



The Write News

California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

A Monthly Publication

March 2008

March Speaker and Meeting Information

The California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch, Presents

Meredith Maran - Nonfiction Workshop

Veteran journalist, and non-fiction author, Meredith Maran will conduct a three-hour workshop on how to produce a saleable nonfiction book on Saturday, March 8, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

How to Produce a Saleable Nonfiction Book will cover all aspects of the process, from topic to concept to publication. Ms. Maran's presentation will include hands-on exercises and a question and answer session to help writers get started on their projects.

A journalist for over 25 years, Meredith Maran has contributed articles to *Salon.com, Health, Family Circle, More, Self, Vibe, Parenting, Utne Reader, Bride's, Teacher, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the San Jose Mercury News.* She has written or co-authored eight books, several of them best sellers.

Please join us at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, in Lafayette, on Saturday, March 8. 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.mtdiablowriters.org>

March Meeting Details

Date & Time: Saturday, March 8. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

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

Cost: \$25 for CWC members, and \$30 for non-members.

Menu: A continental breakfast is included in the cost.

Reservations: Reservations are required, and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, March 5. To make reservations, contact Betty Iverson via e-mail at bjiverson@comcast.net, or by phone at (925) 376-3631. Expect confirmation only if you e-mail your reservation.

Upcoming Speakers for 2008

April 12 - Emily Boyd, Editor ~ North Atlantic Books

May 16 - Young Authors Banquet ~ Leslie Griffith, Speaker

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



In 1995, our branch of the California Writers Club decided that in addition to helping adult writers flourish, we would encourage younger writers on their paths. Joan Brennan began our annual Young Writers Contest, an awards program for Contra Costa youth, specifically those in sixth through eighth grade. The program proved a great success primarily because of the leadership and dedication of club members and their professional expertise.

Two years ago, Joan turned the program over to Liz Pentacoff, and Liz continues to offer an exciting showcase in which local young writers may display their talents while enjoying the bonus of cash prizes for the best in short stories, poetry, and essays. Contest winners and their parents and teachers are honored at a presentation banquet each May.

Because of the contest's significance, and the work that goes into setting up the affair, the branch will not hold a separate branch membership meeting in May. Rather, members and their family members are asked to attend the presentation banquet and show support for those young writers just starting out.

In doing so, members will be able to enjoy listening to noted guest speaker Leslie Griffith, as well as participate in the laughter and enthusiasm generated when winning entries are reviewed and awards presented. It's heartwarming to witness what becomes a lifetime memory for each of the winners and their families.

This year's program is set for Friday, May 16. Mark those calendars and join the club for an uplifting evening with the next generation of writers.

Remembering Sue Tasker



Sue Tasker passed away unexpectedly on February 3, 2008. Born in Leeds, England, she moved to California in 1990 with her husband and three daughters. An avid writer all her life, she was published in school newspapers and a national magazine as a teenager, and most recently in the *Livermore Wine Country Literary Harvest* and *Once Upon a Time* magazine.

Sue's friendly, welcoming nature and ongoing support and encouragement of all writers, made her a welcome addition at California Writers Club meetings. With a passion for helping other writers, she co-founded the CWC Tri-Valley Branch and received the prestigious Jack London Award for exemplary service in 2007. Sue will always be remembered by her colleagues for her generous heart and giving spirit.

Third Annual Flash Prose Contest Sponsored By WriterAdvice

By B. Lynn Goodwin

WriterAdvice, www.writeradvice.com, is searching for flash fiction, memoir, and creative non-fiction that grabs, surprises, and mesmerizes readers in fewer than 750 words. If you have a complete story or memoir with a strong theme, sharp images, a solid structure, and an unexpected discovery, please submit it to the **WriterAdvice** Flash Prose Contest. Visit the website for details about offering your pieces.

Questions? E-mail Lynn Goodwin at Lgood67334@comcast.net.

Deadline: April 10, 2008

Judges: Last year's prizewinners, Daniel F. Rousseau, W.C. Vasquez, Kay Jordan, and Suzanne LaFetra, are this year's judges. Read their pieces and biographies by clicking on the Archived Contest Entries button at www.writeradvice.com.

