



The Write News

California Writers Club – Mount Diablo Branch

A Monthly Publication

December 2008

December Speaker and Meeting Information

*The Mount Diablo Branch is Proud to Feature “Three of Our Own”
at our annual Holiday Celebration Meeting, Saturday, December 13, 2008*



This December, the CWC-Mount Diablo Branch will continue its tradition of highlighting great writers within our own membership. This year we are pleased to present a panel of three distinguished writers and good friends, from whom we can learn a great deal about the art and craft of professional writing/publishing. Each will offer tips for writing, producing and marketing our work.



Barbara Bentley ~

In her recently published memoir, *A Dance with the Devil: A True Story of Marriage to a Psychopath*, Barbara shares how her fairytale dreams collided with the world of psychopaths and domestic violence. After finding the strength to stand up for herself in her marriage, she discovered that she still had to fight against victimization due to California’s antiquated divorce laws. Barbara took on the California state legislature, successfully petitioned to change the laws, and showed that one person *can* make a difference. Barbara has appeared on KGO-TV’s A

View from the Bay and has made numerous radio and print media interviews. *A Dance with the Devil* reads like a page-turning novel.



J. Gary Gwilliam ~

Gary is a local trial lawyer. Over a span of more than 40 years, he has tried nearly 200 jury trials to verdict, the majority of them successfully. Yet, he attributes his most important life lessons to his defeats. In *Getting a Winning Verdict in My Personal Life: A Trial Lawyer Finds His Soul*, Gary details with searing honesty, his struggles with alcoholism and failed relationships. His is a captivating story of healing, love and triumph over his own personal and professional demons. Gary will share with us his insights about writing an intimate memoir.



Katie Clark Vecchio ~

Katie Vecchio is a ghostwriter and literary consultant. She researched and edited four *New York Times* nonfiction bestsellers in the last several years, and, in 2007, was ghostwriter for a popular nonfiction political book, *Target: Caught in the Crosshairs of Bill and Hillary Clinton*. She also edited *The Keeler Migraine Method*, published by Penguin/Avery in November. Katie has helped many other authors finish and polish their fiction and nonfiction manuscripts for submission to agents and publishing houses, and is currently ghostwriting two nonfiction books. Katie will discuss work as a ghostwriter and editor, and why she loves being a behind the scenes writer.

~ Meeting details can be found on page two. ~



December Meeting Details

What a wealth of talent and experience surrounds us at our monthly meetings! Please join us for an informative, celebratory session to be held at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant on December 13. As in the past, a table will be provided for members to display copies of their books for sale to meeting attendees. The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch web address is: <http://www.mtidiablowriters.org>.

Date & Time: Saturday, December 13, 2008, at 11:30 a.m.

Location: Zio Fraedo's Restaurant at 611 Gregory Lane (near the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Gregory Lane). Parking is available both in front and behind the restaurant. The restaurant's phone number is (925) 933-9091.

Cost: \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members

Menu: Look forward to another delicious buffet, this time for the holidays it is ham and turkey plus all the other goodies. Wine will be \$3.00 per glass. Soft drinks are free.

Reservations: Reservations are required, and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, December 10. To make reservations, contact Betty Iverson, via e-mail at bjiverson@comcast.net, or by phone at (925) 376-3631. Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation.

Coming Attractions ~ Upcoming Speakers for 2009

January 10: Laurel Ann Hill and Alice Wilson-Fried
"The Long & the Short of Writing and Editing a Novel"

February 14: Robert G. Pimm, Attorney at Law ~ Literary Property Law

March 14: Stephanie Chandler ~ "How Authors Can Build an Online Platform"

April 11: Priscilla Royal ~ Medieval History Mystery Writer

May 9: Young Writers Banquet

June 13: Verna Driesbach of Driesbach Literary Management

Sales and Salutes

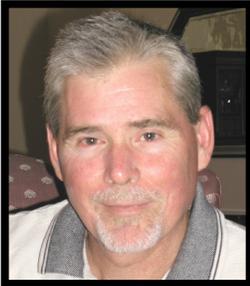
Nannette Rundle Carroll's book, *Communicate 2 Go™ for Managers: Blending Relationships and Process to Prevent and Solve People Problems*, will be published by AMACOM Books, Manhattan, in Fall 2009. This book is loaded with actual stories and how-to steps.

Cheryl Spanos's two short stories, *Bones in the Cellar* and *Pote Tha Fthasoume? (Are We There Yet?)*, were awarded Honorable Mention for Mainstream/Literary Short Story in the *Writer's Digest 77th* Annual Writing Competition.

