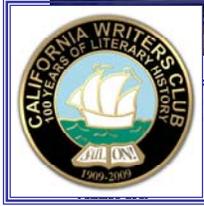


# The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

November 2010



## The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch

Presents

***James Dalessandro***

**November 13, 2010**



James Dalessandro

**James Dalessandro studied screenwriting at UCLA and worked as a writer at Columbia Pictures for many years, where he worked on dozens of films. From 1973-1977, he was co-founder, with Lawrence Ferlinghetti, of the Santa Cruz Poetry Festival, and served as its director for four years.**

**James is best known for his non-fiction novel *1906*, which is based on events surrounding the great San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. A film adaptation was co-produced by Warner Bros. and Pixar Studios, in association with Walt Disney Pictures. He has published three other books, *Canary in a Coal Mine* (poetry), *Bohemian Heart* (detective fiction), and *Citizen Jane* (true crime). A member of the Writer's Guild of America, West, for more than two decades, James has also written the screenplays for his other two books.**

**James was also the writer of "The House of Blues Radio Hour", hosted by Dan Aykroyd (as Elwood Blues). He was also the writer/creator of "Rock On" with The Doors' keyboardist Ray Manzarek. Both projects were produced for Ben Manilla Productions of San Francisco. He is also the writer/director of the award winning documentary film, "The Damnedest, Finest Ruins".**

**Having taught "Screenwriting as a Pro" at Fort Mason Art Center in San Francisco, James currently teaches screenwriting at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. He has lectured at the Cinequest Film Festival and the L.A. Screenwriting Expo.**

**For the November workshop, James will discuss the process of writing from the standpoint of similarities in books and screenplays. He will give the basics of writing a screenplay, from concept and "logline" to general formatting. James will also explain how to convert a novel into a screenplay, and discuss some strategies in getting your screenplay into the hands of a producer.**

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**Please join us for this informative workshop to be held at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant. Meeting details can be found on page two. Everyone is welcomed to come, learn, and network with local writers. The CWC, Mount Diablo Branch website address is [www.mtdiablownriters.org](http://www.mtdiablownriters.org).**

## November Meeting Details

**Date & Time:** Saturday, November 13, 2010. The November workshop check-in starts at 9:00 a.m., the program begins at 9:30 a.m., with lunch following.

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

**Cost:** Workshop and lunch: \$35 for CWC members; \$40 for guests - Lunch only: \$20 for CWC members; \$25 for guests

**Menu:** Zio Fraedo's sumptuous buffet.

**Reservations:** Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, November 10. 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 if 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 either 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.

## Coming Attractions~Upcoming Speakers for 2010-2011

**December 11:** "Three of Our Own"

*Deborah Davis*

*Beverly Lauderdale*

*Judith Marshall*

**January 8:** Ransom Stephens, "The Future of Publishing"

**February 12:** Tamim Ansary, Director of the San Francisco Writer's Workshop

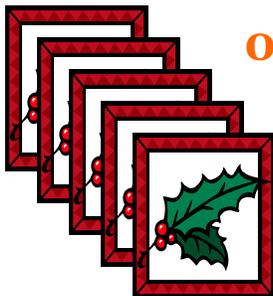
**March 12:** Workshop - Lisa Alpine & Carla King, Self Publishing

**April 9:** To be determined

**May 21:** Young Writers Banquet - Abigail Samoun, Editor

**June 11:** Workshop - Jeff Carlson, fiction & non-fiction author

Writing Process/Selling One's Work



**On December 11,** the CWC-Mount Diablo Branch will feature "Three of Our Own": **Deborah Davis** (children's author), **Beverly Lauderdale** (paranormal author), and **Judith Marshall** (contemporary fiction). Mark your calendars and be sure to join us for our festive meeting and delicious holiday, full service menu. Details will be available in our December newsletter, due out on December 1, and on our branch website at [www.mtdiablowriters.org](http://www.mtdiablowriters.org)

## President's Message *(that would be our interim president!)*

By David George



We are all sorry to see Bill Stong leave the branch President's role to begin his new position in Michigan. We wish him all the best in his important capacity of rescuing a failing regional bank.

