





TERRY TOSH
FAW President

President's Message

A big "Thank You!" shout-out to all of you who helped out in my absence from the August general zoom meeting.

I am feeling much better after a somewhat lengthy battle with the pesky summer cold that's been hanging around.

Between the lockdown, the smoke from the multiple fires surrounding the area and an annoying cough, it seems like a non-stop battle accomplishing anything except naps.

As this "new reality" of pandemic living continues to drag on and on, it becomes increasingly difficult to feel any new sense of accomplishment, and to find new material to impart that doesn't reek of rehashed "SIP" Notes!

We are likely not going to have an opportunity to meet together anytime throughout the remainder of the year, and who can say at this point when it will even work out to do so moving into 2021?

My admonition for this month will be for all of us to do our best to continue to grow and stretch our personal knowledge and to explore new paths that may not have presented themselves to our consciousness in the past, but that now are pushing up through the hard-packed soil of our untapped resources of creativity.

Use the ongoing "downtime" to concentrate on potentially new avenues of thought that may blossom into new ways of reaching future success and fulfillment.

Got a long-forgotten dream relegated to the back burner due to an overabundance of duties and activities? Dig it out and let it see the light of this new day.

Use our website and the other resources we have available through our CWC family statewide. We are a big family with a rich history of success and accomplishment that plays "second fiddle" to no other group worldwide!

Take advantage of this network and let's challenge each other to new heights and depths as we move forward together in our brave new world!

I look forward to hearing your tales of discovery and success in future "shout-outs," or if you feel so inclined, send out a SIP Note to the group about what you are doing and how you are getting there.

Let's do this!

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 Blvd
Fremont

THIRD SUNDAY

Literary OPEN MIC

Third Sundays

Sign-up 3:00 PM

Reading 4:00 – 5:30 PM
Stacks
39201 Cedar Blvd
Newark

FOURTH MONDAY

WRITERS' SALON

Fourth Mondays

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Slap Face Coffee & Tea
Meeting Room
37324 Fremont Blvd
Fremont

MEMBERSHIP

MEETINGS

Fourth Saturdays

General: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

42 Silicon Valley Pk 106
6600 Dutton Circle
Fremont

**CANCELED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE**

Zoom

Zoom

FAW Board Members



TERRY TOSH
President



KNUTI VANHOVEN
Vice President



REKHA RAMANI
Secretary



CHERYLYN CHIN
Treasurer



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

BOARD MEETINGS
3:30 to 5:00 PM
Tuesday before the Fourth Saturday
Membership Meetings
on ZOOM

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 CHIN
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 has been asked to do an interview for **NHK TV**, the largest public network in Japan. They have commissioned a documentary program, *Science Histories*, featuring notable events and people in science. Past episodes have featured “Marie Curie,” the “Manhattan Project,” and similar topics. The interview tapes in October for a program about Hideyo Noguchi, a controversial Japanese bacteriologist who worked on a failed vaccine. Tish mentioned him in her book *Vaccines: History, Science and Issues*, which is how NHK found her. **Congratulations, Tish!**

KUDOS to Evelyn La Torre, who launched her first book, a memoir, *Between Inca Walls, A Peace Corps Memoir* on Zoom on August 19. Since then, a full-page article about the book appeared in the August 18th issue of *Tri-City Voice* (page 29), and she has been interviewed on podcasts such as Pip and the City (London), BITE radio, Big Blend radio, and Apple Delivered. Future hour-long interviews have been scheduled with Linda Joy Myers of the National Association of Memoir Writers (NAMW.org) for October 8, and Dropping In with Diane Dewey for October 23.

A recent article Evelyn wrote, “**How Living in Another Country Prepared Me for the Pandemic**,” is in the current edition of *Conscious Connection Magazine*. She also has interviews in magazines such as *Spiritual Magazine* and *Fabulous after Fifty*.

If you missed Evelyn's launch, here's a link to the Aug. 19th event <https://youtu.be/PXpfOzfG0BA>. **Congratulations, Evelyn!**

Welcome to THE PROMPT PALACE

Here we go again . . . another opportunity for writers to help writers write.

Anyone can suggest prompt ideas: put **FAW—Prompt Palace—Prompt** in the subject line of your email and send it to: inkspots@cw-cfremontareawriters.org. We'll add it to the list. If you use one of **The Prompt Palace** prompts, and you'd like to share your work with the rest of us, put **FAW—Prompt Palace—Submission** in the subject line of your email and send it to: inkspots@cw-cfremontareawriters.org, and we'll publish it in the **Writer's Corner**.

