



INK SPOTS



*The Newsletter of the Fremont Area Writers, A part of the California
Writer's Club*

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Visit us at <http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org>

Webmaster – Linda Lee Chernoff

VOL 49, December 2015

MISSION STATEMENT: Fremont Area Writers educates writers and the public by providing: a. Forums for educating members in the craft of writing and marketing their works and, b. Public meetings, workshops, and seminars open to all writers and the general public to facilitate educating writers of all levels of expertise.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL.





Thank you Bob and Kathy Garfinkle for hosting the 2015 FAW Christmas Party

FAW'S REGULAR NOVEMBER 28, 2015 MEETING

Shelley Bates talked about “Using the Rules of Revision.” She presented how to use revision techniques, including deep character checks and scene outlines.





BOOK SIGNING

Dear Authors:

The Fremont Area Writers Group will be holding a Book Signing at the Union City Library, 34007 Alvarado-Niles Rd., Union City, CA 94587 on December 19, 2015. Parking is available in the Union City Civic Center Parking Lot, accessible from Royal Ann Dr.

Phone: [510-745-1464](tel:510-745-1464) TTY [888-663-0660](tel:888-663-0660)

We will have the room from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. We need to set up the tables ourselves at 10:00 am.

The Book Signing will open at 11:00 am.

There are only 8 6' long tables. So it will be First Come First Served.

I need to know how many will be willing to share a table and how many will need the whole 6' table.

I understand the FAW held a book signing there a few years ago. They decorated the room, served cider and cookies and tried to make it festive. I suggest we do that again. Everyone will have to supply their own table covering.

If anyone can think of anything else that needs to be included, please let me know.

Thanks,



Jan Small
Book Signing Chairperson
Fremont Area Writers Group

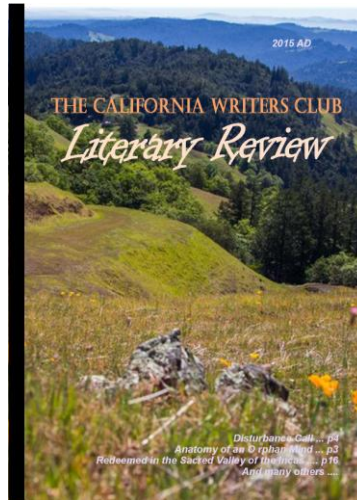


From: Bob Isbill

Bulletin Advertising and (...sort of) Coordinator

To all CWC Bulletin volunteer distributors:

Here it is! The new electronic Bulletin newsletter for distribution to your respective branches.



I have purposely not sent this with email addresses blind copied so that you can see if there is any duplication in your branch for distributors.

If so, please coordinate with them to see that this issue gets sent out to all your members at your earliest convenience! Thank you!

One more thing, please. After you have distributed it to your members, please email hdcwc@aol.com and in the subject line say, for example:

"High Desert distributed by Bob Isbill"

That way, we will know the circle has been completed. You may send all comments, suggestions, critiques, etc to hdcwc@aol.com also.

The CWC Executive Committee is included in this distribution.

As a follow-up, all advertisers will be sent a copy of this issue blind copy.

On behalf of Editor-in-Chief Rusty LaGrange, thanks for your participation in reporting your news, and for getting this issue out to our CWC members in every branch!

A note from Donna McCrohan Rosenthal CWC P/R Director

CWC: Literary Review and Donate button

First, notice that we've extended the submission deadline for the Literary Review to the end of this month. You've gotten an article about this, a flyer, and email blasts, and we keep reminding you because the Literary Review constitutes an excellent benefit for members. It's a good-looking print publication, and a piece in it represents a solid publishing credit to show agents and editors. As Dave LaRoche has said, "It's classic win-win – your work is either published, or you're given professional guidance as to how to improve it....Go to www.calwriters.org, press the Guidelines button and join the others who see the advantages here."

Also, notice that we've added a Donate button to the CWC website homepage. Please keep the CWC in mind as you do your holiday giving. Your tax deductible donation will assist with our continuing education outreach as well as our ongoing mission to provide the best and most current information on writing, publishing, and promotion to our growing membership.

Thanks and happy holidays,

Donna McCrohan Rosenthal
CWC P/R Director



Fremont Area Writers

The Centennial Branch
"Writers Helping Writers"



Fear and Failure in the Life of a Writer



Fear and Failure.

