



**HAPPY 2020 New Year!**

# **Ink Spots**



**The Newsletter of the Fremont Area Writers**

***The "Centennial" Branch of the California Writers Club***

Nancy Guarnera Editor-in-Chief

**Vol. 93 January 2020**

[inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org)

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



## ***January 2020's Speaker***

### **THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN PHYSICS & POETRY**

***Submitted by Knuti VanHoven***

On Saturday, January 25th at 2:00 p.m. Fremont Area Writers will kick off this decade by hosting a unique talent. Her name is Lisa Rosenberg and you'll find her work squarely on the intersection of Technology and Poetry, a place very few have visited, much less taken over as their personal domain, but then, few have her qualifications.

Rosenberg holds degrees in both physics and creative writing. While she's worked as an engineer in the Space Program and flown as a private pilot, she's also been widely published in poetry anthologies. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University, she served as the 2017-2018 Poet Laureate of San Mateo County and authored *A Different Physics*, winner of the 2017 Red Mountain Poetry Prize.

Now, along with her creative work she speaks, consults and instructs in multi-disciplinary settings. Lisa focuses on the commonality between the arts and science, as well as the constant interaction between humanity, nature and technology. She recently earned a 2020 Djerassi Residency for Scientist-Artists.

This Fremont Area Writers event is free and open to anyone who's interested in writing, be they beginners or professionals. It will be held at the "42 Silicon Valley" campus in room 106 at 6600 Dumbarton Circle, in Fremont. Everyone is welcome.



**Lisa Rosenberg**

**[lisarosenberg.com](http://lisarosenberg.com)**



**TERRY TOSH**  
**FAW President**

# ***President's Message***

Ah, yes, 2020!

You know, I've been longing for the day to finally arrive, when I could proudly shout out, 2020, year of VISION! Then days before the opportunity is finally upon me, I have a revelation.

Hey, it's not necessarily about VISION, unless it's IN FOCUS!

Uh, huh. Good point, I reply to myself. Without focus, vision is unclear and distorted.

So my new battle cry for 2020 is...GET FOCUSED!

This year, let's make a focused effort to move forward with our projects, whether they be lofty or modest. Whether you want

to fly upward, or toddle forward, any positive steps in the right direction represent progress. If you have been stuck in a rut, or just bogged down due to over commitment, or just not in the groove, it's a good year to step it up and accomplish something.

We've got a ton of talent in our pool, and a plethora of knowledge from past speakers and presentations, and some very exciting new speakers scheduled for the coming year. Check out some of the great resources online through our **CWC-fremontareawriters.org** website. Sign up to read at the Third Saturday Literary Open Mic at Starbucks, or share your work at the Fourth Monday Writers' Salon. If you've published a book or books, put your name on the schedule to read and sell your book at a Second Saturday Half Price Books event. What's stopping you?

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and got some well-deserved rest, because the new year is upon us just waiting for all of us to step up.. I look forward to hearing about your successes and sharing in your struggles as we climb to ever greater heights in this YEAR of VISION and FOCUS.

In the words of the prophet NIKE, "***Just Do It.***"

Keep the Faith!

***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

**FOURTH MONDAY**  
WRITERS' SALON

***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" HPB &  
"Third Sunday" Open Mic  
Ink Spots Editor



**CHERILYN JOSE**  
CWC Advertising  
& Promotions



**TONY PINO**  
Fourth Monday  
Writers' salon



**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 Tish Davidson** who will be reading her nonfiction story “**Visiting the Bone Man**” at **Books Inc**, 317 Castro Street in Mountain View at 3:00 pm on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. As a winner in the 2019 Ageless Authors contest, she has been invited to participate in the Ageless Authors West Coast book tour. At the event, four local writers—Menlo Park writer Linda Boroff, Tish Davidson of Fremont, Nancy Meyer of San Francisco and Deborah LeFalle of San Jose—will read their work, sign books, answer questions, and offer writing tips. Congratulations, Tish!

