



Ink Spots



The Newsletter of the Fremont Area Writers

"Centennial" Branch of the California Writer's Club

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

Webmaster – Chris Dews

Vol. 79 October 2018

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.

Building Better Branches – Nor-Cal Conference –

HELPING YOUR BRANCH

“ROAR”

*by Evelyn LaTorre,
Nor-Cal Representative*



From left: FAW President Terry Tosh; Hospitality Chairperson and Assistant Editor, Nancy Guarnera; Treasurer Cheryl Jose; Nor-Cal Representative Evelyn LaTorre; and new member Robert Cabello attended the conference

Leaders and volunteers of the Northern California division of the 2,000 member California Writers Club traveled from Chico, Sacramento, Mendocino, Pacific Grove, and many other Bay Area cities to the campus of National University in Pleasant Hill on Saturday, September 28th for Nor-Cal's biennial BBB conference. Over sixty members came to explore ways in which our fourteen Northern California branches can assist one another to accomplish the organization's goal of "Writers Helping Writers."

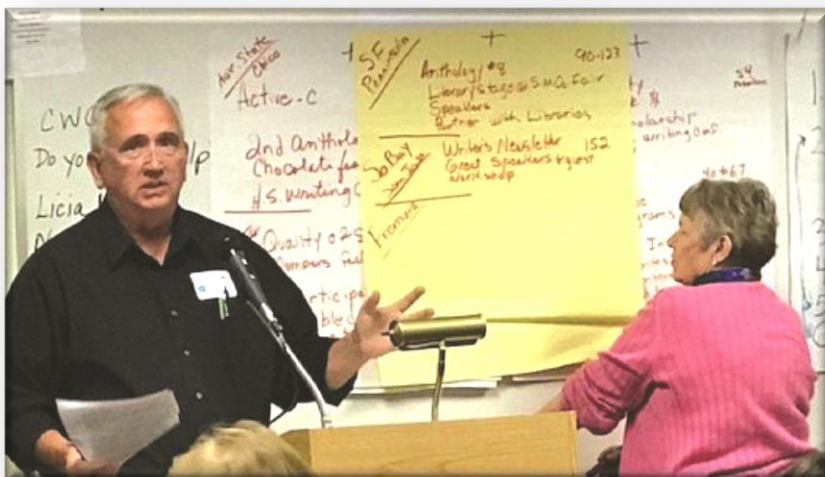
A new word "Idea-rea," the condition of trying to absorb a myriad of suggestions at once, describes what FAW's attendees experienced. Five FAW members attended the conference: President Terry Tosh; Treasurer Cheryl Jose; Nor-Cal Representative Evelyn LaTorre; Hospitality Chairperson and Assistant Editor, Nancy Guarnera; and new member Robert Cabello.

"ROAR" (continued)



Jordan Bernal, Past President of the Tri-Valley Writers branch of the California Writers Club, gave the key note address.

"I'm excited about the great wealth of ideas we were treated to and can envision FAW putting many of them into practice."



Terry Tosh and Evelyn LaTorre spent time at the board sharing new ideas and current activities designed to help FAW ROAR!

The conference's keynote address, *"The (Relatively) Small Branch That Roars,"* presented by past president of the Tri-Valley Branch, Deborah "Jordan" Bernal, began the day.

Tri-Valley's activities stem from member surveys that are incorporated into five-year and one-year plans that provide services to members to assist with their writing goals.

"Members are encouraged to volunteer for activities," said Ms. Bernal, "when detailed job descriptions describe how to fulfill their responsibilities in step-by-step procedures."

Three sessions titled "Keeping Your Volunteers Committed and Motivated," "Attracting New Members," and "Conducting Contests and Workshops," followed the keynote address in three interactive break-out sessions.

A few of the multitude of activities described included new member orientations, "dining with the author" dinners, colorful newsletters, anthology publications, and partnerships with local organizations.

(continued on page 3)

“ROAR” (continued)

*“Ideas flew
at the speed
of light...”*



FAW's Evelyn LaTorre assists Carole Bumpus CWC Nor-Cal Co-Chair as conference attendees discuss the successes and challenges their branches' experience.

Why job descriptions can be a boon to the health of a volunteer organization.

Why Go to All the Trouble?

- ❖ Promotes continuity for new board members.
- ❖ When board members & key volunteers contribute to the planning of club activities, they are more likely to carry out the mission and goals of the branch.
- ❖ Don't have to “re-invent the wheel,” yet flexible enough to improve processes based on volunteer's skills.
- ❖ When branch is organized, volunteers are more likely to come forward—even if just in small ways!

