



The Write News

California Writers Club – Mount Diablo Branch

A Monthly Publication

February 2008

February Speaker and Meeting Information

The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch, Presents
Hailey Lind



Award-winning author Hailey Lind will address the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club at their luncheon meeting, Saturday, February 9, 2008, at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant.

The Art of Forgery: Inform Your Writing with your Passion and Knowledge is Hailey Lind's intriguing topic. "Hailey Lind" is the pseudonym for two sisters who collaborate on *The Art Lover's Mystery*

Series. The first in the series, *Feint of Art*, was nominated for an Agatha Award for best first novel. The second, *Shooting Gallery*, was an Independent Mystery Booksellers' Association (IMBA) Bestseller. The third, *Brush with Death*, was released last year. Ms. Lind is the Bay Area half of the writing duo, and is a portrait artist and muralist with her own faux finishing and design business. She combines her knowledge of fine art and skillful plotting in her best-selling novels.

Please join us at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, in Lafayette, on Saturday, February 9. You will find meeting details below. All are welcome to come, learn, and network with local writers. The California Writers Club, Mount Diablo Branch web address is: <http://www.mtdiablownriters.org>

February Meeting Details

Date & Time: Saturday, February 9, 2008, at 11:30 a.m.

Location: The Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette (at the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Highway 24).

Cost: \$20 for CWC members, and \$25 for non-members.

Menu Choices: Beef Tips - Lean tips of beef sautéed in garlic butter with red onions and sliced mushrooms, tossed in savory peppercorn sauce, and served with rice pilaf; Salmon - A filet brushed with a blend of basil, mustard seed, garlic and lemon; Chicken Caesar salad; Turkey croissant sandwich with french fries; or Veggie pasta.

Reservations: Reservations are required, and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, February 6. To make reservations, contact Barbara Bentley, with your menu choice, via e-mail at barbararex@astound.net, or by phone at (925) 930-2897. Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation.

Upcoming Speakers for 2008

March 8 - Meredith Maran ~ Workshop

April 12 - Emily Boyd, Editor ~ North Atlantic Books

May 10 - Young Authors Banquet (speaker to be announced)

June 14 - Martha Engber ~ Great Characters from the Ground Up

July & August - Club does not meet in July or August

September 13 - Darryl Brock, Novelist

President's Message

By Jack Russ



All of us will admit that sometimes our writing could be better. Sometimes we would appreciate an unbiased second look at our work, and not from well meaning friends or relatives who often can't be truly objective. Finding that "right" reviewer(s) may seem daunting but help is available. If you ask around at one of our meetings you'll learn that many of our members are active participants in one critique group or another. Most groups are small (2-10 members), focusing on a single genre such as children's, mystery, general fiction, etc. For many, participation is by invitation. But others, such

as the group led by Jerry Vaught that meets at 9:30 a.m. at the Hungry Hunter before our monthly meetings, is open to any member.

An additional avenue for finding and joining an appropriate critique group is to post your need on our Back Fence members-only website, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CWCBackFence>. I can assure you from personal experience, examination of your work by one or more objective writers can do wonders for your masterpiece, stimulate your writing, and open new avenues you may have overlooked.

Sales and Salutes

Myrtle Archer's short story, *Then Outward Shine*, has been accepted by *Gem Magazine* for publication.

The CWC Literary Anthology Wants You!

The CWC literary anthology is in the planning phase. This quality publication will be a venue for showcasing our members' essays, fiction, poetry, and art. Interested in working with a talented and motivated committee of members to make the next CWC literary anthology a reality?

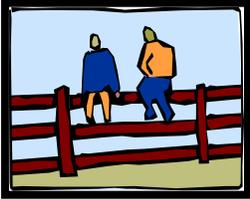
Contact I.D. Levy at textractor@yahoo.com.

Your Help is Needed!

Elizabeth Moreskine will no longer be able to write the thank you letters she has so graciously written in the past. If you or anyone you know is interested in this position, it requires just a little bit of time. Not much! No meetings either!

The Back Fence

By Julie Dowling



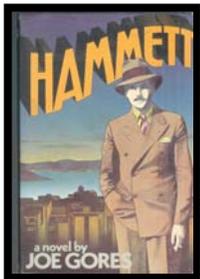
Have you seen Shannon's t-shirts for writers? Did you hear about how Laura fixed Al's MS Word headache? What did you think of the new writer web site links? If none of this sounds familiar, then hop on over to the **Back Fence**—our branch's online message group.

Here you can interact with more than fifty other Mt. Diablo and Tri-Valley CWC members every day, not just at our monthly meetings. You can form a critique group, seek feedback on a story idea, post details on a local literary event, query other members about carpooling to a conference, and share your writing successes (or frustrations).