**Kudos to Marjorie Johnson** on her successful “**Second Saturday**” event at **Half Price Books** in the Fremont Hub held on January 11<sup>th</sup>. She shared excerpts from her book *Bird Watcher* and regaled her audience with aircraft information and personal stories about her experiences as a small plane pilot. Congratulations, Marjorie!

**Kudos to Scott Davidson, Tish Davidson, Doris Nikolaidis, Jeff Hanson, Amber Deann, Carmen VonTickner, Dave Strom, and Nancy Guarnera** for braving the mic at FAW’s “**Third Sunday**” **Literary OPEN MIC at Starbucks** on Cedar Blvd. in Newark. In addition to these FAW members, **Luanne Oleas**, a member of the South Bay and SF Peninsula branches, **Monza Lui**, a member of the public, and Starbucks baristas **Ashley Castellon and Tony Juarez**, also read. Congratulations to you all!

## **Fremont Area Writers & Starbucks**



**Every Third Sunday of the month**

**Sign-up: 3:00 PM    Reading: 3:30 to 5:30 PM**

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!

**Starbucks in Newark**  
**39201 Cedar Blvd**

**Free & Open to the Public**  
**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

# ***A Word from Our Editor***



**Nancy Guarnera**  
**Editor-in-Chief Ink Spots**

**W**elcome to our January 2020 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 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, A Little FAW History, FAW Featured Member, FAW Writers' Corner. Some of these appear every month, some are more transitory.

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 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday meeting.

Send submissions to [inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org). Please put **your name** and **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 15<sup>th</sup> of each month (*excluding July*) and is available on the FAW website [cwcfremontareawriters.org](http://cwcfremontareawriters.org). If you have not received a copy of the newsletter by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, and you've checked your SPAM/JUNK folder and it's not there, contact me at [inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org](mailto: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.

Thank you to Erika Walker and Janet Salinas for volunteering to help with the newsletter and various other tasks.

*Enjoy this month's issue—Happy New Year! 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





**Sue Curtzwiler**  
**Volunteer Coordinator**

## FINDING the TREASURE

Dense gray smoke from the Carr fire in Northern California (August 2018) clung to the dry, brown foothills from Dublin to Livermore, flowed over the Sunol grade, and circled around the entire Bay Area. My nephew, Eric and his son Drake were helping me empty a storage unit. There we were, every afternoon after my part time job, struggling with the summer heat and that awful smoke. It made it hard to breathe and our eyes watered just enough to be annoying. We were miserable; but it needed to be done.

We pressed on. I sat in my Director's Chair, a green canvas camping chair with an attached folding side table, and together, we sorted through years of forgotten treasures and memories. What should we do? Garbage, donation, or take to the house to decide later—together decisions were made. We sorted through clothes, shoes, belts, purses, handmade curtains, greeting cards, and magazines from the 70's.

Almost a treasure, those magazines were quite a find: part of economic history. We took a break and browsed through them, amazed to see how low the prices were for everything: TVs, groceries, and gas for our beloved big cars. Remember when gas was \$0.50/gallon and someone else pumped it for you.

*Aha, we finally found the treasure!*

In one memorable moment, we found my old square dance clothes. They'd seen better days, but when put to good use... Watching Drake, who likes theater, and his dad dancing around in my brown and white polka-dotted dress with a fluffy white underskirt—that was *the comic relief moment* we all desperately needed. *The real treasure!*



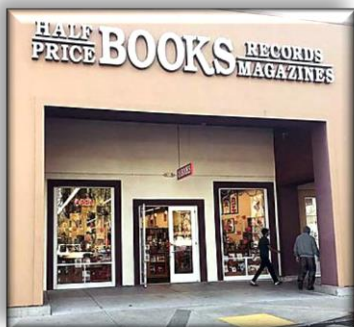
Of course, it wasn't going to be something of monetary value stuffed in an old purse, or between magazine pages. It was that priceless moment of three generations playing and laughing together while working through the dreadful task of clearing out a storage unit with the heat and the smoky haze from one of California's worst fires on record. In spite of the circumstances, we were still able to find joy in the moment. In that precious space, where the memories of the past joined the antics of the present to create new memories for the future, we found our treasure.

