November, 2026

The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoye, Editor

Mt. Diablo Branch

November 14th, 2026, General Meeting — 10 am to 12 pm
Featuring Gideon Asche,
Author, Columnist, Historian — 11:00 am to 12:00 pm



Gideon Asche is a writer with an amazing story to tell. In addition to working as a clandestine intelligence officer, (a spy!), during the Cold War, he worked for Radio Free Europe rewriting scripts for English learning programs for broadcasts behind the Iron Curtain. He has worked in several highly secret and dangerous government positions. He wrote unofficially about some experiences and published in High Times and other publications, after which he was visited by unwelcome government investigators. His publisher canceled his first book because of Government restrictions. It took another 2 years to get clearance to publish JINNIK the Asset, A Cold War Memory. He is currently working on a historical novel, Hummingbird, and it too will require clearance by the State Department.

General Meeting Part 1

- Member Book Sale, 10:00 – 10:30
  (Please come early to set up your spot)
- 3-Minute Flash Fiction, 10:30 – 10:45
- Business Meeting, 10:45 – 11:00

(Coffee, tea, fruit, and pastries included)

General Meeting Part 2

Our Featured Speaker:
Gideon Asche

Come and listen to this fascinating writer. Learn about the dual challenge of holding down an unusual full-time job while being a writer. You will learn about the challenges and restrictions of memoir and novel writing with the State Department looking over your shoulder.

General Meeting Part 3

Stay after the meeting until 1:30 for optional events. Attendance at Parts 1 and 2 is required to participate in optional activities.

Suggested activities

- Sell more books! Restricted to this meeting only.
- Critique groups
- Hush & write group
- Start a discussion on a particular topic of writing
- Play Scrabble (bring your own game board)
- **Location**

  Pleasant Hill Community Center
  320 Civic Drive
  Pleasant Hill, California 94523

Note: This meetng will be held at the Pleasant Hill Community Center on 320 Civic Drive in Pleasant Hill

Please register at:
https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/

President's Message — Barry Hampshire



Being a writer can be a blessing and a curse. We can escape to worlds and groups of characters where we feel safe, challenged, or joyful. Some writers excel in environments where they are fearful, hated, and dreaded. We each choose and build our worlds and surround ourselves with invented people who fit our current storyline.

But while we can live in our stories and ignore what surrounds us in reality, that can become a problem. We can live in our stories, disconnected from our homes and families. How well do we transition between the two worlds? Sometimes it is difficult, especially when we are moving forward after being stuck. Sometimes, home life can be challenging, and the story's atmosphere feels more inviting. Crossing that boundary can be a different challenge, depending on which way we are more inviting.

Moving into writing mode requires us to leave domestic issues behind and let our creative juices flow. We can each find a small activity to help us make that transition. Try activities like meditation, reading a short story, exercising, listening to music, or gardening.

Returning to domestic thoughts from a creative writing session may be helped by one of the above, or activities like drinking some tea or coffee in the kitchen, going out to pick up the mail, checking your email (assuming you ignored it while you wrote), or taking a shower. The important detail here is that a brief activity occupies the mind and causes a short break in how the brain has been working.

Some may consider taking a break after a writing session problematic, since ideas often occur at odd moments during the day when you are away from writing. I am sure they will continue to happen, because doing an activity for a brief time after writing will only stop the immediate flow of words into sentences and onto the page. The world and its characters still exist in your mind, and as they spin, ideas may come forth and, if poignant enough, will interrupt any domestic thoughts.

The bottom line here is that I would encourage you to make a clean break between writing and domestic life. Don't allow them to merge and become intermingled. Keep them separate. Write on.

Barry

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch
Board of Directors

President—Barry Hampshire
president@cwcmtdiablo.org
Vice President—Michael Barrington
vp@cwcmtdiablo.org
Secretary—Beatrice Weber
secretary@cwcmtdiablo.org
Treasurer—Margie Witt
treasurer@cwcmtdiablo.org
Webmaster—Marlene Dotterer
cmdotterer@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor—Denis Hoye
writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org
Backfence—Marlene Dotterer
backfence@cmcmtdiablo.org

Elisabeth Tuck
helpfuleditor@cwcmtdiablo.org
Lyn Roberts
openmic@cwcmtdiablo.org
Dot Edwards
membership@cwcmtdiablo.org
Linda Hartmann
ekphrasis@cwcmtdiablo.org
Anne Marie Gouveia
youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org
Suzy Orpin
outreachchair@cwcmtdiablo.org
Andrew Benzie
writerstable@cwcmtdiablo.org

