

The Write News



A Monthly Newsletter

March 2014

The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch

Saturday, March 8, 2014

Attend a Workshop on:

"Creating 3-Dimensional Non-Stereotypical Characters"



Learn from **Marilyn Atlas** what indelible essence a writer/actor brings to his portrayal of a memorable character. It's a conscious interweaving of a character's thoughts, wants, goals, secrets, flaws and delusions -- moving the plot forward in a way that is DNA-consistent.

Explore and analyze several facets of the evolution of personality as illustrated in screen and television examples.

Marilyn will provide handouts.

I. Discussion of stereotypical, clichéd characters vs. memorable ones. Illustrations through examples from film and television (*Jessa from Girls, Ironman Tony Stark, The Wire, The Good Wife, Breaking Bad, Mad Men, 500 Days of Summer, Thelma and Louise*)

II. Cultural coding -- How to pivot from the character's first impression

III. "Want" vs. "need"- Understand the character's essential must-have need, which underpins his desires

IV. The importance of characters' past setbacks, traumas, wounds.

V. Ways to create memorable characters, for example, Myer Briggs or astrology

Marilyn R Atlas is a talent/literary manager and producer involved in several writers' debut books for HarperCollins, Grand Central Publishing, and Source Books. At the Lifetime channel she has a movie with the working title *Peer Pressure*, shooting in winter 2014. She is developing a musical based on her Sundance-winning film, *Real Women Have Curves* (originally produced for HBO), is in development on the movie *Lola Goes to Roma*, and is working on a pilot that she originally sold to Showtime. She is also featured in the book *Write Now!* from Penguin/Tarcher. Marilyn is committed to projects that celebrate diversity

Sign-in begins at 8:30 am at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Full breakfast 9-9:30. General meeting 9:30. Workshop 9:45 – 12:45. \$45 members, \$55 non-members. Reservation deadline: noon, Mar 5.

Contact Robin at ragig@aol.com or leave a message at: 925-933-9670 for reservations

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, members will be asked to remit the \$45 no-show payment.

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

President's Message

By Elisabeth Tuck



Will March come in like a lion or a lamb? I vote for lion—howling rainstorms being preferable.

The CWC Literary Review should arrive in our mailboxes in early April or thereabouts. Please ensure Marlene Dotterer m.dotterer@comcast.net has your current address. If you submit for next year, read the instructions in the back and please make us a proud branch by submitting well thought out, reviewed and edited pieces that can be included.

Please read the revised branch bylaws on Page 11 and be ready to vote at the March 8 meeting.

I'm nearing 100 words. Hard isn't it!?

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Congratulations to the following members who have successfully moved from Associate to Active status in CWC!!

**Susan Berman
Fran Cain
Dina Coleman
Jing Li**

If you've published since joining CWC, be sure to let us know. Send publishing info to Marlene Dotterer, Membership Chair at m.dotterer@comcast.net

ACTIVITY CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS



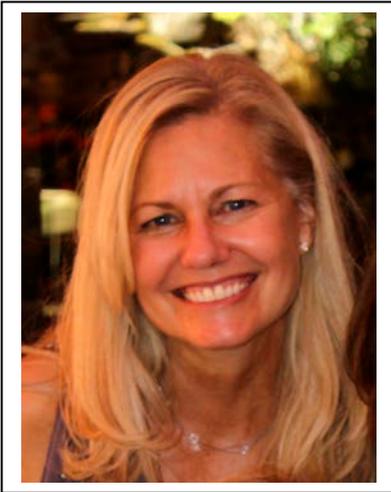
Month	Speaker	Event
Mar 8	Marilyn Atlas	<i>Workshop with breakfast</i>
April 12	Jordan Rosenfeld	Making a Scene
May 10	Ellen Klages	YWC luncheon
June 14	Mary Mackey	Unknown topic (writes both novels and screenplays)

FEBRUARY SPEAKER RECAP:

JANICE DE JESUS

- Use current headlines for story ideas.
- Use real life experiences to move the story forward in the novel and short story.
- Use compassion when developing a character; this may help the reader understand why the character acts as he/she does.
- Use fictional situations based on your real-life challenges in order to provide inspiration to the reader.
- If writing a self-help book, address your readers as though they were your friends and emphasize that you are all on this healing journey together.
- Remember to exercise your body and mind as part of your writing ritual. Find a ritual that helps you connect with your most authentic creative self.

