

The Write News

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A Monthly Newsletter

January 2013

The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch

WORKSHOP & FULL BREAKFAST

Saturday, January 12, 2013; 8:30am to 12:30pm
Creative Use of Language in Fiction and Non-Fiction



Constance Hale, B.A. English Literature,
M.A. Journalism

Connie Hale started as a journalist, and is currently a free-lance writer and writing teacher. She has published three books on the art of writing, focusing on the use of language. She claims that her books *Wired Style*, *Sin and Syntax*, and *Vex, Hex, Smash, Smooch*, “spring from a curiosity about English and a desire to understand how writing makes us laugh, well up with tears, or just say *ahhhh*”.

- How she views writing style, and what “sin and syntax” means
- Approach grammar with confidence without too much editing
- Know the rules in order to break them
- A few writing exercises using nouns, adjectives, verbs
- Ideas in *Vex, Hex*, and more writing exercises
- Writing with dialect—how to do it so that it works

WORKSHOP: Sign-in is 8:30 – 9 am, breakfast 9 – 9:30, and workshop 9:30 – 12:30 at Zio Fraedo’s Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. Registration is \$35, or \$40 for non-CWC members; contact Jean Georgakopoulos at jeaniegpop@comcast.net, or phone 925-934-5677 for reservations.

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

Workshop Details on Page 2

President's Message

By *Elisabeth Tuck*



Hope everyone had a pleasant December holiday and that the upcoming year brings writing success. All the best.

Don't miss **Nina Egert** on February 9th

"Trimming the Fat from Your Writing: Tools for Developing Verbal Precision in Writing"

JANUARY 2013 - Workshop Details

WORKSHOP sign-in is 8:30 – 9 am, breakfast 9 – 9:30, and workshop 9:30 – 12:30 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. Registration is \$35, or \$40 for non-CWC members; contact Jean Georgakopoulos at jeaniepops@comcast.net, or phone 925-934-5677 for reservations. Expect confirmation only when you e-mail your reservation. Credit card payments will not be available at the January meeting.

Reservations are required and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, January 9th.

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 \$35 or \$40 no-show workshop payment according to your membership.

NEWS FOR OUR YOUNG WRITERS

Humor, Mystery & Suspense Writing Workshop
Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade Students

Saturday, March 2, 2013
Walnut Creek Public Library
1644 N. Broadway
Walnut Creek, CA

9:00 - Noon
COST: FREE!
925-977-3340 (Library)

Dying to write a funny thriller or a scary whodunit with quirky characters? Discover from two published authors how YOU can write the BEST story. You'll have a blast, play an uproarious game, and write. This is YOUR chance! Ask questions about books, the craft of writing, and the publishing world! Come and have a great time with children's authors Sarah Wilson and Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff.

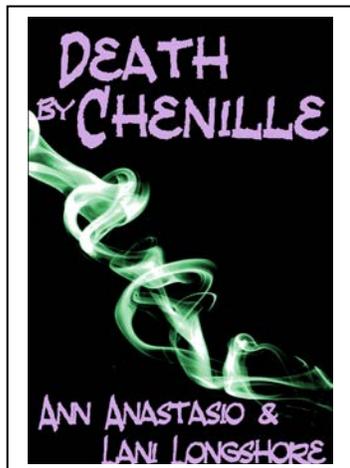
Visit them at www.sarahwilsonbooks.com and www.lizbooks.com

Bring pen and paper and get ready to WRITE!

Visit

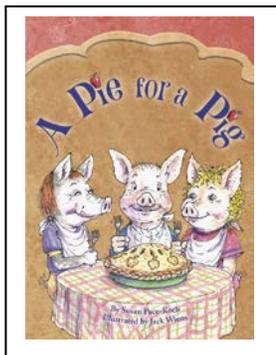
<http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/>

Member Events, News and Salutes



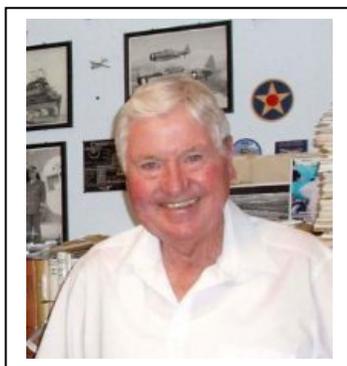
Lani Longshore's novel, *Death by Chenille*, is available as an eBook on Smashwords (<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/55823>). "It is the story of heroic quilters saving the world from space invaders disguised as bolts of beige fabric. It's short, it's cheap, and it's a good giggle."

"How to turn your design book into a novel" appeared in the Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) Journal Spring/Summer issue. Lani and Ann Abastasio wrote *Death by Chenille*, a quilting science fiction novel, and *When Chenille is Not Enough* (available 2013).



Susan Pace-Koch's, author of *Get Out Books*, will be the guest speaker at four Antioch High School classes for the "Fundamentals of Visual Arts" program.

