

Happy 10th Anniversary



Ink Spots

The Newsletter of the Fremont Area Writers

The “Centennial” Branch of the California Writers Club

Nancy Guarnera Editor-in-Chief

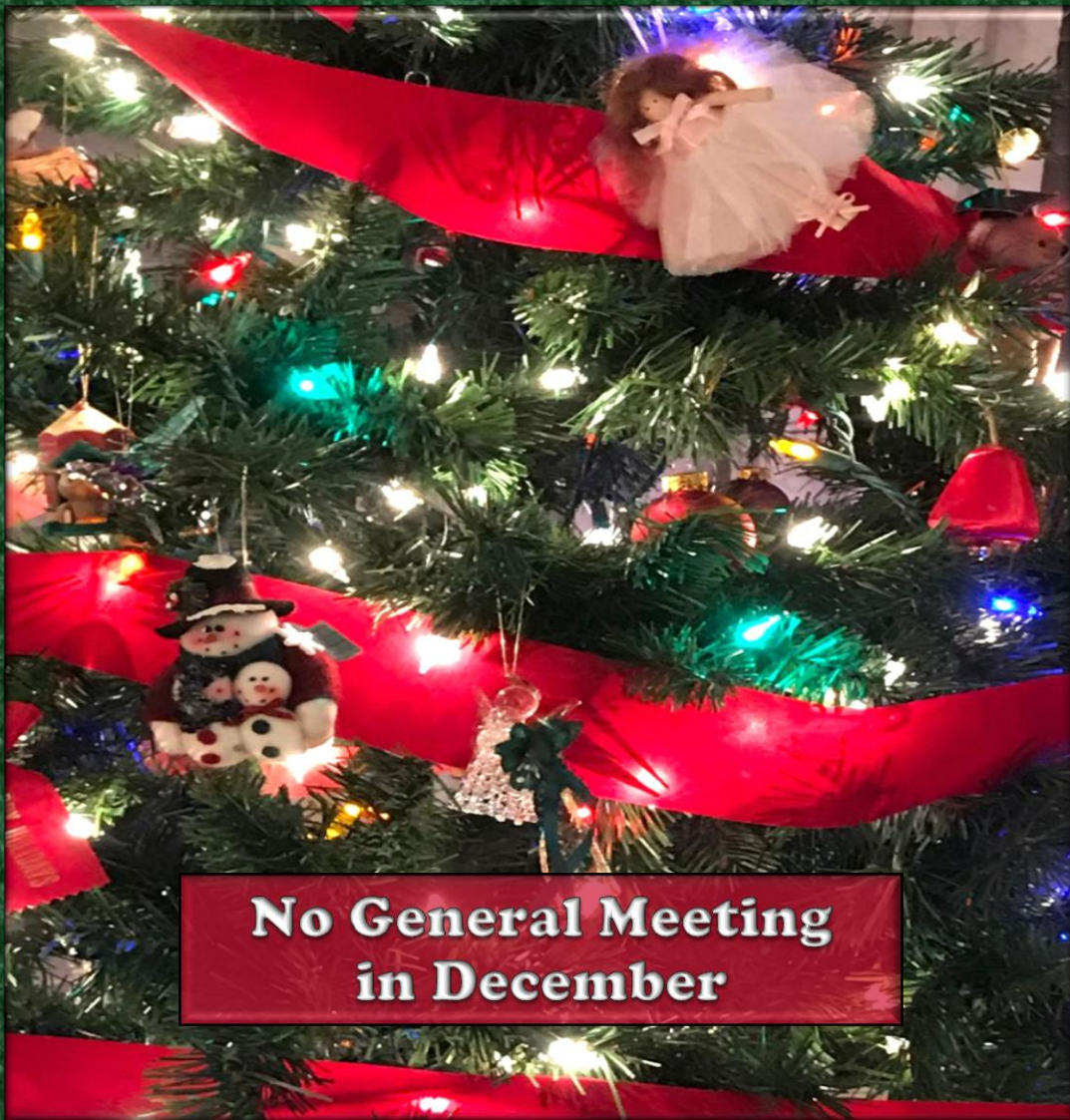
Vol. 92 December 2019

inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org

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

101

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



No General Meeting in December



TERRY TOSH
FAW President

President's Message

Whew! What a whirlwind year we've experienced. I'm glad we have a break from Board and General meetings this Month.