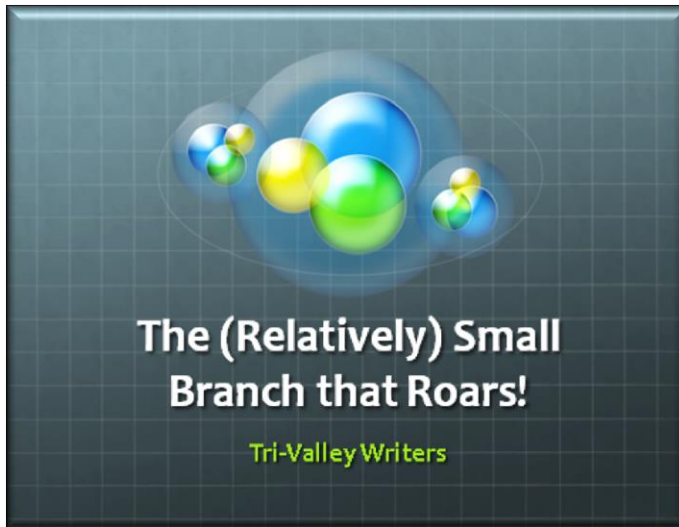
The PowerPoint slides used in this article are part of the keynote address given by Deborah “Jordan” Bernal of the Tri-Valley Writers branch at the CWC Nor-Cal “Building Better Branches” Conference held on September 29, 2018 in Pleasant Hill, CA. They have been altered to promote greater readability at this size and are used with Ms. Bernal's permission.

During the conference, other branches were intrigued with FAW's newly instituted Hospitality Bags. The bags contain various printed materials (brochures, membership applications, bookmarks, etc.) with information about the FAW branch and CWC. Guests and new members, attending a monthly meeting for the first time, can take a bag home with them and peruse its contents at their leisure.

*“It was great to see so many
people who are all committed
to the ideal of “Writers Helping
Writers.” I'm excited to be
a part of it!”*

(continued on page 4)

“ROAR” (continued)



“Ideas flew at the speed of light,” remarked FAW President Terry Tosh.

Ink Spots Assistant Editor and Hospitality Chairperson, Nancy Guarnera added, “I’m excited about the great wealth of ideas we were treated to and can envision FAW putting many of them into practice.” Job descriptions, pot luck salons, combining contests with workshops, and Flash Fiction Fridays with a photo on the branch Facebook page to use as a prompt, were four ideas that got her attention. She’s looking forward to FAW putting some of these into action in the very near future.

***“The conference was inspiring
and it made me proud
to be a CWC member.
I came away with
dozens of new ideas....”***

***“All we need now
are a few more
good volunteers...”***

Peer-to-peer sessions followed a catered lunch. The participants were divided into job-alike groups to continue sharing branch challenges and solutions. Additional ideas bloomed such as mounting literary divisions at County Fairs, Ted Talk Tuesdays, on-line critique groups, and marching in local parades.

“All we need now are a few more good volunteers,” remarked FAW’s Nor-Cal Representative, Evelyn LaTorre, who was on the BBB conference planning committee. FAW Treasurer, Cherilyn Jose added “The conference was inspiring and it made me proud to be a CWC member. I came away with dozens of new ideas—the best is putting up a PayPal link on our website so members can pay dues and meeting fees online.”

New member and future volunteer, Robert Cabello also attended and had this to say about his experience at the conference, “It was great to see so many people who are committed to the ideal of CWC’s mission of “Writers Helping Writers.” I’m excited to be a part of it!”

The 2016 the BBB conference was held in Fremont at our branch’s venue when it was known as DeVry University.



President's Message

Terry Tosh

Wow! What a whiz bang couple of months it's been. I barely got my feet wet in the new pool of Writer's Club Leadership before being thrust into the deep end by a tidal wave of rapidly approaching deadlines. By the time you see this message: I will have been through my first Board meeting and a general meeting as the FAW President; my first visit to the Suju's Coffee House "Open Mic" night; the Nor-Cal leadership conference; and probably the Fremont Library book signing event.

What a way to start the coming year of fun, and hopefully profitable, writing events and all that it encompasses. Watch for announcements of coming speakers, events, learning opportunities, and time for sharing your talents. Be thinking about ideas for ways to celebrate FAW's 10th anniversary coming up in 2019; our new branding project; and potential opportunities for regular public readings.