Add those to the list of challenges facing writers.

Fortunately, one of Fremont Area Writers' past speakers will be back in January to offer some tips on dealing with those potential problems. Multi-talented Jason Ridler, who can

lay claim to being a writer, historian, and improv actor, will discuss "Fear and Failure in the Life of a Writer" on Saturday, Jan. 23.

Ridler believes that fear can guide writers to what they most want to write about, and failure can aid them in shaking bad habits such as fusing writing goals with their own identity.

His novels include "A Triumph for Sakura," and "Blood and Sawdust." He has written the Spar Battersea thrillers and published sixty short stories in magazines and anthologies. In all likelihood, he is the only former punk rock musician and cemetery groundskeeper to hold a Ph.D. in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada.

You can find out more about Jason at <https://ridlerville.wordpress.com/>.

Writers and Poets Open Mic!

When: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Monday, December 28
&
Monday, January 23

Where:
Suju's Coffee and Tea
3602 Thornton Ave.
Fremont

Jason Ridler
**"Fear and Failure in the Life
of the Writer"**
Saturday, January 23, 2-4 p.m.
DeVry University
6600 Dumbarton Circle
Fremont, CA

Fremont Area Writers is a branch of the
1,500-member California Writers Club.

Shirley Ferrante, President
510-791-8639
cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Presidents Message



Shirley Ferrante

Blow those horns and scatter the confetti. It's time to say goodbye to 2015 and hello to 2016.

2015 was a productive year for Fremont Area Writers.

Members published long awaited books. Jan Small organized two book signings. Erika Anderson-Bolden organized a writer's workshop for FAW members. Tony Pino negotiated a space for Open Mic at Suju's Coffee Shop.

Carol Hall won the grand prize in the 2014-15 screenwriting contest sponsored by TheWriteRoom.

Bob Garfinkle received the Ina Coolbrith Award and The Jack London Award was received by Art Carey.

Tish Davidson took fifth place in a flash fiction contest at Half Price Books.

David M. Strom's "Sinister Soul Surfer" was published in the CWC Peninsula branch's Fault Zone Anthology.

Liz Brashear organized a FAW sponsored Fremont high school writing contest. Judges met and selected three winning entries. Awards will be presented to the winning high school sophomores at our January 23 meeting.

A special thank you goes to Bob and Kathy Garfinkle for hosting another well-attended holiday party. Partygoers feasted on good food and exchanged gifts.

You can start 2016 by saving the date of March 5. Romance novelist Shelley Bates has been scheduled to present a FAW workshop for writers. Further details will be available on the FAW website and at the January 23 general meeting.

Happy New Year to you and let's make 2016 a great year for FAW members.

FREMONT AREA WRITERS OFFICERS



President– **Shirley Ferrante**



Treasurer – **Cherilyn Jose**



Vice President – **Erika Anderson-Bolden**



Robert (Bob) Garfinkle –
Past President, California Writers Club

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**FREMONT AREA WRITERS
CHAIRPERSONS**



Secretary – **Joyce Cortez**

Tony Pino – Open MIC
Jay Swartz – Nor-Cal Representative
Andrew Halligan - Membership Chair
Art Carey – Public Relations
Nancy Curteman – Hospitality
Carol Hall – Facebook Coordinator
Bruce Haase – Book Exchange
Pat Van den Heuvel – Telephone Outreach
Coordinator
Liz Breshears – Community Outreach
Coordinator
Jan Small – Book Signing Coordinator
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Tony Pino, the Open Mic Chairperson, leads the group. Open Mic is held monthly at Suju's Coffee Meeting Room, 3602 Thornton Ave., Fremont.



Nancy Curteman—Hospitality



Jay Swartz
NorCal Representative



Carol Hall – FAW Facebook Coordinator



Andrew Halligan
Membership Chairperson

Bruce Haase –
Book Exchange & Authors Book Table



Bruce Haase urges everyone to bring books to our regular meetings. The Authors Book Table is a free service of the Fremont Area Writers. Two long tables are set up at each regular meeting, enough space for eight separate titles.



