

# CWC Bulletin

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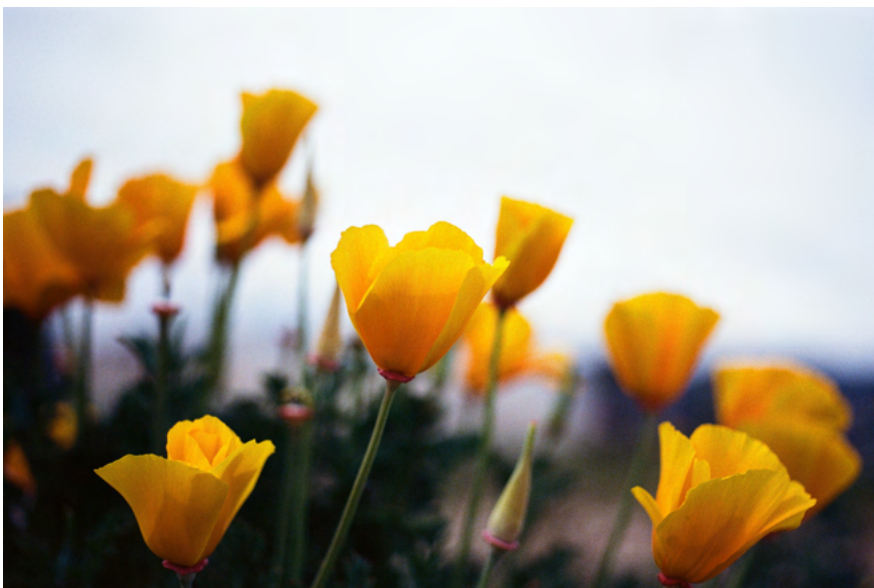
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## Message from the President

The CWC Board of Directors will elect a new president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary in July (See the election slate on page 3).

The CWC is also working on a new website with a membership directory that will replace the current Member Record Management System (MRMS). We expect the new system will be in place by August. Until the system is up and the branches are trained in its functions, we may have to use the current MRMS system to renew and add new members this July and August. After that, new members will join any branch (and renew) using a centralized on-line membership and payment process.

The website will also have a member bookshelf, where all member publications can be listed and updated. This is an exciting benefit which we believe will attract new members and give our current members one more reason to renew. In addition, we are working on new contests, workshops, and CWC publications. The recent Smalls Too contest and the forthcoming Smalls Too book are examples. (See the Smalls Too contest winners on pg. 4).

# President's Message, cont'd.

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The health of a club like ours, in my opinion, is measured by the activities and achievements of its members and the impact the branches have on the communities they serve. As president, I have focused on increasing membership, financial stability, and our collective leadership. At the CWC level, the financial picture is good, our membership has grown to more than two thousand, and candidates for the 2026-2027 CWC president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary are all experienced leaders with a meaningful history of service and leadership in their branches.



That being said, at our meetings in March and April, the presidents or representatives from a number of branches (small and large) talked about problems finding members who are willing to step into elected positions and chair their branches' appointed positions. Also, a few of the branches are struggling financially and they are having a difficult time recruiting new members.

All too often, the same small number of individuals end up doing most or all of the branch work. Over time, they become exhausted and burn out. If your branch is important to you, if you love being in the club, I encourage you to find a way to help at the board level. If you are interested and able to help by joining the board or serving as a director or chair, then speak to your branch president. Remember, the club is only as strong as its members and the work of our boards.

This will be my last President's Message. The California Writers Club is a great organization. It has been an honor and pleasure to have served as president. I look forward to finding new ways to support our club.

Roger Lubeck  
CWC President

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## Candidate Slate for Board of Directors, July Election



**Jordan Bernal for President.** Jordan is the international award-winning author of *The Keepers of Éire*, a dragon fantasy that encourages readers to let their imaginations take flight. Love of fantasy inspires her to write and publish through her independent press, Dragon Wing Publishing. In 2017, Jordan published a middle-grade, anti-bullying spin off novel, *Reluctant Paladin*. The second novel in her adult series, *The Keepers of Alba*, was published in 2020. Jordan is currently working on the third novel in her *Celtic Dragonrider* series. She has been a member of the California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch since 2010. Follow Jordan at <http://www.jordanbernal.com>.

