

# The Write News

A Mo



A Monthly Newsletter

April 2012

## The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch

### WORKSHOP & FULL BREAKFAST

Saturday, April 14, 2012; 8:30am to 12:30pm

Sell Your Book! Tons of tips from a PR/Marketing Pro



#### Without spending much more than your time, learn how to:

- prepare for your marketing campaign
- tap existing and new networks to build credibility and a fan base
- spread the word to a larger audience
- avoid mistakes that will cost you time, money and readers

Maria Murnane has an MA in integrated marketing from Northwestern University and spent 9 years working at a PR firm. Her first novel, *Perfect on Paper*, hit #2 overall on Amazon in November, 2011, due to creative strategies she used to get the word out. Amazon offered a contract for her second novel, *It's a Waverly Life*, and CreateSpace hired Maria to write a weekly blog on all things books. For both traditionally and self-published books, Maria will teach you how to build a solid foundation for your book marketing campaign.

**Sign-in** is 8:30 am – 9 am, breakfast 9 – 9:30, and workshop 9:30 – 12:30 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. Member registration is \$35, or \$40 for non-CWC members;

**Contact:** Jean at [jeaniegpopps@comcast.net](mailto:jeaniegpopps@comcast.net)  
or leave a message at: (925) 934-5677

**Meeting Details on Page 3**

## President's Message

By Elisabeth Tuck



Spring! Does it make writing harder or easier? Although we're not getting a lot of sunshine, the weather is milder, enticing us outdoors away from our writing. On the other hand, Spring's changes remind us to add the five senses to our writing. We're seeing pink or white trees, smelling fresh flowers, tasting tender salad greens, and perhaps touching delicate, new growth. All of which can remind us to sprinkle unexpected details into our writing.

Writers Tables before our meetings! They seem to be a real success. Our hope is that members are sharing their expertise around the table while getting to know each other better. We won't have tables in April (morning workshop) or May (Young Writers Contest banquet) but they'll be back in June. See you around 8:30 am, April 14 for breakfast and a morning workshop!

### ***The Resounding Success of Mt. Diablo's Young Writer's Contest***



*Does the Young Writer's Contest really impact the students who participate? Is it worth the effort? CWC Program Chair, Don Maker, decided to go to the source and find out. He asked former Young Writer's Contest winner, Gabriel Ostler, about his experience.*

Hey Mr. Maker! Thanks for contacting me. I'm more than happy to answer these questions for you.

#### ***Why did you decide to write/enter, and do you still write?***

My decision to enter the contest was really just a case of perfect timing. I had never entered a contest before, and it just so happened that I finished a piece that I was working on by myself when I heard about the contest, so I said, hey, why not? I polished up my rough draft, sent it off, and next thing I knew I was getting a call saying I won! I couldn't believe it.

Yes, I still write. I love writing. I carry around composition books with me and will often just jot down ideas or short stories when I'm bored in class.

#### ***What was your experience with CWC Mt. Diablo?***

Absolutely fantastic. I loved the banquet and everything else that the organization did. I don't think there's any way my experience could have been any better.

#### ***Was this experience in any way helpful to your academic career or life?***

It certainly was. Just from a writer's standpoint, it was awesome to have some affirmation, to really feel good about what I do. It gave me a lot more confidence in all of my writing. Also, the cash prize was pretty awesome.

**MENTORING OUR YOUNG WRITERS****Teen Writer Group Begins in Lafayette  
by  
Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff**

Seven students attended the first Teen Writing Group formed by one of our own workshop attendees and young writer contest applicants, Marisa Chow, a homeschooled junior, on Saturday, March 17 at the Lafayette Library. High school students from Miramonte, Orinda, and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade student from Los Cerros in Danville joined the informal gathering to discuss the writing process and *write*. They plan to go on field trips and write in various locales. Each meeting, participants will rotate as moderators.

The group was initiated because of Marisa's own interest and motivation, and will continue to meet on a regular basis although they haven't decided on a fixed schedule.

Julia, a student from Miramonte, led this workshop and passed out nature photos for the writing prompt. Many discovered writing, based on a picture of a setting, proved more difficult than one rooted on character, but each wrote intriguing pieces which they discussed, although only a few chose to share.