Thanks to all of you for the support and patience through my initial voyage into leading this wonderful group.

Sincerely, Terry

FREMONT AREA WRITERS MONTHLY CALENDAR

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Fourth Saturday
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
42 Silicon Valley
6600 Dumbarton Circle,
Fremont

BOARD MEETING

Fourth Saturday
12:45 pm - 1:45 pm
42 Silicon Valley
6600 Dumbarton Circle,
Fremont

OPEN MIC

Fourth Monday
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Suju's Coffee & Tea Mtg Rm
3602 Thornton Ave,
Fremont

FAW Board Members



TERRY TOSH
President



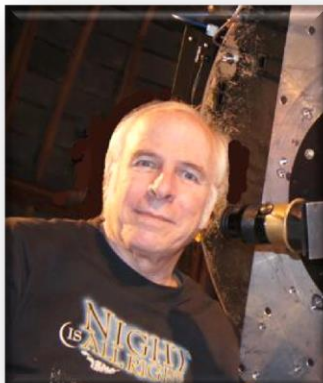
KNUTI VANHOVEN
Vice President



JOYCE CORTEZ
Secretary



CHERILYN JOSE
Treasurer



BOB GARFINKLE
Past President –
Fremont Area Writers
Past President –
CA Writers Club

JACK LONDON AWARDEES

FREMONT AREA WRITERS

- 2009 Bob Garfinkle
- 2011 Myrla Raymundo
- 2013 Carol Hall
- 2015 Art Carey
- 2017 Shirley Ferrante

FAW Chairpersons



ART CAREY
Signage
Facility Liaison



TISH DAVIDSON
CA Writers Club
Representative



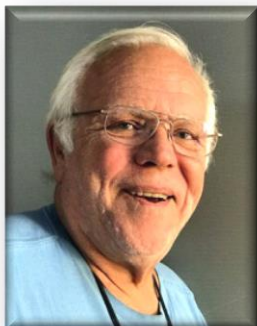
CHRIS DEWS
Membership
Webmaster



BOB GARFINKLE
Historian
Past President



NANCY GUARNERA
Hospitality
Assistant Editor



BRUCE HAASE
Authors' Table
Book Exchange
Open Mic



CAROL HALL
Facebook Page



CHERILYN JOSE
CWC Advertising
& Promotions



EVELYN LATORRE
Nor-Cal
Representative



TONY PINO
Open Mic



JAN SMALL
Book Signings



KNUTI VANHOVEN
Speakers Program
Publicity

October's Speaker

The Economics of Freelancing

OR

"Let's Talk Money"



Margaret Lucke

The last time Margaret spoke to us, she told us about the trials and tribulations of a career in freelance writing. She shared her experiences and all that she'd learned on her own journey to build a career as a freelance writer. She discussed the pros and cons of freelancing and she laid out strategies for success that have worked for her over time. But just when our questions turned to the nitty gritty, we ran out of time! Margaret agreed to come back to continue the topic and to answer those questions left unanswered after her last visit.

And now she's back! Ready to share more about freelancing and the business of making writing your business, she'll share some more of her story and then take questions. So, look back at your notes from last February's meeting, formulate some questions about making money as a freelance writer, and join Margaret for more on how to create and enjoy a lucrative career as a freelance writer.

In her own words, "Writing is a creative endeavor offering many kinds of rewards. If you'd like some of those rewards to be financial, it helps to treat your freelance writing enterprise as a small business. Come and learn what writing pays and how to be not just an author, but an entrepreneur."

Learn more about Margaret Lucke at margaretlucke.com.

September Meeting Recap

Guest Speaker **Carol Hall** guided those present through the challenging landscape of taking a book to film or TV. As Carol explained, there's no one right way to do this. She discussed "pitching" a book or a screenplay to a producer, agent or manager, and also talked about the odds of a book being "optioned" for TV or a film. Typically, not likely; but not impossible.



**CAROL
LEE
HALL**



Carol is an FAW member and served on the Board as both President and Treasurer. She is a freelance writer and has adapted four pieces of intellectual property into script format and edited several more screenplays as part of her freelance writing business. Carol is also actively seeking markets for eight screenplays of her own.

For more information about Carol see her website at www.CarolLeeHall.com.