You have all been very good this year to help out as needed and to get your membership renewals in...some a bit sooner than others, but we really appreciate the efforts. Please invite a friend or two to check out our group this coming year, we really want to grow and help others to learn and to find their niche. A lot of work went into the 10th Anniversary year, for which we are eternally grateful, thanks to all who devoted time and energy into making it a fun and active year.

I can't begin to start naming names, for fear of missing some, as there are lots of efforts that go on behind the scenes. Just suffice it to say that you are appreciated.

We are ready to move forward now with more exciting events and ongoing opportunities for book-signings, readings, critique groups, panel discussions, special speakers on an array of topics, and any other suggestions that will help in our goal of Writers Helping Writers. If you have a special talent (or several), please step up and share your experiences and lessons learned with others. We want to use our members more this year to spread and share the lessons of success and failures, whatever will make us stronger and move us forward in our endeavors.

My apologies for some issues that arose in our first effort to honor our long-term members; we'll do better in 2020. Please let us know as soon as possible if your certificate needs to be corrected, or if you should have received one and didn't. We're working with iffy data, so the more you help us with the updates, the better. Thanks!

By the time you read this, we should have had our Holiday Party (thank you, Bob and Kathy!) as well as our December HPB event (how did it go, Jan?) and our third Literary Open Mic at Starbucks. I hope you all had a great time at the party, and that the "Second Saturday" and "Third Sunday" were both successful.

May your Christmas and/or other Holiday events be filled with the love and joy of this season. See you in January.

Happy New Year to all! 2020, WOW!

Sincerely, Terry

FREMONT AREA WRITERS MONTHLY CALENDAR

SECOND SATURDAY Meet Your Local FAW Authors

Second Saturdays

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Half Price Books
39152 Fremont Hub
Fremont

THIRD SUNDAY Literary OPEN MIC

Third Sundays

Sign-up 3:00

Reading 3:30 – 5:30 PM
Starbucks
39201 Cedar Blvd
Newark

SUJU's OPEN MIC

Fourth Mondays

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Suju's Coffee & Tea
Meeting Room
3602 Thornton Ave
Fremont

BOARD & GENERAL MEETINGS

Fourth Saturdays

Board: 12:30 – 1:45 PM

General: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

42 Silicon Valley Rm 106
6600 Dumbarton Circle
Fremont

FAW Board Members



TERRY TOSH
President



KNUTI VANHOVEN
Vice President



**CARMEN
VONTICKNER**
Secretary



CHERYLYN 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
- 2019 Jan Small

FAW Chairpersons



ART CAREY
Signage
Facility Liaison



SUE CURTZWILER
Volunteer Coordinator
Hospitality Co-Chair



SCOTT DAVIDSON
Webmaster



TISH DAVIDSON
CA Writers Club
Representative



AMBER DeANN
Facebook Page
Social Media



BOB GARFINKLE
Historian
Past President



NANCY GUARNERA
"Second Saturday" &
"Third Sunday"
Ink Spots Editor



CHERILYN JOSE
CWC Advertising
& Promotions



TONY PINO
Monday Open Mic



ANITA TOSH
Membership
Nor-Cal Representative
Authors' Table/Book Exchange



KNUTI VANHOVEN
Speakers Program
Publicity



CARMEN VONTICKNER
Hospitality Co-Chair

FAW MISSION STATEMENT

Fremont Area Writers educates writers and the public by providing:
Forums for educating members in the craft of writing and marketing their works **and**
Public meetings, workshops, and seminars open to all writers and the general public
to facilitate educating writers of all levels of expertise. (*Article II Section 1:1.1 and 1.2 FAW Bylaws*)

KUDOS – Members' News

Kudos to Robert Cabello, Tish Davidson, Scott Davidson, Nancy Guarnera, Jeff Hanson, Tony Pino, Rekha Ramani, and Carmen VonTickner for braving the mic at FAW's "Third Sunday" Literary OPEN MIC at Starbucks on Cedar Blvd. in Newark on December 15th. Congratulations to all!

Kudos to Tish Davidson on her new contract with ABC-CLIO to write two books—*Hormones: A Q&A Book for High School Students* and *Medical Firsts: Innovations & Milestones That Changed the World. Forever*. Congratulations, Tish!

Kudos to Paul K Davis on his short presentation to the Washington Township Country Club Women's Club about why it's important to write memoirs and to include the history of your times. Knuti VanHoven attended Paul's talk and suggested that it is especially important for women to write their stories. Congratulations, Paul!