However, I am very pleased to announce that our longtime board member and all-around good guy, Lee Paulson has agreed to step into the role of Interim Branch President effective January 1. Lee's tenure will continue through our annual June meeting when we will elect new branch officers. The newly elected officers will then take over July 1 as usual.

Please join me in welcoming Lee to his new role. And, the next time you see them, please thank Jack Russ and Elisabeth Tuck for helping convince Lee that he is The Man. I will be our Interim President and Master of Ceremonies through the December holiday meeting. So, please direct your glowing compliments or constructive criticisms to me through the end of this calendar year.

## President's Message *(that would be our outgoing president!)*

By William Stong



Dear Mt. Diablo branch members:  
Regarding my brief Presidency,

**Veni. Vidi. Verti.**

That was going to be the extent of my second, and last, President article for our newsletter. Brevity and all that. However, my editor disabused me of doing so—without even having to say anything.

Being associated with our Mount Diablo branch has been a great blessing for me. I've always fancied myself a writer, even a good writer. The branch, and more accurately the great people at the branch, (members, guests, speakers, workshop leaders), gently but firmly *showed* how my writing could stand with a bit (okay! A whole lot) of improvement. The critique group that meets before the general meetings has helped me more than I can possibly relate. Without them, I wouldn't have plowed through to the end of the first draft. The programs and workshops have also been incredibly helpful—and led me to more courses, studying, and learning about writing.

I am forever indebted to the Phoenix Hall Writers critique group. Their camaraderie and consistently direct, constructive feedback have moved me forward. Its members have kept me energized and motivated to continually become a better writer. Whether I ever become one is up to me. CWC Mount Diablo branch has given me the foundation.

I leave the branch with a deeply conflicted heart.

During Robert Dugoni's lively, passionate, and spot-on talk on October 9, one of his points hit me personally. He shared some advice he had received from his good friend and artist, Michael Collopy:

“Follow your dreams and the money will come.  
Follow the money and you lose your dreams.”

It was like a 2 x 4 cracked me on my forehead: “*Oh my gosh! What have I done?!*”

All the best, Bill



## Member News and Salutes

\* **Barbara Bentley** will be featured on the VIVA network in Canada on October 30 and on November 5, on the program "The Devil You Know." Her one-hour segment is titled "Devil in Disguise" and features her book *A Dance with the Devil: A True Story of Marriage to a Psychopath*. Her story was also featured in the September 6 issue of the weekly U.K. magazine *Full House*.

\* **Joanna Kraus'** play, *Pilot Christabel*, will be produced and presented by the Diablo Actors Ensemble on December 9, 10, and 11 at 8:00 p.m., and also on December 12 at 2:00 p.m. The Diablo Actors Ensemble Studio is located at 1345 Locust Street, Walnut Creek. For more information, go to [www.diabloactors.com](http://www.diabloactors.com), or phone 866-811-4111.

\* **Cheryl Spanos'** short story, *Counting*, has been published in *Beyond Centauri* #30, October, 2010.

\* **Cheryl Vaught's** novel, *Plural Bride to Be*, has won First Place in the novel category of the Mendocino Coast Writers Conference Contest. And, Chapter 15, "Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness", from this novel, has been published in the literary review magazine, *Todd Point Review*.



## Calling All Members! Would You Like To Be Saluted?

We would like to salute you in *The Write News*. We want you to share your good news! Have you had a sale, have an upcoming author event, or have you been published recently (whether paid or not)? If so, we would like to share your good news. Let your newsletter Editor know by providing your name and news, along with a photo if you would like. Contact Catherine at [caacat@comcast.net](mailto:caacat@comcast.net).



**The West Winds Centennial Anthology** is coming out soon and is available now for early (internal) orders. Mount Diablo Branch members with included works are Pat Edwards, Lynn Goodwin, Lani Longshore, Jill Hedgecock, Joanne Brown, and David George.

Our Branch will purchase 25 copies of the book at the preorder price of \$6 each to be used for door prizes. The West Winds Centennial Anthology will be available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble online. The ISBN number is 978-0-9829584-0-7.

Early honorary members of the California Writers Club included Jack London, George Sterling, John Muir, Joaquin Miller, and the first California poet laureate, Ina Coolbrith. The first WEST WINDS, a hardcover collection of fiction by members, was published in 1914 and was illustrated by California artists. Since that time three other WEST WINDS have been published.