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**Crissi Langwell for Vice President.** Crissi has been a Redwood Writers member since 2012, serving the branch over the years as president, vice president, secretary, newsletter editor, web manager, social media manager, and anthology editor-in-chief, along with being a member of the CWC executive board. A Petaluma-based author of 17 books spanning romance, women's fiction, and speculative fiction, and the creator of Substack "Love Letters to Writers," Crissi is a strong believer in writers helping writers. Find her at [CrissiLangwell.com](http://CrissiLangwell.com).

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**Evelyn Kohl LaTorre, Ed.D., for Secretary.** Evelyn belongs to the SF-Peninsula branch and the Fremont Area Writers (FAW), where she was the branch's first secretary and has been on the FAW board since its founding in 2009. She has been the CWC and NorCal representative for the Fremont Area Writers for the past decade. Evelyn has authored two memoirs: *Between Inca Walls* and *Love in Any Language*. Evelyn's website is: <http://www.evelynlatorre.com>.

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**Bernard Wozny for Treasurer.** Bernard served as president of the Sacramento branch from September 2022 to June 2025 and CWC Treasurer in 2025-2026. As branch president, he championed California Writers Week and created the Sacramento Book Festival. He promoted the membership of the club and always promoted fellow writers. Bernard's career as a software engineer allowed him to specialize in digital TV. His career culminated as a consultant, whose clients included Sony, News Corp, Open-TV, Virgin Media, Cisco. Bernard's love of engineering inspired him to write science thrillers, where technology challenges humanity and vice versa. He is also driven to write creative nonfiction, where true stories are dramatized in words. Bernard believes in the values of the California Writers Club. His knowledge of business provides Bernard with valuable insight to assist the California Writers Club. His insight into accounting provides the knowledge needed to serve as treasurer.

# CWC Smalls Too Contest Winners

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First Place, Marianne Brems, SF Peninsula

## A Homemaker's Vision

A small gray bird carries stalks, twigs to a window ledge.  
Each one she lays carefully, then rearranges  
according to a homemaker's plan all her own.  
She knows nothing about coming rain.

She pauses, looks around.  
Predators, food sources, the noon siren.  
Her beak smooths the center of the nest.  
Her pride hangs before us like a gong.



Marianne Brems is the author of the full-length poetry collections *Within the Trifles* (2025) and *Stepping Stones* (2024) plus three chapbooks. Her poems have also appeared in journals including *Cider Press Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Remington Review*, and *Lavender Review*. She lives, cycles, and swims in Northern California.

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Second Place, Laura Peracchio, Marin

## After the Fall

My twenty-four-year-old son, Ben, lay unresponsive in a hospital bed, tethered to machines and cloaked in bandages. On the seventeenth day after his fall, as his sister, Katie, and I sat vigil, he stirred, turning his eyes toward the window, then whispering his first word post-accident, expelling it in a shallow breath as he exhaled.

"Mom."  
"Ben, I'm here."  
"Mom."  
"Mom."  
"Mom...What the f\*\*k?"  
"Well," Katie said with a smile. "He seems to be himself."



Laura Peracchio, an Emeritus Professor and mother of five, is writing a memoir, *After the Fall*, about her experience caring for her 24-year-old son—an expert climber and wilderness rescuer—who fell while rock climbing in Grand Teton National Park. Her story is told as a tribute to all mothers.

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Third Place, Jim Wolff, San Fernando Valley

## Envy the Lit Candle

The unlit candle must envy those touched with flame,  
singing words of light and shadow, to the music of wind.  
No time to remember yesterday or to plan  
the heat is in the moment.  
Voiceless songs of light and shadow,  
no time to remember the one left behind  
while the fire burns, each moment away.



Jim Wolff is the coauthor of *50 Trail Runs in Southern California*. He is active in the outdoors and enjoys doing yoga, weight training, hiking, and cycling. Jim is retired and also enjoys oil painting, drawing, and writing. He is actively working to expand his work in creative nonfiction, memoir, poetry, and short stories.

# CWC Bulletin Editorial Page

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

It has been an honor and a real pleasure working on my first go at the **California Writers Club Bulletin**. Thanks to all of you who have helped in any way during this past month of preparations: our President, Roger Lubeck; Vice President, Jordan Bernal; Poetry Editor, Rick Rayburn; Short Prose Editor, Edward N. Albro; and our Workshops, Conferences, and Publications editor, Mara Johnstone.