Tunnel Vision Falling ...in ...out ...off ...etc. What will FAW look like in 2021?

I am so grateful that... Silver Linings Life in the time of a global pandemic

A walk in the woods Are humans *really* smarter than animals? Skin Deep

What was that noise? When I Was Young... I wish I could...

A Word from Our Editor



Nancy Guarnera
Editor-in-Chief Ink Spots

Welcome to our September 2020 issue of *Ink Spots*.

There has been discussion amongst the Presidents and Editors of many of the CWC branches about encouraging members to join meetings and events of other branches on Zoom. FAW is in the process of arranging to have newsletters and links to branch websites posted on our website to make these opportunities easily available to you. Keep an eye on your email; we'll update you soon on the availability of this information on the FAW website. Of course, we will also send the other CWC branches links to our website as well, so they can join our zoom meetings if they wish. Remember, you can also go to the CWC website calwriters.org and visit various branch websites from there as well.

Our **General Meeting on Zoom** will be on September 26th from 2:00 to 4:00 PM watch for an invitation from Scott Davidson. Our featured speaker will be Attorney, Kelley A. Way on estate planning for writers.

The "Fourth Monday" Writers' Salon is continuing to meet and will be on Zoom on September 28th from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Check with Tony Pino before the next meeting for an invitation, if you aren't already

on his contact list and would like to attend. Contact info for him is on **page 14**. This is open to your writer friends, as well, so let them know about this valuable opportunity to share their work.

We will continue to publish Ink Spots for you as always. You should be receiving your **Weekly SIP NOTES** on Mondays. If you decide to send us a **SIP NOTE**, please send it to nguarnera16@comcast.net. Please put **FAW SIP NOTE Submission** and **your name** in the **subject field**. Thanks to those of you who have already submitted!

The next installment of "Tell Me A Story" starts on **page 17** of this issue, and look for it in your email (inbox & spam) almost every Wednesday. We hope you're enjoying the story.

Remember, send your creative work for the **Writers' Corner**; your shout outs for **KUDOS**; and your prompt suggestions for **The Prompt Palace** (our new feature, to help stimulate ideas for your writing—see **page 5**), to the newsletter email address inkspots@cwc-fremontareawriters.org for publication in *Ink Spots*.

Stay safe, healthy and happy!

Nancy

Submission Guidelines

Please send all submissions for *Ink Spots* to inkspots@cwc-fremontareawriters.org by **October 1st for the October issue**. Remember to put **FAW Ink Spots Submission** and **Your Name** in the **Subject field** of your email. Thank you for sharing your writing with the rest of us!

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

On or before the **First Day of the Publication Month** (e.g. October 1st for the October issue, etc.)
Please submit as attachments, rather than in the body of your email.

WORD COUNT:

Feature articles (Presidents Message, The Spark, features, etc.): **350 - 400 words max.**
Creative Submissions: **1,000 words max.** (unless you are willing to have longer pieces serialized)
Weekly SIP NOTES: **350 - 400 words max.** **Kudos:** **75-100 words max.**

FORMAT: Text – Word.doc/docx in Arial 12 pt. **Photos** – JPEG

Please **DO NOT** use special formatting. **ONLY** use the return key at the end of each paragraph.
Please don't double space between sentences. Thanks!

Your Weekly SIP NOTES

WEEK #18 AUGUST 3RD TERRY TOSH

President's Message AUG 2020

So, anyway...

Ever feel like you might just be a character in a badly written comedy/drama/tragedy, in which the author couldn't come up with a nice wrap-up, and kept erasing and rewriting the chapter you are currently stuck in? Just wondered...

I am so grateful for our phenomenal Nancy Guarnera for her unwavering dedication and talent. She single-handedly kept the fires of inspiration burning while I chilled out, enjoying the summer break and feasting on the fruits of her labor as we devoured the weekly SIP Notes, TMAS teasers, and the latest edition of *Ink Spots!* (Normally, we don't publish a newsletter in July.) On behalf of the entire membership, I offer a hearty *Thank You, Nancy!*

It was weird not having our picnic this year, but par for the course, in this year of weirdness gone wild. I read that some groups had virtual picnics, and gave it a very short thought...then decided no, it just wouldn't be the same.

I trust that everyone stayed safe and healthy during this past month, and those of us that work essential jobs are keeping to the safety protocols as strictly as possible.

