

The Write News

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A Monthly Newsletter

December 2012

The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch

SPECIAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Saturday, December 8, 2012; 11:30am to 2:00pm
Our annual holiday program celebrating the recent writing successes of our own members



Susan Pace-Koch will discuss *Get Out Of My Head, I Should Go To Bed*, illustrated by award-winning Jeremy Kwan, and her latest kid's book, *In One Ear and Out the Other*, illustrated by Jack Wiens. Children's picture books make great Christmas presents, and Susan will have hers available for sale.

Kathleen Curtis Wilson will speak of her 20 years of writing set-backs, successes, and recognizing opportunities. She will describe 2 years of photography, 3 years of research, and 4 years to find a publisher for her third book, *Irish People, Irish Linen*, which will also make wonderful Christmas gifts.



Sign-in is 11:30am–12 pm, seated luncheon 12–1:00, and program 1:00–2:00 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. Registration is \$20, or \$25 for non-CWC members; **Contact Elisabeth Tuck by email at elisabethtuckcwc@gmail.com or call 925-377-6054 to sign up.**

CWC is a federal non-profit 501(c)(3)

Meeting Details and Luncheon Menu on Page 2

President's Message

By *Elisabeth Tuck*



Hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving and that the upcoming holidays are relaxing and joyful. Instead of reading anything from me, enjoy family and friends and take some time to think about writing projects for the new year. All the best.

Need an extra Christmas gift? Members will have their books for sale. We encourage all authors to bring their books and may we all support our fellow writers.

Be enticed with our authors' stories – 30-Second Elevator Pitches are on Page Four

**When you sign up for the December Meeting, remember it will be a seated lunch.
Order your luncheon meal from the selections below.**

DECEMBER 2012 - Meeting Details

Sign-in is 11:30am–12 pm, seated luncheon 12–12:45, and program 12:45–1:30 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. **Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, December 5th.** Registration is \$20, or \$25 for non-CWC members; **Contact Elisabeth Tuck by email at (elisabethtuckcwc@gmail.com) or call 925-377-6054 to sign up.** Expect confirmation only when you e-mail your reservation.

SELECT FROM THE FOLLOWING LUNCHEON CHOICES:

The December lunch menu includes: New York Steak, Salmon, Chicken Parmesan, and Veggie pasta. Please state your preference when making your meeting 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 or \$25 "no-show" payment according to your membership.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 12 - Constance Hale** – (Workshop) from her books, *Sin and Syntax* and *Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch*
- Feb. 9 - Nina Egert** – "Trimming the Fat from Your Writing: Tools for Developing Verbal Precision in Writing"

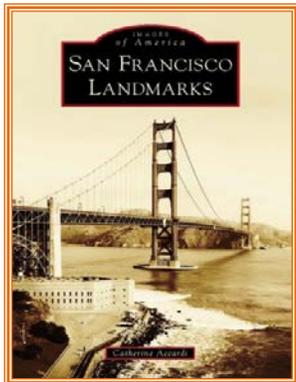
Member Events, News and Salutes



Rick Reed attended the 13th Annual Men of Mystery Event in Irvine, California. Fifty published authors hosted tables where they discussed their books and other topics. Guest speakers were John Lescroart, James Rollins, and Joseph Finder. For more on this event click on this link: http://www.menofmystery.org/registration-form_files/block_0/Men-of-Mystery-Flyer-2012.pdf

In July, 2013, Rick will give a "Killer Talk" for the Public Safety Writer's Conference in Las Vegas. With the plethora of crime programs on television that purport to examine the reason serial killers walk among us, there is just as much confusion. He will examine serial murder through an analysis of the lives of known serial killers in the U.S. and abroad. For more on this event click on the link: <http://marilynmeredith.blogspot.com/>

Rick was recently advised by his publisher that his second book in the Jack Murphy series, *The Coldest Fear*, has been picked up by German publisher Weltbild, and will be released in Germany in the Fall of 2013. He is busy writing the next in the series and hopes it will do as well as the first two.



