogies. She's currently writing a new urban-fantasy series.

A repeat presenter at national events, she has spoken at Daniel David Wallace's Teachers of Fiction and Escape the Plot Forest summits and taught a two-hour Romancing the Subplot workshop for Beth Barany's speculative-fiction community.

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galarussauthor.com

Schedule

- 9:30 AM – Registration & socializing
- 10:00 AM – Part 1 Macro Editing + Logline (50 min)
- 10:50 AM – Break
- 11:00 AM – Part 2 Scene Structure That Actually Works (1 hr)
- 12:00 PM – Lunch break*
- 12:30 PM – Part 3 Applied Editing + Coaching (1 hr)
- 1:30 PM – Workshop ends

Bring your own lunch. We will provide coffee, fruit, and pastries. This workshop will be 3 1/2 hours long.

Location

Pleasant Hill Senior Center
233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill

Cost

Members: \$40; Guests: \$45

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/>

President's Message — Barry Washington

I am writing this message in the southwest of England. My reason for being here is that my sister just passed another milestone birthday and I wanted to take her out for dinner to celebrate.

As we are no longer youngsters and ready to leap off at any moment for a new venture, I have some quiet time and can focus on writing. Sadly, it does not mean that I can produce anything worthwhile. For example, this message is not heading in a meaningful way, as yet.



I was pleased when my niece's husband approved of a metaphorical pun in the start of my latest book (*Adventure Shaped Me*). The fact that he is a classics teacher at a prestigious high school added to my delight.

Enough about my circumstances, here in good old Blighty. How are you all faring with your writing projects? Can you sense a hopeful, completion point yet?

I must admit that the upcoming workshop (October general meeting) on moving beyond a draft is an intriguing prospect for any of us, as we all will face that daunting shift, no matter if we are creating a novel or short story. As this will be a workshop, the meeting will run from 10:00 to 1:30 pm. Bring some lunch to sustain yourself. We will provide tea, coffee, fruit, and pastries.

Remember, you are a member of a vibrant writing community, in which some can be inspired and encouraged by fellow members, while others can share their experience and successes to generate the aspiration that may fuel others.

Attend any of our meetings each month to gather with fellow creative souls.

Let go of the negative thoughts and write. Have fun. Keep writing!

Barry

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Upcoming Events

October 9th

Mt. Diablo Board Meeting

3:00 pm — 4:30 pm PDT

Zoom Meeting

October 10th

Mt. Diablo Workshop

10:00 pm — 1:30 pm PDT

Pleasant Hill Senior Center

233 Gregory Ln., Pleasant Hill, CA

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/>

October 14th

Open Mic Night

7:00 pm — 8:00 pm

Host: Lyn Roberts

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/cwc-mt-diablo-open-mic-events/>

October 16th

What's Your Short Story

12 pm — 3 pm PDT

Capital One Café

Community Room 2

1139 South Main Street

Walnut Creek, California

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/whats-your-story-reading-group-3/>

October 28th

The Writer's Connection

12:00 PM — 2:00 PM PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way

Walnut Creek, CA

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

Open Mic Night on Zoom — October 14th

Meeting from: 7:00 pm to 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-minute meeting.

Hosted by: Lyn Roberts

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/cwc-mt-diablo-open-mic-events/>

What's Your Short Story — October 16th

Meeting from 12 pm to 3 pm.

There are changes happening in the short story group.

October's meeting is from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This meeting is at a different location: Capital One Cafe,
1139 South Main St., Walnut Creek, Community Room 2, Second Floor.

To accommodate the interests of those who write stories longer than 2,500 words, we will alternate the format of the monthly meetings. Every other month, the meeting will be devoted to stories of 5,000 words in length. These longer-story meetings will last three hours instead of the usual two. In October, we will hold the first meeting for longer stories.

For further information, please go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/whats-your-story-reading-group-3/>



The Writer's Connection — October 28th

Meeting 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

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



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://cwcmt Diablo.org/writers-helping-writers/>
<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/young-writers-contest/>

California Writers Cl
Branch EIN Number

Mt. Diablo
your donation.



Want to 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 (fill in your answers in a separate file) and click below and place the file in the block that says Drop file(s) here.

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.

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.

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.

What are you currently working on:

Fiction novel; genre – crime/spy thriller; entitled Czech Mate (placeholder).

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

Elmore Leonard, Graham Greene, William Boyd, Michael Connelly, Steven King.

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.

Approximately how long have you been a CWC member?

Just joined a few days ago.

How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing?

Too early to tell.

Do you have published works?

Not yet.

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)

How do you define success as a writer?

Getting published.