Art Carey – Public Relations



Pat Van den Heuvel
Telephone Outreach Coordinator



Liz Breshears
Community Outreach Coordinator



Jan Small, Book Signing Chairperson

JACK LONDON AWARDEES FREMONT AREA WRITERS

2009 Robert Garfinkle
2011 Myrla Raymundo
2013 Carol Hall
2015 Art Carey

CALENDAR

BOARD MEETING – Fourth Saturday of the month 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm – DeVry University, Fremont.

OPEN MIC – Fourth Monday of the month
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm.

**FREMONT AREA WRITERS REGULAR
MEMBERSHIP MEETING** – Fourth Saturday of the
month, 2:00 pm -4:00 pm, DeVry University, Fremont



Myrla Raymundo, MBA-Writer/Editor

Ink Spots Newsletter



This Editor welcomes you to our December 2015 issue of the Ink Spots. It contains the latest FAW news and tidbits, poems, prose, essays and articles written by our members.

Ink Spots is issued monthly and is distributed to FAW members at the club general meeting every month. It is also emailed to those with email addresses.

Ink Spots welcomes you to write articles and submit them to this Editor at raymundomyrla@gmail.com.

FAWS WRITERS CORNER

Our Special Guests



By Doris Nikolaidis

My daughter Natasha was relaxing in a lounge on our patio when I suddenly heard her scream, "Mom, Mom come fast!"

I dropped the dishes I was washing in the sink in the kitchen and charged out onto our patio. Natasha pointed to our lawn. There was a raccoon mother with five babies walking across the lawn. The mother turned her head towards us and after a haughty shake of her head continued on her trek towards the wooden fence that separated our yard from our neighbor's yard. I ran inside to grab my camera but when I came back out the raccoons were just disappearing over the fence. I rushed towards the fence, hoping to at least get a photo while they were still in our neighbor's yard.

My daughter was yelling at me to stop. "Mom, raccoon mothers are very aggressive when they have babies! Stay away from the fence!"



But I could not let this opportunity go and approached the fence slowly, camera ready for snapshot. If the raccoon mother turned on me I'd just have to take my chances and hope that I could sprint faster than her into the safety of our home.

Leaves and small branches had accumulated under our birch tree that was growing next to the fence. I approached the fence slowly but I kept stepping on some branches and froze when the creaking of the branches reverberated in the stillness of the summer afternoon.

Suddenly, there was a scratching at the fence. I froze, panting, ready for my sprint into the house. The mother raccoon peaked over the fence and stared at me. A low, growling sound came from her chest but she not move. I lifted my camera and

took the photo. Mama raccoon was eyeing me suspiciously. I talked to her in a low voice, assuring her that I did not object her crossing our yard without permission, that I just wanted take a photo of her and her babies. She made a strange high-pitched sound and disappeared again behind the fence. I second later, five raccoon baby faces poked over the fence. They evidently had still been sitting on the ledge behind the fence. I snapped my picture and thanked them.



Mama

did
to
to



And her 5

My husband is convinced that the excitement of the raccoon visit had done some damage to my usually logical brain, but to this day I am convinced that raccoon mama had understood me and told her offspring to accommodate the nice lady and pose for a photo.

The Stalker

By Doris Nikolaidis

I walk every morning on the nature trail that runs behind our home in Union City. We have a gate that lets us access the trail without having to go all the way around to Decoto Avenue - a 20 minute walk.

I love walking this trail. Early in the morning, there is no one else on the trail. When the sun rises, the water in the creek below the trail is bathed in golden hues of pink and yellow, ducks and geese splash in the creek, taking their morning baths. There are blue herons and white egrets stalking in the reeds growing below. I even once saw a deer wading through the shallow waters of the creek.

My husband does not want me to walk the trail early in the morning any longer. The Union City police department had warned that they were looking for a man who had assaulted a woman in her home and they thought that the assailant was a homeless man.

One day last week when I walked the trail I was startled. He sat under a tree watching me intently. When I passed him, he got up and walked behind me. I walked faster, but he also picked up the pace and stayed behind me at a distance of about 10 feet. Panicked, I started to run, but he was not deterred. He picked up the pace and trotted faster behind me.

I finally turned around and faced him. He stopped and looked at me intently, his dark black eyes showing no emotion. Slowly, with wobbly legs, I walked towards him and passed him. He did not budge but let me pass without making a sound.