Now, back to business as (un)usual. Let's continue to be "writers helping writers" in as much capacity as possible. Please renew your membership if not already done, as we need to maintain the numbers needed to qualify as a branch, as well as attempt to grow in this tough environment. Our board meeting will continue to be zoomed on the Tuesday afternoon (3:30-5:00 PM) immediately prior to the 4th Saturday General Meeting (2:00-4:00 PM), which appears to still be destined to be zoomed, as well.

Please do your best to attend our meetings as appropriate. We need your talent and interaction to achieve success as an integral part of the CWC body of writers and contributors to this creative and potentially lucrative field that we have chosen to pursue.

Here's to a healthy and productive month for all of you, and your families; I hope to "see" you all soon.

Terry

WEEK #19 AUG 10TH KNUTI VANHOVEN

Dear fellow inmates:

It seems that Life is changing to accommodate the CORONA 19 lockdown.

I sing with three big bands, plus as a church soloist. When this started, ALL of the gigs I had scheduled for 2020 were cancelled, including New Year's Eve, which is usually our biggest night.

For two months, without rehearsals or performances to go to, I wrote a lot more than I usually have time to. I even sorted my house! And to my husband's dismay...I cooked!

Then, the churches started calling again! Weirdly, they wanted me to sing on Zoom (which I discovered, was like Skype, but I didn't know how to operate that, either.)

The choir that my husband sings in began rehearsing together, then they'd each record their individual voice parts and email them to the "techie" who mixed them into a seventeen-piece performance—and it sounded very good!

My niece called and announced that she was completely daunted by the fact that she had to learn to do her job by Zoom. She took time off for stress, but she learned it. She's still employed.

My neighbors, who had the option of working at home, joined her unhappily. The "essential workers" I know expressed gratitude for the people who stayed home and lessened their exposure levels.

One by one, people I knew began to talk about visiting friends and relatives and attending performances by Zoom. My bargain hunting pals are bragging about finding deals among the price gougers on Amazon.

So, life is going on, even while pals who used to hug me, can only smile and wave from their cars.

Folks on my street are surviving, and even having fun in this "new normal." It's like living in a spaceship that's eerily reminiscent of my own living room. It's the same, yet very, very different.

Even so, the view of the stars outside my window hasn't changed. And many nights, because of the lower pollution levels we've achieved, they look clearer and brighter than before.

Knuti

More Weekly SIP NOTES

WEEK #20 AUG 18TH NANCY GUARNERA

My Dear Fremont Area Writers,

I hope that you and those you love are safe, healthy and happy.

Well, here we are in mid-August and things seem to be getting worse, not better. Not sure about the rest of you, but I'm recognizing signs of pandemic fatigue in myself and others. It seems like one piece of discouraging news after another. So many people, in so many places, for so many reasons are hurting...people we know...people we don't know and never will. It looks and feels like the whole world is falling apart. It seems like there's not much we can do to make things better. There's a helplessness that takes over, and drives away hope.

This is not meant to make you feel discouraged or weak or bad; just an acknowledgement of what some of you may be feeling right now, or observing in others. Even though we may not realize it when we see it or experience it, there are signs.

When things get so big that I can't see beyond them, the time has come to look to the light that's always there...within me. It's time to refocus my attention and to lift myself and others out of the doldrums. It's time to shake off the unnecessary isolation, and reconnect.

An 80 year-old friend, who I thought was being cared for by others, called me a few days ago in distress. We had talked the week before and he seemed in good spirits, even though he'd had surgery on his leg earlier in the week. Now he was in tears and disoriented. He's on several new meds that are affecting him in ways that are frightening to him. It's been hot, he has no AC, and he'd gotten dehydrated. My husband, Robert, and I came to the rescue...got him some water and his favorite diet Snapple. We've since talked to a few of his other friends, and together we're working out a plan that will keep him in the supplies he needs and provides the human contact that is vital for someone who lives alone in the age of COVID-19; especially, one of our venerated elders. It was a wake-up call for me.

Recently, I've had this feeling of being unstuck in time and place; no idea what day or time it is...and not really caring. I feel disconnected from the world as I SIP. Isolated. Wondering when, if ever, I'll be able to hug the people I love and miss. After the incident with my friend, I looked at my text threads and realized it's been months since I've been in touch with many of the people I care about. That's not like me. I am not an ostrich, but recently I've been behaving like one.