A Pie for a Pig is due for release in the first half of the year. Delicious illustrations by Jack Wiens.



William T. Larkin's, *Alameda Naval Air Station*, published in 2010, was his 10th book based on aviation history. With three years in the AAF in World War II followed by another three in the California Air National Guard, **Larkin** has had a lifelong interest in Navy aircraft and in 2006 was honored with the Admiral Radford Award for excellence in naval aviation history and literature. Future books will cover the postwar Nonsked aircraft, and Seaplanes of California.

Membership News

By Catherine Accardi
Branch Membership Chair



Welcome New Members

We are beginning the New Year with new members. The Mount Diablo Branch is delighted to welcome the following members to the California Writers Club:

Susan Imboden

Sheila Watt

Tony Jaymes Wayman

Susan, Sheila and Tony –

The Mount Diablo Branch is pleased you have decided to join CWC. We all look forward to many years of happy writing.

Let's encourage warm welcomes to all of our new members. If you happen to see them at an upcoming meeting, say Hello. Kindness is free and painless, so let's try to use it liberally!

*Have You Been **Profiled** Yet?*

Would you like to be? It's easy and painless!

The Mount Diablo Branch has a long tradition of publishing member profiles in our monthly newsletter, *The Write News*. You may have seen one in past issues. They are brief, usually around 400 words, biographies of members which might include one's education and writing experiences. It is a great way of acknowledging and getting to know each other better.

If you are interested in submitting your profile please contact me, Catherine Accardi, at caacat@comcast.net, or by phoning (925) 934-9015. I would be happy to send you sample questions that can be used to create your individual profile.

Are You Updated?

Has there been a change in your contact information recently?

Our branch uses your email and postal mail addresses to distribute *The Write News* to members each month. Also, this is the way the branch notifies you of important announcements and TidBits. Please make certain you let me know (my email address and phone number above) if your contact information changes so you can continue to be updated in a timely manner.



The Craft of Writing

Random Thoughts from an Editor Part II

Write active sentences in preference to passive ones. Instead of “The letter was sent to her,” write “The letter arrived in her mailbox.” This also illustrates ways to use nouns as the subjects so your sentences don’t all start with pronouns or the characters’ names.

Back-story: Stories have a forward momentum. Readers wonder, *what happens next?* If you interrupt that forward momentum to tell us what happened before, it stops the reader. Sprinkle in back story if it is crucial and if it is relevant to current action. For example, if the main character is a woman with an abusive childhood, let her remember her past in short moments when she witnesses something that triggers the memory such as a mother slapping a young child.

Try not to be repetitive. Try not to use clichés.

Keep a list to remind yourself of words to avoid.

Every author has quirks regarding words they use frequently. As you see them repeated in your manuscript, add them to your list and try to find better ways to write. Examples of words clients have overused are: back, just, sometimes, something, suddenly, get, after

Go find a more interesting verb

Start/begin to: Once you start, you are already doing. “He started to smoke.” becomes “He smoked.”

Was: You’ll find better ways to write if you rarely use “was.” The easiest occurrences of “was” to eliminate are with gerunds: He was sitting becomes He sat. It was a sunny day becomes The sun sparkled off the damp tree leaves.

As: If a character does something AS something else is happening, which is the important activity that the reader is supposed to absorb? “S returned to the room as R related his adventure.” I missed S’s return and was surprised later to see him light someone’s cigarette. I thought he was still out of the room! If it’s important that one person is doing something while someone else is doing something else, show the importance: S snuck into the room, hiding the gun he planned to use. Oblivious, R related his adventure complete with hand gestures.

Grammar issues:

Pronouns Make sure it’s absolutely clear who or what you are referring to. “A single-lane bridge that crossed a riverbed ahead appeared to lead into the town’s narrow main street. It offered the lone evidence of repairs.” What had been repaired? The bridge or the street?

Adverbs I acknowledge that limiting adverbs gives people fits. However, in most cases you can produce much better writing by eliminating the adverb. They:

-- are often redundant. “He whispered softly.” Softly is redundant.

-- tell, rather than show: “The curtain gracefully covered the window.” Was it swagged? Was it sheer? What am I supposed to see?

-- can be a sign of rushing your writing. “The teacher carefully explained.” Did she talk for a long time? Did she bore the class with detail? Think about slowing down whenever you come across an adverb in your writing.

Try making the adverb into the verb. Instead of “the Victrola scratchily sang” try the Victrola scratched out the song.”

Don’t become a fanatic. I’ve seen writers use incorrect grammar in an attempt to not use an adverb or make the sentence awkward to avoid using one.

Compound sentences: Don’t lose good writing by rushing with compound sentences. Sometimes they’re valid, sometimes they need to be separated for emphasis or so the reader can stop for a second to absorb what’s being shown before they read the next action or idea. He backed down the ladder and picked up the gun. Since backing down a ladder is unusual, give us a chance to see it.

Conjunctions: Microsoft grammar checker encourages the use of “and then.” Don’t fall for it! Each word indicates a different situation.