Catherine Accardi's book, *Images of America ~ Walnut Creek*, will be released by Arcadia Publishing on March 2, 2009.

President's Message

By David George



Happy Holidays to all! The George family has been busy preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas when family members will be descending upon our humble home. We hope your stockings and stomachs get stuffed with goodies, despite the dismal economy.

Speaking of holidays, stomachs, and goodies, the Branch is inviting all members to bring a guest to our annual holiday monthly meeting on Saturday, December 13, beginning with check in at 11:30. Zio Fraedo's restaurant, of which I have heard many complimentary comments, is pulling out all the stops for us. They will be serving us a fabulous luncheon buffet replete with holiday favorites. Fresh sliced turkey, ham, gravy, cranberry sauce, and other festive selections will be served. In addition, the Branch will be subsidizing wine for a nominal (\$3) charge, and free soft drinks. We will also be served, during the speaker portion of the program, fresh wisdom and advice from three of our own members who have recently achieved writing success. The December holiday luncheon meeting will be a great opportunity to introduce that special someone to the fun and camaraderie of our meetings, without boring speeches from your President.

As always, if you have any ideas you'd like to share with me about how to improve our member experience, please email me at davegeorge7@comcast.net. Or better yet, talk up your ideas with the Board at our next meeting at Zio Fraedo's, at 10 a.m., just prior to our holiday gathering on Saturday, December 13. Sail on!

New Monthly Meeting No-Show Policy

The Mount Diablo Board of Directors has voted in a new policy stating that members who make a reservation to attend the monthly luncheon meeting, but then fail to attend, will be required to pay the \$20 fee anyway. The reason for this policy is that our new restaurant, Zio Fraedo's, asks the branch to pay \$20 for each meal requested in advance, whether or not the meal is consumed.

Our reservation system has been working well the past several years. It is easy for our members to either email or phone in their reservation. The Board and restaurant have also made it easy for members to cancel their lunch reservation. If "stuff" happens and you can't make the luncheon after all, just email or call before noon on Friday, the day before our meeting. Members who attend the monthly luncheon and meeting without making a reservation will be charged an additional \$5 to cover the cost of ordering an extra unplanned lunch. You can either contact our reservations person, Betty Iverson, our logistics chair, Danard Emanuelson, or President David George to cancel your reservation by the deadline. Below are their respective phone numbers and email addresses:

Betty Iverson - 376-3631, bjiverson@comcast.net

Danard Emanuelson - 934-4538, (private email)

David George - 255-3018, davegeorge7@comcast.net



The Tip Bucket

The Back Fence has a new feature called **The Tip Bucket**. Future editions of *The Write News* will feature tips for writers. Members of **The Back Fence** can visit **The Back Fence** at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CWCBackFence/>, and click on "Files" at the left of your screen. Topics of interest to writers are arranged in order as you work your way through the publishing process. Do you have any tips to share under the main topics? Do you have another topic you feel needs to be addressed? Members who want to add their tips can open a folder and easily add a file. **The Tip Bucket** is worth exploring! If you haven't yet joined **The Back Fence** go to the link above and follow the simple sign-up process. In addition, we have a special treat. Below is Camille Minichino's first in a series of columns called **Myth-busters**.

It's a Myth

By Camille Minichino

~ *The first in a series of myth-busting columns* ~

Myth: To be successful as a writer, you must write every day.

Truth: As long as you write Some Time, it doesn't matter when or how often. If you're the kind of person who likes to do things routinely—pizza with the boys every Friday, a coffee klatch with girlfriends on Wednesday evenings—then maybe writing every day at a certain time will work for you.

But if you're like me, freaked out at the thought of doing anything on a routine, you'll just get frustrated trying to change that rhythm.

Find your writing rhythm and go with it, whether it's every morning before the kids are up or in spurts through the week. Just get it done.

Here's a way to find your rhythm: ask yourself how you approach other "projects" in your life. If you're going to crochet an afghan, do you buy all the yarn first, lay it out, prepare a pattern, and make a daily schedule? Or do you just start working on it, at odd times, change the pattern now and then, and eventually get it done? The same question applies to how you approach completing a woodworking project, a painting, even a bathroom remodel. What process works best for you? What have you learned about yourself over the years about getting a project done?

That's the way to approach your writing project.

Here's one of my favorite quotes from Abraham Lincoln: "If you give me six hours to chop down a tree, I'll spend the first five sharpening the ax."