Their meetings are focused on the Amherst Writing Method:

1. There is no hierarchy.
2. There is no right or wrong way to write.
3. It is optional to share.
4. Members only offer positive feedback.
5. If contributors write a personal experience, don't tell. It will be treated as if fictional.

Congratulations to this terrific group of motivated and creative teenagers!

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## Workshop Details

**April 14 - Workshop Details - Sign-in** is 8:30 am – 9 am, breakfast served from 9 – 9:30, and workshop 9:30 – 12:30

**Menu:** Full Breakfast Served by Zio Fraedo's

**Reservations:** Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on **Wednesday, April 11, 2012.**

**Cost:** \$35 for CWC members - \$40 for guests

**To make a reservation**, contact Jean Georgakopoulos, via e-mail at [jeaniepops@comcast.net](mailto:jeaniepops@comcast.net), or by phone at (925) 934-5677. Expect confirmation only when you e-mail your reservation.

**Please Note:** In accordance with our contractual agreement with Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, the club is charged for every reservation confirmed on the day before the meeting. If you are not able to attend this meeting, or if you do not cancel your reservation prior to noon on the Friday before the meeting, you will be asked to remit a \$20 "no-show" payment.

## Highlighting One of Our Members

### Member Profile: *Susan Berman*

*Mount Diablo Branch member Susan Berman submitted her profile to me in such fine form that I thought it best to let her speak in her own words.*



I was raised in Orange, Texas on the Texas Gulf coast, just six miles from Louisiana. During my sixth grade year (1957), my daddy was transferred from the States to Maracaibo, Venezuela. We lived in Maracaibo from 1957 until 1964.

I attended public school in Orange, Texas until the sixth grade. Then, a private American school in Maracaibo, Escuela Bella Vista. After the ninth grade, I attended San Marcos Academy, San Marcos, Texas for my sophomore through senior years in high school. My

parents still lived

in Maracaibo, and I commuted between San Marcos and Maracaibo for Christmases and summers from 1961 through 1964.

I attended Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, from 1964 until I graduated in 1968. I did attend one summer session at University of Texas, Austin, until some damned fool started shooting at me. Yes, I was walking around the campus while Charles Whitman shot people from the U. T. tower. I am here today only because the temperature was in the high 90's. I left my classroom to return to my dormitory, Blanton Hall, by hurrying from shade tree to shade tree. I attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas where I began a Masters of Fine Arts program.

When we moved to Maracaibo, I wrote long, detailed letters to my friends in Orange, Texas. I learned to create color and action using only words. How can one attend boarding school without there being colorful stories to tell? Holden Caulfield was my hero.

I worked for a large Northern California health maintenance organization for twenty years. During that time, I wrote contract benefit changes and revisions for approval from the Department of Corporations. What I wrote now sits in a dusty room somewhere in Sacramento. However, I learned the succinctness of words, as well as preciseness.

Before I was too young to write, I sketched out scenes with my baby doll in which one of us invariably had stolen Federal documents from some U. S. agency, a result of the Cold War and "I Led Three Lives" television program. I submitted a joke to the "Polly Pigtales" magazine when I was in the third grade. (They never used it.) I wrote a play when I was in the sixth grade. I regularly submitted articles to the Escuela Bella Vista school newspaper. When I attended San Marcos Academy, I joined the newspaper staff during my junior year as the Assistant Editor. During my senior year, I acted as the Editor in Chief of the school newspaper, "The Laurel."

I suppose I have always had something to say about most everything. Or, at least that is what my husband tells me.

