

# The Write News



A Monthly Newsletter

May 2014

*The California Writers Club-Mount Diablo Branch*

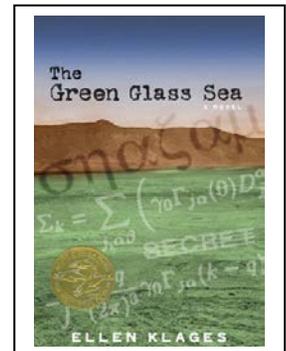
## AWARD CEREMONY & LUNCHEON Young Writers Contest Winners & Special Speaker Saturday, May 10, 2014; 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

### *'Building a Story from the Ground Up'*

Noted author **Ellen Klages** will talk about the process of writing, including:



- **First drafts**
- **Developing characters**
- **Plot and structure**
- **What to do when stuck**



**Ellen Klages** is the award-winning author of the novels *The Green Glass Sea* and *White Sands, Red Menace*, and the story collection *Portable Childhoods*. She lives in a small house full of many odd things.

**Sign-in is 11:00 am - Awards start at 11:30** – with luncheon and speaker from 12:15 to 2:00 at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. Registration is \$20, or \$25 for non-CWC members; **contact Robin Gigoux at [ragig@aol.com](mailto:ragig@aol.com), or phone 925-933-9670.**

**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 the \$20 or \$25 no-show payment.

## President's Message

By Elisabeth Tuck



Recently I finished reading *The Snow Child* by Eowyn Ivey, a Pulitzer finalist. What a good book! Her writing partner was her mother, a poet. It shows in Ivey's ability to show scene and tell a captivating story with such well-chosen words. Included was an interview with Ivey who mentioned authors she was influenced by, many of whom I have read. Then she wrote of conversations with customers in the independent bookstore where she works. It reminded me how lucky we all are to be part of a reading and writing community like CWC.

Check out Lynn Goodwin's column of good suggestions for writers. Hope you read Lynn's suggestions every month. She has such good ideas for us.

Remember that the **May meeting** is our **excellent Young Writers Contest's Award** banquet.

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## Helpful Writing Tools Recommended by CWC Members

By: Linda Todd

Soon after I determined that the writing life was for me, I came across a podcast that I have listened to since 2010. **Lani Diane Rich** and **Alistair Stephens** from *StoryWonk* started out with a daily podcast on different topics related to writing craft.

In 2012 they switched to a Sunday format podcast. They posted their 58th Sunday podcast on September 15, 2013, and have expanded their topics. They also periodically post **StoryWonk** sessions where they analyze movies or television shows for story structure. They are currently running a series on the Pixar movies. **Lani Diane Rich** and **Alistair Stephens** make a smart and funny team, especially when their opinions are in conflict.

Every Sunday I patiently wait for the next podcast post to get my **StoryWonk** fix for the week. They also offer classes and editorial and other services such as cover design and copywriting.

Check out their classes, services, and podcasts at <http://storywonk.com>, or get the podcasts through iTunes and Stitcher.

## ***Member Profile: Jing Li***



**Hello. My name is Jing Li.**

From an unwanted girl growing up in northern China's poverty-stricken deep-mountain village of the Red Stone Bridge, to a proud American citizen, high school teacher, CWC published / Awarded writer living in beautiful San Francisco by its famous Golden Gate Bridge, I've come a long way.

I've been blessed by special Guardian Angels at every crucial turning point of my life.

My life started at China's bottom society in the care of my poor peasant grandparents. As a small child, I survived death, famine, disease, neglect and abuse. My tough survivor grandmother, illiterate but brilliantly intelligent, resented raising me, a worthless girl. She suffered from her three-inch bound feet since age five, and once tossed her own new born baby daughter into the urine pot to drown. She wanted a boy.

When my own daughter was born, my in-law's pressured me to have my baby daughter killed so as to try for a boy. Today, my radiantly beautiful daughter is a MBA graduate from Rice University, and working for a prominent American company.

It was my love for school, for reading, for books, for my teachers' praise, and for my all-time excelling academic grades that sustained my spirit. I refused to believe my parents that I was too dumb to ever amount anything in life.

It was my love for the English language and hard work that brought me to the top world of America. I was the Number One winner out of hundreds of my high school English teacher colleagues out of the whole Shanxi Province to become an exchange teacher in America, and later in 1989 for my Master's degree.

Writing in my second language of English gives me a sense of fulfillment. Getting published and awarded (2007) has since greatly inspired me. I want to become a book author of my miraculous surviving life story to thank my beloved new home country, wonderful America, for giving me so many blessings to count.

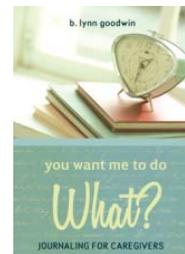
I also feel compelled to write about the odyssey of my past 20-year public school teaching experiences. I worry about America's future. Too many semi-illiterate youngsters are passed up to "graduate" from public high schools every year, who are utterly unprepared to function as productive citizens. America is like a beautiful mansion with a leaking foundation.

I feel the calling to repay my Guardian Angels who saw me through so much.