Now there's an approach much to be admired, but it's not mine! I'm more likely to hack away at the tree immediately, maybe break the first ax, get a splinter, hack some more, and finally get it done in the last ten minutes. All that matters is that the deadline is met and the tree is down.

I used to cringe every time I heard an author tell new writers they *must* write every day. That "myth" kept me from even trying for many years.

After twelve novels and many other published pieces, I'm here to tell you, you don't need to believe that myth. Find your own rhythm and follow it. Again, just get it done!

Young Writers Workshop

By Liz Koehler-Pentacoff



**What: Young Writers Workshop
An Interactive Writing Morning**

Who: Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade Students

When: Saturday, January 31, 2009 OR Saturday, February 7, 2009

9:00 - Noon

9:00 - Noon

Where: Concord Public Library

Where: Ygnacio Valley Public Library

2900 Salvio Street, Concord

2661 Oak Grove Road, Walnut Creek

Cost: FREE!

Cost: FREE!

Humor and Suspense: How to Write a Sizzling, Suspenseful, Fabulously, Funny Page-Turner!

Discover comedy and suspense writing tips from two professional children's authors who love writing! You'll also get a chance to ask questions about the publishing world, play a writing game, and meet other writers your age. Led by children's authors Sarah Wilson and Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff.

Visit them at www.sarahwilsonbooks.com and www.lizbooks.com. Workshop attendees will be eligible to enter a drawing for a free story critique by the authors.

For more information, visit <http://mtdiablownriters.org/>.

Complete the registration form below, bring pen and paper, and get ready to WRITE!

California Writers Club Mt. Diablo Branch Young Writers Workshop 2009

PLEASE PRINT

Check one: January 31 in Concord _____ February 7 in Walnut Creek _____

Name _____

Home Address _____
House/Apt. Number Street City Zip

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

School _____ Grade _____

Teacher's First & Last Name _____

Workshop space is limited. Your reservation will be acknowledged by e-mail.

E-mail this application form to: YoungWriters@mtdiablownriters.org, or postal mail the form to:

CWC – Young Writers Workshop
P.O. Box 606
Alamo, CA 94507

Annual Young Writers Contest Donor Club 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 donor clubs listed below. Your gift will be acknowledged in the Young Writers Contest program and in the Mt. Diablo CWC newsletter. In addition, all donations are tax-deductible.

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. Contest submissions are free and must be received on or before April 1, 2009. Winners are notified in May and presented with their awards at an awards luncheon on Saturday, May 14, 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. Don't know what to give someone special for the holidays or a birthday? Give a membership in our Young Writers Contest Donor Club! Just add a special note with your check letting us know this is a birthday or holiday gift, give us the person's name and address, and we'll send your friend a card letting them know of your gift and their new donor stature.

- * The Jack London Founder's Circle ~ \$500
- * The John Steinbeck Society ~ \$250 - \$499
- * The John Muir Member Club ~ \$150 - \$249
- * The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club ~ \$100 - \$149
- * The Mary Austin Writers Club ~ \$50 - \$99
- * The Helen Hunt Jackson Group ~ \$25 - \$49
- * The Gertrude Atherton Guild ~ \$10 - \$24

Please list my membership in the following donor club: _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (checks only, please)

Acknowledge my gift in honor of/in memory of _____

Make your check payable to: *CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch*
Mail to: CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch
Attention: Young Writers Contest
P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507

A Website Review

By B. Lynn Goodwin



New Books and More at MyShelf.com

My Shelf, <http://www.myshelf.com/>, is colorful, attractive, and easy to navigate. November's author of the month, Sue Monk Kidd, is one of my favorites. When I clicked on her name, I found an intelligent essay about her work and her visit to the Marin Center in San Rafael. Reviewer Laura Strathman Hulka is first-rate.

Back on the home page, I clicked on Holiday Reading Lists and found children's books grouped by ages, and adult books grouped by genres. Who knew there were so many Thanksgiving books? Who knew that Y2K was a holiday? The site had 142 new reviews in November. I looked in Adult Non-Fiction under "How-To," "Self-Help," and "Writing" searching for Carolyn Howard-Johnson's review of my book, *You Want Me to Do What? Journaling for Caregivers*, but it wouldn't go up until the December issue. Ahh, anticipation. Shameless self-promotion: You can learn more about my book at Writer Advice, www.writeradvice.com and click on "Journaling for Caregivers."