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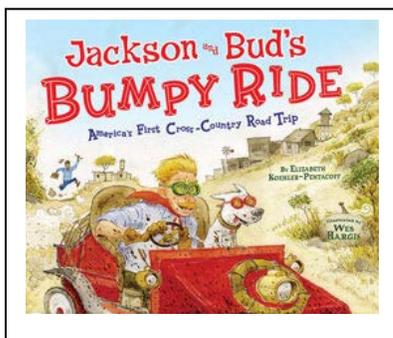


## Member Events, News and Salutes



**Kathleen Curtis Wilson** is currently in Virginia giving presentations on her most recent book, *Irish People, Irish Linen* published by Ohio University Press and launched in October 2011 - first in NY at the private residency of the Irish Consulate General Noel Kilkenny and then at the Irish Embassy in Washington DC. For 400 years, Irish linen was the premier industry of the island of Ireland. The book explores this history through art and design, architecture, technology, economic history, and cultural traditions. Kathleen will be conducting a media presentation at the Irish Literary and Historical Society in San Francisco on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Kathleen has just finished a month's residency at the Vermont Studio Center where she finished the first draft of her novel, *The Fabric of Wishful Thinking*. "This is a fabulous place to work for writers and artists. Set in Johnson, Vermont, the writers have individual studios, the food is great and you are with a group of 50 artists and writers so it is a very creative atmosphere. One resident said it is a combination of Camelot and camp - I can't agree more."



**Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff's** book, *Jackson and Bud's Bumpy Ride* was a 2011- 2012 South Carolina Picture Book Award Nominee. The book tells the true story of the first automobile trip across the United States. Dr. Horatio Jackson began in San Francisco, by betting \$50 with a stranger that he could drive a car from S.F. to New York. He bought a used Winton automobile, hired a mechanic and adopted a dog named Bud. After 5,600 miles and 63 1/2 days, they made history with a lot of funny adventures!

Illustrated by Wes Hargis and published by Lerner, the book was also nominated as one of the 10 best nonfiction picture books by Arizona's Grand Canyon Reader Award for 2010.

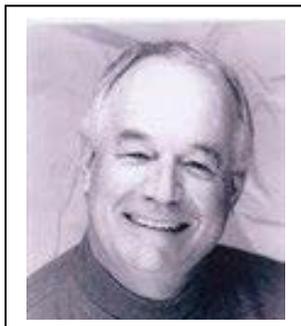
### A Special Thank You

Ever heard of **Ron Jewison**?

He's the General Manager of the UPS Store at 25-A Crescent Drive, Pleasant Hill and he is definitely a friend of our CWC Mt. Diablo Branch. Over the years, he has donated much to our Young Writers Contest. According to Liz Koehler-Pentacoff, he's professional and helpful. He's also been generous, providing us with advertising in the window of his store and generally supporting us in many ways.

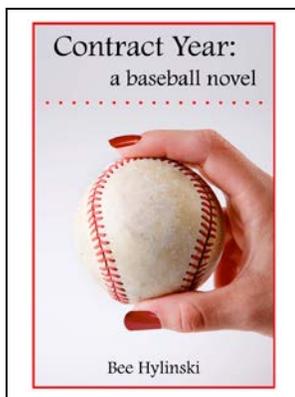
Next time you are in the UPS store in Pleasant Hill, be sure to let him know that you are a CWC Mt. Diablo Branch member and say "thank you." Friends like Ron are a gift.

## **More Member Events, News and Salutes**



J.C. Blair's short story *La (Not So) Dolce Vita* has been picked up by Marco Polo Arts Journal. It will appear on-line in about two months. The story is a whimsical piece about a man who is searching for the true meaning of life and his quest takes him on a couple of bizarre twists and turns. He meets some interesting people on the hunt and he ultimately finds what he's searching for when he makes a bad toss of the *New York Times*.

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**Bee Helinski's** newly published book is called *Contract Year*. Bee describes the baseball story as follows:

"Larry Gordon has it all. He's a successful major league pitcher and dating the perfect woman. He'll earn big money in the free agency market at the end of the upcoming season if he plays well during this, his *Contract Year*. But his girlfriend walks out on him and turns his world upside down. Larry heads off to spring training to forget about her and get ready for the season. He learns quickly that his self-absorbed carefree way of life won't cut it anymore, that he'll have to find a new way to succeed on the mound and in his personal life. Follow Larry's funny and poignant journey, and get a peek inside the world of professional baseball."

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### **Editor's Note**

**Send me your good news!** As you can see from the members saluted above, this includes upcoming events, new publications, recent awards for past work, and noteworthy news. We want to honor your good work and not only share the news with our fellow members, but encourage them to persevere and keep the writer's dream alive.