Member Profile: Jana Haert



“Study what you love” is the advice Jana gives to college students. Possessed with that wisdom in her youth, she might have majored in English Lit or Creative Writing at the University of Redlands. Instead, she doubled in Business and Communications with the goal of a marketing career and the pursuit of financial reward. She did follow one youthful passion - studying abroad in Salzburg in 1981 and traveling throughout Europe, most notably behind the Iron Curtain, which inspired a lifelong love of travel, an appreciation of foreign cultures, and a curiosity about human nature.

Motherhood derailed Jana’s marketing career, and she spent twenty-two years as a full-time mother of three active children. She became a “professional volunteer” and those years were filled with leadership positions in PTAs, school site councils, and educational foundations as well as in National Charity League. With a grateful heart, she also spent countless hours volunteering for local charities.

Community service is still important to Jana, but now she integrates it with the craft of writing. She is the newsletter editor for the Museum of the San Ramon Valley and assists with some of their writing and publicity projects. She is also a writer coach at Richmond High School through the Community Alliance For Learning. WriterCoach Connection is a great way for writers to help at-risk students in the classrooms. For more information about this tremendous organization, please contact Jana or go to their website at writercoachconnection.org.

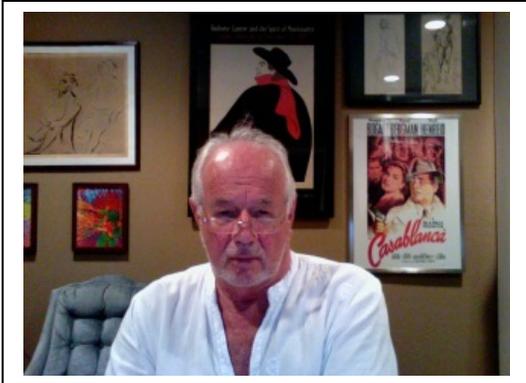
At fifty-three years old, Jana feels like a giddy college coed all over again, learning not only how to be a writer but how to be an *author*. Joining CWC was a fabulous first step in the journey. Writing is a solitary pastime, and being part of a writing community keeps her inspired. CWC workshops, the San Francisco Writers Conference, writing websites, various classes and retreats, and a myriad of writing books have been key components of her adventure.

A voracious reader since childhood and a member of two book clubs for fifteen years, books have been vital to Jana’s happiness. Her own first book project is a historical fiction novel that weaves together three eras – ambitious for a beginning author, but it’s a story that’s in her heart and must be written! To find her voice and gain some traction, Jana has also been blogging for the past two years. “Tangled Up in Life Unfolding” is her small-scale blogging platform to reflect on life, promote wellness, and spread goodwill. You can follow her at janahaertl.wordpress.com.

A Note from your Membership Chair

Are you new to CWC? Have you been here for years, and would like us to know you better? Tell us about yourself! Contact our membership chair, Marlene Dotterer, at m.dotterer@comcast.net to find out how to submit your profile.

Member Events, News and Salutes



J.D. Blair announces the publication of his crime story “Janus” by *Blank Fiction Magazine*. The story takes place in San Francisco. An ex-cop, Janus, is homeless but with help, turns his life around and takes on a local crime boss who threatens the life of a prostitute who Janus has befriended. *Blank Fiction Magazine* can be found on line and purchased through Apple iTunes.

Free Writing Workshop for the Young Writers Contest.