Kudos to Carol Hall on forming her film production company, Blue Carp Productions, LLC, that will begin in January 2020. Congratulations, Carol!

Kudos to Myrla Raymundo who has started her third book on Union City oral history. Congratulations, Myrla!

Kudos to Jan Small on her successful "Second Saturday" event at **Half Price Books** in the Fremont Hub held on December 14th; she shared excerpts from seven of her art books. Congratulations, Jan!

Fremont Area Writers & Starbucks



Writers Reading Their Original Work

Third Sunday of the month

Sign-up: 3:00 Reading: 3:30 to 5:30
Starbucks 39201 Cedar Blvd in Newark

Readings should be no more than 10 minutes long.
Starbucks is a "family-friendly" venue — please read family-appropriate material.

PLEASE: No hate speech, No pornography, No gratuitous obscenities or vulgarity; No political or religious rants or proselytizing. No book sales at this venue. Thank you!

Carmen "Claus"
VonTickner
came dressed
for the occasion
to Emcee the
December 2019
FAW Literary
Open Mic
at Starbucks



Free & Open to the Public / Everyone Is Welcome!

A Word from Our Editor



Nancy Guarnera
Editor-in-Chief Ink Spots

Welcome to our December 2019 issue of *Ink Spots*; it contains the latest FAW news, poetry, prose, essays, and articles written by our members. It also contains information from other branches of the California Writers Club and from the literary world beyond.

If you are an avid reader of *Ink Spots*, you've probably noticed that we have "departments." Some examples: Notes from the World, Kudos, FAW Writers' Corner. This month we're adding **The Spark** contributed by Sue Curtzwiler, FAW Volunteer Coordinator and Hospitality Co-Chair. Read Sue's column for encouragement and inspiration. See page 10 in this issue.

This is your newsletter and I would truly appreciate your participation. If you've had a success, submit it as a **Kudo**; finished a poem or a short story, submit it for the **Writers' Corner**; have some tips, tricks, contests, websites, or events that would appeal to writers,

submit them for **Notes from the World**; have some FAW history you'd like to share—you get the idea! This is your organization and your newsletter; please consider contributing to both. If you'd like to submit a continuing series, or have an idea for a new department, let's talk. Send me an email or talk to me at a 4th Saturday meeting.

Send submissions to inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org. Please put **FAW Ink Spots Submission** in the **Subject** line of your email. See below for Submission Guidelines. Thank you!

Ink Spots is emailed to members on or around the 15th of each month (*excluding July*) and is available on the FAW website cwcfremontareawriters.org. If you have not received a copy of the newsletter by the 25th of the month, and you've checked your SPAM/JUNK folder and it's not there, contact me at inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org and I'll resend it to you. Please put **FAW—NO NEWS-LETTER** in the **Subject** line. We email Ink Spots to all the different branches of the California Writers Club, as well.

Thanks to *Erika Walker* and *Janet Salinas* for volunteering to help with the newsletter and other tasks.

Enjoy this month's issue—Merry Christmas, Happy Solstice, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year! Cheers! Nancy

Submission Guidelines

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

On or before the **First Day of the Publication Month** (May 1st for the May issue, etc.)

Please submit as attachments, rather than in the body of your email.

WORD COUNT:

Feature articles (Presidents Message, Featured Member, etc.): **300 words max.**

Creative Submissions: **1,000 words max.** (unless you are willing to have longer pieces serialized)

Kudos: **75-80 words max.**

FORMAT: **Text** – Word.doc/docx **Photos** – JPEG

November's Speaker Recap

CONTRACT CRAFTING:

How to Find, Create & Negotiate Author-Friendly Contracts



Kelley A. Way

www.kawaylaw.com

November's speaker, **Kelley A. Way, Esq.**, returned to FAW took a deep dive into the world of contracts. Every writer, if they intend to publish their work, will have to deal with a contract or two along the way. Having at least a basic understanding of these documents can make the process of getting published and benefitting from the experience just a little bit easier. Kelley came with handouts; if you missed the meeting and didn't get a handout, check with and FAW member or contact Kelley.



Kelley's first key to successful negotiation of a contract is one's **MINDSET**. She suggested that before you even start the process of negotiation, check your mindset.

Bad mindset: "The process is manipulative and sleazy;" "I'll look pushy, greedy and ungrateful if I ask for what I want;" "A win for me is a loss for them;" "If I push for what I want, they'll get angry and walk away;" "I have no bargaining power." If this is your mindset, change it before negotiating!