We had many, many submissions this time around, and of course, as always, it was difficult to choose. I hope you enjoy our selections. If you were not featured in this issue, however, please do not be discouraged. We have an upcoming issue due out in early September with an August 15 deadline. If you feel inspired to do so, please submit new selections of your poetry, short story excerpts, novel excerpts, flash fiction pieces or essays to [editor@calwriters.org](mailto:editor@calwriters.org). Your work will be considered with thoughtfulness and care.

My goals for our bulletin are to help build our creative community, communicate important literary news from around the state, and showcase our wonderful California talent.

Besides submitting your work, I could use your help in other ways. As you'll see in the sidebar next to this letter, the CWC Bulletin's Editorial Staff has a number of open positions: Long Prose Editor (max. 500-word excerpts from novels and memoirs); Essay Editor; Branch News Editor; CWC News Editor; and Copy Editors. Please consider filling one of these spots by again contacting me at [editor@calwriters.org](mailto:editor@calwriters.org).

All the best to you and stay inspired!

Susan Marquez Owen  
CWC Bulletin Editor-in-Chief

## CWC Bulletin Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief  
Susan Marquez Owen  
[editor@calwriters.org](mailto:editor@calwriters.org)

Poetry Editor  
Rick Rayburn, Sacramento

Workshops, Conferences, and  
Publications Editor  
Mara Johnstone,  
Redwood Branch

Short Prose Editor  
Edward N. Albro, Sacramento

Long Prose Editor  
TBD

Essay Editor  
TBD

Branch News Editor  
TBD

CWC News Editor  
TBD

Member Publications Editor  
TBD

Copy Editors  
TBD



# Featured Short Prose

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## Wrapped

by Nicola Tateosian  
San Francisco Peninsula Branch

*Cape Town, 1982*

Five a.m. on New Year's Day and the beach stretches out to the distance. Wind cuts across the empty grey expanse. Flurries of sand wheel up and around – swirling, whirling grit-filled clouds.

I am sitting on a blanket eating a warm bacon sandwich, engulfed in a big down coat. I am thirteen. I sit crossed legged on the edge of a small group, huddled together as we are, waiting for the sun to come up. We have been here for a while and our collective weight has forced a shallow scooped indent into the packed sand. There are no gulls squawking, swimmers splashing, or hawkers hawking; only the soft lapping of the bioluminescence-fringed waves. The moon, a waxing gibbous, lights just a small patch of the night sky above us.

The ethereality of it is mesmerizing. But the thing that truly has captured my attention is the warm sandwich. I take another bite and savor the crispy, salty rind pushing against the soft white bread. I marvel at how it might be something a mother might do – lavishing the time and care needed to create such a perfect morsel. I pick up the mug propped beside me, take a sip of tea and watch as the steam swirls in the wind, haphazardly, no obvious destination.

Despite the greyness of the pre-dawn, the bleary outline of my “Aunty” Morag sitting on the other side of the group is just visible. I can see her familiar dark curls being tousled by the strong gusts coming off the ocean. Next to Morag is a large bundle containing the sandwiches. She has wrapped them with great care to ensure they stay warm – first in parcels of foil, then layers of tea towels and finally, on top, a thick blanket. Next to the sandwiches is a tall, beige thermos of milky tea. Morag sees me looking over and smiles, motions to the blanket-wrapped bundle, to the tea. I shake my head and smile back. It's a true smile, a deep smile, one of love and of admiration. I feel the lightness in myself as I smile that smile.

The edge of daylight is beginning to creep through and as it does our little crowd starts to rouse. There's a hum of wonder at the glowing sky and the arrival of the first light of the new year. But I remain silent. “That's the kind of mother I'll be,” I think to myself as I sip my tea. “I'll wrap up the sandwiches to keep them warm.”

I take another bite and look out across at the vastness of the ocean as the sun continues to rise.



# Featured Essay

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## A Territorial War

by Paul Karrer  
Central Coast Branch

The borders are not clearly defined. We have been at war a long time. The infiltrators tend overwhelmingly to come at night. Sometimes in groups of five but usually in covert clusters of two or three. They cling to the belief that there is safety in numbers. They believe this territory belongs to them.

