

# The Write News

## California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

A Monthly Newsletter

February 2010

### The California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

“One Hundred Years of Excellence in Writing”

#### Features

**Suzanne Woods Fisher**

**"Starting Small"**

**February 13, 2010**



Suzanne Woods Fisher encourages writers to dream big, without overlooking the smaller steps along the writing/publishing path. “Starting small,” she says, “provides many advantages—having time to develop one’s writing craft, understanding the business of book promotion, and learning to speak in front of groups.” Before launching her career as a novelist, she was a contributing editor to *Christian Parenting Today*. Her work has been featured in *Today’s Christian Woman*, *Marriage Partnership*, and *Worldwide Challenge*. Hooked by the book-

writing bug, she began with small royalty presses, then advanced to a larger publisher. Suzanne is the author of the new Amish series, *Lancaster County Secrets* (Revell). *The Choice* (January 2010), already in its third printing, is a runaway bestseller and book club choice (Crossings, Doubleday, Bookspan). *The Waiting* is due in October, and she has signed a new three-book contract with Revell.



Please join us for this informative session to be held at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant. All are welcome to come, learn, and network with local writers. The CWC, Mount Diablo Branch web address is [www.mtdiablowlriters.org](http://www.mtdiablowlriters.org).

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### February Meeting Details

**Date & Time:** Saturday, February 13, 2010, from noon to 2:30 p.m.

**Sign-in begins at 11:30.**

**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:** \$20 for CWC members, \$25 for non-members

**Menu:** Zio Fraedo's delicious luncheon buffet.

**Reservations:** Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, February 10. To make a reservation, contact Jean Georgakopoulos, via e-mail at [jeaniegpops@comcast.net](mailto:jeaniegpops@comcast.net), or by phone at (925) 934-5677. Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation.



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 cancel your reservation prior to noon on Friday, December 11, you will be asked to remit a \$20 "no-show" payment.

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## ~ *Coming Attractions* ~ *Upcoming Speakers for 2009-2010*

**March 13: Nik C. Colyer, Grit-Lit Novelist, Poet, author of the Biker Bob series**

**April 10: Writing Workshop ~ Martha Engber**

**May 15: Young Writers Banquet ~ Melissa Manlove, Editor, Chronicle Books**

**June 12: Sophie Littlefield, Author**

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## President's Message

By David George



Volunteer service has always been important to our world, our communities, and our Club. All of us have watched on the news the selfless efforts of volunteer aid workers helping the desperate earthquake victims in Haiti. But I wanted to spend a moment to thank each and every individual that has held your Club together and provided the great monthly meetings and youth programs throughout the year.

Please join me in thanking (or hugging them if you wish) our board members, committee chairs, and helpers the next time you see them:

Catherine Accardi, Barbara Bentley, Joanne Brown, Ann Damaschino, Jody Denison, Julie Dowling, Pat Edwards, Danard Emanuelson, Al Garrotto, Jean Georgakopoulos, Liz Pentacoff, Veronica Rossi, Aline Soules, Bill Stong, Elisabeth Tuck, Fran Wojner, Jack Russ, Camille Minichino, Nannette Carroll, Lee Paulson, Betty Iverson, Peter Hjersman, Bee Hylinsky, David Alpaugh, Cynthia Borcena, Jerry Vaught, Sarah Wilson, and Kathy Urban.

Please forgive me if I've left someone off this list of generous volunteers. But I wanted to list all the folks so you, Dear Reader have a good idea just how many volunteers it takes to run the Club. I am but a smiling face. They do almost all the work on your behalf. We all benefit from their contributions.

But life circumstances and energy levels change over time. Each year, the Club loses the service of a number of well-worn individuals who have just had enough. That is why I am asking for YOUR help running our Club next year. I know how busy we have all become. But, the Mount Diablo branch is very active and adds great value to the membership and general community.