Prizes:

First Place earns \$75

Second Place earns \$50

Third Place earns \$35

Fourth Place earns \$20.

Honorable Mentions will also be published.

A list of all winners will be posted in the summer issue of **WriterAdvice**.

SPECIAL PERK: All entries accompanied by an SASE will be returned with brief comments.

Sales & Salutes



Nannette Carroll has received the first half of her advance for her non-fiction book. AMACOM Books will publish her book on communication for managers in Spring 2009.

Janelle Kimball's article, *Uneasy Visit to a Pueblo*, has been published on the front page of the February 2 edition of the *Times Real Life* section.

Cheryl Spanos' middle-grade novel, *Tougher than Dragon Hide*, was named runner-up for Children's Fiction in the 2008 San Francisco Writers Conference Contest. An announcement appears on the SFWC website at www.sfwriters.org.

Catherine Accardi has been added to the Mystery Writers of America NorCal newsletter team. She will be assistant Editor and will contribute articles for the MWA periodical, *The Lineup*.

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!

A Website Review

By B. Lynn Goodwin

Mediabistro Offers Help for Nonfiction Writers

Mediabistro, <http://www.mediabistro.com/>, caters to nonfiction professionals. It is “dedicated to anyone who creates or works with content, or who is a non-creative professional working in a content/creative industry,” according to the site.

Register at no charge to read blogs, media news, class descriptions, and current job openings. See what other freelancers offer, or list your freelancing specialties for a fee. Explore the Content tab, which includes many free articles. Explore the Forums tab, where you can post your own questions and respond to others. As a newly registered member, I posted information about the Writer Advice Flash Prose Contest (www.writeradvice.com) on the Bulletin Boards in Forums with no problems at all. The “How to Pitch” segments come highly recommended. Mediabistro includes a piece called “Pitching an Agent.” I am told these articles are well worth the \$49 annual fee.

Although the quantity of content seems overwhelming at first, Mediabistro has a great deal to offer journalists, editors, photographers, memoirists, screenwriters, and freelancers. Take some time to explore <http://www.mediabistro.com/>.

Meet Our Member

By Jody Denison

Profile: Katie Clark Vecchio



Katie Vecchio, one of our newest members, graduated from Carondelet High School and headed for UC Santa Cruz to major in politics. Quickly disenchanted with the “ridiculous” political scene there she returned home to Pleasant Hill after her first year to consider her future. She decided to do what she loved—writing—so she changed colleges and majors.

She graduated *magna cum laude* from San Francisco State in 1980 with a degree in English with an “independent major” in Writing. She went to work as a public relations writer for non-profit agencies, and worked as an advertising copywriter and marketing writer.

In 1990, Katie took a short detour to start up a little company with her mother. They had invented a paper type of wine glass name tag and formed the Tuit Company. Their company manufactured, marketed, and distributed wine glass tags.

She still wanted to get back to writing and she always followed politics. Serendipity brought political analyst, Dick Morris, across her path. Mr. Morris eventually hired her to help with his books and so full circle—writing and politics. Katie edited and researched several of Dick Morris’s books: *Outrage, Condi vs. Hillary, Because He Could*, and *Rewriting History*. She was ghostwriter for Kathleen Willey’s book, *Target: Caught in the Crosshairs of Bill and Hillary Clinton*. She also did extensive editing for Robert Cowan, MD on his book, *The Insider’s Guide to Migraine Management*. Unfortunately, Katie can add personal knowledge to this subject.

Katie is married to artist Tony Vecchio. They live in Pleasant Hill one block away from where she grew up and where her parents still live. Katie and Tony have two children at home—surrounded by creativity in two generations!

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.

* **Pride in Publishing ~ Northern California Publishers & Authors Conference**

April 26, 2008 ~ 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel, 1401 Arden Way in Sacramento.