With 2020 now in full swing, perhaps new resolutions in progress, and Spring cleaning just around the corner, where will you find your treasure in this new year? No matter what's happening in life, enjoy and embrace your *Aha, Oh My Gosh moment!*

*Sue Curtzwiler*

# 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 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: [faw-hpb@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:faw-hpb@cw-c-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**  
**Doris Nikolaidis**

**April 11**  
**TBD**

## "Meet Your Local FAW Author" for February 2020

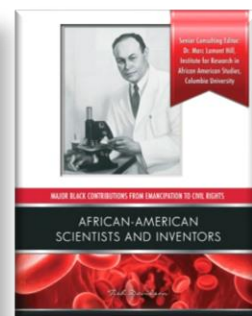
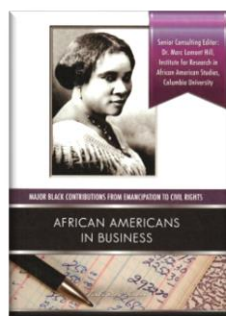
**Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> 2 – 4 P.M. Half Price Books in the Fremont Hub**



**Tish  
Davidson**

Join FAW author Tish Davidson as she shares two of her 14 traditionally-published books: *African-American Scientists and Inventors* and *African Americans in Business*. Covering emancipation to the civil rights era, these books highlight Americans and their contributions that often go largely ignored in our history books.

These books are appropriate for school age children and adults. Celebrate Black History month by learning about the many unsung Americans who have made contributions that have made our everyday-lives easier, safer and more efficient.



**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**



# FAW—HPB “Second Saturday”

January’s “Meet Your Local FAW Authors”

## Marjorie Johnson

Author — Pilot  
Shares *Bird Watcher*

Marjorie Johnson kicked off the FAW “Second Saturday” 2020 series at Half Price Books on Saturday, January 11. Once again she entertained her Half Price Books audience with personal experiences that brought greater meaning to the events in her book *Bird Watcher*, a story about a small plane thief.

A trained pilot, Marjorie shared a variety of experiences—from how to start a plane when you don’t have the keys (helpful if you want to steal a plane, or have lost or misplaced your keys) to how to crash land your Cessna on a golf course and survive the event.

She brought pictures of the types of planes that make appearances in her book and gave the audience a “crash” course on the peculiarities of the private airports that are featured in her book; all of which she’s flown into and out of. Audience members had lots of questions, and Marjorie was happy to share her knowledge and experience with them.



Marjorie Johnson enjoys a humorous exchange with her audience at her reading at Half Price Books on Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup>.



(Above 1991) Marjorie Johnson poses with her Cessna 172 N3318E, the plane she “landed” on a golf course; the tail number is referenced in her book *Bird Watcher*. (Right 1995) the author and her friend, Cody posing with “the Mooney.”



(Above) Marjorie Johnson reads from *Bird Watcher*, wearing her “I AM ONE OF THE 6%” button. Only 6% of small plane pilots are women.

# Notes from the World

## 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**.

**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**

## 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 29, 2020. (UPDATED)**

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.

Tish Davidson won second prize and \$75 in the nonfiction category last year.

**Remember: Don't waste your submission fee—follow the entry directions exactly.**

**Submitted by Tish Davidson**

## 2020 CWC Literary Review Open Submissions

Open to current members of CWC  
Submissions accepted from  
December 15, 2019 — February 29, 2020

All work reviewed and selected  
for possible publication by a panel of  
acquisition editors through a blind  
judging process. Members will be  
notified by email if their work has been  
selected for inclusion in the  
2020 Literary Review shortly before  
publication in autumn of 2020.