We will have interesting (but not too challenging) tasks that need to be done. You don't need to be a branch officer or even a board member to help out. If you have recently joined the Mount Diablo branch and have a few hours a month to lend, or if you are a long-time member and are ready to step up and help out, we'd love your assistance. You'll realize how rewarding it can be.

Come join us at our next board meeting just prior to the general membership meeting on Saturday, February 13, beginning at 10 a.m. Share your new ideas and energy, and enjoy the camaraderie of our talented and fun team.

## National Gallery of Writing Honors Writers of All Levels

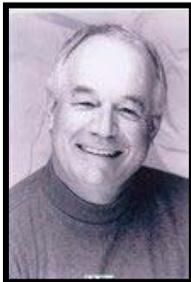
By Kathy Urban

Have you ever stopped to think about how often you write each day? Grocery lists, emails, checks, birthday cards, and blogs, to name a few? Add in the short story, personal essay, memoir, or novel you're hoping to get published, and you probably write more often than you think. For most of us, author Sarah McCoy said it best. "A day without writing is like a day without food."

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the U.S. Senate declared October 20, 2009, as the National Day of Writing. They marked this day by creating the National Gallery of Writing online and asking Americans to share their written words in addition to audio, video, and artwork. There are currently almost 18,000 compositions on the website. They're open to submissions through June 1, 2010 and to reading and viewing through June 30, 2010. Visit the link <http://galleryofwriting.org/> to read what's been posted or to submit your own work. You're eligible to submit one piece of writing to each gallery (there are nearly 1,800 of them) or to post a link to writing you already have on the internet. You can even start a local gallery with writings from your club.

The NCTE posted some helpful tips for writers on their website at <http://www.ncte.org/dayonwriting/tips>. Some of it is basic information but a good refresher for all of us, or information we can share with family and friends who may want to post their writing. What will you post on the National Gallery of Writing? The possibilities are endless but the submission time isn't. Start posting today!

## Sales and Salutes



**Jerry Blair's** poem, *The Children's Hour*, has been published in the 41st edition of the literary magazine *Pearl*. Jerry was pleased to be in the company of several featured writers, Christopher Buckley among them.

## Members – Would You Like To Be Saluted?

We would like to salute you in *The Write News*. Please let newsletter Editor Catherine Accardi know if you have been published recently. Your name and writing achievement will be highlighted in the "Sales and Salutes" section of the newsletter. Send along a photograph of yourself and we shall include it as well. You may contact Catherine via e-mail at [caacat@comcast.net](mailto:caacat@comcast.net).

## CWC Centennial



On the left is the newly approved colorized, stylized version of the California Writers Club Centennial logo. On the right is a photograph of the Life Member combination of pin and "rocker tab." The pin is available for purchase at our monthly meetings. The rocker tab is available for Active members who pay the Life membership fee of \$599. Those members will receive both items as a gift.



# Centennial Writing Contest

By Joanne Brown

Discover the Jack London, John Muir, or Joaquin Miller in you. Get out your pencils, find your definitive how-to notes and write an award-winning query letter in the voice of one of these CWC founders. Read on for details.

## The Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club

invites you to participate in our

### ~ Centennial Writing Contest ~



**Contest Theme:** Query Letter

**Eligibility:** Membership in Mt. Diablo or Tri-Valley Branch of CWC

#### Submission Guidelines:



- Write as though you are one of the founding members of CWC:  
Jack London querying his short story, "To Build a Fire," or  
John Muir querying his essay, "Save the Redwoods," or  
Joaquin Miller querying his poem, "Columbus"



- Write as if the author of your choice is working in today's world.
- Address your letter to an agent, publishing house, or publication (real or imaginary) that you believe would be receptive to the chosen work given today's marketplace.
- Submit query letter on one 8-1/2 x 11" page printed in 12 point Times New Roman, single spaced, with one inch margins.
- Mail submission to Centennial Writing Contest, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507.
- Include a 3 x 5 card with your name, address, email address, and phone number.
- Do not include your name or other identifying information on your query letter.