This all day conference will have speakers, expert panels, information on modern publishing, marketing, distribution, copy editing and lay-out. Featured speakers include: Dan Poynter Author, *The Self-Publishing Manual*; Michael Larsen and Elizabeth Pomada, Larsen-Pomada Literary Agents. Michael is also co-author of *Guerilla Marketing for Writers*; Bud Gardner Co-Author, *Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul*; Stephanie Chandler Author, *The Author's Guide to Building an Online Platform*.

This is a \$250 conference, but is available at reduced rates because of our generous sponsors!

Early Registration (by March 31):

Members:\$95 Guests and Students:\$75 Non-Members:\$125 - All registrations after April 1:\$125

For more information, check the website at www.norcalpa.org, e-mail info@norcalpa.org, or phone (916) 733-1655.

* **The Maui Writers Conference** will take place on Friday, August 29 - Monday, September 1, 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 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, go 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

Mount Diablo Branch Critique Group

~ Who is the Mount Diablo Branch Critique Group for?

It's for fiction writers who are members of the CWC Mt. Diablo Branch. Nonfiction writers whose work is "fiction-like" (memoirs, articles, etc.) may find it valuable.

~ Do I have to reserve a spot or apply for membership in the critique group?

No, the group operates on a drop-in basis. We add interested parties to our e-mail list, but if you'd rather not receive any e-mail from us, just let us know.

~ What is the format of the meeting?

1. Bring up to 20-25 pages
2. Material can be manuscripts, query letters, or book proposals. This group is for "fiction" writers, so the material should relate to fiction. Material should be double-spaced, at least 12pt type (font) or larger, white paper (or same as you'd submit).
3. Find a partner at the meeting and exchange material. Let's change partners each meeting (or even in the same meeting if time permits) so that we can get to know each other. Over time, perhaps people who work well together will find each other.
4. Don't forget your pen.
5. During the last 30-45 minutes participants comment on each others work.

~ If I attend the critique group, do I still have to pay for the CWC meeting that follows?

Yes. Admission to the CWC meeting is separate. If you want to attend that meeting you must reserve and pay for that meeting as discussed in the CWC Mt. Diablo newsletter, website, and/or emails.

~ When and where does the critique group meet?

We meet at the Lafayette Hungry Hunter restaurant at 9:30 a.m. before the branch's general meeting, the second Saturday of most months. If the club does not meet (July and August), has a night meeting, or a special event before the regular luncheon meeting, the critique group meets the third Saturday at Papillon Coffee House in Lafayette at 2:00 p.m. The two critique group locations are:

Hungry Hunter

(Before regular CWC meetings the second Saturday at 9:30 a.m.)

3201 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - 938-3938

Papillon Gourmet Coffees

(Other months on the third Saturday at 2:00 p.m.)

67 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette - 283-0466

Any questions? Contact Jerry Vaught at (925) 283-6278, or via e-mail at twentyhundred@aol.com.



From the Editor's Desk will return in the April edition of *The Write News*.

At that time, we shall explore *Hammett and Chandler*.

Annual Young Writers Contest
Sponsored by
The Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club

The Mt. 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 Mt. Diablo CWC Newsletter.

This annual Young Writers Contest for middle-school students of Contra Costa County awards cash prizes for excellence in short story, poetry, and essay categories. Contest submissions are free and must be received on or before April 1, 2008. Winners are notified in May and presented with their awards at an awards banquet Friday May 16, 2008 at the Pleasant Hill Recreation Center. Award winners and their parents are the guests of CWC at the awards banquet. All expenses of the program are supported by individual donations and grants.

Please join us in this unique program.

The Jack London Founder's Circle ~ \$250

The John Muir Member Club ~ \$150 - \$249

The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club ~ \$100 - \$149

The Mary Austin Writers Club ~ \$50 - \$99

The George Sterling Society ~ \$25 - \$49

The Gertrude Atherton Guild ~ \$10 - \$24

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 _____

* Please make your check payable to: CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch

Mail to: CWC Mt. Diablo Branch
Attention: The Young Writers Contest
P.O. Box 606, Alamo, CA 94507

* The California Writers Club is a non-profit organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

California Writers Club - Mount Diablo Branch

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