Good Mindset: "I have something valuable to offer;" "Publishers expect authors to negotiate;" "Negotiations done right leave everyone feeling they've gotten something of value out of the process." If this is your mindset before you sit down to a negotiation, go for it!

Also very important: "Know your desired outcome before you start negotiating." Make sure you have an "opening offer," a final "goal," and a "walk away" point. Know what's important to you? Know what's important to the publisher? Ask them, before you start negotiating. Make sure you "have a reason for every ask and every concession." Be willing to walk away if you're not happy with the process or the final outcome.

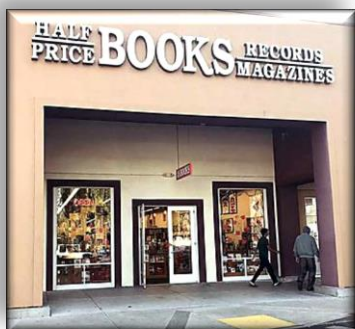
Perhaps the most important thing about a contract is making sure you know what's in it, and that you understand it. If you don't understand something, find someone who does (an attorney, an agent, etc.) and have them explain it to you. **Don't sign it if you don't understand it.** Know what you're getting and what you're giving away; and what the other party is getting and what they're giving away. Always remember, a contract's not binding if it doesn't have a "promise" in it.

Instead of granting a copyright to the publisher, "license" specific rights—exclusivity, format, language, territory, and term (length)—to them. Don't retain rights if you don't have a plan to use them. Contracts generally include publication deadlines; but make sure your contract includes an automatic deadline extension for unforeseen circumstances, as well. Money: make sure your royalties are based on "suggested retail price"—what the publisher thinks the book will sell for, not what they actually sell it for. Your contract should specify how and when you'll receive payment—annually, bi-annually, quarterly. Make sure there's a specific publication date identified in your contract, as well as the inclusion of a limit to the term of license to allow for renegotiations in the future. Define "out of print" and make sure the contract includes a "reversion right" if your book goes 'out of print.'

There was, of course, she shared much more; a single page is just not enough space to cover all the intricacies of contracts and negotiations. Expect to see Kelley return again to share her expertise with us in the future.

Calling All FAW Published Authors

FAW-HPB "Second Saturday" Meet Your Local FAW Authors



**Half Price Books
at
39152
Fremont Hub,
in Fremont**

Fremont Area Writers is partnering with Half Price Books in Fremont to present "Second Saturday" — Meet Your Local FAW Authors monthly readings by FAW published authors. Readings are scheduled from 2:00 to 4:00 PM; a different FAW author will be featured each month.

This opportunity to read and sell your books is available to FAW members who are published authors.

If you're interested in scheduling a month in 2020, please contact Nancy Guarnera at faw-hpb@cw-fremontareawriters.org. 2019 authors who have new books to share are welcome to schedule for 2020.

2020 FAW Authors

January 11
Marjorie Johnson

February 8
Tish Davidson

March 14
TBD

April 11
TBD

"Meet Your Local FAW Author" for January 2020

Saturday, January 11th 2 – 4 P.M. Half Price Books in the Fremont Hub



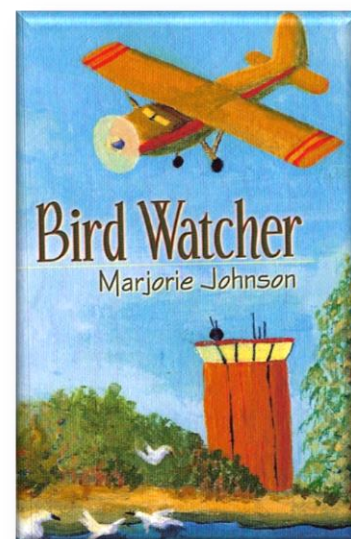
**Marjorie
Johnson**

Join **Marjorie Johnson**, FAW author, pilot and retired math teacher with a Fibonacci fascination, as she reads from her book *Bird Watcher*.

Who is the bird watcher, and why does he steal airplanes?

When Jerry Christensen's Cessna disappears from its tie-down at Palo Alto Airport, Air Traffic Control can't help, and the FBI isn't interested. Jerry, a teacher, is unsuited to pursue a criminal, but he's determined to catch the thief. Acting on hunches and using his imagination, Jerry chases the thief across California, Nevada, and South Dakota to their final destination. Don't miss this first HPB reading of the New Year.

Everyone is welcome!



