

The Write News



California Writers Club – Mount Diablo Branch

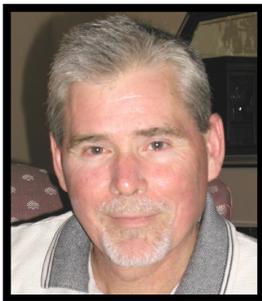
A Monthly Publication

Summer 2008

Extra, Extra - Read All About It! The Summer Edition of The Write News Has Arrived!

President's Message

By David George



Who said your vote does not count? In this very important presidential election year, every vote counts. That's why I want to thank you all for electing me at the June meeting as your new branch president for this coming 2008-09 year. I am honored by your confidence in me, and am excited about my new role.

I have had a chance to meet many of you, but for some of you I am a new face. I transferred over from the Berkeley branch in 2006, and so have only been affiliated with the Mt. Diablo branch for two years. But in that short time, I have developed a deep appreciation for the vocal, professional, but fun-loving membership, and the dedication and hard work of your branch officers and board. I have also noticed how serious we all are about improving our craft, and reaching out to the community around us to reinforce their love and appreciation for the written word.

That is why I joined the California Writers Club, and why I volunteered my time to help further our branch goals. We have just concluded our summer board planning session where we discussed many great ideas to improve both the value of our membership and our outreach and educational programs for the community. Our members represent a vast storehouse of writing excellence, achievement, and potential for continuing to educate our community in the precious gifts of reading and creative writing.

My main goals for this coming year are to further our community outreach and educational programs, to ensure that our monthly speakers and programs add value for our members, that we continue to financially break even with our Young Writers contest, workshops, and other valuable yearly events, and that we all continue to have FUN as an affiliate club of published and aspiring writers.

Remember that 2009 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the California Writers Club by Jack London and others in 1909. We have plans to celebrate our Club's centennial year in a number of ways throughout the state at our seventeen existing branches. But the Club would have foundered on the rocks of Alameda Island years ago if it weren't for the talented and dedicated leaders from whom the Club has benefited over the years. Please join me in a very heartfelt thank you to Jack Russ, Al Garrotto, and all of the past officers and branch board members who have dedicated their time to making your monthly meetings, workshops, website, newsletter, Back Fence bulletin board, and special events professional, meaningful, and value-packed.

Please help me and your new 2008-09 board of directors by sharing your ideas on improving our outreach to the community, bringing more value to your membership, and having more fun than ever before. My email address is davegeorge7@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you, and seeing you again at our next meeting in September.

Who's Who on Your CWC Branch Board?

The general membership held its annual election at the June 14, 2008, meeting. The following officers were voted into office for 2008-2009:

President - David George, **Vice-President** - Julie Dowling, **Treasurer** - Joanne Brown, and **Secretary** - Barbara Bentley

Your Committee Chairs are: Membership – Jody Denison, **Programs & Website** – Al Garrotto, **Young Writers Contest** – Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff, **Workshops** – Igal Levy, **Barnes & Noble Fund Raiser** – Camille Minichino, **Event Logistics** – Danard Emanuelson, **Publicity** – Ann Damaschino, **Branch Historian & Door Prizes** – Fran Wojnar, **Central Board Representative** – David George, **Central Board Alternate Rep** – Jack Russ, and **Newsletter** – Catherine Accardi.

Your Board Members are: Ann Damaschino, Jody Denison, Danard Emanuelson, Al Garrotto, Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff, Igal Levy, Fran Wojnar, Jack Russ, and Catherine Accardi.

Advisory Board Members are: Pat Edwards, Nanette Carroll, Camille Minichino, Veronica Rossi, and Lee Paulson.