It took a friend calling in desperation to wake me up. To remind me I have a light that I can shine on everyone and that the more I do it, the better and more alive I feel. And the world is a better place for it. My friend needed help, and I was so grateful to be able to provide it—not just for his benefit, but for my own, as well.

I started these notes, so that “even though we couldn't be together socially, we could be together emotionally” (Thank you, Kamala Harris, for these words back in April). So today, I want to remind all of us that almost nothing thrives when neglected. Life goes on whether we're paying attention or not...and it can change in a heartbeat. Sheltering in place is not an excuse to disconnect from others.

While the odds may seem insurmountable at times, the light within us, shared with each other, can chase away the darkness—the fear and sadness that simultaneously drives us apart and pulls us together. While we mourn, we must also remember to celebrate. None of us can solve all these “problems” by ourselves, but united, in love, we can withstand anything; we can solve anything. We just need to make the decision to do it.

When we can't be with each other, and we can't see each other (and we can now, with Zoom and Facetime), we can still hear each other. The human voice can be an elixir of life to the soul. We need each other right now. Reach out, connect with someone you care about; it will lift their spirits and yours. Sometimes, a simple phone call is all it takes.

Stay safe, healthy and happy!

Nancy

August Speaker Recap

How to Write Romantic Subplots

presented by Kilby Blades

Guest speaker Kilby Blades began by defining terms. It's important to understand the difference between a love story and a romance. Some examples are:

Romance Novels: *The Princess Bride*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*

Love Stories: *Gone with the Wind*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Notebook*, and *The English Patient*

Understanding the difference is important when targeting your audience and marketing your work. A romance novel must have a love story that is central to the story, with the lovers facing a major obstacle together that culminates with a Happily Ever After (HEA) ending. Romance readers expect this. A love story will have a non-romantic conflict, and a big romantic sub-plot, but generally, no HEA.

Why romance...because, people love "LOVE;" Blades sites fan fiction as an example of this. A significant portion of fan fiction revolves around romantic relationships that are hinted at, but never fully developed in the original story. Fans look for romantic relationships in stories, and if they don't find them, they will often write these themselves.

Romance fans are voracious readers and consume their guilty pleasure faster than readers of any other genre...an average of 6 to 7 days per book. Romance is popular with 84% of women and 16% of men, with the largest consumers of romance between the ages of 18 and 44. To illustrate just how popular this genre is...romance novelist Nora Roberts has sold 13 books per minute for the last 20 years, according to Penguin Random House publishers. Romance makes up 31% of all fiction sales, and according to *Publisher's Weekly*, since 2000, romance has generated a billion dollars in sales each year.

The top three romance sub-genres are 1) Romantic suspense, 2) Erotic romance, and 3) Historical romance. According to Romance Writers of America, this accounts for 50% of all romance readers. Other sub-genres include contemporary, young adult, inspirational, and speculative (sci-fi, fantasy and paranormal) romance.

Once we'd covered the basics, Blades began a thorough explanation of her topic of how and why including romantic relationship subplots in any genre will attract romance readers to your work; and once you have them, they tend to be very loyal.

The pillars of craft: Character, Pacing, Setting, Tension, and Plot, when combined with romantic and relationship circumstances, makes most stories richer. Blades discussed the first four and noted that relationship circumstances and status are not equivalent, i.e. Status: Joe is married; Circumstance: Joe and May have been unhappily married for 30 years.

Relationship circumstance (RC) when applied to a Character lets us experience her in context, exposing flaws, likability/unlikability, and what drives her. The absence, or presence, of a partner, helps you to "show" your character's life, not just "tell" it. A character in relationship provides dimensionality.

RC assists with Pacing by creating, both shared and individual, stable routines and disrupting them. A partner becomes a point of reference for your character to explain life's rhythms and activities.

Use RC to enrich your character in her Setting. Is she a slob? Does she clean up to impress? What happens to the setting, and how your character perceives it and functions within it, if/when a lover leaves?

RC raises the stakes when you're building Tension. It's not only your character's life that's in jeopardy, but the person he loves as well. This tension can be subtle and persistent, just under the surface, or offers the opportunity of a sudden surprise.

Next up was how to craft your HEA. You start with **the status quo**: your protagonist is going about the business of living life; **insert an inciting incident**: he/she meets an intriguing stranger and can't stop thinking about them, but lies to self and the other person about why this will never work; **set up obstacles**: these are overcome through self-discovery resulting from experience; and leads to **realization**: that what is desired is possible; and allows the protagonist to attain **a new status quo**, achieving or heading in the direction of HEA.