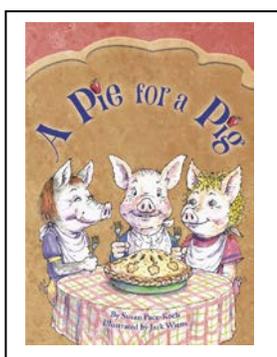
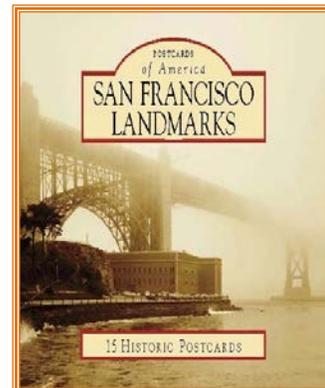
Catherine Accardi's latest book,

San Francisco Landmarks, will be featured at a free event on Sunday, December 16, from 1:00 to 3:00, at Cliché Note Gift Store in San Francisco. Refreshments will be served.

Cliché Noe is one of San Francisco's most treasured neighborhood shops, nestled in historic Noe Valley, located at 4175 - 24th Street.

San Francisco Landmarks highlights designated landmarks in the City by the Bay, with over 200 historic, vintage photographs.

The companion book is titled *Postcards of America-San Francisco Landmarks*. **Come, read a good book, and enjoy a historic San Francisco neighborhood!**



Susan Pace-Koch's (*Get Out Books*) will be visiting the Dozier-Libby School in Antioch to speak to classes in January on children's publishing and the mechanics of making a picture book, from start to finish. Story boards will be brought to show the progress for the upcoming release of *A Pie for a Pig*, due for release in the first half of the year. Delicious illustrations by Jack Wiens.

Editor's Note:

I am pleased to present submissions from your "30-Second Elevator Speeches" – please take note of the creativity and thought put into these pitches – we've got talent! For the sake of fairness, they are listed in the order in which they were received.

Perhaps you will find one of these books at the authors' sale!

30-Second Pitches

"I'm writing a memoir about the emotional and legal consequences of long-term workplace abuse, sharing details of relationships that will have you hanging onto your jaw."

(nom de plume) **Regina Mancuso**, *The Occupational Prostitute*

"Have you ever visited a friend in Japan, or India, and blundered your way through the cultural do's and don'ts? Understanding any culture before visiting it is so important because without that understanding our ability to communicate our ideas gives two strikes against us before we even begin. My mission to India was salvaged by a young man who understood my cultural incompetence."

Author - **Ken Kerkhoff**, *Pejathaya, The Story Teller*

"When my sister informed me our deceased parents had had siblings we knew nothing about, the search was on to find them."

Author - **Allene Graham**

"Travel the world like two gypsies living your dreams of adventure, savoring luxury at times but existing mostly with silver rings rather than gold, pampering your spirits with friends, music, dancing, and laughter, serving your souls with a bountiful, invisible feast. Explore your outer world town by town as you decipher peoples' inner worlds heart by heart."

Author - **Ted Wells**

Parents! You gotta love them...but they keep telling you what to do!

Make your bed, comb your hair, take out the trash...

...but how do kids *hear* that request...you'll see! in the colorful, clever art by Jack Wiens. Kids *hear* with a different set of ears! Play Time *verses* Chore Time! A wee bit of mischief and a whole lot of fun in a 'tale as old as time'.

Author - **Susan Pace-Koch**, *In One Ear and Out the Other*

"What happens behind cloister walls, tensions between the cloth, vows? Read about Mother Superior's death that seems natural to all except Sister Camille. She reports her suspicions to a detective friend who starts an investigation. Camille helps solve the murder, but is ordered to see a psychiatrist. There she examines her motive for joining the nunnery. Kicking off her nun shoes, she leaves the convent and becomes involved in another murder and a romance."