Dunbas, Luhansk or Zaporizhzhia? No. It is Monterey. I have been happy to let them trespass in peace. However, where they go, they do so with a heavy presence. I'm speaking of the four-legged masked bandits known as Mapuche in Spanish, which means the one who washes. In Latin, they're Procyon Lotor, and in English we call these omnivorous raiders...Raccoons.

They tend to be nocturnal. Around November I hear them under my house amorously attempting to make more raccoons. A few months ago, one stumbled near my home frothing at the mouth. Laying on his back in the sun hissing. He, she, or it hung around in a tree for a day and was found expired the next morning. No surprise there as they are carriers of rabies and leptospirosis. One of my main issues with them is that they leave their nasty disease-ridden deposits.

I have failed in my attempts to be rid of them. My favorite attempt required spraying mountain lion urine around.

Three things about that.

#1 Mountain lion urine isn't cheap.

#2 HOW THE HELL DOES SOMEONE EVEN "GET" Mountain Lion urine? Come here kitty, kitty. Can you pee in this test tube for me?

# 3 Pure BS. It doesn't work.



Also, the furry SOBs ruin yards. They dig up the earth between the ground and fences scavenging for snails, grubs, and/or larvae.

Plus, two of them bit my dog and that cost me \$435 at the vet. BTW - The bite took a loooong ass time to heal.

The final straw occurred when I started a cheerful morning drinking coffee in my kitchen beneath my skylight. A shadow passed over my coffee cup. A shadow should not pass over my coffee cup. I looked up and I saw that which should not be seen. A raccoon was relieving itself on my nice clean, clear glass skylight. I mean in... the... act. I'm pretty sure it was because the glass was comfy on its posterior. Also, because Rocky Raccoon was saying "Hey, buddy screw you and your fake kitty kitty pee."

To me this was a declaration of total war. But to be honest I have lost this war as not only do I have that terrible visual in my cranium for all eternity. I had to climb up on the roof and clean it.

# Featured Essay

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## The Life Cycle of Writing

by Lani Longshore  
Tri-Valley Writers Branch

I like to think of my writing as self-contained. I write a blog post, or a chapter, or a journal entry, and it stays where it began. This may not be the best strategy. There are many times when what I write doesn't fit. My critique partners can usually talk me into removing the offending chapter and putting it in a file to use in another time and place. Ah, you may ask, but do I look in that file? Of course not. That's what files are for - to be ignored. And that's where thinking of the life cycle of writing may be useful.

Consider the tree. As it grows and changes, it often reaches a stage where it isn't as lovely as it could be. The wise gardener prunes a little, or trains a branch to grow in a different direction. Leaves fall, sometimes limbs fall, sometimes roots need to be removed before they damage something else. We accept that these things happen. We don't leave the limb to rot in the yard, we find a purpose for it. We might use fallen leaves for decorations, or let them shelter wildlife over the winter, or gather them for the compost pile that will feed next season's vegetables. Whatever happens, we adapt because we love the tree and want it to live as long as possible.

The next time your writing vexes you, don't abandon it. Let it tell you how it wants to be used, or if it needs a rest, or if it is morphing into something entirely different. You may need to trim an errant branch or root, but the writing itself is worth the effort.



# Featured Poetry

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## Butter on the Counter

by Karen Ashby Flack  
Central Coast Branch

*Let's be butter  
on the counter people!*

A seemingly  
simple act  
in a season  
churning  
with change.

I felt cold and hard.  
Boxed up  
and tightly wrapped,  
with measured  
demarcations.

I need a new  
consistency.  
Easily giving  
when touched,  
yet not spread so thin.

Unfolding edges,  
corners and creases,  
I peel back the layers  
that hold  
my form.

Now I rest,  
exposed and  
enlightened,  
with fresh clarity.  
Trying to soften,

like butter on the counter.

## I Should Have Known

by RoseMary Covington-Morgan  
Sacramento Branch

You should have known me when I was beautiful  
You should have known me back then  
As a girl with shiny curls  
And bright white teeth  
And dimples smiling on each cheek.