Middle school students from Pleasant Hill, Martinez, San Ramon, Danville, Concord, Walnut Creek, Clayton, Antioch, and Brentwood enrolled in The California Writers Club Young Writers Character and Plot Workshop.

The writing workshop was led by authors **Sarah Wilson** www.sarahwilsonbooks.com (Danville) and **Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff** www.libooks.com (Pleasant Hill). Held February 1st at the **Walnut Creek Library**, even students from Albany and Fremont attended for inspiration and guidance. All participated in discussions, improvisations and wrote short stories to prepare for the annual CWC Young Writers Contest. Deadline is March 27, 2014.

Guidelines at <http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com/young-writers-contest/>

With Only 100 Words...

This was the challenge: “Write an excellent 100 word fiction story (scene, characters, arc, etc.) or non-fiction essay, article or true-life experience.”

The submissions below on Pages 6 – 9 are published in the order they were received.

Shivering despite my wetsuit, deep in the dark waters of Monterey Bay, I clung to my dive buddy waiting for my turn at the certification test. Above, we heard screaming and saw the water churn. The star of our class, a man who swam through the training with ease, thrashed at the instructors, tearing his equipment off. They dragged him safely to shore and returned, ready to continue the test. *If he can't do it, how the heck will I be able to?* I struggled with mask clearing. But that day, I triumphed over fear and frailty. And I passed.

Denise P. Kalm

The Perfect Immigrant

He was just a driver, but he was good. Even when I drove those big Chevy Blazers I wanted him with me. His ‘can do’ approach to mechanical problems, his ability to speak the local dialect as well as Pidgin English, English and French made him invaluable as I travelled unstable Cameroon.

The automatic transmission in the new Chevy Citation failed. No one in Cameroon repaired Chevrolet cars. Eric bought the manual and I imported the parts. In 15 days he had the Citation running like a top.

Today, he runs a successful shop in Maryland.

Ken H. Kerkoff

In Spirit Only

Her apartment door closed and he raced to his bedroom, pushed his ear to the wall and waited for the sound of clothes shifting and dropping. There was the shuffle of footsteps on carpet and the clatter of closet hangers...was that humming...was she humming? She slid her closet door closed and he rushed to his bathroom and quietly shut the door. He leaned his head against the wall straining to hear the rush of her shower being turned on full and the shower door closing. He closed his eyes and pictured her bathing. He was in rapture.

J.D. Blair

There's More...

A bat. A ball. A swing. A bullet. A death. A guide. A life.

A bat—black-varnished, rays of setting sun splintering north, south, east, west, until tension-stilled, at the ready. *A ball*—Virginal white. Never pitched, nor struck. Rocketing from hurler's hand. *A swing*—fluid, potent contact, ball arrowing moundward. *A bullet*—fired in revenge, racing ball to target. *A death*. Accident? Murder? Projectiles: protagonists in this unplotted drama. The pitcher falls, forehead concaved, a blackening hole deep at crater's base. *A guide*. Heaven-sent to assist at this unexpected crossing-over. *A life*—“There's more, my son . . .”

Al Garrotto

Full Disclosure

The seller rolled his eyes when I asked if his cottage was haunted. The man rotated his baby blues 360 degrees. That night, a spectral form stood at my bedside. The elder ghost had wisps of unkempt hair that sprouted from under a magician's hat. The translucent figure bowed, tapped the brim, then rolled his eyes in a precise mimicry of the prior owner's before melting away.

The raspy sound of my slippers followed me straight to the bathroom mirror. My dark brown eyes reflected back as my iris' began a slow rotation. Time to call my realtor.

Jill Hedgecock

The Little Red-Haired Girl

After the final ended, I waited outside in the slush. She walked out. I caught up with her. "H-how did you do on the test?" I asked.

"Okay, I think. How did you do?"

Instead of answering, I asked her if she read the comics.

"Yes...?"

"Do you ever read Pe-Peanuts...Charlie Brown?"