I ran towards home and told my husband about this encounter. He did not want me to walk on the trail any longer, he said. But I'll miss these early morning walks, I told him.

The next morning, I got out on the trail again, armed with a wooden cane. He sat under the same tree, watching my approach.

When I passed him, he got up and followed me. I turned around and faced him. "What the hell do you want from me," I yelled. But there was no response. When I started walking again, he followed me at a polite distance. He must be homeless, I thought. He looked skinny and emaciated and I was feeling sorry for him.

When I got home, I told my husband that he posed no danger. We should take him in and give him some shelter, I said. My husband looked at me incredulously. "Are you kidding me," he asked. "I don't want him in our house."

"Maybe we can put him in the shed for the time being until we know he is ok," I suggested. "Are you kidding," my husband yelled. "He will destroy everything in the shed."

"He is obviously homeless," I answered, "and I can't bear not to give him a shelter. I will bring him some food every morning and every evening, until we are sure that he poses no danger to us and is free of disease."

My husband finally agreed.

And that is how we ended up with another dog.

A Day in The Big City

A Rite of Passage



By Pat van den Heuvel

I grew up in a time and place when ordinary people didn't eat out in restaurants. Only business men or rich people indulged in such extravagance. Everything I consumed was home cooked straight from the garden or the field. Eggs came fresh from the hens and milk from the cows. I was almost twelve years old and I had never eaten in a restaurant. I had never travelled on a bus. Then came that rite of passage that occurs in the life of every catholic child. I was about to receive my confirmation. This was a solemn event in the eyes of the church but for me, an eleven year old girl; it meant a trip to the big city with my mother to buy new clothes. And it was mentioned that we might even get lunch in a restaurant depending on how the day went.

When you are one of five children and you are neither the oldest nor the youngest, time alone with either parent is a rare event. So this was going to be a great day in my short life; a day alone with my mother, travelling on a bus, possibly eating in a restaurant and getting a new coat and shoes; a rite of passage indeed. I did not need to get a new dress because the dress I would wear belonged to my cousins and was passed around from cousin to cousin as needed. Looking back, there was nothing special about this dress. It was long, white, no frills or ruffles. It had a bodice with a peter pan collar, cap sleeves, and a belt which tied in a bow in the back, quite ordinary as dresses go. But when I stepped into this dress and my mother fastened the buttons in the back and put a veil on my head, I was transformed. I felt like the Virgin Mary. All the sins of an eleven year old were washed away. If I looked upwards, I could almost see a halo of light around my head.

My father drove my mother and me to the bus stop in town to catch the morning bus to the city. It was a ninety minute drive and I was looking forward with great enthusiasm to this bus ride. As we approached the City Centre I was intrigued by all the city sites and particularly by the number of children who were going about their business or playing on the sidewalk unsupervised. I felt very secure and untouchable inside this vehicle and the rebel in me encouraged me to pull mean faces and stick my tongue out at some of these children; the sins of an eleven year old.

My mother knew her way around the city so she knew which stores to visit. As always, she was all business and in control and eventually she found the most beautiful green coat at the right price with white shoes to go with the white dress and then we were ready for lunch. I followed a few steps behind her as she weaved her way through the crowded sidewalk. Then she turned into Woolworth's. Yes, Woolworth's cafe was where we would have lunch. We got into the queue for trays and from the stack of brown trays she pulled out two and put one on the counter in front of me. I was awestruck by the speed at which everyone and everything was moving. The clatter and banging of silverware and dishes added to the hustle and bustle and excitement. My mother ordered the same food for both of us,

mashed potatoes, peas, gravy, and thinly sliced roast beef which looked more like a slice of soft leather than the roast beef I was used to. She paid for the food and found a table for us. I took my first mouthful of the potatoes and gravy and I knew I had never tasted anything so delicious; smooth, creamy, and tasty. I had eaten mashed potatoes and gravy many times before but never like this. And the leathery looking roast beef tasted delicious too. I cleaned my plate of every scrap of food and washed it down with milk. Now our business was finished and we were ready to go home.

We made our way back to the bus depot and returned home on the same bus. By now it was evening, cold and getting dark. Dad was waiting at the bus stop for us and asked how was our day to which mother replied, "Ah sure the seats on the old bus were as hard as nails and the food would make your stomach turn. Thanks be to God to be back in this comfortable car."