Send a short paragraph, along with a .jpg of your photo or book cover. We love to include visuals so we can 'put a face with a name' or remember your book. The deadline for the **May newsletter** will be **April 18**.

Send your news to [lynz@astound.net](mailto:lynz@astound.net).

Lyn Roberts  
Newsletter Editor

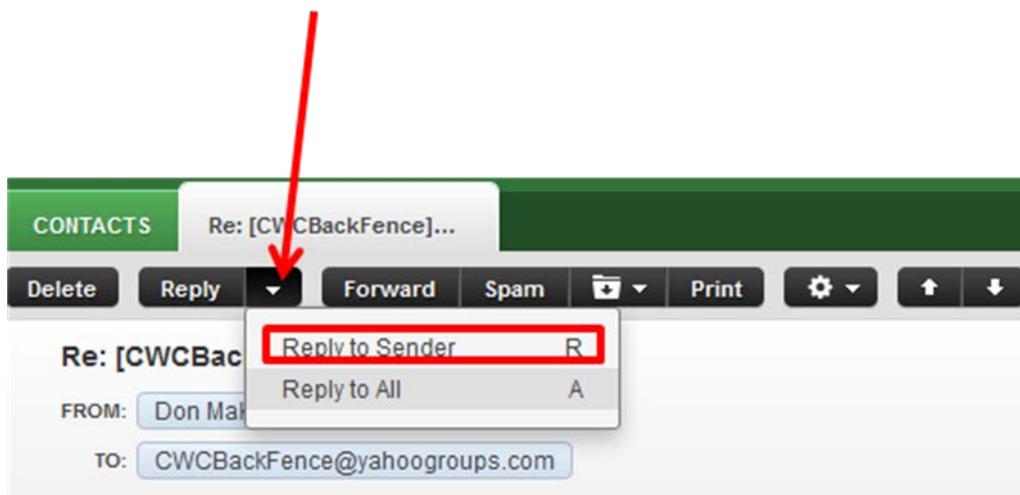
## Return to Sender, Address Definitely Known!

by  
Aline Soules, Online Coordinator

Remember that old Elvis Presley song "Return to Sender"? I'd like to suggest a new form of "return to sender" for the *Back Fence*.

It's wonderful to see the lively exchanges that take place on the Back Fence, but after the main points have been made, there's a trail of "Thanks" or the conversation essentially goes private and continues between two people who want to carry on further. All good stuff!

If you want take your conversation private or "offline," you can do it quite easily. One way is to click the arrow beside the "reply" button and choose "reply to sender."



Alternately, you can scroll down to the bottom of the message and click "Reply to Sender." You'll note that the "Reply" button also appears at the bottom of the message.

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### *Upcoming CWC Events*

May 19	Young Writer's Banquet	Lindsey Grant, NaNoWriMo's (National Writer's Month) Program Director
June 9	<b>Special Speaker Event</b>	<b>Maxine Hong Kingston</b>

## Special Report ~ Where Do Your Dues Go?

~ Original article prepared by former Membership Chair, Jody Denison

~ Chart created by David George

Every spring we start reminding you all about “dues” and you wonder why it is such a big deal that we get them in before September 30....well, I’ll tell you. We don’t get to keep all that money. We belong to something bigger than ourselves...it is called “Central” and Central coordinates all the branches of the California Writers Club.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Member Pays</u>	<u>Branch Keeps</u>	<u>Branch pays State</u>
Renewed Members	\$45.00	\$20.00	\$25.00
New Members	\$65.00	\$30.00	\$35.00