She did. I asked if she remembered the little red-haired girl Charlie Brown was afraid to talk to. She nodded her head.

"This semester, you have been that little red-haired girl for me," I said.

"Thank you."

She smiled, turned and faded into the falling snow.

John Marvin

Mimesis in Berlin

As we sat in the Document Center examining personnel records, we quickly found only the medical section confirmed the identity of the body in the Ember Das Artes cemetery. Still duty-bound, I read the entire folder. The annual appraisal succinctly summed up his official portrait "sincere" and "genuine" and his work made "valuable contributions to anthropology." Lastly his superior noted, "He is a Catholic" and "conscientiously performs his medical duties."

Later as we walked into the Berlin night, I reflected on the transformation of Hauptsturmfuher SS Josef Mangele, Standortarzt, Auschwitz.

John Sharp

Living with a verbal abuser is like living in a gas chamber with land mines scattered around. From senseless accusations and wounding words, to confusing comments and cruel implications, verbal abuse assaults consciousness. Like a viral invasion, covert verbal abuse insidiously infiltrates the minds of millions. And, like a heat seeking missile, overt verbal abuse unerringly assaults its target. It can hide out in relationships, families, schools, cultures and cyberspace. It can bring tyrants to power and destroy relationships. It is the unseen face of domestic violence. It's not about a fight, but about control.

Patricia Evans

Five of us including a 6-month old baby were caught in a squall in a small sailboat which was in danger of capsizing due to fierce headwinds against the mainsail. I listened for a baby's cry. There was no sound from anyone, only eerie human silence, or was it just that no cries could be heard above the screaming, raging roar of the wind? I thought I must keep the boat afloat. She was seriously listing on the starboard side. Rushing forward I grabbed hard on the main halyard, and then let go. She righted herself. We were saved.

Ted Wells

Memory

We walked down the lane, hand in hand. The bumpy road, the girls called it.

She stopped, pointed to the hedgerow. Remembering.

I pondered. How to explain death and cruelty to a two-year-old. The mangled fox, pulled from the hedgerow and displayed to the riders, in their red coats and top hats. I brushed a cheek, picked her up, held her close. She hugged my neck, pulled back, smiled.

"Boo-bell," she said, forgetting, a child's advantage.

I put her down.

"Okay, monkey."

She took my hand, pulled me down the bumpy road toward the little wood, carpeted with bluebells.

Harlan Hague

Sally trudged through the parking lot, bent against the chill. Another dance waiting for Charlie to choose her--just once-- through four years of high school. She spotted his pickup, and impulsively tossed her purse into the back of the truck. Tears froze on her cheeks as she headed home.

Charlie opened the cab door, smirking at the memory of all the town girls vying for him. He spotted a woman's purse in back. A freckle-faced redhead smiled in the driver's license photo. He flicked on the inside light, "Sally Reed." He didn't recognize her at all.

Ann Damaschino

Ghosts of the Desert

A flash flood gushes through the arroyos and blocks my horse and wagon. I watch the thirsty sand soak up every drop that remains and the track I must follow melds with barren desert. My water barrel is empty. Rattlesnake Springs is nearby but eludes me as familiar landmarks shimmer and disappear under a piercing sun. My search fails. The wagon's shade provides temporary refuge and my eyes close until voices wake me. I mumble *water*. None's given. Voices bemoan not finding us sooner. I mount my horse and we mosey on, stuck in time as ghosts of the desert.

Barbara Bentley

The Appointment

Jacob Smythe, an 88 year old widower of five years, finished breakfast and talked to his daughter who called every morning at 9 a.m. to check on his health. He knew he had plenty of time for the appointment; it could be life altering and he dressed accordingly. He carefully examined his suit, and selected just the right shirt and tie. He combed his white hair neatly, checked his appearance and left. He drove two blocks and suddenly pulled over, cursing and pounding on the steering wheel. He couldn't remember where the appointment was or what it was about.