Branch Achievements

By Jack Russ

At a recent meeting, I reviewed for the board, specific actions from the summer of 2004 to date. Al Garrotto and I, with many suggestions and help from the board members, orchestrated gradual improvements to the branch's operation to achieve their goal of increasing the benefits of membership. These achievements include:

- Board membership was expanded from 9 to 15 bringing in new faces, ideas, and energy.
- The TidBits quick information program was established.
- The Back Fence member-only idea exchange program was begun.
- A new upgraded website was created with many new features.
- The monthly newsletter went electronic, published in the universal .pdf format saving considerable expense for copying and mailing. Members without web access continue to receive paper copies.
- Publication of a summer edition of the newsletter was instituted with special features, many of which were not included in regular issues.
- The annual Young Writers Contest was expanded & more prize money added. The awards banquet was moved to more suitable facilities.
- A successful program to obtain financial contributions to support and expand the Young Writers Contest was implemented.
- Success was achieved in expanding public awareness of the club and its activities.
- A special annual writing workshop for middle school children was begun.
- The programs of the regular monthly meetings were modified to include a fall and spring workshop.
- A new public address system was purchased and put into use.
- A stable venue for meeting was established – Lafayette Hungry Hunter restaurant.
- The branch's initiative to create a state-wide anthology was approved by the CWC central board and is under development.
- Several actions served to place the branch on sound financial footing with adequate cash reserves.

Meet Our Secretary - *Barbara Bentley*



Barbara Bentley, the newly elected secretary of the Mt. Diablo Branch of the California Writer's Club, has stayed close to her roots. She was born at the Camp Stoneman hospital in Pittsburg and has lived in Pittsburg, Antioch, Concord, Alamo and Walnut Creek. As a vibrant youngster she played cowboys and Indians in the field next to the Santa Fe railroad tracks, collected soda pop bottles in the city park to pay her way to the twenty-five cent Saturday matinee and never, never had the compulsion to write.

Barbara has worn many hats along her journey. She built a 3,000 square foot home in Concord with her first husband and tells tales of applying shakes to the roof of the second story, wriggling in the mud under the house to install sheet metal ducts for the heating and air conditioning system, pulling electrical wire, and installing her own dishwasher and garbage disposal. But she never had the compulsion to write.

When she decided to advance in her longtime job she went back to school at night and after seven years of schlepping into San Francisco she graduated with a B.S. in Marketing from Golden Gate University as the outstanding undergraduate of the business school. She eventually got her promotion, but she never had the compulsion to write.

Then her second husband attempted to murder her by ether asphyxiation. Her world crumbled around her as she discovered he was not the retired rear admiral he said he was. He was a con man who just happened to be the son of Rear Admiral Perry that started the Seabees in WWII. As she tried to make sense of what happened, she decided to write a book about her experience to help prevent others from making the same mistakes she did. During this time she helped the police investigate her case, she acted as co-attorney in her divorce (even though she is not an attorney), and twice she went to divorce court representing herself (she won). She also became the sponsor of Assembly Bill 16 and changed the divorce law of California. She now had the compulsion to write.

After almost 39 years with the same company, Barbara retired in 2003. When she completed her manuscript, *A Dance with the Devil: A True Story of Surviving a Psychopath*, she pitched it to a New York literary agent who in turn sold her story in four days to Berkley Books, an imprint of Penguin USA. The release date for her book is November 4, 2008, and she is amazed that it will have taken almost two years since the Berkley editor acquired her manuscript for her book to appear in stores.

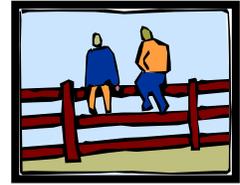
Barbara is now happily married to the love of her life, Rex. They enjoy traveling together and making award winning homemade wine and labels. Sierra, the cat, shares her home with them. Barbara has written and illustrated three fairy tales about the *Blacksmith's Daughter* and plans to submit them to her publisher. And Barbara has decided to write another book, this time an historical novel about a strong Irish woman.

Volunteer Needed! *We Want You!*

The CWC-Mount Diablo Branch needs your help. Are you are interested in becoming the Chair for the Young Writers event? If you answered "Yes" to this question, please contact Branch President David George for more details. You may contact David at davegeorge7@comcast.net.

Calling All Members To Join The Back Fence

The Back Fence is the online forum for the Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club. CWC members are invited to poke their heads over this virtual "Back Fence" to network, exchange ideas, and post announcements on anything related to writing, editing, and CWC activities.



Did you see the message chain on running online critique groups? Are you going to volunteer for the Litquake festival? Want to enter that contest for crime writers? If none of this sounds familiar, then hop on over to the Back Fence, our branch's online message group.