FAW—HPB “Second Saturday”

December’s “Meet Your Local FAW Authors”

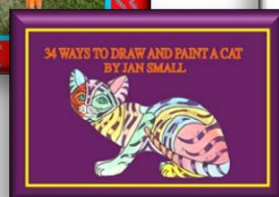
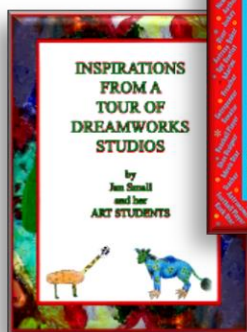
Jan Small Seven Art Books & Counting

At the FAW “Second Saturday” reading on December 14th, Jan Small, author of more than a dozen art books, shared seven of them with an enthusiastic and appreciative audience at Half Price Books in the Fremont Hub.

Jan had assistance with her presentation from FAW author Anita Tosh, November’s “Second Saturday” author. As Jan read and described the origins of her books, Anita made sure that everyone could see Jan’s art.

From a trip to the zoo, to a tour of DreamWorks Studios, Jan took her audience on a creative journey that wove together the author’s words and her art. Much of Jan’s art is spiritually inspired and she shared several stories that helped the audience better understand her inspiration and her decades of dedication to helping others find their creative passion.

Another successful
FAW–Half Price
Books event!



Jan Small
jansmall.com



*Top: Jan reads from Zootangles;
Middle: Author reads from What Do
You want to Be When You Grow Up as
Anita shows the book; Jan explains the
process of creating the art in Healing
By His Design as Anita looks on*



Sue Curtzwiler
Volunteer
Coordinator

Start Over

Here it is again; the benchmark, the scale, or the goal—not quite there yet?

Stop and breathe.

Did you hit the wall or find something that breaks your focus and you feel like you need to pick up the pieces and start over? You know what? It's okay, in fact, it's good, it's healthy to start over. Giving up is not an acceptable alternative.

Why wait until the New Year to make those inspiring resolutions? Start making small changes now. Yes, right now in the middle of the holiday season! Sure, it's tough, but if you start making subtle changes now, when the New Year arrives, you're set for success because you'll have been practicing and making those mind set changes. Getting your mind ready is the critical beginning to achieve your goals. Determination powered by your mind allows you to make it through anything.

Picking up the pieces simply means you're making progress. Why? It shows you are aware of the times when things don't go as planned and you are determined to push forward.

Remember, you can do anything you put your mind to. So, please, never give up! Go ahead and start over as many times as necessary, and perhaps you need to make a few adjustments. Stay persistent. Little by little, you will start to see your dreams become reality.

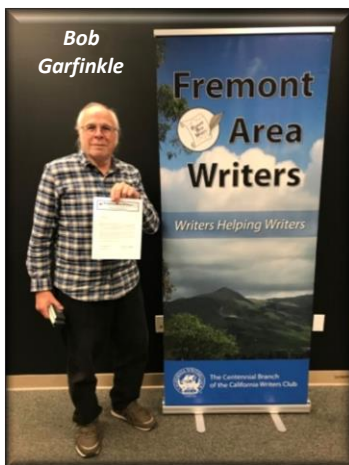
Happy New Year!

Sue Curtzwiler

HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Our 10th Anniversary is coming to an end. It's been quite a year and quite a decade. At our final General Meeting of the year, on November 23, we celebrated those of us who have been members of Fremont Area Writers consecutively for three years and five years with certificates. Our members who have been with FAW for ten consecutive years each received a beautiful pen and a letter of appreciation. We appreciate all of these members for their continuous commitment and service to the organization. Some of these dedicated members are pictured below. Thank you to all of you. And of course...there was cake!

Our Founder



Bob Garfinkle

10 Year Recipients not pictured

Sarabjit Cheema
Nancy Curteman
Bob Garfinkle
Annmarie Garfinkle
Kathy Garfinkle
Shirley Gilbert
Sadie Kahn

10 Year Recipients



Left to right: Myrla Raymundo, Carol Hall, Tish Davidson

Right to Left: Evelyn LaTorre, Jan Small, Art Carey

5 Year Recipients



Right to Left: Joyce Cortez, Dave Strom

5 Year Recipients not pictured

Caroline Ahlsweide
Penelope Cole
Shirley Ferrante
Bruce Haase
Marjorie Johnson
Cherilyn Jose
Doris Nikolaidis
Urmila Patel
Tony Pino