You should have known me when life was a song  
And I sang every day  
And danced  
And ran  
Forward

You should have known me when I was love  
And everyone I loved was near  
And the world was magic  
And the sun was warm  
And the clouds hid fascinating mysteries

You should have known me when all was right  
And wrong was nothing I knew about  
And monsters lived in storybooks  
And stories ended happily  
And joy lived deep inside me

You should have known me when excitement was my friend  
And my spirit was like lightning  
And my laughter was music  
And there was mischief in my grin

You should have known me when I was beautiful.  
You should have known me then.

# Featured Poetry, cont'd.

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## Atomic Cocktail

by Jan Steckel  
Berkeley Branch

In went the blue curacao, ground lapis lazuli,  
Sapphire gin, butterfly wing, UV Blue Vodka,  
feather of a jay, lime juice plus Maraschino liqueur  
shifting with the pH, a cerulean sky, blue spirulina,  
the Caribbean, butterfly pea flower, and a blue  
note.

Next poured my depressed cousin's soul,  
a toddler holding its breath, my old jeans,  
a warrior's woad-painted face, indigo eventide,  
a periwinkle, a turquoise earring, a blue bonnet,  
and a draught of my in-laws' imagined royal blood.

The barkeep finished it with a bar of Bessie  
Smith, a measure of Ma Rainey, and a string  
from Robert Johnson's guitar, still twanging.  
A couple of chunks of dry ice, and azure  
mist wafted from the rim, curling into my nostrils.

I drank deep, felt it diffuse from stomach into veins,  
respire out my now aquamarine lungs. The room  
spun cobalt and radioactive. My bones shivered  
into a mermaid on a mussel-covered rock.  
I sang all my sailors home to cold and deep.

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## Haiku

by Miera Rao \*  
SF-Peninsula Branch

**child's cry  
same language  
across borders**

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# Featured Novel

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## *Monarchs in the Wild (excerpt)*

by Israel Moya  
Orange County Branch

I rang the doorbell, and a woman with a cigarette in her mouth opened the door. Her ribs were visible through the neck in her shirt, and her denim shorts hardly covered anything. I couldn't take my eyes off the pockmarks and divots on her face, and her darting eyes that bounced from floor to sky, never once locking on mine. She walked me through her yard to the side of the house and boasted about how this '68 was her dream. "One of the last great muscle cars."

She took long drags, blew clouds of smoke out the side of her mouth, and pointed with the cigarette between her fingers while she choked on her words.

"This car suits a real man like you, not like that deadbeat who drove it before."

I was surprised and asked if the car belonged to someone else. Smoky McRib answered with a rant about how that deadbeat never owned a damn thing in his life, and even if he gave her money for the car the pink slip was clean and in her name. I'm not sure what kept me interested since the car came loaded with spite. Should I have been worried about her man showing up to kick my teenage ass? Trying to prove something.

"Why you selling?" I asked.

"Times are tough. Can't hold on'ta a dream for too long, yuh know? Gotta pay the bills, help me out, won't yuh?" she said while a child inside the house cried. "Mommy's coming, hold on!" she yelled. "I'll get another someday if I can, but they're going up in price, they'll be worth a fortune in the future, and this one's all original you see." Her bony yellow fingers opened the driver's side door and stroked the data plate in the doorjamb. "Coupe, Acapulco Blue, 1 March, 1968," but it wasn't blue no more.

She asked for nine-hundred, and I showed her five. I kept four in my back pocket just in case. Smoky McRib cursed and said, "Come on," then grabbed the bills and counted them, over and over, worried she missed one on each pass. She let out another curse and agreed. As she handed over the pink-slip and keys, I bit my lip and fought the smile as hard as I could.

"These cars are real pretty all fixed up," she said. "Send a picture when yer done, I might wanna buy it back from you."

I didn't plan to keep in touch. She reached under her shirt, scratched her back and spit on the ground, then the child inside the house started to cry. Smoky had a tired look on her face and walked to her front door. "I'm coming!" she yelled at the kid. What if her deadbeat man showed up? I jumped in the car.



# Featured Novel

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## *Girl in a Box* (excerpt)

by Jean Gordon Kocienda  
Marin Branch

"You write. You understand. It takes so much out of me. To put emotions into words. Sometimes I don't want to write what I'm feeling because it's painful, but I have to." She breathed out a plume of smoke and laughed bitterly. "It's my job."

Masako nodded. The sounds of small feet, the maid's voice, and the smell of rice and miso soup floated up the stairs.