If you're already a member, we invite you to do what you do best: write! We'd love to hear about how your new memoir is going, where you found your literary agent, or when your personal essay is published. To start exchanging ideas with other members, just go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/cwbackfence. If you have any questions about joining or posting, e-mail our Back Fence coordinator, Julie Dowling at JulieMDowling@yahoo.com. Hope to see more of you peeking over our **Back Fence** soon!

From the Editor's Desk

By Catherine Accardi



Behind every classic film noir, there was a short story, or a novel, or a screenplay. The written word came first, shaping each scene, each character, and their dialogue.

I had the opportunity to observe a panel of the finest noir writers and historians several days ago at the Mechanics Institute Library's event, **San Francisco Noir: Past to Present**. This was the Institute third annual literary noir night. The panel consisted of noir editor Peter Maravelis, author Peter Plate, noir historian Don Herron, film noir restorer and writer, Eddie Muller and one other person. That other person was, in my opinion, the best living noir author today, Joe Gores.

Mr. Gores has many impressive credits to his name. Over his lengthily career as a private detective and author, he wrote the novel *Hammett*, historical fiction based on the life of Dashiell Hammett. *Hammett* was made into a film starring Frederic Forrest, and produced by Francis Ford Coppola. It was exquisitely neo noir. Mr. Gores and I discussed his prize winning 1975 essay *A Foggy Night*, a detailed analysis of Sam Spade's life during *The Maltese Falcon*. He told me he has achieved a very impressive success recently. He has received the permission of the Hammett family to write the prequel to *The Maltese Falcon*. The possible title for the new novel is *Spade and Archer*. A quote from the publication, *Library Journal*, states: "Mystery writer Joe Gores' lifelong fascination with Dashiell Hammett is paying off in spades—literally: Gores has been tapped by Knopf (Hammett's publisher) to write a prequel to *The Maltese Falcon* featuring PI partners Sam Spade and Miles Archer. The six-figure deal calls for Gores to deliver the manuscript in late 2007."

In subsequent editions of *The Write News*, I will highlight noir authors, including several of the best, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and of course, Joe Gores. All these authors were, after all, California writers. But, before I do the above, I must go and polish my falcon.

Young Writers Learn How to Write Funny in Humor Workshop



Susie Wilson and Liz Koehler-Pentacoff led forty-one creative and enthusiastic middle school students in the Young Writers Humor Workshop at the Hungry Hunter in January. Susie and Liz report that the brunch was delicious, the kids were lots of fun, and the discussion and stories and poems were creative and inspiring.

Be a Writing Evangelist!

It's that time of year again! Encourage middle school students to write poems, essays, and short stories for our contest. The contest application form, guidelines, and tips are on our website at <http://mtdiablowriters.org>. Tips for submission for the Young Writers Contest can also be found below. Entries must be postmarked by April 1st. Entries are accepted NOW. All students in Contra Costa County may enter any and all categories as many times as they wish. NO CHARGE.

Winners will be presented with their cash prizes and framed awards at a dinner on Friday evening, May 16th, at the Pleasant Hill Community Center, featuring former Channel Two Anchor, Leslie Griffith, who is as excited about our contest as we are! We will be posting more information on advance ticket sales, or reservations, soon, so save the date on your calendar.

Young Writers Contest Tips for Submission:

1. Follow the guidelines precisely. If the guidelines aren't followed, your entry will be disqualified.
2. Print clearly so the judges can read your name, address and phone number.
3. Submit poetry in any form. Poems don't have to rhyme. However, poetry isn't simply words written down to look like a poem. A poem is dense. A lot of meaning is packed in a few words. Since each word is there for a purpose, 'extra' words should be edited. The best poetry helps a reader see something in a new way.
4. Write an essay, which can be a personal experience piece, so that readers experience an emotion. They should feel they are there. An essay often has an epiphany - an 'ah-ha' moment in which you were changed or learned something not realized before.
5. Use your senses in all types of writing, including your short story. Also, make sure you have a beginning, middle and end. Ask yourself, "Who is my story about?" "What is my main character's problem?" "What keeps him or her from solving it?" "How does my character resolve the problem?"
6. Rewrite your story. Published writers write their stories over and over. The first few times they may concentrate on telling their story and thinking about the characters. Then they work on other areas such as specific details.
7. Enter the contest as often as you like, but send only your best work.
8. Keep writing even if you don't win this contest. Every writer faces rejection. The first book Dr. Seuss wrote was rejected by publishers two dozen times. Madeline L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* was rejected twenty-nine times. These writers refused to give up. They kept learning their craft and they believed in their writing!

A Website Review

By B. Lynn Goodwin

WRITER'S TOOLBOX: A Gateway to Information

Even the most experienced author has questions. Skilled writers provide answers in the Writer's Toolbox, <http://www.writingclasses.com/WritersResources/toolbox.php>. It's offered by the Gotham Writers' Workshop and is a site worth adding to your bookmarks.