3 Year Recipients not pictured

JoAnn Frisch
Nancy Guarnera
Alfred Jan
Janet Salinas
Judy Taylor
Knuti VanHoven

3 Year Recipients



Left to right: Terry Connelly, Paul Davis

1st Anniversary Celebration



Notes from the World

CONTESTS Contests CONTESTS

Writers Weekly. Free newsletter. 24-hour short story contest once each quarter. Topic and word length revealed after signing up. Limited to 500 entrants. \$5 entry fee. Also lists some paying markets for fiction and nonfiction. writersweekly.com

Winning Writers. Free newsletter. Lists free contests (many age or location restricted) as well as pay-to-enter contests. Lots of poetry contests. winningwriters.com

The Write Life. Website. Lists free contests (with a few exceptions.) Includes book, short fiction, essay, and poetry contests. Many contests are very specific, e.g. book by first generation immigrant, book of military fiction. thewritelife.com/writing-contests

Poets & Writers. Website. Searchable contest database with filters for cost, genre and deadline. pw.org/grants

Submishmash Weekly. Free newsletter. A curated arts newsletter with select publishing opportunities including contests, publications seeking submissions, and artist residencies. Run by the submission platform **Submittable**.

Free Write. Blog. 20 contests for 2019. Mixture of pay-to-enter and free contests. getfreewrite.com/blogs/writing-success/2019-writing-contests-the-complete-guide

The Writer. Website and free newsletter. Listing of mostly pay-to-enter contests. writersmag.com/contests

Fan Story. Paid site. Seven-day free trial. \$9.95/month or \$69/year. Feedback on writing you post and almost daily contests that can be entered at no additional fee. fanstory.com

Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

ANOTHER CONTEST

(for ages 65 and up)

Ageless Authors is accepting submissions to its new writing contest exclusively for writers and poets age 65 and older.

The categories are short fiction, short nonfiction, and short poetry. Stories must be 1,000 words or less, and poetry must be 12 lines or less.

Deadline is February 1, 2020.

Complete submission details are available at agelessauthors.com/current-contests.

There is a \$10 submission fee and cash prizes.

This is a good contest to enter. It's in its fourth year and the competition and number of submissions is not overwhelming.

Genre-specific Websites

Sisters in Crime <http://www.sistersincrime.org>
(open to men as well as women)

Mystery Writers of America <http://www.mysterywriters.org>

Romance Writers of America <http://www.rwa.org>

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America
<http://www.sfwaweb.org>

Inspire Christian Writers <http://inspirewriters.com>

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
<http://www.scbwi.org>

Women's National Book Association <http://www.wnba-books.org>
(open to men as well as women)

Academy of American Poets <http://www.poets.org>

Poetry Society of America <http://www.poetrysociety.org>

National Association of Memoir Writers
<http://www.namw.org>

American Society of Journalists and Authors
<http://www.asja.org> *(nonfiction writers)*

CineStory (screenwriters) <http://www.cinestory.org>

Scriptwriters Network <http://scriptwritersnetwork.com>

Historical Novel Association <https://historicalnovelsociety.org/>

Horror Writers Association <http://www.horror.org>

FAW Holiday Party

December 6th 2019



Bob Garfinkle &
Jeannette Robinson



The Christmas Tree



Bob Garfinkle, Carol Hall &
Scott Davidson



Dave Strom &
Marjorie Johnson



Evelyn LaTorre, Anita Tosh &
Myrle Raymundo

**'Twas the
season
to be Joyful...
and we were!**



**How many
Christmas Trees
can you find?**

Jan Small with Shirley &
Gab Ferrante

(Continued)

FAW Holiday Party



Marjorie Johnson with her friend Bob & daughter Jan



Kathy Garfinkle & Robert Cabello



Jan Small & Shirley Gilbert



Frank Arevalo & Claude Robinson



Terry Tosh & Dave Strom

(Continued)

FAW Holiday Party



Marjorie & the Gift



Sue Curtzwiler & Tish Davidson

'Twas the season to be Joyful and as I look at these photos now, the Joy of that evening brings a smile to my face and contentment to my heart.

If you missed the party this year, come next year and experience the Joy for yourself.

Thanks to our gracious hosts, Kathy and Bob Garfinkle, we all had a great time.