"Over the years, I poured out all the wine in my soul, bled out my body, and put nothing back in. I must have been a miserable person to be around. I understand better now why my husband was suffering. He was dying of thirst, and I gave him no water. How stupid I was."

"You are hard on yourself," Masako said. Her eyes went to the Genji translation on her desk—hundreds of dog-eared, handwritten pages—and the tipsy piles of dictionaries and reference books on the floor.

"I've done poorly," Akiko fretted, "as a wife, as a mother. But something has changed. I sent my husband away on a whim and it gave me a chance to think. I feel stronger now, like I'm twenty years old, and I want to run away from home all over again."

"This is a hard home to run from, Akiko-san. You have many responsibilities." Masako was starting to suspect what Akiko was thinking.

But it was too late; Akiko had made up her mind. "Everyone needs to be alone sometimes," she said. "Especially women. The people who never have time to be alone are the ones who need it most. How can we know ourselves if we are never alone with ourselves?"

The sound of a crying child downstairs underscored her point. "We must live our lives as fully as we can. Poets need to replenish the wine in their souls. Women should be allowed to wander, too."

"You want to go to Paris," Masako said in a low voice.

Akiko looked at her, or just past her, and nodded. "I do."

"What about the children?"

*Selfish, selfish.*

Neither of them said it, but Akiko saw it in her friend's eyes.

"I have some ideas. Tekkan's sister took care of them when I went to Kobe. She is single; she might be willing to stay with them."

"Even the little ones?"

*Say it, Masako, I'm a monster. It's true.*

"Well, Rin is almost four." *And the girls, Sahoko and Uchiko, are already gone.*

Her mind was far away now, across the ocean, in a land of flowers, cafés, and intellectual freedom. Space to breathe, time to write, time to fall in love again.

She deserved her friend's disapprobation, and she didn't fear it. She had broken out of a box before and she would do it again, or ruin herself in the effort. Masako must understand that.

Poets run away sometimes to save themselves. And sometimes, mothers do, too.



# Workshops, Conferences, and Publications

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## Summer 2026 Workshops and Conferences

**Marin Writers Session** (Zoom, open to the whole CWC) May 14, 2026, 6:00 – 7:10 p.m. PT. Join CWC Marin for a timely virtual session, *Beat the Bots: A Writer's Guide to Thriving in the Age of AI*, presented by author Jane K. Cleland. [Register here](#).

**The 2026 California Writing Workshop** (Online): June 12-13, 2026. A virtual workshop covering various genres with agent consultations via Zoom. [californiawritingworkshop.com](http://californiawritingworkshop.com)

**The Santa Barbara Writers Conference:** June 21-26, 2026, in Santa Barbara. Writing workshops, panels, speakers, agents, and seminars. [sbwriters.com](http://sbwriters.com)

**Mendocino Coast Writers' Conference:** July 30 – August 1, 2026, in Mendocino. Includes morning workshops, afternoon sessions, and panels. [mcwc.org](http://mcwc.org)

**Travel Writers and Photographers Conference:** August 7-9, 2026, at Book Passage in Corte Madera. Classes, workshops, panels, and evening activities focused on travel writing. [bookpassage.com/travel](http://bookpassage.com/travel)

## CWC Branch Publications (open to the whole CWC)

**2026 Anthology for the Napa Valley Writers** (Deadline: June 1, 2026): Submit literary fiction, flash fiction, personal essays, memoir, or experimental prose, under 1,500 words, on the theme of “The Hidden Story: What Shocked, Surprised, or Shattered a World.” [napavalleywriters.org/2026-anthology](http://napavalleywriters.org/2026-anthology)



# Member Publications

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**Michael Barrington**, (Mt. Diablo Branch), [\*Colourblind: A Travesty of Justice\*](#) (April 2026). Historical fiction. In 1943, in the English village of Bamber Bridge, Black American GIs found rare dignity and friendship among working-class people – until U.S. military segregation ignited a violent confrontation. Three Blacks are shot, and 34 are court-martialed, but no white soldiers are charged. The Army hurries to hide any trace of the confrontation.

**Michael Barrington**, (Mt. Diablo Branch), *Midnight Express & Other Stories* (May 2026). Short Story Collection. From the warmth and tension of Africa to the ancient streets of France and Spain, and the shifting landscapes of England and Gaelic-speaking Ireland, each story opens a door into a different world.