#### Timeline:

- Submission deadline April 15, 2010
- Winners announced June 1, 2010, in the Mt. Diablo Branch newsletter
- Prizes awarded June 12, 2010, during Mt Diablo Branch meeting at Zio Fracdo's

#### Prizes:

- First Place – Opportunity to pitch your own project to the agent/judge of your choice; \$100; publication of winning entry in Branch newsletter; free lunch at June meeting; certificate
- Second Place – \$50; publication in newsletter; free lunch; certificate
- Third Place – \$25; publication in newsletter; free lunch; certificate

#### Judges:

- **Amberly Finarelli**, a literary agent with Andrea Hurst & Associates Literary Management
- **Michael Larsen**, founder of Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents
- **Lisa Westmoreland**, Project Editor at Ten Speed Press

For links to "To Build a Fire," "Save the Redwoods," and "Columbus," and judges' bios, visit [www.mtidiablowriters.org](http://www.mtidiablowriters.org).

## Member Profile

By Jody Denison



### Profile: *Donna Gholson Cook*

Donna learned early on that a library is more than just books on a shelf. It is the doorway to the world of the imagination and the limitless opportunities thereof. She connected reading with writing very early and found that research was her favorite thing to do.

While she cherished the dream that all writers have—earning a living with it—she joined the ranks of the secretarial world, but it was in an oil company that she found the outlet for her interest in earth science and the artwork involved was an added bonus. Donna says her daughters were amazed that she was being paid to sit at a drafting table and color with colored pencils.

However, this native Texan, born in San Angelo and raised in Kerrville, has accomplished publication in “Wild West” magazine and gotten paid for it! Is there a better feeling than seeing your efforts rewarded in print? Before Donna retired from her drafting table, she began researching her father’s side of the family history. Her efforts resulted in discovering that her family went back to the founding of the United States, which made her wish she had paid more attention to history when she was in school. She found one ancestor had defaulted on the rent of a piece of land owned by George Washington. (Donna’s husband whimsically declared him a deadbeat of the American Revolution.) She self-published her book through 1<sup>st</sup> Books (Now AuthorHouse) and Texas historians received it well. The other reward was to connect with distant Gholsons. The title of her book is *Gholson Road—Revolutionaries and Texas Rangers*.

The second book deals with the other side of the family, *Fritz and Annie Lippe Family—German Cotton Farmers in Early 1900s Texas*. Research was different here since a great many of the family was still alive—her mother being the eldest of eleven. Again, Donna used AuthorHouse rather than wait for another publisher, as she wanted the book to be a gift to her large and aging extended family.

Donna has been married to Lewis Cook for almost thirty-three years and they have two daughters, and three grandchildren. She managed through her life to continue with her education. She began at Schreiner University in Kerrville, then Diablo Valley College and finally achieved a BA degree in Business Management from St. Mary’s. Numerically, Donna is two-thirds through her life, but her creative production has just hit its stride in her desire to preserve history. Her next project is to record, preserve, and honor the history of local veterans. Write on Donna!

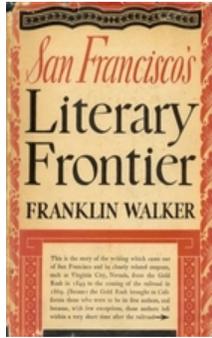
## CaliforniaAuthors.com

You might want to check out **CaliforniaAuthors.com**. From their "About us" section: "Since 2002, CaliforniaAuthors.com has offered news and notes from a ringside seat on the nation’s largest book market. Along the way, we’ve built some nice resources: a growing and varied library of book excerpts and original essays by California writers; a directory where readers can find California authors and authors can tell the world about their work; and listings pointing readers to independent bookstores, west coast publishers, media, literary events, organizations and more...Our regular readership includes publishers, literary agents, authors, journalists, professors, teachers, librarians, students, booksellers, and book lovers in general."