How many Christmas trees did you find? (EZ)



Myrla Raymundo, Evelyn LaTorre & Cherilyn Jose



Kathy Garfinkle all lit up

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

Wild Fires

Leaves crunch under foot
Crispy for want of water
Up in flames they go

Nancy Guarnera

Rain, at last

Cold wet winter rains
Long awaited freshening
Grass greening the hills

Nancy Guarnera



MY CHRISTMAS MIRACLE CAT

by Shirley Ferrante

I was raised in an Italian Catholic Family. We practiced the obligatory rituals of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, no meat on Friday and Mass on Christmas and Easter. Even though we weren't super religious, my mom insisted on a parochial education for my brother and me. Hello St. Elizabeth's and the Presentation Nuns.

Education and discipline were their forte. In our religious instructions we learned about The Virgin Mary's appearances at Fatima and Lourdes. Our Lady of Fatima appeared to three cousins in Portugal. In Lourdes, France the visitation of the Blessed Mother was to a young girl named Bernadette. At the site of the Lourdes manifestation a spring started to flow from the grotto. This water was said to have healing properties by pilgrims who visited the site. As a young student, I was impressed with these stories. I envisioned in my mind where these events took place, but never dreamed I would actually visit Fatima or Lourdes.

Fifty years later, I did get to visit these two sites. Whoa, it was like being twelve years old again hearing the nun's stories of Fatima and Lourdes. Our Pilgrimage took us first to the farm in Fatima, where the apparition to the three cousins, Jacinta dos Santos, Lucia and Francisco Marto occurred. Then on to the Grotto in Lourdes where Bernadette Soubirous had her experience. And, yes, I saw the discarded crutches and wheelchairs, and filled my bottles with water from the spring in the grotto to take home and share with family.

In early December that year, my cat, Lamont, couldn't keep any food down and lost significant weight. He was diagnosed with kidney disease and was not doing well. I figured I was going to lose him. Lamont was my TV buddy who kept me calm through long nights. Yes, you guessed it. I thought, why not? I sprinkled him with my water from Lourdes.

Two years later, in December, at fifteen years old, Lamont is still my pampered, haughty and cantankerous black fur baby.

Black and White

by Tony Pino

It had been a long interview. I was tired, but too anxious to rest, and certainly too tired to drive back to Palm Springs. This guy, Andrews had set it up in the adjunct room of an old hotel lobby. The old place had the remnants of sumptuousness: heavy curtains and stuffed chairs, art-deco chandeliers and soft lamps. Andrews didn't wear a tie, an expectation I had with anyone who wanted an interview; I guess Maria had forgotten to tell him. I just didn't like looking at his chest hairs and red skin; they were distracting and annoying. I don't know why. Men of my generation—especially those dealing with celebrities—wouldn't "get down" like this. The heavy gold frames of his sunglasses bothered me too; he had the look of someone excessively swept up in the Southern California life-style—a response I'd commonly seen in those with a restrictive upbringing. He had a German accent, which I couldn't connect to his last name. I wondered if he was hiding something. He was an irritating role-player, but I answered all his questions anyway; it was business. He understood the agency would have to look over the interview once his article was drafted. He asked me about favorite directors, favorite scenes, memorable moments on the old lots, actresses I'd liked and hated, wives and divorces, more wives and divorces.

"You understand," he said. "I *have* to ask these questions. You know—the 'reading' public."

"Understand," I said. I lied my way through it, and had no qualms. Could anyone think I would really risk the truth of my work, on some phony interviewer-hack like Andrews? And for some magazines to be stacked at the checkout counters of a Safeway store?

But when it was over, I was exhausted. I must

have felt some stress through it all. I needed my car right away, with the top down and the wind in my face.

Andrews offered to buy me a drink, which I declined, and he called out to the concierge to bring the car around. I shook Andrews' hand, smiled briefly and walked out onto the pavement, leaving him to put his notes together. It was still sunny, but a low fog was beginning to chill the air. I loosened my tie and released a breath of air.

I needed a drink and dinner. I got into the black El Dorado and motored the top down. I drove up the hill to The Ram and the Angels, a sumptuous, old restaurant with a view of the LA basin, shaded by oak trees, covered in stucco and wrapped in hibiscus and birds of paradise. A valet took my car and smiled as he drove off to the walled parking area behind the building. I entered below the awning. An aging host in a white, gold-buttoned tunic opened the door for me, greeting me with, "Good evening, Mr. Gage!" He wasn't too loud and I appreciated his discretion; I was too fatigued for public attention.

I hadn't realized it was getting to be evening. I smiled at him and glanced back at the Pacific sun becoming enveloped in a reddish-purple haze. The host was right. It *was* evening.