Notes from the World

The Merits of Audiobooks

by John Cawlfeld

If you are a published author, self-published or traditionally published, you should be on Audible.com. Period! In some respects, not having a presence on this site is like not having your books available on Amazon.

Here's why:

- eBook sales are down year over year since 2014.
- Audiobook sales are increasing 30% to 40% yearly.
- Audiobooks are projected to surpass eBooks market share by the year 2020.
- With all of this growth, more choices are on the horizon for Indie Authors to publish audiobooks.

The cost to produce an audiobook is not cheap if you pay for it upfront with other services. ACX offers indie authors the best avenue to produce an audiobook by offering the Royalty Share feature. This option allows you to share revenue with your narrator. Good plan. No upfront cost to the author and it creates a partner who has skin-in-the-game. They want you to be as successful as possible, so you both can earn royalties.

So, my suggestion is to dip your toe into the water, use ACX.com, and start selling more books. You'll be glad you did. Trust me; it's a partnership leading to increased sales.

[CCW Member Wanda Sue Parrott sent this article from the Springfield [MO] Writers' Guild, where she once served as president. Please welcome SWG current president and guest writer John Cawlfeld. -Ed.]

California Writers Club "Bulletin"

Announces Display Ad

Sale

Rusty LaGrange, Editor of the CWC "Bulletin," is offering to do a limit of ten 5x7 ads that she will design and publish for just \$60 a piece rather than the usual \$90 rate.

These are the popular **"Cover Story" Display Ads** that she did for the 2017 Summer edition.

But it's on a first-come, first-served basis, so place your order now.

Rusty said in the last issue of the Bulletin:

"This coming Autumn issue will offer the "Cover Story" display ad discount for only \$60. This gives first-time authors a chance to showcase their new title with a unique advertisement for a discount of 30%.

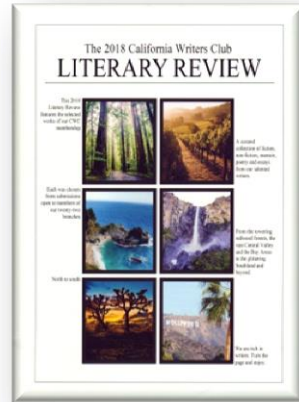
*Plan now for your **OCTOBER 28th DEADLINE.***

All display ads created by me are owned by you. Just request a copy and you can use it in any other publication – no strings attached. Authors from summer 2017 can still request a copy before my files are deleted.

I hope you let others know that within the news you find here is the credit you all deserve as accomplished writers and authors." Rusty LaGrange, Editor

Notes from the World

Call for 2019 CWC Literary Review Submissions



by Tish Davidson, CWC Representative

The CWC *Literary Review* is an annual print and online publication that features writing from members of all 22 branches of the California Writers Club. Submissions are accepted in the **categories of fiction, memoir, essays up to 2,500 words, and poetry up to 30 lines.**

Although the word “*literary*” is in its name, the *Review* encourages **well-written genre fiction such as mystery, science fiction, fantasy, romance, western, and light humor, as well as literary fiction.** In short, it is looking to publish the best writing from CWC members regardless of category.

Publication is competitive. Works will be reviewed and selected for possible publication by a panel of acquisition editors through a blind judging process.

Up to three (3) prose pieces may be submitted for a fee of \$10 per submitted piece – Total for three (3) prose submissions: \$30. Up to three (3) submissions of two (2) poems each may be submitted for a \$10 fee for each submission – Total for three (3) poetry submissions of 2 poems each (6 poems): \$30. **Limit of three (3) submissions per person. No refunds or revisions of your work once it’s been submitted.**

Submission Deadline is November 30, 2018.

FAQ and additional information on how to enter is available at **www.calwriters.org**. Click on the banner near the top of the home page.



New Member Spotlight

For Susan Curtzwiler, writing was fun, math was a struggle. During the sixth grade, staring at the chalk board learning how to diagram sentences, she discovered that writing would become a peaceful pastime, creative, inspirational, and eventually her 30-year career as a Technical Writer.

Over the years, Susan wrote a variety of small articles. Spontaneously, vacant lots bloomed into the Silicon Valley. Leaving the insurance business and joining Fairchild to learn about marketing and technology gave her several technical stepping stones, including writing and editing the company newsletter. An introduction to Technical Writing showed her a new style of writing with great flexibility; it allowed her to finish her degree.