## From the Editor's Desk

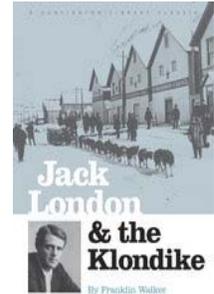
By Catherine Accardi

While conducting my research at the San Francisco Main Library, I am surrounded by hundreds of volumes of rare and marvelous books. My eyes tend to wander over all the volumes resting on shelves next to me. It is a lovely distraction from hours of "writing for hire."



My latest discovery was a book by Franklin Walker titled *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* from which I quote:

"Literary activity in San Francisco because of the generation following the gold-rush, San Francisco was the focal point, and to an unparalleled degree, the literary capital of a huge frontier territory. As San Francisco alone had the wealth, reading public and facilities to publish literary journals and books, almost all the important writers west of the Rockies sooner or later became identified with its literature."



One of Franklin Walker's many books was *Jack London and the Klondike*.

Everywhere I look, especially in a library book (as illustrated above), are references to the word "literary." It seems there are as many definitions as there are examples. For example, the item below from <http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/Literature>:

"When the celebrated 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica defined literature as 'the best expression of the best thought reduced to writing,' few dared question it. Now, though, a century of such questioning has broadened the definition so that it can include nearly any text in any human language, even works in other media. Practically speaking, literature's present-day definition is shaped by the perspective from which one regards it: scholars of a theoretical bent see it as embedded in questions of race, class, and gender, and highly variable over historical time, while those more aesthetically inclined tend to emphasize its continuity within traditions of arts and humane letters. One perspective typically mistrusts the other."

Is that not deliciously abstract? Is literature now in the eye of the beholder? Could this possibly be a discussion without end...

***Every man's memory is his private literature.***

~ Aldous Huxley

***What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote.***

~ E.M. Forster

***The pen is the tongue of the mind.***

~ Miguel de Cervantes



Could uncommon words magically turn your good writing into great literature? If your answer is "Yes," you must read my article in the March edition of *The Write News*.

## Tip Bucket



As reported in the December 2008 edition of *The Write News*, the Back Fence has a new feature called the Tip Bucket. Future editions of *The Write News* will feature excerpts from the Tip Bucket. Below is the tip for February.

### MARKETING AND PUBLICITY — PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

The amount of promotional material you prepare will vary with your budget and interests. You can prepare something simple, like a flyer with your book information and synopsis, website and other contact information, blurbs, and so on. OR you can get samples of elaborate press kits, with items like resumes and professional photos, and prepare one for yourself. OR, you can have your personal publicist do this for you.

In any case, it's a good idea to have something on hand in large quantities, such as bookmarks and postcards, for distribution wherever you are.

Genre fiction authors tend to be creative along these lines, designing promotional items like key chains, pens and pencils, tape measures — whatever fits with the book's theme. Research what's common practice in your field.

For the complete text of this, and other helpful tips, check out the Tip Bucket at the Back Fence. Members of The Back Fence can visit this site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CWCBackFence/>. 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. If you haven't yet joined the Back Fence, go to the link above and follow the simple sign-up process.

## Young Writers Program

By Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff

By the time this newsletter goes to press, the young writers workshops on January 30 and February 6 at Concord and Ygnacio Libraries respectively, will have occurred. Sarah and I always enjoy these because of the energy and imagination that these sixth, seventh and eighth graders create. They are our inspiration!

Meanwhile, fundraising continues. For those who have supported the program through your generous donations thank you! Since we are legally a nonprofit organization we would really appreciate you helping us continue our club's mission to encourage the next generation of California writers. We will gratefully accept your donations.

Please help us by spreading the word on the contest. If you know any Contra Costa County middle school students, teachers, librarians, parents or book sellers, please give them a copy of the guidelines or the link. <http://mtdiablowriters.org/> If students or teachers have questions, they may ask me on my blog. ([www.lizbooks.com](http://www.lizbooks.com) will take them there.)