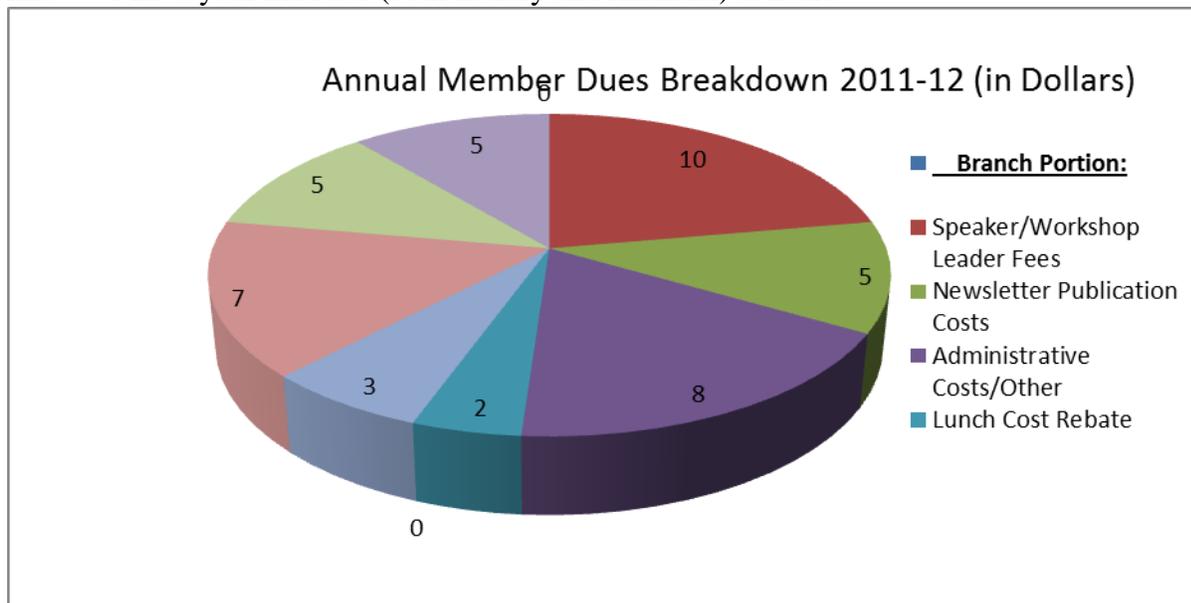
Your annual membership fee of \$45 is split, with \$20 sent to CWC Central and \$25 remaining for our branch. Currently we subsidize your lunch by \$2. You pay \$20 and we pay Zio Fraedo's \$22. If a member attends all seven general meetings he/she will recover \$14 or over half of our branch's share of the annual dues. We encourage you to attend our lunches and take advantage of this dues refund.

Because we are a rather large group, we pay a goodly sum every year to Central and this year our responsibility to Central was over \$3,000. We are required to collect a \$20 late fee for dues received after September 30.

What do we get in return for this? Well, here you are:

- The CWC Literary Review
- Accounting and IRS tax filing services
- CWC State website maintenance
- Periodic branch representative meetings, communications, and coordination among the 18 branches
- Liability insurance coverage for accidents during a club-sponsored event, such as a monthly meeting.

Central requires us to pay ALL our dues by September 30....so you can see why we try so very hard to get all our dues in on time. When the dues are late, it is not just the Membership Chair that is faced with the onerous task of nagging...Central is also discomfited trying to gather up all the loose ends for the year end audits. So, when we start “haranguing” you in to get your dues in, please know we have your interests (both literary and financial) at heart.



# Guess What Time Of Year It Is! *Membership Renewal Time!*

**By Catherine Accardi**  
**Branch Membership Chair**

It is annual membership renewal time. For all members, your membership will expire on June 30, 2012. Dues for the upcoming, 2012/2013, year are \$45.00. Mail your check and the membership renewal form on Page 9 to: CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch Membership, P.O. Box 606, Alamo CA, 94507. And don't forget – one of the members who renews prior to May 31 will be selected in a drawing for a **free lunch** at our June meeting.