## The Back Fence

**Don't forget** to hang out at our **Back Fence**. That would be our Mount Diablo branch site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CWCBackFence/>. At The Fence you will find topics of interest to writers. You can also sign-up for Back Fence e-mails. If you haven't yet joined the Back Fence, go to the link above and follow the simple sign-up process.

## The CWC-Mount Diablo Branch Critique Group

By Peter Hjersman

For over seven years, CWC has been the most decisive assistance with my writing. The speakers, workshops, and camaraderie have kept my pencil, pen, and keys in motion.

Jerry Vaught coordinated the CWC-Mount Diablo critique group for a long time, following the originator, Igal Levy. Then, I was honored to be offered the position of critique architect. Jerry helped in setting it up. Every month, I sent advance e-mails to confirm the meeting for those I knew wanted to know, hoping the e-mails were current. As of October 9, Ted Wells has volunteered to facilitate the crit, so the group will continue to inspire the CWC writers. The branch critique group meets at Zio Fraedo's prior to our regular Saturday monthly meetings.

This critique group of irregular participants and different partners has strength with the unknown partners. *Not* knowing whose input we will receive brings in insightful new perspectives to our MS. Along the way, I wanted to supplement this with regulars. At a regular CWC crit, three of us decided to start a regular critique group. Thus, Phoenix was born (for more details, see <http://phoenixhallwriters.wordpress.com/about/>).

I am going back to Japan for a couple of years—an extended 'vacation' and I look forward to returning to CWC. Thank you everyone for all you gave me.

## Writing Contest

**Central Coast Writers 2011 Spring Writing Contest** is open to all work not previously published. The contest is open to all writers. You do not need to be a member of CCW to enter. Enter as many times as you wish, with separate fee for each entry. Submission Period: September 15, 2010 through January 15, 2011 (by postmark). Submit to: CCW Writing Contest, P.O. Box 997, Pacific Grove, CA 93950. Make your check payable to Central Coast Writers. Questions: Send e-mail to [ccw-contests@comcast.net](mailto:ccw-contests@comcast.net).

## Conferences/Symposium

**The 2011 San Francisco Writers Conference** will be held February 18-20 at the Mark Hopkins Hotel, on San Francisco's Nob Hill. Nearly 100 presenters - author, agents, editors, publishers, and book marketing professionals will share their knowledge and know-how with you. For complete details go to [www.SFWriters.org](http://www.SFWriters.org), or phone (925) 560-1403 or (415) 673-0939.

**The 2010 San Francisco Writing for Change Conference** is the third annual Nonfiction Writers' Conference. It will be held November 13 and 14 at the San Francisco Financial District Hilton Hotel. The conference is a world-class writers' event created to give writers the knowledge they need to write, sell, and promote books that will change the world in positive ways. Such book topics include business, politics, technology, spirituality, health, culture, and social issues. More information is available at [www.SFWritingforChange.org](http://www.SFWritingforChange.org), and by phone at (925) 560-1403, or (415) 673-0939.

**The All About eBooks Symposium** will take place on November 12, from 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the Hilton-Financial. Join today's leaders in the digital publishing revolution for insight and education about everything eBooks. Learn what all authors should know about the realities of today's technology and get a glimpse into the future of this quickly-evolving publishing opportunity. Registration fee of \$199 includes the agent luncheon panel at Chinatown's R & G Lounge plus Hilton cocktail reception with eReader exhibition. For more information, go to [www.sfwritingforchange.org/pages.cfm?ID=33](http://www.sfwritingforchange.org/pages.cfm?ID=33).

## Special Report from the Membership Chair

By Jody Denison



Your Money and Where it goes.....

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 California Writers (no apostrophe) Club.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Member Pays</u>	<u>Branch Keeps</u>	<u>Branch pays State</u>
Renewals	\$45.00	\$20.00	\$25.00
New	\$65.00	\$30.00	\$35.00
Patron or Courtesy	0	0	\$25.00
Emeritus	\$15.00	\$7.00	\$8.00
Life	\$599.00	\$400.00	\$199.00 *
Dual Branch **	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$0
After January1-New	\$42.00	\$20.00	\$22.50
Student/Youth	Branch choice	Branch choice	\$10.00

\* One-time payment-Special Centennial Rate

\*\* Non-primary branch

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.