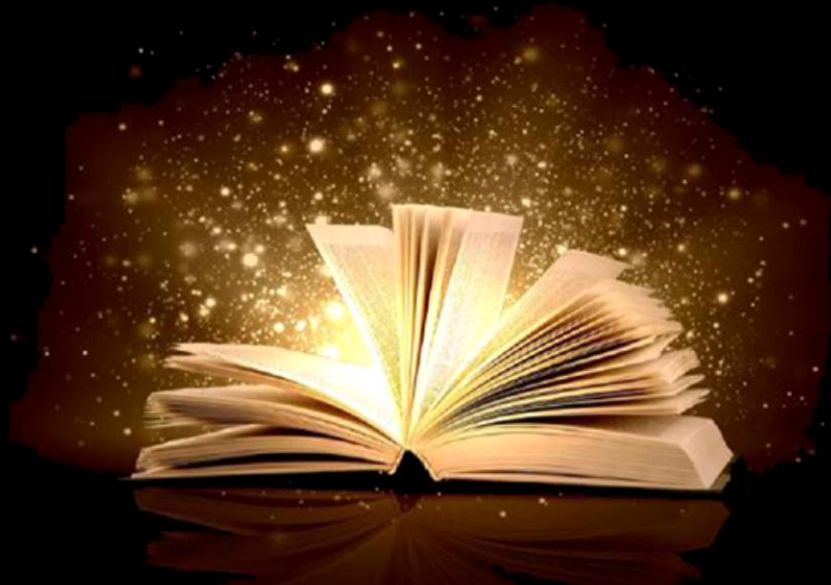
# ***Notes from the World*** (Continued)

## **WOMEN'S JOURNEYS A READERS THEATER EVENT presented by**

**CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB SF PENINSULA**

**An ensemble cast of characters and stories  
to kick off the shortest month of the year!**

**FEATURING  
Sue Barizon  
Thomas Crockett  
Audrey Kalman  
Sam Kauffman  
Lisa Meltzer Penn  
Korie Pelka  
Lisa Rosenberg**



**7:30PM on Monday, February 3, 2020  
(Doors open 7:00pm)  
Dragon Theatre  
2120 Broadway, Redwood City**

*tickets at [dragonproductions.net](http://dragonproductions.net) or at door*



# *Notes from the World* (Continued)



*Celebrate Women!*

National League of American Pen Women  
Diablo-Alameda Branch

January 17 - March 6, 2020

Reception: January 24, 5:30 - 7:30pm



HAYWARD  
*Arts*  
COUNCIL  
**JOHN O'LAGUE  
GALLERIA**  
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN - NLAPW  
Diablo-Alameda Branch

Hayward Arts Council  
PO Box 126  
Hayward, CA 94543  
510.538.2787  
[www.haywardartscouncil.org](http://www.haywardartscouncil.org)  
[hac@haywardartscouncil.org](mailto:hac@haywardartscouncil.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
HAYWARD, CA  
PERMIT No. 3205  
Return Service Requested

*Celebrate Women!*

*A collaboration of Artists, Musicians & Writers*

**Guest of honor: Nancy O'Malley**  
**Alameda County District Attorney**

**January 17 - March 6, 2020**  
**Reception: January 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 - 7:30pm**  
Refreshments      Free event

**John O'Lague Galleria**  
**777 B St, Hayward City Hall**  
Gallery hours: Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm

Art: Natica Angilly, Usha Shukla, Ann Maloney-Mason,  
Winifred Thompson, Charlotte Severin, Kazumi Cranney,  
Elizabeth Hack, Ruey Syrop

NLAPW, founded in 1897, has 81 branches where 1600+  
artists, writers, and composers meet for support and  
inspiration.



The Hayward Arts Council is a 501c3 non-profit  
organization sponsored in part by City of Hayward,  
Alameda County Arts Commission and its  
members.





## ***Notes from the World*** (Continued)

### **The League of Women Voters**

**Fremont - Newark - Union City**

**The League Invites You to Celebrate Its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

**with the sensational movie**

## **Iron Jawed Angels**

**Starring**

**Hilary Swank, Frances O'Connor, Julia Ormond,  
and Angelica Huston**

*Two auspicious occasions come together:  
100 Years of the League's dedication to the community and  
a century since the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving all women  
in the U.S. the right to vote.*

To commemorate these great and historic events,  
please join the League for a very special afternoon.