Author - **Fran Wojnar**, *Magdalena's Conflict*

"Eliza, 16 and brother, Heinrich, 14 are put on a ship to America in 1832 with few clothes and a trunk of bread. Landing in New Orleans, Eliza, in letters to her papa, describes slavery, wild animals and disease they encounter in America. Following the Mississippi River, Eliza meets Johann in St. Louis. Together they settle on the river in frontier Iowa."

Author - **Fran Wojnar**, *Eliza, an Iowa Pioneer*

“In 1909, Albert McCloud, a staunch Presbyterian, leases a small textile production mill in southwest Virginia that was abandoned after a major flood and sends his two youngest sons to put it back into operation. McCloud has no idea that his son, Summers will fall in love with Ella Hutchinson, a young wife and mother, married to a mean-spirited, hard-drinking mountain man who is unemployed and fifteen years her senior.”

“The story takes place over eighteen months, in which the main characters are forced to make difficult decisions in their personal and professional lives, ultimately choosing to abide by or challenge traditional values and the ultimate cost of those decisions.”

Author - **Kathleen Curtis Wilson**, *The Fabric of Wishful Thinking*

“She's lost her mother to cancer and her husband to infidelity. Now a lonely young woman learns that she has a birth twin and impulsively invites the penniless stranger into her life, despite the misgivings of a handsome police detective who is following a trail of arson and murder.”

Author – **Judith Ingram**, *Relative Doubt*

“This book is about a woman's struggle of success and failures in overcoming obstacles in fulfilling her dream of becoming a nurse-attorney.”

Author - **Lilly A Gwilliam**

“How does a 62-year-old woman who's never been married find happiness with an electrical contractor/pastor she meets on Craigslist? Can they marry without her losing her independence? Join me for the ride of my life as I meet and marry a man who changes me forever.”

Author - **Lynn Goodwin**

“Sandee is tired of being Brian Mason's little sister, and the fact that he's been MIA in Afghanistan for 7 months doesn't help. When she auditions for her high school musical in the hopes of finding her own talent and identity, she has no idea what others will expect, or what her real talent is.”

Author - **Lynn Goodwin**, *Talent*

The Craft of Writing

Random Thoughts from an Editor

The least important part of what an editor does is correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, or find redundancies. Of course those details are essential when you're ready to submit, but several other important issues must be addressed first. Following are thoughts I'll submit from a talk I gave at the Tri-Valley branch of the CWC.

After you've reworked your material, you probably have it memorized. If it's fiction, you know the story, where you intend the emphasis to be, what's important, and who the reader should care about. If it's non-fiction, you know the background and facts this piece fits into. But, is all that on the page? An editor brings the fresh eyes of a reader and will give you feedback on how the work may be read and understood by others, i.e.: What is the experience of reading this work? Is the story/article interesting? Can the reader see what the author meant them to see? Will they want to turn the page? Are there places where they'd rather drift off to sleep?

Every time a reader has an opportunity to stop reading, you risk that they'll put the work down and never pick it up again without really knowing why. Ensure you're clear. But do this subtly. We don't live in an age when readers are willing to suffer lines of description or explanation. Today a few words slipped in set the scene and let the reader know who they're with.

Point of view (POV): Whose story is it? From what point of view will you tell the story? Are you consistent?

The British love *omniscient narrators*: "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. . ." as in Charles Dickens or Ian McEwan.

The most common POV in this country is close third (he, she). With this POV, the camera is on the narrator's shoulder. The narrator can only relate what he sees, hears and knows. That's an excellent way to draw readers close to a character who they care about and want to follow. Less popular and more difficult for a reader is first person: I, or even more seldom, we.

It is possible to have more than one narrator but only with very clear scene changes. Such changes can take up a large portion of the book and don't leave as much time for action and for caring about characters. Be judicious. Good example: *House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III, told from alternating points of view of the two main characters. Bad example in my never-to-be-humble opinion: *Change of Heart* by Jodi Picoult, told among four points of view with the only clue being different type face. How does that translate to an audio book?!