## **Benefits of Membership**

Our club invites authors, publishers, editors, and agents to speak at our monthly meetings. They discuss writing, querying, publishing and marketing your work. Additional benefits include:

- Networking opportunities with other members that will provide additional exposure and further develop your writing career
- Discounted price on monthly meeting luncheons and seminars
- Information on writing contests (including those sponsored by other organizations)
- Workshops for developing your writing skills
- Your own web information and blog links posted on the CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch website
- Critique group connections and opportunities
- *The Write News*, the branch's newsletter with writing tips, upcoming events and a column celebrating the latest publishing successes of our members
- Copies of *CWC's new Literary Review*, our statewide literary magazine
- Periodic emails, called TidBits, updating you on time-sensitive writing opportunities, conferences, statewide events, etc.
- Opportunity to join The Back Fence, the Mt. Diablo Branch online Yahoo group.
- Opportunity to participate in the Publishing Pathways program that may provide assistance towards publication of your writing.

Check out the article "Where Do The Dues Go" on Page 8, to find out what happens to your membership dollars. For further information regarding membership contact me, Catherine Accardi, your Membership Chair, via email at [caecat@comcast.net](mailto:caecat@comcast.net), or by phone at (925) 934-9015.



## Annual Membership Renewal Form

There really is such a thing as a FREE LUNCH! Renew your membership by May 31<sup>st</sup>, and your name will be entered in our drawing for a FREE LUNCH at a future meeting of your choice. Don't wait. RENEW TODAY!

Please complete this form, and include it with your check for \$45. We are updating our member database and we want to make sure we have correct information about you.

Please PRINT clearly!

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Active \_\_\_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting \_\_\_\_\_ Dual Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Affiliate

Principal Genre \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Genre(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Security Note: Membership information is not made public at any time.

Make your \$45 check payable to "CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch." Mail your check and this form to "CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch Membership, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA-94507.

If you have questions, contact Catherine Accardi via email at [caacat@comcast.net](mailto:caacat@comcast.net), or by phone at (925) 934-9015.

## Public Relations Ideas for California Writers Club Branches

In 2011/12, the Public Relations Society of America led an international effort to replace a [definition adopted in 1982](#) by the PRSA National Assembly with: "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics."

For the CWC and its branches, public relations new or old boils down to not just informing the community about what you do but making clear why it should matter to them. Do you offer a scholarship? Run a contest? Hold events they can attend? If you do, get the word out. Avail yourselves of current technology as well as tried-and-true handouts and posters. Above all, never miss the opportunity to network.

Speaking of networking, consider saving Saturday afternoon, July 21, for some face-to-face socializing at our annual pot-luck picnic that, in the words of CWC president Bob Garfinkle, "continues the glorious tradition that Jack London and his literary pals began over 100 years ago with informal outdoor literary salons — 'a blanket and a basket of chow' — on the lands that are now Oakland's 500-acre Joaquin Miller Park." We gather at the Fire Circle. Details to follow.

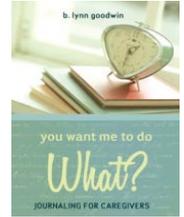
Good luck and sail on!

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, CWC Central, PR chair,

- [pr@calwriters.org](mailto:pr@calwriters.org)

## Writer's Markets Column

### *One Hand Washes The Other* By B. Lynn Goodwin



### CWC Writers, I need your help.

I'd like to share your favorite marketing tips with other CWC members. Could you send me the best marketing tip you ever found? It could be one that surprised you, one that opened your eyes, or one that simply worked. Tell us what it is and explain why it worked in fewer than 125 words. I'll share one or two each month until we run out.

I can only make this work with your help, so please don't disappoint me. Your experiences will create good karma.

I hope that this month's resources will help you.

1. Sign up for [PayingWriterJobs@yahoo.com](mailto:PayingWriterJobs@yahoo.com). A journalism background helps you with many of these positions.
2. Check Craigslist. I found a job writing curriculum for StudySync.net that lasted the better part of a year. Look under both "gigs" and "jobs" and check back often. New things are always being posted.
3. Sign up for [Ambersand@yahoo.com](mailto:Ambersand@yahoo.com). It's a great place to find reading opportunities and submission requests as well as some local classes.
4. If you're a woman, sign on to the groups that interest you on <http://www.shewrites.com/>.
5. Develop a following by publishing a blog and responding to others on <http://redroom.com/>. It's a great place to network.
6. If you're looking for markets, there's a new list on the Contests & Markets page at Writer Advice, [www.writeradvice.com](http://www.writeradvice.com)
7. C. Hope Clark regularly updates Funds for Writers, [www.fundsforwriters.com/](http://www.fundsforwriters.com/).
8. There's an ongoing collection of opportunities in Poets & Writers, <http://www.pw.org/magazine>.
9. Check Writer's Guidelines, <http://www.freelancewriting.com/guidelines/pages/index.php>, for all kinds of magazine opportunities.
10. Look for blogs that might like an excerpt from your story and approach the editor.