**Date: Sunday, January 26, 2020 Time: 4:00 pm**

**Venue: Edison Theater, 37417 Niles Blvd., Fremont**

Iron Jawed Angels tells the story of Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, suffragette activists who fought ferociously to help win the vote for women in 1920.

**RSVP: List your name, email, and any guests and send to:**  
nilesmuse@yahoo.com.

Please use "Iron Jawed Angels" in the subject line

**The movie is free of charge.**

***WARNING: There are a few scenes in the film that are not suitable  
for young children.***

# *Notes from the World* (Continued)

## Writers of Kern Annual Spring Conference March 28, 2020 ~ 8am-4pm



**Adam Richardson**, Police detective,  
author, consultant to writers and  
screenwriters.  
*"Interviewing Like a Detective"*



**Dennis Palumbo**, Hollywood TV and  
Film writer, psychotherapist, suspense  
author.  
*"Writing From the Inside Out"*



**Jerry Mathes**, Award-winning  
author, photographer, book critic, and  
librettist.  
*"Writing Life"*



**Keith Silvas**, Sci-Fi/Fantasy author,  
social media marketing specialist  
*"Social Media Marketing for  
Authors"*



**Early Bird Registration ~ NOW through February 15, 2020**

**\$65 WOK & CWC, \$75 Non-Members, \$25 Full-time Students with ID**

***After February 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Registration: \$95. Full-time Students w/ID, \$25***

**Includes Continental Breakfast, Snacks, Lunch, plus  
a full day of encouraging speakers and much, much more!!!**

**In Hodel's Kern Room, on Knudsen Drive, Bakersfield, CA**

**For more information and to register:**

<https://writersofkern.com/2019/11/17/28-march-2020-wok-spring-conference/>



# ***FAW Changes***

## **Fourth Monday Open Mic**

is changing its name to

## **Fourth Monday Writers' Salon**

**SAME TIME  
SAME PLACE**

(see page 2 for details)

# **FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER**

## **Death By Cruise**

**by Evelyn LaTorre**

**(Read at the FAW Literary Open Mic at Starbucks)**

**"Italian Cruise Ship with 4200 Aboard Capsizes Off Italian Coast,"** shouted the headlines on every TV, radio and newspaper on Saturday morning, January 14, 2012.

*Oh those poor people,* I thought as I watched the first cell phone pictures of passengers wrapped in beige blankets and orange life jackets struggle in the dark to leave the sinking Costa Concordia. *How frightening to be eating dinner and suddenly have your food slide to the floor because your ship is tipping over because it crashed onto a rocky reef.*

I empathized, even though I'd only been on a couple of cruises.

At first, no one on board seemed to be aware of the danger they were in. Pictures shot from the shore showed the ship on its side taking on water. Then came videos of the dark hallways crowded with the masses more panicked, waiting to exit. I could hear children crying. Most were uncertain how to escape—except the captain, as it turned out. He later said he "fell" into a lifeboat which then rowed away. By the end of the next day, most everyone had abandoned the ship by either jumping into the water and swimming to shore, carefully climbing down the ship's slanting side, or by making it onto a lifeboat. I was relieved for them, and filed the disaster in the back of my mind.

Until I saw the next headline caught my attention: *"American Couple from Minnesota missing on Italian Cruise Liner."* Reports gave the number of Americans on the Costa Concordia and said that all but two had gotten off safely. *Do they report that because*

*American lives are more precious than any other nationality?* The U.S. media always distinguishes between Americans and all others, as if there are only two types of people on earth: Americans and less important others. However, the information re-kindled my interest in the accident.

On Sunday morning I was reading an email from my cousin Jan in Minnesota when a photograph of her sister, Barbara Ann and Barbara's husband, Jerry, flashed across the TV screen.

"My God, that's my first cousin they say is missing!" I said aloud.

My next thought was, "What an awful photo of her. Couldn't her children have found one that showed her with hair?"

Jan's email verified the report: my cousin Barbara and her husband were the two Americans missing from the Costa Concordia.