Well sorry Mum, I begged to differ. But I kept my mouth shut.

HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS



By Rita Kibildis

When I became teenager, I asked my mother why we always had to go to Grandma and Grandpa's house for the holidays. "So we can all be together," she answered. To my large Italian family, togetherness was a virtue not to be trifled with and all generations were expected to show up not only for the holidays but also for confirmations, birthdays, anniversaries, and feast days of the saints - especially the ones you were named after - and even wanna be saints on the Pope's waiting list. Togetherness was intertwined like a tightly crocheted afghan and no one wished to unravel the tradition as if doing so would mean committing a mortal sin and spending eternity burning in hell.

And so from the beginning of my life, I celebrated holidays at my grandparents' home. At dinnertime everyone gathered comfortably around the massive oak table with legs the size of tree trunks and an endless supply of leaves for extending the table "one more foot." A white starched tablecloth and bottles of homemade red wine graced the top and everyone sat around the table before, during and after meals, exchanging gossip and laughter. A carved wooden plaque of *The Last Supper* hung on one wall of the dining room, with the disciples, like old friends, sharing their meal with us and watching over the merriment.

When I was six, my grandparents moved to a smaller house overlooking the Connecticut River. Although there was a backyard for my grandfather's modest vineyard and vegetable garden, there was

no dining room. However, everyone was still expected to gather at their home for the holidays. This did present a challenge at mealtimes as the large oak dining room table was now stored in the cellar and the only available seating was a small table in the small kitchen. My clever aunts improvised to create more seating by pushing together and crisscrossing card tables, like words in a crossword puzzle, packing everyone together like sardines in a can. Despite their efforts, this still was insufficient seating.

Pressed into action to devise a solution, for those family members with the least stature and status, meaning myself and my four cousins since we were the shortest and the youngest, they set up an old creaky wooden ironing board as a table next to a hissing water heater that was like an intrusive dinner guest who made rude noises. We tried our best to get out of eating off this shaky contraption. “Do we have to? I don’t want to! It’s too high! It’s too low!” Our protests fell on deaf ears but soon died down once we heard, “Mangia, mangia!” and dinner was served.

I grew up thinking turkeys were some kind of exotic poultry that lived long ago and only the Pilgrims got to eat. We did have something my mother called a capon. She explained it was like a chicken only bigger. In fact, a capon is a castrated rooster bred for it’s tenderness and white meat. No one much cared for the tasteless eunuch bird and preferred real food like baked ziti or lasagna brimming with homemade sausage and tomato sauce. When everyone had eaten to the bursting point and the dishes were cleared away, Grandma would bring out the jumbo cardboard box from the Italian bakery that she had hid in the pantry and open the top to reveal dozens of crispy cannoli made with sweet ricotta, their ends sprinkled with chopped pistachios. Life was good again.

Before long it was time to leave and head back home. After we took our carefully wrapped portions of delicious leftovers and said our goodbyes, everyone would ask before leaving, “When will we be getting together again?” With a smile on her face, Grandma would always answer, “La prossima settimana. Next week, next week.”



Nov. 28, 2015 Christmas Prompt response: **From Art Carey**



Santa Claus Version 2.0

It was Santa! He wore a red suit, blue tie, and porkpie hat with a sprinkle of mistletoe. His beard was neatly trimmed to a point.

He looked up. “Dude, you’re supposed to be in bed.”

“You’re real,” I gasped.

He smiled and pulled a wrapped present from his Abercrombie & Fitch pack. “I get that a lot.”

“You don’t look like Santa,” I said. “Not that you’re real. Neither is the Easter Bunny.”

“This is my update,” he said, “for believers.”

“Did you come down the chimney?”

“No, I used the front door. Passkey works every time.”

“Where’s your sled?”

“My Tesla is outside. One of the doors is sticking.”

“Okay,” I said, “are you going to leave gifts?”

“Yes,” he said, “but only if you believe in me.”