A small start-up company offered Susan a part-time position as Publications Editor - Technical Writer. Four years later, she completed her bachelor's in Public Relations and her certificate in Technical Writing at San Jose State University.

Creative writing – come back.



**Susan
Curtzwiler**



**Brenda G.
Sands**

Brenda Sands was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and moved to California in the early 1950s with her family. Yes, she can make a mean pot of Gumbo and she likes Zydeco! Brenda's a single parent. Her son lives in Southern California with his wife and two lovely teenagers. She sees them as often as she can.

For over thirty years, Brenda was an educator with an after-school program, before retiring and obtaining a law degree to practice as a part-time Consumer Law Mediator. She spends time at the gym, travels, spends quality time with her family and friends, volunteers as a Faith Formation Catechist for her Catholic Church, and helps folks with their Consumer Law issues. Of course, she's always squeezing in time to write.

She is interested in writing her memoir and religious faith-related articles. Brenda hopes to have at least one article submitted to a periodical by the first of 2019.

Her favorite saying is: ***I am too Blessed to be stressed!***

New Member Spotlight (Continued)

Carmen VonTickner earned her BS and MA from San Jose State College. She is fluent in Spanish and can use ASL (American Sign Language).

Her poetry has appeared in both the *Tablerock Poets Book* and *This Time Around*, *Connections* edition. She has had two books published: *Poems for You*, a dedication to her father, and *En Mi Viejo San Juan*, a collection of short stories about her sister's life.

Like many writers, Carmen has other passions that pull at her for time and expression. Whenever she can escape from her writing time, which isn't very often, she picks up a brush and paints in watercolor and/or acrylic.

Carmen is a native Californian. She and her husband both retired from their teaching positions at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont. She lives in the Fremont area.



**Carmen
VonTichner**

And Now, A Word from Our Editor



Myrla Raymundo, MBA
Editor/Writer
Ink Spots Newsletter

Welcome to our October 2018 issue of Ink Spots. It contains the latest FAW news, tidbits, poems, prose, essays, and articles written by our members. It also contains information from other branches of the California Writers Club.

Ink Spots is emailed monthly to members on or around the 15th of each month (*excluding July*). It is available in print to FAW members at the general meeting on the fourth Saturday of the month.

We email a copy of Ink Spots to all the different branches of the California Writers Club, as well.

We welcome your submissions; please send them to the Editor at the following email addresses: myrlaraymundoback@gmail.com or raymundomyrla@gmail.com

FORMAT: Text in word.doc or PDF & Photos in jpeg

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: On or before the First Day of the publication month (May 1st for the May issue). **WORD COUNT:** Feature articles: 300 words max. New Member bios: 150 max.

FAW Featured Member

**Urmila
Patel:**

LIVING A LIFE THAT'S FULL AND RICH



Urmila Patel was born in India and brought up in a Hindu family. When she was a toddler, her parents moved to Uganda in East Africa, where her father taught History and her mother was a housewife. She grew up in this country that seemed like a paradise with its mountains, lakes, forests, and jungles, until a vicious dictator seized power. When the violence began, there was fear, confusion and uncertainty in all of Uganda. Urmila was just beginning her passage into womanhood when her life was torn apart. Yet she lived to tell her tale.

She wrote her first account, "Out of Uganda in 90 days" at the age of 14; it has been deep in her heart ever since, and all these years, she has yearned to tell her story to the world. She is now working on the second part of her tale. Her life has been full and rich; she has lived in several different countries enjoying varied cultures, climates and foods. Her book was a stepping stone for her; it led her to become a Reiki master and a Yoga instructor.

Urmila's purpose in life is to share her knowledge and her wisdom and give others the tools to empower and heal themselves. As she helps others, she continues her own spiritual journey, diving deeper into achieving more knowledge and wisdom. She believes that knowledge is power that cannot be destroyed nor taken away by any means.

Urmila gives Reiki and yoga classes from her home, and is looking forward to giving classes at the local community center or at the library. She loves gardening, cooking, traveling, swimming, reading, and is committed to learning tai-chi on her day off. She lives in Fremont, CA, USA, close to both of her grown children.

KUDOS – Members' News

Shirley Ferrante's mom started it with the invitation, "we're going to the library today." It was her practice to check out the maximum books allowed. Shirley started writing stories in her head. Many years later her friend, Nancy Curteman, invited her to a critique group. Thanks to that group, Shirley got serious about writing. She finally took the plunge and entered the Half Price Books Flash Fiction Contest. Third place was her reward for "Togetherness". *"Thank you, Mom."* (Check out Shirley's contest winner in the FAW Writers' Corner of this issue.)