**Michael Barrington & Dorothy Edwards**, (Mt. Diablo Branch), [\*Stories for a Spring Day\*](#) (April 2026). Short Story Collection. Let these thirty-two short stories take you to places of wonder. Meet fascinating international characters who will make you laugh and cry. Feel the thrill of watching real flamenco dancing, see the sadness of a child in Gaza, or lose yourself in a modern fantasy with a talking tree.

**G.R. Browda** (Sacramento Branch), [\*Devotion Brings Control\*](#) (Wordwooze Publishing, March 2025). Mystery/Thriller. Revenge is a powerful motivator for action. So is love.

**Cherilyn Chin** (Fremont Area Branch), [\*Lily Lu to the Rescue\*](#) (Lerner Books, 2026). This Blueberry Changemaker Award-winning, eight-book early reader series features a seven-year-old Chinese American girl who rescues ocean animals while traveling the world with her marine biologist mom. Available wherever books are sold.

**Roberto de Haro**, (Marin Branch) [\*Mariner of Destiny\*](#) (Gatekeeper Press, 2026). A novel of historical fiction by an award-winning author. A romantic story of an American naval officer and a married Austro-Hungarian Countess that traverses two world wars. Their love affair is challenging, long lived, and filled with passion and adventure.

**Tim Flood**, (SF Peninsula Branch), [\*The Flower of Canaan\*](#) (Histria Books, August 18, 2026). Historical Fiction. In the 13th century, before Jesus, when the land is called “Canaan,” a young couple is denied their wish to marry. Beautiful Anat is sold into an abusive marriage until she flees for her life, while David wanders the land in search of a beauty her equal. Available for preorder from Amazon, Simon & Schuster, Barnes & Noble, or Histria Fiction.



# Member Publications, cont'd.

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**Brian M. Gaps** (Orange County), *Technology is Greek to Me, Volume I: Understanding Social Media and Other Popular Website Services* (Amazon, self-published, 2026). Fictional Short Stories. The nature of social media is revealed in elaborately illustrated, mythic origin stories of the apps personified as characters in Greek mythology. Bridge the gap between the metaphors and real-world parallels with the companion Student Workbook and Teaching Guide.

**Constance Hanstedt** (Tri-Valley Writers Branch), "Wings" in *California Quarterly Review*, 2025, Poetry

"After My Daughter Moved to L.A." in *Saving Ourselves*, 2026, Poetry

"Radiation" in *1 in 8: An Anthology By and For Women Affected by Breast Cancer*, 2026, Poetry

**Dwight Holing** (Central Coast Branch) *The Yellow Hair, Nick Drake Mysteries, Book 10* (Jackdaw Press, April 2026). Mystery. When Nick Drake trades his past as a fish and wildlife ranger for the Sheriff's star, his tenure kicks off with a double homicide. As he digs into the crime, he finds himself fighting a war on two fronts: a lethal learning curve with unproven deputies and a political recall designed to bury him. Available everywhere. [www.dwightholing.com](http://www.dwightholing.com)

**Jean Gordon Kocienda** (Marin Branch) *Girl in a Box: A Novel* (Sibylline Press, 2026). Historical fiction based on the life of Japanese poet Yosano Akiko (1878 - 1942). Jean is President of CWC Marin. This is her first novel; it is a story of love, betrayal, and the quest for creative freedom. [www.jeangordonkocienda.com](http://www.jeangordonkocienda.com). See featured excerpt, page 12.