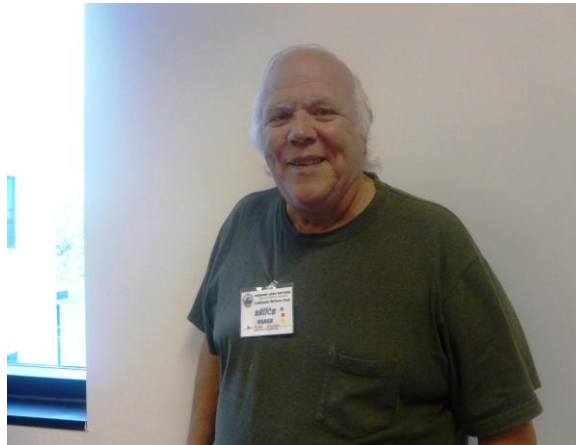
I nodded. “I’m only seven, but if you’re willing to go this far to persuade kids you really exist, sign me up.”

Santa smiled. “You’ll have to go online and join the believers’ club,” he said.

I raced upstairs and sat down at the computer.

“Christmas Eve 1940”

A fiction in England



By Bruce Haase

Dec. 2015

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*From the prompt: A child is doubting Santa for the first time, on Christmas Eve there's a thud on the roof...*

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It was the first Christmas that I wasn't sure if there was a Santa Claus. In December of 1940 I was ten years old and we lived on the Royal Hendon Road, not far from the Royal Air Force airfield. The Battle of Britain had just slowed down in October, but we weren't sure if it was safe then, just weeks later.

My only brother, George, was fourteen and he and his friends had fun convincing me that there wasn't a Santa. They had pretty much succeeded in their efforts. I felt a little sad, but more grown up with my new knowledge. During the war, my Dad was a civilian, but was gone most of the time, traveling the country, fixing electronic gear and training soldiers.

On that Christmas Eve and my Mom and Dad and George were down at the local pub for a couple of hours. I was home alone with our ancient cat, Prissy; she would fall asleep too close to the coal heater and would have to be moved away before she caught fire. I had moved Prissy and was dozing in the parlor with the wireless on low.

Far overhead there was the sound of a few Merlin engines; those Merlin's were comforting music to our ears back then. The German engines never had a smooth and pleasant sound to them. We called the Germans, hienies, or Fritz or just plain nazis in those days. We didn't hate them exactly, but we were very afraid of them, no one ever spoke of that fear though.

I heard one of the Merlins get a choppy sound that got me on my feet. I checked Prissy and climbed the stairs to listen better. My ears were straining and I was barely breathing when the engine quit. While thinking about the young man, high above, alone in the dark and cold, I started counting off seconds and waited for a sound. Mom's wind up Porcelain wall clock read ten:fifty-three when there

was a big thud and swooshing sound on the roof. There was a rattle outside the window, on opening it I was face to face with a man hanging from parachute cords.

He was badly hurt and I said that I would go for help. He said no, please don't leave him alone. He asked me my name and I told him, "Johnnie". He said he was a Canadian Flight Officer named Carson and he wasn't going to make it.

He told me of his wife in Ontario and his three children, all younger than me. He asked me to take his wrist watch and to make sure they got it. His grip on my arm was weakening and his voice became too soft and garbled to understand. His eyes closed and he died. It was ten:fifty-eight. I had only known him for five minutes. I took his watch off of his wrist; it was broken and very bloody.

That Christmas Day I washed his watch and carefully wrapped it, I wrote a letter to his family. I told them how much we children appreciated the people like Canadian Flight Officer Carson. People that came from another country to help save us from the Nazi's.

The next day my brother and I went to the airfield and we found a Pilot Officer that would make sure that Pilot Carson's family would get his watch and my letter. A couple of months later I received a letter from his wife and parents. They thanked me for my letter and the watch; they had given him that watch on the day he got his wings at flight training. Now they had it back and it meant a lot to them. They told me that they were happy that I was there in his last moments so he wasn't alone.

During that war George and I and our Mom and Dad and many other children at school wrote many other letters to families of dead soldiers, sailors, and airmen. We received many letters back, all saying how much our letters meant to them. We felt like we were helping those loved ones, heartbroken, so far way. It's not a lot of effort to write a letter.

I've written many more over the decades, and through all of the wars, I've written to the families of police and firemen too. My wife and children have done the same. Now the grandchildren carry on. It's December 2015 now, and I know that on Christmas Eve I'll think about washing Canadian Flight Officer Carson's broken watch.

Flight Officer Carson wasn't Santa, but he taught me about the meaning of giving... Even if the gift is as small as a letter. (End)

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Myrla Raymundo, MBA
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