I returned to My Shelf's home page and found "Audio Buzz," "Babes to Teens," "Back to Literature," and six more columns filled with appealing commentary. According to the owner, this award-winning site has "contests, reviews, columns, holiday reading lists, and deaf characters lists".

Whether you are New York published, self-published, or somewhere in between, explore www.MyShelf.com. Consider advertising, writing reviews, or editing for them. Explore the wealth of information on this comprehensive, long-running site.

Meet Our Member

By Jody Denison

Member Profile: *Kathryn Smick, Physician and Writer*

This profile first appeared in the February 2004 edition of The Write News. Dr. Smick passed away this August. We are reprinting it here as a tribute to our friend and fellow CWC member. Her book is available through Amazon and her article is on www.Moviemag.com.

Californians tend to view people from the Midwest as somewhat conservative. Well, Kathryn Smick put that view to the test. She grew up in Wisconsin and borrowed money to attend the University of Wisconsin in Madison just as the Great Depression was winding down. Thus began her remarkable journey. Kathryn earned her M.D. in 1946 and began her career in Chicago at the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium. Her work supported the newly divorced mother and her two young sons. She has continued in that field and holds a Master's Degree in Public Health from UC Berkeley. In the 1980's she became an activist and spokesperson for Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Kathryn continued to explore new things, from swimming, modern dance, skiing, back packing, and, best of all, a return to the writing career begun at age twelve. A creative writing class opened the gates to expressing a rich and varied life. She wrote and published a memoir about her sister, *Queen of the Derby Pub*, available from Creative Arts Book Company. This was followed by an article on www.Moviemag.com titled *Love Revisited*. Her style is clean, crisp and honest. She said she didn't use big words and long sentences. Well, "moxie" isn't a big word either but it does describe Dr. Kathryn Smick, Physician and Writer. (By the way, she was still downhill skiing with her eight grandchildren well into her seventies.)

Announcement

~ Literary agent Donald Maass to bring acclaimed writing workshop to the San Jose Area -

The workshop runs from February 16 to February 22, 2009, at the Sheraton Pleasanton Hotel. New York literary agent Donald Maass, author of the acclaimed *Writing the Breakout Novel* book and workbook, will provide an insider's guide on how to create fiction that will stand out in the publishing world. Students will receive one-on-one consultations from Maass and other members of the workshop staff. Cost of the workshop is \$1,895 for new students, \$1,775 for returning students, and includes all lodging and meals. For more information, visit the workshop website at www.free-expressions.com, or phone (886) 497-4832, to register or obtain additional information.

From the Editor's Desk

By Catherine Accardi

A SAN FRANCISCO LITERARY LANDMARK TURNS 100 YEARS OLD!

John's Grill was resplendent for its 100th birthday celebrations on November 13 and 14. On Friday the 14th, the public was invited to toast the landmark restaurant with eight cent martinis at John's bar. And, the invitation-only party on in the evening of Thursday, November 13, was quite the "read deal".

The invitation at the left reads that John's Grill, at 63 Ellis Street, has been a favorite of people in search of a great meal and a slice of history for over a century. This is where Dashiell Hammett enjoyed grilled chops and tomatoes. The Konstin family, owners of John's Grill, underwrote all the expenses for the evening. All proceeds went to benefit the City College of San Francisco Bernard Osher Scholarship Fund.

Now back to the matter at hand. It was a dark and starry evening as I turned the corner of Powell and Ellis Streets on the evening of November 13. Spilling into the street was a well-dressed group of people making their way through John's historic doors. Four giant search lights shot bright beams though the night sky. A colorful jazz band at the door, and another on the third level, provided sounds of the past. And, of course, there was the required private security detail, handsome in black tie. Guests were required to pass through security and were checked off the guest list as they entered. The reasons for security became evident when I spotted several notable figures, including former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown. Yes, he was wearing a fedora. Another reason for the tight security was the fact that the bar was open, *and free*, offering drinks, including champagne, to invited guests. The hors d'oeuvres were yummy.

I climbed the stairs to the upper levels entering a literary noir in San Francisco. After all, we were celebrating the noir photographs on the walls of Sam Spade and Bridget O'Shaughnessy, among others. The restaurant is not only a tribute to 100 years of San Francisco, but also a tribute to a California author. On the way out, all guests were offered a complimentary gift bag that included a bottle of cabernet sauvignon. The label reads John's Grill, home of the Maltese Falcon. "The Bird" is encased in glass on the second floor, next to a collection of books by Dashiell Hammett.



California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

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Sail On