Nancy Guarnera won 1st and 2nd place in the Half Price Books Flash Fiction Contest held on the 22nd of September. Her "Home Coming" took 1st place and "Three Times" took 2nd place. Both pieces began as prompts from FAW meetings. While at the bookstore for the awarding of prices, Nancy met Bhaskar Sompalli, a former member of FAW and encouraged him to rejoin. Potential FAW members can be found everywhere. (Check out Nancy's contest winners in the FAW Writers' Corner of this issue.)

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If you give a Shout Out at one of our meetings, we'd like to celebrate you and put it in the newsletter. So Shout Out – then send the information to Myrla (raymundomyrla@gmail.com) or Nancy (nguarnera16@comcast.net). Please keep word count in the range of 75 words or less in third person. If you'd like us to print the accompanying piece, please include it as a word.doc with your Kudo. If it's a long piece (500 words or more) we may choose to hold the Kudo and your piece for an issue when we have room for it in its entirety. If you've published a book, send us an excerpt from it and we'll print that in the FAW Writers' Corner.

Congratulations! & Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE – MARK YOUR CALENDAR



*** FAW Annual Holiday Party ***

Saturday Evening * December 8

Hosted by Bob and Kathy Garfinkle

Flyer with details to follow



FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

Out of Uganda in 90 Days

(Excerpt Chapter 10 pages from 67 to 69)

by Urmila Patel

I lay in a deep sleep full of dreams. The room was crowded. People argued with each other, and there was a lot of noise. Finally I heard Mum's call, and woke up. My petticoat was all wet. I slowly pulled myself up and sat on my bed. The sound was getting louder. *Is this a dream?* I wondered.

The noise came from the street. Bicycle bells rang, scooter engines rumbled, and I realized I'd overslept. It was already ten-thirty and most of the morning was gone. I sat for a moment, still feeling tired. My stomachache was gone. When I stood up my legs were weak.

I kept hearing voices screaming, and it just got louder. In the kitchen Mum was preparing lunch. She'd decided to make an extra dish. The noise from the primus stove and whistle of the pressure cooker blocked any outside sounds.

"Come have a cup of tea, with something to eat," Mum said.

I rubbed my eyes. "Mum, I heard people."

"What people?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Do you feel better now?"

"Yes," I replied.

"The backyard door is locked," she said. "Do not go out."

"Why not?" I asked.

At first she didn't want me to know about the corpse in the jute bag thinking I will get sick. "It's too hot and it's not good to stand in the sun," she said. Go and rest until lunch is ready. It is becoming dangerous outside." I protested. That's when she started telling me about the leg in the jute bag.

As she talked I walked carefully, heading for the backyard.

"What's going on Mila?"



Urmila Patel

"I don't know," I said. "I heard the noise and I came out."

"There is a dead body over there," she said, pointing.

I looked towards the wilderness. Adrenalin surged through my body.

"Yes, Mum told me." I looked towards the hill, shielding my eyes to see better. Even though my head was getting hot, I didn't move. "What is that?"

People who'd left for work and school were now running down the hill, screaming. As they came closer I could understand what they were shouting: "They are killing people!"

Blindly they crowded into the narrow path, jostling, trampling, and climbing over one another. The older and younger folks were getting bruised and cut on the stone path. Finally some brave men helped the weaker ones. They lifted old women and children and carried them on their backs. As people reached their houses they ran in, locking doors behind them.

Sunday and I looked at each other. I heard a woman weeping, but I didn't bother to look. My eyes were focused on the running crowd.

"Oh, there is Papa!" I cried. "Mum! Mum!"

Mum didn't answer. Kevin was next to Papa, and Donna ran ahead of them. *Where's Bina?* I wondered. The sun warmed my head. I sat down on the stone wall. The banana trees gave me shade.

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)

Shoes

by Anita Tosh

Jessica sprang out of bed as soon as the sun was up. She threw on her play clothes and her favorite red tennis shoes before running outside to the big backyard to play until mom called her for breakfast.

Getting ready for another day at the high school, Jessica dressed carefully. She decided on the navy blue heels to go with her blue skirt and white blouse. *You never know, she thought, I just might meet Mr. right today.*

The music was playing in the church. The bustle of excitement was everywhere. Bridesmaids were checking the mirror one last time before finding their groomsman to walk down the aisle. Jessica was putting on her sparkly white shoes. Her father took her hand and she stood. It was time.