Here you can interact with dozens of other Mount Diablo and Tri-Valley CWC members every day, not just at our monthly meetings. You can seek feedback on a story idea, recommend a new reference book, post details on a local literary event, query other members about carpooling to a conference, and share your writing successes (or frustrations).

To start exchanging ideas with other members, just go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/cwcbbackfence. If you have any questions about joining or posting, e-mail our Back Fence coordinator Julie Dowling at JulieMDowling@yahoo.com. Hope to see more of you peeking over our Back Fence soon!



Sales & Salutes

Myrtle Archer's reprint story, *A Mother's Heart*, has been accepted by *New Works Review*. This story was first published in *Green's Magazine* in Canada.



Bookspan has offered \$5,000 for *Barbara Bentley's* book, *A Dance with the Devil*, as a Featured Alternate in the Doubleday Book Club, Literary Guild, Mystery Guild, Book of the Month and BOMC2.



Jerry Blair has been honored by the Santa Barbara Writers Conference with two awards. He won first place in the humor category for his story *Vincent BanGold*, and he was also awarded Honorable Mention for short stories under 1000 words with his thematic piece, *Sideways*.

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 at CAACat@prodigy.net.

Finding Your Place in the World of Blogs

Observations by B. Lynn Goodwin

Do you read blogs? Do you offer your blog to the world?

With traditional publishers disappearing, the blogging world is the newest frontier in publishing. Newspapers, magazines, and every special interest all run them. They have millions of readers, and many are searching for writers.

Sarah Boxer's *ULTIMATE BLOGS: Masterworks from the Wild Web* is a unique look at this brave new world. Here's my review of her eye-opening book, which ran in the spring issue of *Writer Advice*, www.writeradvice.com.

ULTIMATE BLOGS: Masterworks from the Wild Web

By Sarah Boxer

ISBN # 978-0-307-27806-7

A Vintage Books Original

Scientists, political analysts, photographers, cartoonists, soldiers, reporters, musicians, moms, and more share unstintingly in blogs collected by former New York Times critic and reporter Sarah Boxer, who has put together a fresh new collection called *ULTIMATE BLOGS: Masterworks from the Wild Web*. She culled the gems in this book from over 77 million blogs that have popped up worldwide

Boxer based her selections on the quality of writing rather than the number of links each site collected. She discovered that "bloggy writing...is conventional and reckless, composed on the fly for anonymous intimates. It is public and private, grand and niggling, smart-assed and dumb-assed."

ULTIMATE BLOGS offers fresh, contemporary voices—educated, analytical, streetwise, opinionated, and unexpected. "In The Middle" gives a firsthand account of racial profiling in airports. "Old Hag" presents contemporary issues in verse. "Matthew Yglesias" digs deeply into politics, exposing what the media missed. So does "The Smoking Gun."

"Midnight in Iraq" is a soldier's first-hand account of Iraq in 2006. "Cosmic Variance" looks at the structure of the universe and observes dark matter. "Click Opera" and "The Rest is Noise" present differing views of the music world. Google the title to find the blog.

Each selection offers original subject matter and a distinct attitude. Unlike news stories, blogs are not expected to look at all sides of an issue. *Ultimate Blogs*, which includes photoblogs and cartoons, is cutting edge. All kinds of readers will enjoy the new voices and new worlds it offers.

If you've read the review or looked at the book, you may be feeling overwhelmed. You are not alone. A writer who attended the July 20th blogging conference in San Francisco said, "Everyone is figuring this out as they go along."

Feel like being a pioneer? If you have the time, the inclination, and a passion for a particular niche, try blogging about it.

Word Fancy

By Jack Russ

Once again, The Washington Post published its yearly contest in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for various words. And the winners are...

1. Coffee (n.), a person who is coughed upon.
2. Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. Abdicate (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent.
6. Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absent-mindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
7. Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.
8. Gargoyle (n.), an olive-flavored mouthwash.
9. Flatulence (n.) the emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller
10. Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
11. Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam.
12. Rectitude (n.), the formal, dignified demeanor assumed by a proctologist immediately before he examines you.
13. Oyster (n.), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddish expressions.
14. Pokemon (n), A Jamaican proctologist.
15. Frisbeetarianism (n.), The belief that when you die your Soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck there.
16. Circumvent (n.), the opening in the front of boxer shorts.