The Writer's Toolbox page presents five links to "thought-provoking exercises, activities, and advice that will help you generate ideas, break through problems, and improve your stories." "Ask the Writer" is a 59-question Q & A, with top-notch detailed answers. "Faculty Articles" cover fiction, memoir, romance, and screen writing as well as general information.

Read tips from Kurt Vonnegut, George Orwell, Strunk & White, Elmore Leonard, Jack Kerouac and more in "Tips from Masters." "*Fiction Gallery Teaching Guide*" offers story openings and intelligent questions from the book by that name. Be sure to check out the two downloadable "Character Questionnaires," one by Gotham Writers Workshop and one by Marcel Proust. They are fabulous.

If you like the links in the Writer's Toolbox, check out "Resources" or consider taking an online class. Everything you need is on the site. All writers need tools. Writer's Toolbox website at www.writingclasses.com/WritersResources/toolbox.php, is a gateway to the information you need.

Meet Our Member

By Jody Denison

Profile: Claudia Harper

Claudia Harper is a new member to the Mt. Diablo branch of the California Writers Club, but she is no stranger to CWC. In the early 1980's she was a charter member of the San Fernando Valley Branch. Claudia began writing short stories at the age of eight. This practice set her course to write poetry and articles for the school paper and creative writing magazines through high school. She says it was "all for fun." It was fun to put words together, and being an avid reader quickened what she calls her "addiction." Claudia couldn't stop. We can all relate to her statement that, "writing a piece that says exactly what I want is one of the most satisfying, exciting kinds of "jobs" a person can do." Claudia has found that poetry offers a real challenge as it requires putting a story or a feeling into its basic short form, while keeping a rhythm and inner rhyme. She finds writing a poem a constant adventure—exciting and satisfying.

Claudia's educational history reflects a love of learning. Starting at Punahou in Oahu, Hawaii, she later went to Piedmont High and from there to Pomona College, Smith College, and then the University of Geneva and finished up at the Graduate School of International Studies outside Geneva. But wait, she wasn't through. She graduated from Cal Berkeley and did more graduate work there, as well as California State Bakersfield, Northridge and UCLA.

Her publishing history is equal to her educational history. To cite just one--her book, "Northwest Rainforest Pioneers" is a lovely poetic description of the life of the first Scandinavian settlers in the Lower Columbia River area.

Claudia is also the proud mother of seven children and as she says, "many grandchildren." Actually, Claudia is a book unto herself! Welcome back to CWC!

Conferences

* **The 7th Annual Pleasanton Poetry, Prose & Arts Festival** will take place on April 5 and 6, 2008, at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., in Pleasanton. The contest entry deadline and early registration deadline are both March 8. For festival information, registration, or brochure, check their website at www.PleasantonArts.org, or contact Michelle Russo at (925) 931-5350, or via e-mail at mrusso@ci.pleasanton.ca.us.

* **The Maui Writers Conference** will take place on Friday, August 29th - Monday, September 1st, 2008. ~ "Offering Something Valuable for Every Writer" ~ While the Conference highlights the fields of fiction, nonfiction, and screenwriting, we are also proud to present insightful specialty workshops on the issues of writing, children's and young adult books, journalism, magazine writing, food and cookbook writing, and poetry. For conference details, visit their website at www.mauiwriters.com.

Contests

* **The 2008 New York Book Festival** has issued a call for entries to its annual program. This book festival will consider published, self-published and independent publisher non-fiction, fiction, children's books, science fiction, horror, photography/art, romance and biography/autobiography works. Regular registration deadline in each category must be postmarked by the close of business on May 25, 2008. To enter, check the New York Book Festival website at www.newyorkbookfestival.com, phone (323) 665-8080, or e-mail NewYorkBookFest@aol.com, for more information.

* **The Sacramento Branch of the California Writers Club** is accepting entries for their 2008 Limerick and Poetry Contests. The deadline is March 31, 2008. For more information, contact contest chair Evelyn Luscher at eluscher@sbcglobal.net.

* **The Central Coast Branch of the California Writers Club** is having its Spring 2008 contest for poetry and short stories. Awards for winners in each category: \$250 and publication (print and on-line) in the spring '08 *Homestead Review* (Hartnell College, Salinas). Entry Fees: \$15 per short story and \$5 per poem. Submission period: February 1, 2008 through March 31, 2008. For complete information, to to <http://www.centralcoastwriters.org/2008-spring-contest-rules.htm>.

* **The Tom Howard/John H. Reid Short Story Contest** is accepting submissions until March 31, 2008. They are seeking short stories, essays and other works of prose, up to 5,000 words. For more contest information check www.winningwriters.com/tomstory

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## February's Notable Quote:

"Writing, even writing hard-boiled stories of mayhem and murder, demands insights and compassions that are destructive to the manhunter. Begin seeing your antagonist as a fellow human sufferer, rather than the enemy, and you lose that hard edge that lets you survive emotionally, and, in rare instances, physically, as an investigator".

~ Joe Gores

## *California Writers Club - Mount Diablo Branch*

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