Sue Curtzwiler
Volunteer Coordinator

Labor Day Then and Now

Shake out the traditional red and white checkered tablecloth—memorialized with chicken gravy stains from years gone by—used to set the picnic table for the fried chicken, potato salad, watermelon, and cherry punch. The night before was the hassle of cooking, taste testing, and the warm aroma of fried chicken and onions. Little Johnny yelled, “I’m hungry, can I have a chicken leg now?” Can you smell and hear the memories?

Labor Day used to be standing on the sidewalk at a local parade; then rushing home to welcome friends in to watch the collegiate Big 10 Football season and share some food. Everyone could sit on the floor, crowd close together to watch the game on a 20-inch TV. Contrast today, keep your distance, watch a 52-inch high definition TV.

Close your eyes. Think back 30 or 40 years. Oh, how different it was! You may have dreamt of a better job, *needed a job*, or a more reliable car. You might have talked about your job conditions, how you would change things, and how to get recognized for your hard work.

Open your eyes. During COVID-19, Labor Day and all holidays in 2020 are events we’ll never forget. A couple of weeks ago, your Labor Day party most likely was in your back yard and living room to watch a game without a filled stadium. You kept your distance and did not pass the snack bowl. Maybe you even wore a mask. *Many people still need a job and are repairing their old cars!*

STOP! There’s a presidential election just weeks away. The age-old question, should you wait and see who will run this great USA? Change now?

Chances are for *this moment* in 2020, just as 30 or 40 years ago, while you dreamt your dreams, you realized *you’re content* to enjoy each day as it comes. Stay close to your family, don’t burn your bridges, and be flexible. A new door will open with opportunities you can’t imagine.

Contact Sue Curtzwiler at smcurtzwiler@comcast.net to discuss volunteering opportunities.
(Please put FAW in the subject line.)

Sue Curtzwiler

Notes from the World

Two Not-So-New Contests

The **35th Annual Tennessee Williams & New Orleans Literary Festival** is seeking submissions of original *Fiction, Short Fiction, Poetry, and One-Act plays* for our 2020-2021 Writing Contest. This contest is open to U.S. and international submissions. Prizes are awarded for the winning submission, as well as for the top finalists in each category. Fiction and One-Act Play deadline is **October 1, 2020**. Poetry and Very Short Fiction deadline is **October 15, 2020**. For complete guidelines and submission details, please see our website:

tennesseewilliams.net/contests/

Saints and Sinners, our LGBTQ Literary Festival, also has an annual Fiction Contest. Deadline for submissions is **October 1, 2020**. More information can be found on our website:

sasfest.org/#contest

Follow us @TWFestNOLA & @sasfest on social media.

Call for Romance Submissions

Belonging Books, a new, inclusive, feminist publishing house, has begun accepting submissions for launch in June. Submissions can be of all lengths from and about minorities—people of color, people with disabilities, religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, etc.—and non-traditional romance. Mission: diversify and modernize the genre.
belongingbooksonline.wordpress.com

Two More FREE Writing Webinars

Writer Jane Cleland is offering two more **FREE** Zoom craft webinars to all writers.

Foreshadowing: A Literary Workhorse is scheduled for **Saturday, October 17**, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PDT. This webinar will cover how to use hints, innuendo and repetition to foreshadow your plot and themes (crucial), and how to avoid coincidence and contrived endings (also crucial). Foreshadowing both heightens suspense and serves as the underpinning for your plots and storyline. Sign up at janecleland.com/events

A second webinar, **Four Things I Wish I'd Known at the Start of My Writing Career**, is scheduled for **Saturday, November 14**, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PDT.

A **December webinar** will deal with overcoming writer's block. Sign up at janecleland.com/events

Jane Cleland writes crime fiction, middle grade, espionage, and the long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, all published by St. Martin's Minotaur. She contributes craft articles to *Writers Digest* and teaches professional writing at the university level.

Submitted by Tish Davidson

Free Online Workshops

scriptwriters check out
roadmapwriters.com

More 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.com.

★ CONTESTS ★

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

Literary Review 2021 Volunteers Needed

The **California Writers Club** is looking for volunteers to work on the **2021 Literary Review**. This magazine, published once a year, showcases the best writing from CWC members statewide. The Central Board is especially looking for judges and proofreaders. To express an interest in volunteering, please contact Tish Davidson, FAW's Central Board representative before Oct. 15 at tish_davidson@yahoo.com. At this point, expressing an interest does not commit you to anything more than finding out what the job involves, so if you are even slightly interested, please contact Tish. Thank you.