Jessica sat up slowly, the bed and her own bones creaking in the process. Her feet searched for the comfy slippers next to her bed. Her toes wiggled in and she willed herself to stand even as she groaned.

Bright light woke her. She bounded out of bed and her feet touched a cool smooth surface. Jessica looked around. She was not in her bedroom. This was not the floor. It was gold, and splendorous beauty surrounded her.

Togetherness

(3rd place Half Price Books Flash Fiction Contest)

by Shirley Ferrante

Rosie awakened and turned to look towards the love of her life. "Good morning sweetheart. Can you believe how hard it rained last night?" She smiled and motioned toward the window, "but now the sun is shining and it's warming up. My flower garden is very happy and the lawn is turning green. I think I'll roll out our bicycle and we'll go for a ride along the levy. I know it's been awhile since we've ventured out, but hey, let's have an adventure."

"First, I'll cook up a light breakfast." When she finished eating, Rosie did the dishes and headed to her garage.

She wiped the cobwebs off the faded blue bicycle built for two. "Oh poop, wouldn't you know it, dang tires are flat? I know that bicycle tire pump is around here somewhere. There you are hiding under the workbench. I'll have these tires pumped up in no time."

"Ok, Chuck, here we go. Lordy, those nosey neighbors are staring. You'd think I was an oddball or something." She smiled "I'm just going for a bike ride with my husband." The bike swayed a bit then found its equilibrium as it headed toward the bike path on the levy that ran along Alameda creek.

Fellow bikers greeted the bicycle for two with a smile and a nod of the head. "Isn't this lovely Chuck? Like old times. Wow, there in that tall grass is a red fox. Listen to those birds. The mustard plants are blooming, acres of golden yellow stretching out to the bay. Well, my darling, my legs are starting to ache. I'm ready to head back home."

As Rosie entered the house, she looked down at the urn cradled in her arms. "What a lovely ride, my love."

NaNoWriMo is almost here!

**What is NaNoWriMo?
National Novel Writing Month,
a.k.a November!**

**Yep, the goal is to write a novel in one
month. Want to know more?
Be bold — check it out at**

www.nanowrimo.org

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER *(continued)*

Home Coming

(1st place Half Price Books Flash Fiction Contest)

by Nancy Guarnera

As I looked across the frozen fields, I spotted a figure approaching the house. It couldn't be!

But it was. He was back. He was finally back. My son was alive and home . . . home from that hideous war. His father had gone and fallen, leaving only my son and me to tend the farm. Then he was gone, too; off to defend our way of life.

Word had come; the war was over, but no sign of my son. No word from occasional passers-by who stopped to rest, have something to eat and drink, before continuing on.

For so long I grieved his loss, sure he was with his father. My dear sweet boy: handsome, funny and kind. He could never take another's life. He just didn't have it in him. He would hunt and fish, and even butcher animals for our food, but it was always hard for him. He hated killing things. I was sure he wouldn't survive, so I begged him not to go. But he felt bound by duty and the memory of his father, so he went. My beautiful son marched off to war.

But here he was at last.

I untied my apron, flung it over the railing, pulled my shawl tight and began to run. I ran as fast I could to him; to hold him in my arms once again. My dear, precious boy, home from the war. Alive!

I ran and ran until I could run no longer. Then I walked . . . staggered . . . crawled, but I was no closer.

I lay on the ground, sobbing . . . yet once again.

How many times did he have to come back, before I understood that he was never coming home?

Three Times

(2nd place Half Price Books Flash Fiction Contest)

by Nancy Guarnera

"Damn it! Do you have to repeat everything you say three times? Do you think I'm deaf . . . or an idiot? I'm neither!" Judith slammed the glass plates on the table and stormed out of the kitchen.

"C'mon, Babe, I know you're not deaf," he cajoled after her, attempting to slap her bottom as she raged by him.

Small shards of anger-glass glittered in the afternoon sun as its rays consumed the kitchen table and the lanky, unshaven middle-aged man, who sat sipping his ginseng tea. He sighed and shook his head in bewilderment dislodging his man bun; his scraggly blond dreads falling to his sloping shoulders. She had begged him to cut them off so many times he'd lost count. Knowing her, she knew exactly how many times.