Definite and indefinite articles (the/a): Small words make a difference: “He moved the chair.” The reader should know which one or maybe that there’s only one available. “He moved a chair.” Any chair will do.

Prepositions: Some aren’t necessary. “He narrowed down his eyes.” Narrow is a fine verb that says all we need to see. Down is redundant.

Superlatives/absolutes (best, greatest, most, never, all, always, etc): Can be overused and are rarely true: “He introduced all the other officers.” Then later on we read, “Next he introduced Watkins.” What? I’m confused. “All” the officers had been introduced. Now I’ve had to stop to figure something out.

Leading dependent clauses (LDC): A long introductory clause may lead the reader in one direction then the main meaning of the sentence may go elsewhere: “Hearing his screams and seeing the blood spurt and the entrails of his arm displayed as though in a medical textbook, I felt faint with a mixture of nausea, repulsion and fear.”

I’d like to wager that each reader expects something different after reading that underlined LDC. If we’re following a character, the important point is how he felt: “I felt faint with a mixture of nausea, repulsion and fear hearing his screams, seeing the blood spurt . . .” The rewrite puts you with the character feeling faint while looking at the injury.

Story: Does the end of the story “inform the beginning?” Is the story wrapped up at the end?

Writing is a discipline. Writing is HARD work and it amazes me that people stick to it. I almost hate editing because it just creates more work for the writer!

Recommended reference books: A good, recent dictionary, a grammar text, maybe a manual of style and a thesaurus (but don’t use words that you don’t know or that feel weird.) The library has lots of reference books and the Internet is invaluable.

PS. I’ve used a lot of exclamation marks in this—don’t do that in your first novel. Write the most excellent literary novel you can. Let your words make the meaning clear, not your punctuation. When you’re an established author, write whatever your publisher directs or allows you to write!

Revised Member Web Pages ***From Aline Soules, Online Coordinator***

Over the fall, as promised, I revamped the member web pages, essentially consolidating information for each author into one composite entry. I have based this revamp on a combination of existing entries and Amazon listings (when available). We now have the following:

Members A-D

Members E-J

Members K-Q

Members R-Z

To finish up, I've sent separate emails to a few of you seeking information, seeking copyright authorization/permission to include book cover pictures, or seeking .jpg files. As you respond to these requests, I will update the pages accordingly.

In addition, it is entirely possible that some members are not represented. If you were not on the previous member pages or if I could not find an entry for you in amazon, I did not include you. If this is inaccurate, please contact me and we'll work it out.

As a final note, Wordpress sometimes "re-spaces" content when line spaces are blank. I've tried to manipulate the pages to allow appropriate space between author entries, but that is not guaranteed to be stable and entries may shift. I don't intend to do anything further at this point because I want to see what content changes are needed first. That will cause shifts, anyway, and I would like to see the needed corrections settle down before struggling with this aspect of Wordpress any further.

Please check your entries at <https://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/>

Let me know of any issues and I'll address them as much as possible in the new year.

The goal has been to showcase our members' accomplishments more effectively and I hope this has been achieved.

Aline

Writer's Markets Column

More Sources Than You Imagined

by **B. Lynn Goodwin**



Today, I looked at the new author pages on the CWC website. We are a prolific group. Small presses have published many of us, and a great place to find new small presses is <http://www.newpages.com/book-publishers/>. The list of publishers runs for pages.

The genres are easy to read. Whether you're looking for children's literature, YA, poetry, fiction, short stories, nonfiction, creative nonfiction, drama, chapbooks, cookbooks, folk tales, anthologies, monographs, mini books, short fiction, multi-cultural fiction, LGBT literature, or erotica you can find it here. Click on the links that interest you.

While you're at NewPages.com, check the Calls for Submissions posted on <http://www.newpages.com/classifieds/calls/>. Writing contests are posted at <http://www.newpages.com/classifieds/writingcontests/>.

If you're a journalist or you're looking for a place to post your reviews, consider the alternative newspapers listed at <http://www.newpages.com/npguides/newswkly.htm>.

Though the list is extensive, it's not all-inclusive.

Another site with more long lists and an academic bent is AcqWeb's Directory of Publishers and Vendors. Start at <http://www.acqweb.org/pubr.html>. In addition to the sites listed there, use the left hand column to find sites for Children's Literature, General Publishers, Mystery Publishers, Poetry Publishers, Romance Publishers, Science Fiction & Fantasy Publishers, and University Presses.

Because the site was last updated in 2001 some of the links are dead, but most of the ones I tried work.

Still searching? You can also google your genre + book publishers and see what comes up or look for an agent through the agents listing on Preditors and Editors, <http://pred-ed.com/pubagent.htm>.

Beware of scams. If a company sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

I'd be interested in hearing the story of how you found your publisher. Send it to Lgood67334@comcast.net.

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>Elisabeth Tuck</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 Workshop
is on January 12, 2012 at 8:30 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.