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Characters: Establish who's seeing/telling this story early on. Gender? Age? Size? And anything that's important for reader understanding or story.

Characters need to be introduced to the reader with characteristics that make them memorable. What quirks, distinguishing features, malevolent looks, or kindnesses will each character have?

Are your characters realistic? Do they do things normal people do--or abnormal people if that's who they are?! What's unusual about them? Why are they interesting?

Include the characters' emotions. People think and feel whether or not they express it out loud. Human emotions bring characters alive and make readers want to follow them. Characters become real and just like us.

Are there extraneous characters who distract from the story?

Most of all, do the characters change as the story develops?

Story: Don't count on a preface, dust jacket, chapter headings, or back-of-the-book praise to inform the reader. Opening chapters or paragraphs are crucial to setting the story and they are extraordinarily hard to master.

Is your story compelling? What is the climax/tension/goal of this story or book? Is the story clear to the reader early on (within the first 5 pages)? What drives the reader to turn pages? What are the subplots or mini-stories that appear along the way? What kind of tension do they create? How are they resolved?

Scene: *Where* are we? *When* does this take place? If I live in Iowa, do I know what summer weather is like in the Bay Area? Ensure that what you see in your head is on the page. If your readers have to imagine too much, then you mention a detail that conflicts with what they imagined, that causes dissonance. They may stop reading.

Detail/description: Use detail sparingly peppered throughout. Let me see the woman hiding behind the tree, one sandal on the exposed tree root, the other in the dust. Use all five senses. Think "unexpected detail" such as feeling the pebbly surface of the avocado.

Conversations are a great place to add detail that reveals story/character/scene. The human brain has a fantastic capacity to think of many things at once. Our five senses are active. We feel the heat in the room, smell the brownies baking, hear the airplane rumble overhead, see people twitching around us and taste our soda, all while conversing with others. Using the senses helps the reader to participate in the scene and is an opportunity to reveal character and/or plot. Is that bill paid? My foot hurts. Does that person have a gun in his pocket? Did she look at me funny? Will he ever stop talking?

-Include action in the midst of conversations or otherwise you have talking heads which isn't interesting. ". . .she said, smoothing her frizzy hair."

-Start a new paragraph when a new person speaks.

-Use tags when writing conversation. Because our minds are so active and tend to wander, don't make your reader struggle to figure out who's talking. If the reader's dog barks and they look up wondering why, then return to the written conversation, let them easily pick up where they were, clearly knowing who's speaking because of tags. The brain won't trip on "he said," "she said."

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Verbs: Use interesting ones. Yes, someone can "walk over" to the table but surely they have other ways of moving around. They shuffle, saunter, lope, rush, limp, etc. Again, verbs can show the character.

Verb tense: The easiest tense for the reader is simple past. He ran, she swam, he thought, they loved. Less easy for both writer and reader is present tense. I am walking: the trees bend in the fierce wind. Whichever tense you use, be consistent.

Show, don't tell: Instead of saying "He was impatient," show him jingling the change in his pocket, shifting from foot to foot, or cutting someone off in conversation. Don't tell us a date, show us an era.

Chronological order: Write actions in the order they happen. Instead of "He spoke up after he entered the room," show him striding into the room then speaking.

Elisabeth Tuck
Literary Editor

'T WAS THE MONTH BEFORE DEADLINE

by Judith Ingram

'Twas the month before deadline, when all through my head
No ideas were stirring but feelings of dread.
Pink Post-its were hung on my iPad with care,
In hopes that my article soon would be there.

'Twas the week before deadline. I saw my hopes wane
As visions of wittiness fled from my brain.
"My schedule's too busy," I heard myself squeak.
"I'll write my piece later. I've still got a week!"

'Twas the night before deadline. My time had run low,
The screen of my iPad still blank as the snow.
My editor phoned, and I said, "I'll get to it.
I just have to make myself sit down and *do* it!"