# Member Publications, cont'd.

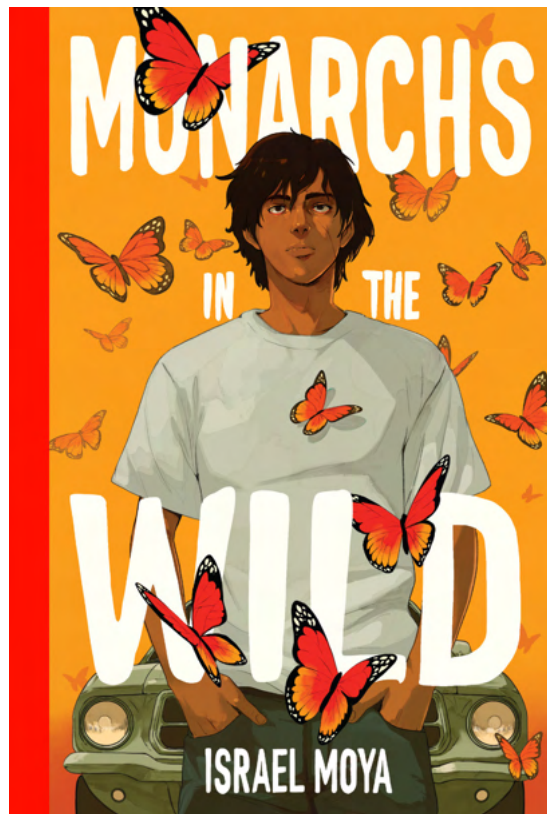
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**Israel Moya** (Orange County Branch), debut novel, *Monarchs in the Wild* (Tu Books, June 2, 2026). Publishers Weekly said: “Questions of family, religious faith, and belonging drive a complex and moving coming-of-age that’s distinguished by vividly drawn characters and kinetic prose.” Ages 13-17. **See featured excerpt, page 11.**

**Tess Perko** (Mount Diablo Branch) *Learning to Whistle: A Novel* (She Writes Press, April 7, 2026). Contemporary Women’s Fiction. A story of a young woman’s grief over the death of her mother. Leonie flees to South America where she makes new friends, discovers her own inner strength, and learns how to build a new life. <https://tessperko.com/>.

**Victoria Zackheim** (Berkeley Branch) *Death Times Seven* (Ballantine, 2026). The final novel in Anne Perry’s Daniel Pitt series, completed by Zackheim following the author’s death. Available everywhere.

**Victoria Zackheim** (Berkeley Branch) *Murder at Hotel Gloriosa* (Level Best Books, 2026). The second in the Aria Nevins/Noah Roche series, journalist Aria frantically works to uncover the mastermind behind Noah’s arrest for murder. The isolation of an international conference in New Mexico’s high desert and a small-town police force intensify the challenge. [www.victoriazackheim.com](http://www.victoriazackheim.com)



# CWC Leadership & Policies

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## CWC Leadership

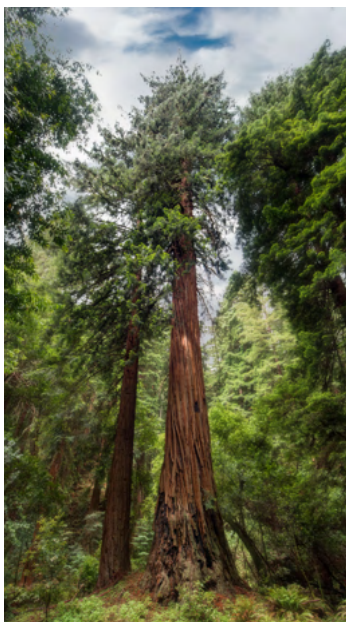
CWC President  
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## CWC Policies and Procedures

The California Writers Club reserves the right to edit submissions for length and content.

It is CWC policy that *The Bulletin* will not print gratuitous vulgarity, obscenity, explicit sexual content or political or religious rants or proselytizing.

The CWC encourages individual branches to honor and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through any means by which they interact with their members and communities, including but not limited to programming, publications, board representation, and outreach.

More CWC Policies and Procedures may be found online [here](#).

## Board News

At a board meeting on April 12, 2026, the CWC board of directors voted to approve a change in the renewal period for current members to two months, July 1 to August 31, 2026. Members who do not renew their membership before September 1 will have to pay an extra \$20.00 to reinstate their membership. This is the same as the dues for a new member.

The board also voted to approve a “state” membership for new members for whom a local branch is not available. This state membership was proposed to provide for writers in areas not served by an existing branch, for example San Diego. Also, it is an option for current members who move out of state.

Our goal in creating a state member is not to reduce branch membership. Rather, it is to serve writers who may one day develop a new branch in an unserved part of the state. The CWC executive committee is developing guidelines for these members. Like all members, the state member will have access to all statewide events and to branch events not restricted to branch-only members (for example, a branch anthology).

The state membership will be available on a limited basis until the procedures and guidelines are completed. If you have questions, contact [president@calwriters.org](mailto:president@calwriters.org).