Danard Emanuelson

The Red Bikini

Zero hour finally arrived, and the glistening silver tightrope dance of love begins slowly, passionately, meticulously as he calculates his next move like a Masters million dollar chess game, cautiously knowing he could become her prey; yet spellbound by her sexy red bikini that so perfectly outlined her sensuous curves, sending his quivering body and eight spindly legs into maximum sensory overload, causing him to throw all caution to the wind as he aggressively mounts her, climaxing in a passionate embrace and piercing bite, which paralyzes his lungs snuffing out his breath as the bright sunlight slowly fades into darkness.

Ceci Pugh

Escape from a Dog Attack

My two babies and I needed a walk. With Alex in the stroller, Christina in my back pack, we began our journey. Doobie, an ill-tempered Rhodesian Ridgeback dog, ambled toward us. How could the three of us escape from fight-ready Doobie? As my Aunt Mae often said, “If I were in Africa, what would I do?” I raised my hands over my head and shouted Tarzan’s “Un-gah-wah!” If that worked for Tarzan when he wanted animals to move, why not for me? Doobie turned and headed home. We finished our walk without incident. I drank some wine.

Susan Berman

911. What’s your emergency?

Help! Someone’s breaking into my house. I’m alone with small children.

Your name and address?

Gina. 276 Peekskill Crescent. Hurry!

I’m dispatching two vehicles. They’ll arrive with no lights or sirens. Stay on the line.

Hello! Hello! Oh God, they’ve cut the phone line.

Gina?

Yes. Oh, thank God.

You scared me.

Think how I felt.

The police are circling your house. Stay on the line. They’re at your front door. You may go and open it.

Well, ma’am, biggest raccoon we’ve ever seen was trying to get under your house. You should be safe now.

Robin Gigoux

Cry Me a Road

The spring tour kicked off in Chicago, instruments jammed in a ramshackle van that met an untimely death – van and tour. A blown tire along the highway rolled the jalopy, launching the guitarist to a neglected field of cotton. He departed Mobile with spinal fractures, broken hips and stunned gratitude, bound for recuperation in the land of California dreamin’. Wheelchair to walker to crutches – months later, a mother playing the lilting cadence drove her son to a flight back to life in Chicago.

Embracing farewells, she left to greet the tears that waited so long on the open road.

Jana Haert

Editor’s Note: A few prolific members sent in more than one submission to the 100-Word Challenge. Too good to be missed - the April edition of *The Write News* will include more stories and essays.

Written in Stone – or Soft Clay

Harlan Hague

Have you ever eagerly opened your new book and seen an error on the first page? I have, and I didn't even have to open the book. The title of my book, a history, was printed on the front cover of the hardback, on the spine and on the title page inside. The title was wrong. This book is still circulating with the incorrect title.

The title was corrected a few years later in a paperback reprint by a commercial house. A second reprint a few years later was upgraded with a bit more tweaking and a new cover. This was possible because the new reprint was self-published. I had recovered rights to the book from the publisher and produced the reprint myself through CreateSpace, a subsidiary of Amazon.

This sort of tweaking is possible on every self-published volume, non-fiction or fiction. Commercial publishing houses generally do not issue second editions of novels. They may issue subsequent printings, but typically the content does not change. If there are mistakes in the original edition, the mistakes remain in the new printings. Written in stone.

If your book is self-published, you can make changes in content on your computer, upload the revised file to the self-publishing house, such as CreateSpace, and the new version will be up on the Amazon web site in a couple of days. There is no cost to the author, for the original publication or for the newly uploaded version. The modified version replaces the original version. Anyone who purchases the title automatically receives the new version because the book is not printed until a sale is made. This is the *Print On Demand* feature that makes self-published books so attractive. Written in soft clay.