CWC Anthology

By Igal Levy

At its quarterly meeting in May, the California Writers Club Central Board approved setting up an editorial committee that has a mandate to produce an anthology of writing by members of the CWC. That committee is now in place. After 20 years, the CWC is getting ready to produce another literary anthology!

In the introduction to the last CWC anthology, *West Winds IV*, Therese M. Pipe wrote that the "year 1989 marks the 80th anniversary of the California Writers' Club ... [t]hus the production of a new *West Winds* anthology of the work of its members is indeed timely."

Much has changed since *West Winds IV* was published by a vanity press in the late 1980's. The CWC has grown manifold, with a number of new branches appearing across the state. The publishing world has entered a new era. Printing technology, the Internet, the World Wide Web, and the power and speed of personal computers have gone through and continue to see revolutionary changes. Now the CWC must adapt and take advantage of this new environment.

Next year, the CWC will celebrate its 100th anniversary. So timeliness, too, is reason for the CWC to leverage its size and fulfill its historical mission by offering its members a chance at publication in this brave new world. With well over 1100 members, the CWC is itself reaching a critical mass of writers and readers. But our mission is not just to add members and rest on our laurels; following our motto, we must continue to explore new seas. Creating a new anthology is a perfect way for the club to sail on, to further enhance its venerable reputation, extend its outreach, and increase its influence. Most importantly, an anthology offers CWC members yet another way to get their writing out.

The editorial committee is preparing to publicize the anthology to our branches and publish guidelines for submissions. Get ready to hear more about the anthology in the weeks to come!

From The Editor's Desk

By Catherine Accardi



Of course, as California writers, we are not limited to writing about California. We are at liberty to write about an enormous variety of subjects, create endless numbers of poems, novels, articles, etc., and that's just dandy. So, with that being said, I can now move on to the subject of this article which is writing about California using the California Historical Society (CHS) as a magnificent resource.

The CHS collections are categorized into three categories, all of which reflect the mission of the CHS to "collect, preserve, interpret, publish and exhibit materials about California, and to provide an invaluable record of the various histories of the people of this area." The three collections are: The Fine Arts Collection, which includes over 5,000 works of art, the Research Collection, consisting of the CHS library and Photography collection, and the North Baker Research Library containing historical texts, manuscripts, and maps.

The CHS is open to members and non-members. It is located at 678 Mission Street in San Francisco. The CHS website is a joy to visit at www.californiahistoricalsociety.org, or phone (415) 357-1848. The website has detailed information about the Society and its collections. Click on "Doing Research" and you will be provided with all the information you need to make your visit to the CHS quite rewarding.

Check back with "From the Editor's Desk" in our September edition of The Write News because I am going to introduce you to Melvyl. Who is Melvyl you might ask. Read me next month and you will know all...



Coming Attractions Upcoming Speakers for 2008-2009

September 13: Anita Amirrezvani, novelist, The Blood of Flowers

October 11: Darryl Brock, baseball novelist

November 8: Workshop (details to follow in future newsletter)

December 13: CWC-Mt. Diablo Branch members Barbara Bentley, and Katie Vecchio

January 10: Laurel Ann Hill and Alice Wilson-Fried

The Long & the Short of Writing and Editing a Novel



Officers:

***President: David George
Vice-President: Julie Dowling
Treasurer: Joanne Brown
Secretary: Barbara Bentley***

Committee Chairs::

Central Board Rep: David George
Central Board Alternative Rep:
Jack Russ
Membership: Jody Denison
Newsletter: Catherine Accardi
Barnes & Noble Fundraiser:
Camille Minichino
Programs & Website: Al Garrotto
Branch Historian & Door Prizes:
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Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacoff
Publicity: Ann Damaschino
Event Logistics:
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Workshops: Igal Levy

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Al Garrotto
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Fran Wojnar

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Pat Edwards
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Lee Paulson
Veronica Rossi

The ideas and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributing individuals and do not necessarily represent the views of the California Writers Club.

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Sail On