Upcoming Events

November 13th
Mt. Diablo Board Meeting
3:00 pm — 4:30 pm PDT
Zoom Meeting

November 14th
Mt. Diablo Meeeting
10:00 pm —12:00 pm PDT
Pleasant Hill Community Center
320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill, CA
https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/

November 18th
Open Mic Night
7:00 pm — 8:00 pm
Host: Lyn Roberts
https://cwcmtdiablo.org/event/open-mic-on-zoom/

November 20th
What's Your Short Story
12 pm — 2 pm PDT
Walnut Creek Library
Trampas Room
1139 South Main Street
Walnut Creek, CA
https://cwcmtdiablo.org/whats-your-story-reading-group-4/

November 25th
The Writer's Connection
12:00 PM —2:00 PM PDT
Chicken Pie Shop
1251Arroyo Way
Walnut Creek, CA
https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writers-connection/

Open Mic Night on Zoom — November 18th
Meeting from: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm | Online event

Details: Join us for Open Mic

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/event/open-mic-on-zoom/

What's Your Short Story — November 20th

Meeting from 12 pm to 2 pm.

Come, Read, and enjoy listening at CWC Mt. Diablo's Short Story Reading Group. This meeting is for short stories up to 2500 words.

There will be *no walk-in* readers. But walk-in listeners are invited.

Join us at:

https://cwcmtdiablo.org/whats-your-story-reading-group-4/



The Writer's Connection — November 25th

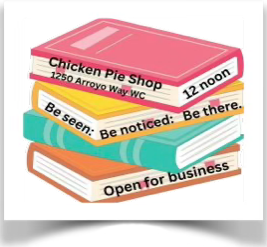
Meeting from: 12 Noon to 1:30 pm

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/https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writers-connection-4/

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/writers-helping-writers/

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.



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.

Mary Teresa — Fiction by Robert Poirier

Michael sobbed as he drove to Loreto Abbey in Dublin.

"If I can't have her, no one can," he wailed while fingering the boning knife at his side.

He had been obsessed with Mary Teresa's vibrant, dark-brown eyes since meeting her at the county fair. His attempts to contact her had been rebuffed by the abbey staff.

Three black Kerry cows appeared, blocking him on the road to the abbey.

The Kerry cattle breed is the oldest domesticated cattle breed in Ireland. They were the first cows to be bred mainly for milk and dairy products. They are small, four feet tall at the shoulder, and weigh 750 to 1,000 pounds; they are gentle, docile, and, although horned, have a friendly temperament.

Michael's family had a large Kerry cow dairy operation, supplying the local restaurants, residents, and schools, including the abbey. He had worked closely with the breed and had not seen them block a road like this.

He exited the car, slammed the door shut behind him, and screamed at the cows staring at him.

The cows approached the car, two hemming him in on either side, while the center cow made eye contact with Michael and slowly pressed him against the door.

In his last breath, Michael realized the cow's eyes were the same vibrant, dark brown as Mary Teresa's.

The Kerry cow kept pressing against Michael's chest until the light went out of his eyes.

The three cows left Michael on the road beside the car, separated, and wandered off. Their mission was complete.

Mary Teresa completed her English studies at the abbey in 1929, and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, India.

Twenty years later, she founded the Missionaries of Charity and adopted a white sari with one wide and two narrow blue borders as the order's habit. She took the title "Mother" as part of the Loreto custom.

By the time Mother Teresa died in 1997, the Missionaries of Charity had grown to 5,000 sisters and 450 brothers, operating 600 mission schools and shelters in 120 countries.

All because three Kerry cows followed God's will on a small country road outside Dublin many years before.

Robert Poirier began writing in 2018 with a small creative writing group at the Martinez, California Veteran's Administration Medical Center. He has since published short stories in the annual statewide California Writers Club Literary Review of 2019 and 2020 and SURVIVAL: Tales of Pandemic, a CWC anthology, 2020.

Robert Porier



Resources for Writers

How to Get Good Writing Feedback from Beta Readers

Best Book Editing Software for Authors in 2025

What Goes in the Back Matter of a Book?

Choosing a Book Editing Package

Scrivner: My Three-year Review

You're Not An Editor



Part 2 of 4 Part Writing Series
Character and Setting Development
on November 10th from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm PDT

Explore techniques for creating memorable characters, believable worlds, and settings that enrich your story and engage readers

Four Part Writing Series
with Local Authors | Mt. Diablo Room





Phyllis Wachob



Boris Erlank



AnneMarie Mazotti Gouveia



Henry 'Hank' Kalweit



Josephine 'Jo' Mele

Danville Library
400 Front Street 94526
925.314.3750

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY
Bringing People and Ideas Together
ccclib.org