## Writer's Markets Column

### *Speaking Engagements for Writers*

by **B. Lynn Goodwin**



**Being seen as an expert is good for your sales and your self-image. If you've given a book talk for any group, you remember what it felt like to have an audience listening and you probably loved their questions and comments. If you've talked to a class, you remember the excitement of the students. If you've run a workshop, you may remember the thank you's as well as adding people to your mailing list.**

Speaking engagements help most authors. Here are a few links that will help you begin gathering information about how to put yourself out in the world:

Berrett-Koehler Publishers makes the following recommendations:

<http://www.bkpextranet.com/tips/speaking.htm>

Nina Amir and C. Hope Clark offer these simple suggestions gleaned from years of experience:

<http://savvybookwriters.wordpress.com/2013/10/04/7-tips-for-successful-author-speaking-engagements/>.

Kristie Rimmel offers 14 tips to help you at <http://www.brandingonthenet.com/articles/booking-speaking-engagements.htm>.

Some people offer free teleconferences and make either books or coaching available at the end. Others talk to their local independent bookstores to get lists of nearby book clubs interested in having a guest speaker.

I used to give journaling workshops for the Alzheimer's Association, the Cancer Association, Senior Centers, and more. We used my books for prompts and they were available for sale at the end of the workshop. I always had a great time and left energized. Make yourself a press kit, and if possible get a video or at least a recording of a presentation. Then put yourself out in the world. One thing leads to another. If you give it a try, please let me know at [Lgood67334@comcast.net](mailto:Lgood67334@comcast.net).

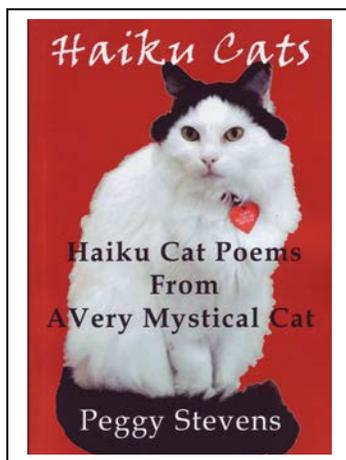
**Editor's Note:** In my role as an editor, I am often asked by authors, "How do I find places to send my stories, enter contests and promote my writing?" My first answer has always been to read Lynn Goodwin's *Writer's Markets* column – example above. It appears in most of our monthly CWC newsletters and offers invaluable ideas for writers. Check your back copies and take notice. It's terrific information!

*Lyn Roberts*, Editor

## Member Events, News and Salutes



**Kathleen Wilson** has been awarded a Fellowship to write the history of the Southern Industrial Educational Association, 1905-1926. She will be in residence at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities at University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA for the fall semester (Aug 15-Dec.15). The outcome of this work will be a digital archive hosted by Morehead State University. Kathleen will also curate exhibitions on the subject in Kentucky and Virginia - scheduled for 2015/16.



**Peggy Steven's** book, *Haiku Cats* is a collection of 69 haiku poems on the subject of cats.

From the back cover:

“Whether by magic or some sort of mental telepathy, Tommy (sic, my cat) gave Peggy the sixty-nine haiku poems in this book. How or why is beyond explanation. These haiku poems are a mysterious and minimalist gift of love from a mystical cat.”

## The 2014 Golden Quill Awards

**SLO NightWriters 25th Annual Writing Contest, The 2014 Golden Quill Awards** Short Story/Memoir – 1,000 word maximum; Poetry – 40 line maximum. Entries must include the words ‘Déjà vu’ and depict the theme.

Entry Fee: \$15 per entry, multiple entries are allowed in both categories

Prizes: \$750 – First Prize, \$400 – Second Prize, for each category, plus Honorable Mentions. Submissions Accepted: April 1, 2014 through June 30th, 2014 ALL WRITERS ARE WELCOME!

Visit our website for more contest details at: [www.slolightwriters.org](http://www.slolightwriters.org) Tom Snow, Contest Director

Contest email: [nightwriterscontest@gmail.com](mailto:nightwriterscontest@gmail.com) In association with The Central Coast Writers Conference [www.communityprograms.net](http://www.communityprograms.net) (You do not need to attend the conference to enter)

## Members' Challenge:

**Ideas for book promotion. What or who helped sell your book? Tell your fellow members the best way to promote your book. Ideas below!**

### *From Judith Marshall:*

One effective way to promote your book is to exchange interviews with other authors. It also drives traffic to your site. Here's my latest interview by Annamaria Bazzi.

<http://www.annamariabazzi.com/2014/04/08/round-table-chat-36/>

I interviewed Annamaria last year when her book, "White Swans", was released.

<http://judithmarshall.net/guest-author-interview-with-annamaria-bazzi-blog-tour-stop-14/>

### *From John Marvin:*

I think the most important thing I have done is to send copies of my book to many friends, relatives, and former working cohorts. Those who are in book clubs have recommended it to their book clubs, and some of those have gone to their local libraries and requested the library order copies. Also, those friends who are Facebook - friendly have put out the word, and that has made a difference. I also began simply walking into any independent book store I find wherever I am, and hand them two copies as gifts. I tell them I wrote the book and they can read them, put them out on the shelves and keep the profit, and that if they know of any short fiction writers, I am looking for contributing authors for a second part. They have been receptive, each time. I also hand copies of the book to hotel and inn keepers who have libraries, and I know some sales have come from that, because other customers have said so.