The Spark — Fiction by Robert Poirier

Patrick Kelly met Anne Miller at a Fresno, California high school. Both felt an immediate, warm spark and a deep connection. They were inseparable for two years. Patrick took a gap year to wait until Anne graduated so they could attend junior college together.

Patrick's draft number was called when he turned eighteen, a month after he graduated. Six months later, while on Marine Corps leave on his way to Vietnam, he asked Anne to marry him. She tearfully said she promised her mother she would wait until she graduated.

Three months later, his parents received a visit from a Marine Corps officer informing them that Lance Corporal Patrick Kelly was MIA and presumed dead.

Anne, now three months pregnant, cried for a week, then accepted a lavender marriage proposal from an older family friend who could not provide intimacy but promised to cherish her and help raise her child. They moved to San Francisco, where he became manager of his family's trust fund.

Patrick was in a North Vietnamese POW camp for two years before his release. He returned home, learned Anne had married, and promptly asked for another tour in Vietnam. He took every dangerous assignment, earned a reputation for courage under fire, and received a battlefield promotion to Second Lieutenant.

After two years in country, and another promotion, he rotated stateside to Camp Lejeune, where he taught a course in counter-guerrilla warfare until the Vietnam War ended.

While at Camp Lejeune, Patrick met and married a local schoolteacher and had a daughter, Beth. When his wife died in an automobile accident, he raised his teenage daughter alone. He retired from the Marine Corps after twenty-five years and moved back to Northern California.

The Spark — Continued

Two years later, Beth graduated from UC Davis and took a job with the Presidio Trust, the San Francisco federal park agency.

Anne became an RN and worked at UCSF. Her husband died of complications from multiple sclerosis after twenty-five years of marriage. Anne's son, Jack, graduated from San Francisco State University with a degree in Computer Science and worked as a Data Analyst at the Presidio Trust.

Jack and Beth met at a trivia night function at a pub near the Presidio and became platonic friends. They thought it would be nice for their parents to meet.

A few weeks later, Beth invited her father to the Presidio Trust inauguration dinner.

"Please wear your uniform," she said. "We would love a military presence."

Jack invited his mother, now managing her late husband's family trust, to the same dinner.

Patrick and Anne met again at the Presidio Trust dinner, recognized each other immediately, and felt a rekindled warm spark and deep connection.

"They told me you were dead," Anne whispered.

"I thought I had lost you forever," Patrick replied softly.

They stood close together, beaming as they exchanged their life stories, until Anne spotted Jack and a young woman heading toward them.

"Patrick," she said. "Would you like to meet your son?"

Robert Poirier



October 6 @ 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm PDT

Looking for inspiration to start—or strengthen—your writing practice? Join a panel of local authors at the Danville Library for Part 1 of a four-part writing series, *Getting Started and Building a Writing Habit*.

Moderated by author and culinary educator S.Q. Orpin, the evening will feature a conversational discussion with local authors Marianne Lonsdale (*When the Road Curves*), Bruce Lewis (*Angel of Mercy*), Jill Hedgecock (*Rhino in the Room*), and Anindita (Dita) Basu (*Shadowbirds*).

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in an audience Q&A, meet the authors following the discussion, and purchase signed books.

The series continues with sessions on character and building a writing habit, plot/structure/pacing, and the editing and revision process in November, December, and January.

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/event/four-part-writing-series-with-local-authors-getting-started-and-building-a-writing-habit/>

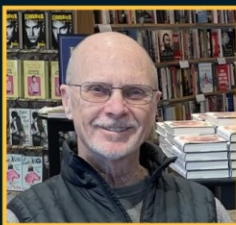
Four Part Writing Series with Local Authors | Mt. Diablo Room Tuesday, October 6 | 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.



Part 1: Getting Started and Building a Writing Habit

A panel of local authors will engage in conversational discussion moderated by S.Q. Orpin, author and culinary educator, followed by audience Q&A, with time afterward to meet the authors and purchase signed books.

Authors include:



Bruce Lewis, author
of *Angel of Mercy*



Marianne Lonsdale,
author of *When the
Road Curves*



Jill Hedgecock,
author of *Rhino in
the Room*



Anindita (Dita) Basu,
author of
Shadowbirds

Part one of a four-part writing series:

- Part 2: Tuesday, November 10 | Character and Building a Writing Habit
- Part 3: Tuesday, December 8 | Plot, Structure and Pacing
- Part 4: Tuesday, January 12 | The Editing and Revision Process

Danville Library

400 Front Street 94526 | 925.314.3750

Mon 10-8 • Tues 10-8 • Wed 10-8

Thurs 10-8 • Fri 10-6 • Sat 10-6 • Sun Closed



To request accommodations, please contact the Library with three days notice.