The interval between submission to release is another advantage that is drawing more and more people to self-publishing. I have a manuscript, titled *The People*, with a leading publisher of western fiction. The interval from submission to release next summer will be seventeen months. I put up a novella, titled *Belize in My Dreams*, on CreateSpace last month. The interval from submission (upload) to appearance on Amazon was five days, if I recall correctly. A week after it appeared on Amazon, I was browsing my manuscript and noticed a grammatical problem. I corrected it on my computer, uploaded the modified file to CreateSpace, and the corrected version appeared seamlessly on Amazon a couple of days later.

There are obvious disadvantages in self-publishing. No editing, but you can hire a competent editor at a reasonable rate. You can even hire someone to put the manuscript file up on CreateSpace at a reasonable rate. You have to do all of the promoting, but writers for commercial houses are finding that they are increasingly expected to work on promotion.

Finally, the stigma of self-publishing is diminishing as more and more self-published titles are among top sellers.

Change in Bylaws

Editor's Note to All Mt. Diablo members: Please read the selected Branch Bylaws found below (proposed changes in red), to be voted on at the March 8, 2014 meeting.

ARTICLE III: MANAGEMENT

OLD VERSION:

Article III Section 2: The additional members of the Board of Directors shall consist of not less than three nor more than seven members in good standing, appointed by the president. Thpositions may include the Membership Chair, Newsletter Editor, the Branch's Central Board Representatives, and/or Member(s) at Large, according to the needs of the branch.

NEW VERSION:

Section 2: The additional members of the board of directors shall consist of not less than three **members** in good standing, appointed by the president **and approved by a majority board vote** according to the needed **functional roles**.

OLD VERSION: Article V Section 5:

Section 5: The Treasurer shall keep proper books of account and report the financial status of the Mount Diablo Branch at each called meeting of the board of directors.

The treasurer shall receive and keep all funds of the Mount Diablo Branch and pay them out only as authorized by the Executive Board. Any funds received for the organization shall be promptly deposited in an account set up for that purpose.

The treasurer or the president shall sign all checks issued by the branch.

The treasurer shall prepare all financial reports required by the Central Board of the California Writers Club.

The treasurer shall assist the membership chairperson in preparing reports for the Central Board of the California Writers Club.

NEW VERSION:

Section 5: The **treasurer** shall keep proper books of account and report the financial status of the Mount Diablo Branch at each called meeting of the board of directors.

The **treasurer has a fiduciary responsibility to the board and branch members to** receive and keep all funds of the Mount Diablo Branch and pay out **normal and reasonable expense**. Any funds received for the organization shall be promptly deposited in an account set up for that purpose.

Any two of the four executive branch members may sign checks written for branch expenses.

2014 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 today's young Contra Costa County middle school students who like to write 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 donors to the Young Writers Contest from July 1, 2012, to September 1, 2013.

Table with 2 columns and 2 rows listing donor clubs and their members. Clubs include The Leroy Family Foundation, The Gertrude Atherton Guild, The John Muir Member Club, The Mary Austin Writers Club, and The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club.

- List of donor clubs and their contribution ranges: ~ The Jack London Founder's Circle - \$500, ~ The John Steinbeck Society - \$250-\$499, ~ The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club - \$100-\$149, ~ The Gertrude Atherton Guild - Less than \$25, ~ The John Muir Member Club - \$150-\$249, ~ The Mary Austin Writers Club - \$50-\$99, ~ The Helen Hunt Jackson Group - \$25-\$49

Please consider joining a Donor Club in support of our Annual Young Writers Contest which awards cash prizes for excellence in the following categories: short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative. Winners are notified in May and presented with their awards at a luncheon at a local restaurant. All program expenses are supported by individual donations and grants.

Your gift furthers our mission to identify and reward excellence among Contra Costa County middle school students and enables our club to continue and to expand our outreach to young writers. Your gift is fully tax deductible. Thank you to all our members who generously donated to the 2013 Young Writers Contest.

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



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 March 8, at 9:00 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.