Meanwhile, mark your calendars for Saturday, May 15. Note this is the THIRD Saturday in May this year. This is the date of our Young Writer Banquet. The fabulous speaker for this date will be Melissa Manlove, Editor, with Chronicle Books.

**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.

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 14, 2010. Winners are notified in May and presented with their awards at an awards luncheon on Saturday, May 15, 2010, 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 Helen Hunt Jackson Group - \$25 - \$49**
- ~ **The Gertrude Atherton Guild - \$10 - \$24**

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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-Mount Diablo Branch*

Mail 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!



## Young Writers Contest Guidelines & Submission Forms

### California Writers Club

Mount Diablo Branch, Contra Costa County

#### YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST

Honoring a New Generation of California Writers

See <http://mtdiablowriters.org/> for writer details

PLEASE PRINT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

Zip

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

First and Last Name of your English (and Humanities) Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Manuscript Title \_\_\_\_\_

MANUSCRIPT CATEGORIES (please check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Story (up to 5 pages typed, double-spaced)

\_\_\_\_\_ Poem (up to 30 lines, need not be double-spaced)

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal Narrative/Essay (up to 3 pages, typed, double-spaced)

Mail submissions to: CWC-Young Writers Contest, P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507

DON'T MISS OUT: Only entries that follow the guidelines EXACTLY will be considered!

#### **CONTEST GUIDELINES:**

**1.** Contest open to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who live in or attend school in Contra Costa County.

**2.** Submit 2 copies of your manuscript. Do not include artwork or a cover. Your manuscript must be typed or computer generated at 12 point, double-spaced. No staples. Paper clips only.

**3.** Put your name in the upper left-hand corner of each page. Number each page. Put manuscript title on the first page.

**4.** Multiple entries are welcome. Each entry must be accompanied by a separate application form (above) or 3x5 card noting: name; home address; home phone; school; grade; e-mail address; teacher; manuscript title; and category.

**5.** Deadline for submission is 4/12/10. Winners will be announced when judging is complete.

**6.** INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS BY STUDENTS PREFERRED. TEACHERS: PLEASE ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SUBMIT THEIR STORIES AND POEMS THEMSELVES.

**TEACHERS:** We are striving to encourage individual creativity and expression. Do not send entire class assignments. Teachers of winning students will be invited to attend the May 15 banquet.

**PRIZES:** Winning short stories and poems from each grade level will receive \$100 for first prize, \$50 for second prize and \$25 for third prize. The Betty Tenney Essay Award of \$100 will be given to the best personal narrative/essay in each grade. Second and third place prizes may be awarded in this category at the judges' discretion. Prizes will be presented to winners on May 15, 2010, at a lunch banquet. A published author will speak. Parents are welcome.

## California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

***President: David George***  
***Vice-President: William Stong***  
***Treasurer: Joanne Brown***  
***Secretary: Barbara Bentley***

### ***Board Members***

Catherine Accardi  
Ann Damaschino  
Jody Denison  
Danard Emanuelson  
Al Garrotto  
Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff  
Aline Soules  
Elisabeth Tuck  
Fran Wojnar

### ***Committee Chairs***

Central Board Rep: David George  
Central Board Alternate Rep: Jack Russ  
Membership: Jody Denison  
Newsletter: Catherine Accardi  
Barnes & Noble Fundraiser: Camille Minichino  
Programs & Website: Al Garrotto  
Branch Historian & Door Prizes: Fran Wojnar  
Young Writers Contest: Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff  
Publicity: Ann Damaschino  
Workshops: Elisabeth Tuck, Nannette Carroll  
Event Logistics: Danard Emanuelson

### ***Advisory Board Members***

Nannette Carroll  
Betty Iverson  
Lee Paulson  
Jack Russ

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



***Sail On!***