Remember to send your favorite marketing tip and why it worked to:  
[Lgood67334@comcast.net](mailto:Lgood67334@comcast.net).

## 2012 Annual Young Writers Contest

### Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch

The Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club invites you to support the young writers of today by honoring the great California writers of the past. Please consider joining one of the following donor clubs. Your gift will be acknowledged in the Young Writers Contest program and in the Mount Diablo CWC newsletter. In addition, all donations are tax-deductible. The Young Writers Contest Committee and the Mt. Diablo Board of Directors wish to thank the following donors to the Young Writers Contest from July 1, 2011, to the present:

<p><b>Foundation Donors</b> <i>The Leroe Family Foundation</i></p>	<p><b>The John Steinbeck Society</b> <i>Barbara Bentley</i> <i>Christine Sunderland</i></p>
<p><b>The Jack London Founder's Circle</b></p> <p><b>The John Muir Member Club</b> <i>Bev Lauderdale</i></p> <p><b>The Mary Austin Writers Club</b> <i>David George in memory of Joan Brennan</i></p> <p><b>The Helen Hunt Jackson Group</b> <i>Ed Stanislawski</i></p>	<p><b>The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club</b> <i>Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff in memory of Joan Brennan</i></p> <p><i>Sarah (Susie) Wilson</i> <i>Lee Paulson</i> <i>Aline Soules</i></p> <p><i>Karen Tenney in memory of Betty Tenney</i></p> <p><i>The Vinapa Foundation for Cross-Cultural Studies</i></p>

This annual Young Writers Contest for middle school students of Contra Costa County awards cash prizes for excellence in short story, poetry, and essay/personal narrative categories. Winners are notified in May and presented with their awards at an awards luncheon, at a local restaurant. All expenses of the program are supported by individual donations and grants. Please join us in this unique program for encouraging our youth toward creative writing.

~ The Jack London Founder's Circle - \$500

- ~ The John Steinbeck Society - \$250-\$499
- ~ The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club - \$100-\$149
- ~ The Gertrude Atherton Guild - \$10-\$24
- ~ The John Muir Member Club - \$150-\$249
- ~ The Mary Austin Writers Club - \$50-\$99
- ~ The Helen Hunt Jackson Group - \$25-\$49

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Please list my membership in the following donor club: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (checks or cash only, please)

Acknowledge my gift in honor of/in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to: *CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch*      Mail check to:

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch, Attention: Young Writers Contest, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507

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Please consider joining a Donor Club in support of our Annual Young Writers Contest. Your gift furthers our mission to provide support and encouragement not only to our adult writers, but also to identify and reward excellence among Contra Costa County middle school students. Your gift enables our club to continue and to expand our outreach to young writers. You can designate a gift in honor of or in memory of a friend or loved one. Your gift is fully tax deductible. Thank you to all our members who generously donated to the 2012 Young Writers Contest. It was the best ever! Please consider joining one of our Donor Clubs again this year to support the next generation of California writers who look forward to entering the 2012 contest. They are depending on you!



**California Writers Club~Mount Diablo Branch**  
**Post Office Box 606**  
**Alamo, CA 94507**

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**California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch**

*~ The California Writers Club is a designated 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation. ~*

***Join Us!***

**Our next CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch Workshop  
is on April 14, 2012 at 9:00 am, in Pleasant Hill.**

**For detailed workshop information, go to**

**<http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com>**

The California Writer's Club (CWC) shall foster professionalism in writing, promote networking of writers with the writing community, mentor new writers, and provide the literary support for writers and the writing community as is appropriate through education and leadership. All items in this newsletter are the opinions of the author(s) and do not in any way represent the views or official position of CWC.