Chaz rubbed his temples. Her constant nagging and temper tantrums always caused disruption in his chi. She had never understood what a sensitive constitution he had. As far as he was concerned, their relationship was getting to be a real downer. But, she was a good little provider. Even with him not working, they were doing okay on her salary; especially since she'd been able to pick up some extra shifts.

"Chaz, can you come in here, please?" Judith called from the living room, her voice calm and steady.

"Good," Chaz thought to himself, "I bet she's going to apologize for her little outburst."

Chaz sauntered victoriously into the living room to find Judith pointing a gun at him.

"No," he pleaded covering his face with his arms.

"Better," she said with a smile and pulled the trigger three times.

(Author's note: Both these pieces started as FAW general meeting prompts.)

Adrian Wolf: The Ape Man

by Anthony Pino

I

Yesterday I read in the news that authorities had spotted three people in the ravine above High Canyon College. Speculation started in the local coffee shops that this might have had something to do with Adrian Wolf, "The Ape Man," and his lover, Marietta Gonzalez, and possibly a baby. Around the Bay Area, the academic community and public officials had been looking for him, but finding him was not an easy task. Adrian had become an escape artist, and he had a knack for eluding the authorities when they wanted him.

I remember my first episode involving one of his escapes. They couldn't find him on campus and the university demanded an intense search. The president, who was squeamish about the Ape-Man Project to begin with, was distraught about what she saw as a potential danger to the public. What I eventually found looked nothing like endangerment.

Local broadcast stations made public announcements on television, radio and on the internet asking for the public's assistance in determining Adrian's whereabouts. Well, a tip came in from a coffee shop, and the Advisory Council asked me to oversee his retrieval. Authorities determined that I had a calming effect on him and should be the one to coax him back to his university "home."

Following the tip, I found Adrian at a coffee shop in Newark at a small table pounding away at his usual text. I looked over his shoulder and there it was:

opinxzzanny

thnk beking a shape.

Shapp shape aipe

bekdming ahh-pee.

Bkmchhh app

Mchhhchhhh

xrvchgmmchingeechangee

(Watch for the continuing adventures of Adrian Wolf: The Ape Man in future issues of Ink Spots.)

GUEST WRITERS' CORNER



A love letter to my Home

by Madeline Inman

**2018 FAW
Writing Scholarship Recipient**

Dear Home Sweet Home of Mine,

It's true what they say, you're not like the other homes. You have no roof to protect my head, no fire to warm my feet on wintry nights, no doorbell.

You don't have that list of numbers and letters that so many homes do. No address, no area code.

Many who can't see your four walls may guess that you don't exist. For a while I asked myself this question, too.

Having never lived in one house for more than 4 years, did I have a home? If I did, where was it? What did it look like? What did it smell like? Was it hidden?

What the others do not know, what I discovered is that you, unlike the other homes, do not have four walls, because you are a shapeshifter.

A shapeshifter, that's right. You truly are a marvel!

You are not a location, or a person, a city, or even an entire country.

While you can take the form of any of these things, for a time or in a given place, you are encompassed by none of them.

When I came to the realization of this fact, it was easy to see your footprints traipsing through my childhood and hear the echoes of your voice in the words that I speak today.

You were in the arms of my mother after a long school day, in the smiles of welcoming strangers when I was an immigrant in a new land and in the wafting smell of pancakes that my Grandma made, every morning that I spent in her house on Washington Avenue.

As I grew you were continually woven through my life, like a single thread in an intricate tapestry. I would see a glimpse of you in the generosity of the Northern Irish people only to hear you in the 'Welcomes' of my family members when I returned to Fremont, California.

I found you printed on pages, in the lyrics of my dad's favorite eighties songs, in the warm tea friends offered me every time I entered their homes.

Thank you for growing, changing and shifting with me. As I make some changes in my life I like to think about what kind of shape you will take next. Will I find you in the eyes of others, in the sound of my name on someone's lips, in the winding of a new street?

The answers to this question are endless and unknowable but there is one thing I am certain of...

I am grateful. Grateful that you are not 4 cold walls and a mailbox. Grateful that you are a shapeshifter and grateful that I have found you on both sides of the Atlantic ocean, with people of different ages, genders, races and names, in sounds, in views, in feelings, and in food.

Here's to many more years of finding you, right under my nose!

Thank you for being my home sweet home!

(A feature article about Madeline Inman and her Scholarship Award appeared on the front page of Vol. 78, the September 2018 issue of Ink Spots.)