Last, I started putting in a book mark in those books I give to stores and businesses. It sticks out the top and simply says, "Do you write short fiction?" and continues with a short explanation and how to learn more through my website. I have not done this much yet, and have no idea if it will generate anything.

### *From Andy Kinane:*

The best book promotion has been an article in the local paper about my book.

### *From Lloyd Lofthouse:*

The best way to sell books for me was through Blogging and buying an ad to run on *Book Bub* in March of 2013. These two approaches were measurable. No other approach has produced significant, measurable results.

For instance, after taking a workshop run by Bell Belew on how to Blog properly, I launched my first serious Blog in 2010. But my first book came out in 2008 and sold 221 copies that year. I was also a guest on 30 traditional radio talk shows that year as a China expert.

In 2009, the same title sold 341 copies.

Then I launched my first Blog early in 2010 and by the end of the year, 2,375 copies of my first title had sold. In 2011, 4,641 copies sold. In 2012, another 4,148 sold. In 2013, 5,044 copies were sold and almost 3,000 of those sales took place the same month the Book Bub ad ran.

The Blog that supports my first novel, *My Splendid Concubine*, historical fiction set in 19th century China, is approaching 1,900 posts---all about China---and 500,000 views.

## **Book Promotion Continued:**

### **From Denise P. Kalm:**

The best way I've found to sell books is to speak. Ideally, you talk about your book, but for fiction, this might be tough. So craft a topic that sort of relates or bring your books anyway, even if you aren't speaking about anything related to them. If you have any professional societies to speak to, bring your books and bookmarks. Yes, even techies like these and I've sold more where I speak than anywhere else. Put a plug for your book on your last slide and be sure to note where they can buy it.

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## **(And One MORE) – ‘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.”**

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### **Small Change**

The one-pound coffee can was a repository for my husband's small change. At the time of his death it was filled to the brim. But for a whole year I left it undisturbed.

But one morning the bank provided me with several tiny flat strips of brown paper into which I laboriously fed the separated pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters.

When my son and family came for the one year memorial, the accumulated eighty dollars took us out for a Bar B Q meal, my late husband's favorite cuisine. His small change treated us all to one last lunch together.

**Joanna H. Kraus**

# California Writers Club – Central Board

## David George, Mt. Diablo Branch serves as President

**California Writers Club**  
Officers and Appointees of the Central Board (2013-2014)

**President**  
David George  
Mt. Diablo

**Vice President**  
Margie Yee Webb  
Sacramento

**Secretary**  
Joyce Krieg  
Central Coast

**Treasurer**  
Sharon Svitak  
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**Policies and Procedures Chair**  
Dave LaRoche  
South Bay

**Public Relations Director**  
Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
East Sierra

**Member-At-Large**  
Ray Malus  
San Fernando Valley

President David George, Mt. Diablo, became a dual member of the Mt. Diablo and Berkeley branches in 2004 and is a lifetime member of the club. Dave has held a number of board-level positions at both branches as well as the Central Board. Dave’s writing career includes short stories, poems, and nonfiction. He explores the ironies found during his 30-year high-tech business career and his encounters with the wildlife of rural California. He has won writing awards, most recently First Place in the CWC-San Francisco/Peninsula’s Jack London Annual Writing Contest. He is currently writing a novel based on his Irish ancestral roots and an anthology of modern fables about the natural world.

### 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 to September 1, 2013 to the present.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Foundation Donors</b></p> <p><i>The Leroe Family Foundation</i></p>                                                                                                                       | <p><b>The Gertrude Atherton Guild</b></p> <p><i>Lee Paulson<br/>Gary and Lilly Gwilliam<br/>Karen Terhune<br/>Beth Grimm<br/>Bee Hylinski<br/>Bob O'Brian</i></p>                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>The John Muir Member Club</b></p> <p><b>The Mary Austin Writers Club</b></p> <p><i>David George<br/>Ron Shoop – Random House<br/>Sheryl Ruzek<br/>Ed Stanislawski<br/>Kathy Urban</i></p> | <p><b>The Ina Coolbrith Laureate Club</b></p> <p><i>Danard Emanuelson<br/>Liz Koehler-Pentacoff<br/>Karen Tenney - In memory of her mother, Betty Tenney and for the Betty Tenney Essay Prize<br/>Barbara Bentley<br/>Elisabeth Tuck – In memory of Sue Tasker</i></p> |

~ 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 – Less than \$25      ~ The Helen Hunt Jackson Group - \$25-\$49

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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 and a special humor award. 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 and 2014 Young Writers Contests.

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

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

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California Writers Club ~ Mount Diablo Branch

~ *The California Writers Club is a designated 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation.* ~

***Join Us!***

**Our Young Writers Contest Awards Luncheon  
is May 10, at 11:00 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.