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

- The CWC Bulletin
- 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.

As of this writing, we number 142 members:

Active: 71 (51%)~Associate: 58 (40%)

Supporting: 4, Patron: 2, Emeritus: 3, Life Members: 3

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 \$3,200. We have long been charged to collect a \$20 late fee for dues received after September 30, but we haven't been doing that and now we learn that if one is late with dues and we do not charge the fee, the membership will be voided. So next year “the state of grace” will be voided and we will collect the \$20 fee for late payers after September 30. So when we start “haranguing” you in March, please know we have your interests (both literary and financial) at heart.

## From The Editor's Desk

By Catherine Accardi

### *Bouchercon by the Bay*



This was the year! I was so pleased to learn that Bouchercon 2010 was to be held in San Francisco. Bouchercon, the Anthony Boucher Memorial World Mystery Convention, is an annual convention of creators and devotees of mystery and detective fiction. It is named in honor of writer, reviewer, and editor Anthony Boucher.

For the 41st time, mystery readers, writers, agents, editors, librarians, booksellers, publishers were all together, approximately 1,500 of them. We all gathered at the Hyatt Regency from October 14th through the 17th. Special events, numerous panels, and an amazing awards brunch completely satisfied aficionados of the genre. And the winners were:

Best Novel: *The Brutal Telling* by Louise Penny

Best First Novel: *A Bad Day for Sorry* by Sophie Littlefield  
(Ms. Littlefield was our June, 2010 speaker)

Best Paperback Original: *Starvation Lake* by Bryan Gruley

Best Short Story: *On the House* by Hank Phillippi Ryan

Best Critical Non-Fiction Work: *Talking about Detective Fiction* by P.D. James

## Member Profile

By Jody Denison

### Profile: *Nina Egert*

Before turning to writing, Nina Egert's creative efforts were of a musical nature. She came to the East Bay to study North Indian classical music, and received her BA and MA in Music Composition from Mills College. She took up photography while pursuing her doctorate in anthropology at CAL to help illustrate her informants' musical and ritual performances. After exhibiting profiles on various Asian and Asian American groups, and winning a couple of prestigious photography awards, she took a few stabs at writing before finding her speed integrating mediums. Focusing on ethnic diversity in the East Bay (both historical and contemporary), Dr. Egert has produced three books: *Tracing Anza's Trail: A Photographer's Journey, A Place Where the Wind Blows; Mien Women Plant New Roots at Oakland's Original Rancho*, and *Noguchi's California: Poetic Visions of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Dharma Bum*.



## **Call For Volunteers**

### **Would You Like To Be A Volunteer For Your Writers Club?**

Would you not want to further the mission of our writers club? Our mission, as defined on our statewide club website is:

*"Educating writers of all abilities in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work"*

Sounds like a good plan to me. Our writers club runs smoothly thanks to our talented and dedicated volunteers. Our board members are volunteers, our program chairs are volunteers, and all the other people that assist with various projects and tasks are volunteers. We want you to be our next volunteer. For more information about what opportunities are available to you, contact our interim president, David George, at [davegeorge7@comcast.net](mailto:davegeorge7@comcast.net).

# 2011 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, 2010, to the present:

### Foundation Donors

*The Leroe Family Foundation*

### The John Steinbeck Society

### The Jack London Founder's Circle

*Christine Sunderland*

### The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club

*Barbara Bentley*

*Joanne Brown*

### The John Muir Member Club

*Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff in memory of Al and Elmer Koehler*

### The Mary Austin Writers Club

*Sarah Wilson in memory of Sue Tasker*

### The Helen Hunt Jackson Group

*Edward Stanislawski*

### The Gertrude Atherton Guild

*Nanette Cooper McGuinness*

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 in May 2011, 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 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 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 2010 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 2011 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 meeting/workshop  
is on November 13, 2010, at 9:30, in Pleasant Hill.  
For detailed meeting information, go to  
[www.mtdiablowlriters.org](http://www.mtdiablowlriters.org).**

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.