The story became personal and moved to the front of my mind. I needed to know everything. I Googled "Italian cruise ship," and saw my cousin's name on fifteen news stories. I wrote Jan to say I hoped they'd be found soon.

I found the photograph of Barb's fifteen young grandchildren that she had mailed to me just weeks before in her yearly Christmas letter. 2004's photo showed two one new little faces added since the previous Christmas. In her letter, she described the countless communions, recitals, and swim meets she'd attended. *Who would take*

## **FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Death By Cruise** by Evelyn LaTorre (continued)

*her place at her grandkids' soccer, baseball, and basketball games if she were gone?*

On my Facebook page I posted one of the news articles I'd found. I hoped someone might respond who had seen Barb and Jerry in a video or encountered them getting off the ship.

Jan was now in Italy with two of Barb's four children, Sarah and John. Jan saw my FB post and asked me to take it down right away. They were trying to control media stories about the family, which was extremely difficult and stressful. My publicizing information wouldn't help, she said. I did.

Barb and Jerry had adopted a Korean orphan over thirty years ago, named her Sarah, and made her part of their family. I heard Sarah interviewed on public radio. She said that her parents had worked hard all their lives to give their children private school educations all through college and were just now spending money on themselves. Barb and Jerry had recently retired and this Mediterranean cruise was their trip of a lifetime. A family blog started on January 17; I went to it hourly hoping for good news.

I kept imagining Barb and Jerry stuck in their cabin like the Korean couple who had just been found. But there was no news of my cousin and her husband.

Maybe they stayed on the ship because they couldn't swim, or they helped others get to safety before saving themselves. That would be so like them. All her life Barb had cared for others. She helped a son cope with Crohn's disease, nursed her husband through several back surgeries, and made and delivered food to homeless shelters. These were just a few of the activities I knew about from my cousin's letters. Barb had also survived pancreatic

cancer and a hip replacement. Maybe, just maybe, she had survived this disaster too.

Barbara Ann had not been a major part of my life since childhood. Still, I felt close to her. After my parents moved us to California when I was sixteen, I'd seen Barb twice: once, when she was on her way to teach native children at a missionary school in northern Alaska, and again, in 2005 when my husband and I visited her and her two sisters in Minnesota. I had warm memories of Barbara.

Our fathers were brothers who both had three same-aged girls and who visited one another with their families every few months. We lived in eastern Montana and Barb's family lived three hours away on a farm in western North Dakota. As soon as we arrived at my cousins' place, my two sisters and I headed off with Barb and her two sisters to their playhouse. For hours, we made green salads out of weeds and hamburgers out of thick gray North Dakota mud. When we tired of making pretend food and dressing our dolls, we would ride the ponies, chase the sheep, or gather the eggs from the hen house. When it was time for real salad and hamburgers, made from their farm produce we ate at the picnic table in the tree-lined windbreak. After home churned ice cream for dessert, it was time to head back to Montana in time to milk the cows. I hated to leave.

Two weeks after the Costa Concordia accident, Jan reported that a man on the Costa Concordia had filmed Barb and Jerry in orange safety vests waiting on the tilting ship to be rescued. But there was no sign of them among the surviving 3,206 passengers and 1,023-crew. When I saw Sarah and John on CBS-TV in the prow of a boat placing daisies in the sea for their mother and white roses for their father, I knew we had to presume Barbara



## ***FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER*** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Death By Cruise** *by Evelyn LaTorre (continued)*

and Jerry had drowned.

Jan wrote that Hillary Clinton had called Sarah with condolences. A more attractive photo of Barb was finally displayed on television. The online Family Update blog had satisfied the hungry media, and it moved on to other disasters.

The prayers of caring friends and relatives continued on to a memorial service for the Minnesota couple. I didn't attend the services, though hundreds did. Jan reported that Barb's strict instructions of "no bagpipes" at her funeral were honored.

And...I no longer go on cruises.



### **Weather**

Storm clouds surge above  
Dark dappled rain-stained faces  
Sun peeks out — rainbows

*Nancy Guarnera*