I passed through the dining room where no one was sitting, and went to the bar. There was a small group of well-dressed men and women laughing and guffawing at something that had just been said. While I envied their joy, I didn't want to inquire. They looked like a business or legal team. Perhaps they had just landed a sale or a major client. Their eyes turned on me and they grew silent.

(continued)

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)

Black and White (continued)

They smiled without comment and I smiled back briefly. They seemed to understand I didn't want company. They began to whisper. I slipped into an alcove adjacent to the bar, where it was dark and quiet. I heard the footsteps of the other guests as they were leaving. I took a seat in an overstuffed arm chair next to a little table and an antique lamp. A young waiter in a green service jacket with brass buttons walked in and asked for my order. I asked for a gin and tonic, and he returned in a few minutes.

"Thank you," I said, feeling relaxed at last. "Could you put some music on?"

"Sure," he smiled. "What would you like to hear?"

"Oh, how about some Dean Martin or Mel Torme, or someone sultry like Julie London—well, you pick it!"

"Sure," he said, and left the alcove.

There was a delay; the kid probably didn't understand who I was talking about. I rested my head back on the wingback chair but worried about falling asleep. I raised it again, and watched a woman in a green sequined dress as she stepped up to the bar. Her hair was red and her skin pink and robust against the glittering cocktail dress she was wearing. Except for her black high-heeled shoes, she was all color. She ordered a red vermouth with lemon and ice and began to sip at the edge of her glass. She glanced to her left and I seem to have caught her attention.

"Hi!" she called.

"Hi, back!" I responded and smiled.

"I know you," she said.

"I don't recall," I said.

"You...you've been in a lot of movies!" she said.

"A few," I responded sheepishly.

"May I come over?" she asked.

"That's all right; I'll come and see you." I got up from my chair, picked up my topcoat and walked over to her. "Waiting for someone?" I asked.

"I thought I had a ride to Malibu, but he seems to have disappeared."

"That's too bad. I'd take you there, but I've had a long day."

"That's OK. Something will come up."

"So you've seen my movies?" I asked.

"All of them," she said.

"Thank you," I responded. "I appreciate that. I was blessed with some great directors and colleagues."

"Don't be so modest. Everyone knows your face and voice."

"Look, I'm getting tired. Would you like to come to my place? I have a very nice little townhome with a pool and extra beds. The pool has nice tropical plants around it, and we could sit near the water and have breakfast in the morning. I could send out for it. Eggs, crepes and brandy. If you need a few things we can pick them up on the way."

"Oh, no I couldn't. I...my...friend's looking to pick me up. I'm sure he's been held up in traffic somewhere."

(continued)

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)

Black and White (continued)

"It might be good for you—for your career I mean, to be seen with me."

"Oh, no I couldn't. It's...you know...we're different. How did you know I was an actress?"

"Different? You mean our ages, is that what you're talking about?"

"Well, in a sense. You know, it's the color thing. People will talk."

"Color?"

"Black and white. You know what I'm talking about."

I looked down at my hands, feeling a sting from her point. My fingers were silvery, my nails papery white like onion skin. My jacket black. My shirt so white. I looked up at her, her skin flush with red, her green sequined cocktail dress, her red hair dangling in ringlets, lying flush with life against her glowing skin. She smiled a bit and pulled a cigarette out of her purple-beaded pocket purse. I pulled a lighter off the table and pulled down on the flint wheel; the white flame stretched out hot and I held it against the tip of her cigarette; then she pulled on my hand and the flame turned orange. She released it and it

became white again in my hand. The scent of gas filled my nostrils. Everything about me was black and white. I was old movies, old attire and old music.

A horn blared rudely from the parking lot. She looked up as though she recognized a familiar voice. "I think that's my ride," she said.

"Let me walk you to the door," I said. "Maybe sometime I can see you again?"

"Yes, maybe."

"I'll try to color myself up a bit," I offered, smiling. I pushed open the door to a glaring sunset over the marine clouds covering the Pacific.

"There he is," she said looking out at a silver Mercedes with a high grill cage topped by a circular star. "That's my ride."

The driver stepped out of the car and pulled open her door. She smiled, and called, "Bye for now!"

I recognized the driver, round-faced with thick strawberry hair; it was Andrews. He had parked right next to my black El Dorado.

It looked like a hearse.

**WISHING YOU A HAPPY,
PROSPEROUS & PEACEFUL
2020 NEW YEAR!**