Then laying my fingers atop of the keys,
I wrote the first line with astonishing ease.
More rapid than eagles fine paragraphs came,
And soon I was typing THE END and my name.

I ran it through Spell-Check but easily saw
That each word was perfect, each phrase without flaw.
I smiled and hit "Send" with a confident tap,
Then settled myself for a long winter's nap.

'Tis the night after deadline. I'm drinking champagne
And toasting the genius who lives in my brain,
When what to my wondering eyes should arrive
But a text that says "redo tomorrow by 5."

Writer's Markets Column

Literary Agents Seeking...

by **B. Lynn Goodwin**



Do you have a book that you don't want to self-publish? These agencies seem open to new as well as established authors. They have more than one agent, have an active list of works published, work in multiple genres, and do not seem to charge fees. In other words, they seem legit, though I cannot offer you any guarantees. If you find something that seems like a scam, please let me know at Lgood67334@comcast.net.

Click on each link to find out if the agent is seeking work in your genre. Most agents understand that you are submitting simultaneously. Notify the others immediately when you find the agent you want to work with.

Find more agents in your genre on your own. Google "Literary Agents seeking" and add your genre. NOTE: The first four are from the San Francisco Bay Area.

Andrea Brown Literary Agency
<http://www.andreabrownlit.com/about.php>

Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents
<http://www.larsenpomada.com/>

Hill Nadell Literary Agency
<http://www.hillnadell.com/>

Waterside Literary Agency (non-fiction, computers, technology)
<http://www.waterside.com/agency/literary-agency/>

Emphasis on Crime Fiction
<http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/members/stronglit/>

Emphasis on Women's Fiction
http://www.info.com/Literary_Agents_Seeking?cb=49&cmp=3976&gclid=CN3Hp-OL3LMCFeGDQgodORAAgg

Natasha Kern Literary Agency

<http://www.natashakern.com/>

Long List of Agents Accepting Romance

<http://www.passionatepen.com/agentlist.htm>

Irene Goodman Literary Agency

<http://www.irenegoodman.com/about.php>

Donald Maass Literary Agency

<http://www.maassagency.com/index.html>

Judith Ehrlich Literary Agency

<http://www.judithehrlichliterary.com/index.html>

Signature Literary Agency

www.signaturelit.com/

Veritas Literary Agency

<http://veritasliterary.com/index.shtml>

And of course...

Publisher's Marketplace (encourages you to join)

<http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/>

Sample Page from Publisher's Marketplace

<http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/members/SaraMegibow/>

Writer's Net (encourages you to join)

<http://www.writers.net/agents.html>

Poets & Writers

http://www.pw.org/literary_agents?perpage=*

Still can't find the right agent? Keep looking. Let me know what you come up with at Lgood67334@comcast.net. I'd love to hear your story.

2013 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, 2012, to the present:

<p>Foundation Donors <i>The Leroe Family Foundation</i></p>	<p>The John Steinbeck Society</p>
<p>The John Muir Member Club <i>Barbara Bentley</i></p> <p>The Mary Austin Writers Club <i>Kathy Urban</i> <i>In memory of Nancy O'Connell</i></p> <p><i>Betty Iverson – in honor of all the young writers</i></p> <p><i>David George – in honor of Elizabeth Pentacoff's years of generous time contributions to the success of the program.</i></p>	<p>The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club</p> <p><i>Sara Wilson – in honor of Elizabeth Pentacoff for her continued support of Young Writers</i></p> <p><i>Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff – in memory of Al and Elmer Koehler</i></p> <p><i>Rick Reed – by donating proceeds from book sales after speaking at Mt. Diablo Branch</i></p>

The 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.

~ 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 Gertrude Atherton Guild - \$10-\$24 ~ The Helen Hunt Jackson Group - \$25-\$49

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 9450

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 2013 contest. They are depending on you!



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

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 Christmas Luncheon
is on December 8, 2012 at 9:00 am, in Pleasant Hill.**

For detailed meeting 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.