Terrific Resource for Writers in the Age of COVID-19

The **Gotham Writers Workshop** in New York City has put together a series of free talks about writing. Each talk features a writer in a particular genre and an agent who deals with that genre. The first season covered everything from historical fiction to graphic novels to writing query letters.

Season 1 is archived at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIOByuSHCqP7V9mSsoqU5Fojjys2LsvYi>

Season 2 begins October 7 with Inside Short Stories followed October 14 with Inside Humor. Check out these free talks on your genre!

Author Skills — CWC-SF Peninsula Book Coaching — The New Edit

September 23, 6:00 PM PDT (UTC-7:00)

Book Coaching is a modern editorial service. Editors traditionally work on finished manuscripts. Writing, as a teachable craft and not just a talented specialty, has created a need for editors who help in the planning and drafting phase. This is an ideal education option for those without access to writing programs or adequate support. Find out • what book coaching does • why it differs from other types of editing • if it's right for you • when to prepare for a season of coaching • Q&A opportunity

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7215982331873/WN_YrTxRODURVGwOjw_YNsiTA

CWC Central Board Report

Summary of CWC Central Board Meeting — July 19, 2020

by Tish Davidson

CWC Central Board Representative

The CWC Central Board met by Zoom on July 19, 2020. Tish Davidson is FAW's Central Board representative. The following issues of interest to FAW were discussed.

2020–2021 Budget: Insurance for branches is budgeted at \$7,000. The president tried to get a reduction this year because branches were not meeting in person, but was unsuccessful. In addition to insurance, accounting fees are budgeted at \$7,000, web hosting & software \$3,000, Literary Review \$9,500. There are also other lesser budgeted items. Overall, Central Board income and expenses are balanced.

Literary Review: The magazine should be out in the fourth quarter of 2020. The selection process complete, and layout is underway. The *Literary Review* will be distributed by postal mail to all current members in October.

Strategies Developed for Online Meetings: Most branches are up and running on Zoom. Generally, people like Zoom meetings and some branches expect to continue them even when they restart in-person meetings. It was pointed out that online meetings are a great opportunity to hear from speakers out of our immediate area since the speaker does not have to travel.

Motion Related to Online Meetings: A motion was made to give each branch the option of requesting \$150 to use for outreach during the coronavirus pandemic. This amount covers a professional Zoom license for one year, but it comes to the branch without restrictions and does not have to be used for Zoom. Requesting the money is optional. This motion passed with 11 aye, 6 no, 4 abstain, 1 absent. The FAW board voted to request this money at its August 18, 2020 board meeting as we have already bought a one-year Zoom license. The check from the Central Board will be sent to our treasurer.

Motion Related to Membership: A motion was made by the Central Coast branch that the dues renewal period be extended to December 31. In other words, people could renew until December 31, 2020 without paying the new member fee. New members would still pay the fee. Some branches are having trouble getting members to renew because of COVID-19. This extension is *optional*. The CB motion passed with 12 aye, 8 no, 1 abstain 1 absent. However, shortly after the CB meeting, the CB president discovered that the software that tracks membership is designed to automatically eliminate non-renewed members on October 1 each year. The Central Bboard will have to pay the software contractor to have the software changed and then pay again to change it back next year. The FAW board voted at the August 18, 2020 board meeting not to extend the renewal period for our club. Although the resolution passed by the Central Board is binding, the CWC president is asking clubs to vote against the change. If every club chooses not to change its renewal date, there will be no need to pay the software contractor.

The next Central Board Zoom meeting is scheduled for October 18. If you have any concerns you would like brought to the board's attention, please send them in writing to Tish Davidson tish_davidson@yahoo.com by October 1, so that they can be added to the agenda.

Nor-Cal Meeting Report

Summary of Nor-Cal Meeting — September 5, 2020

by Anita Tosh
FAW Nor-Cal Representative

We had a good showing at the Nor-Cal Zoom Meeting on Saturday, September 5th. Carol Bumpus has tried to step down as chairperson for the group, but has not yet found a replacement. She set up and led the meeting, as usual. We discussed and accomplished many things; it was a productive and interesting meeting.

Here's a recap:

We had hoped that Wild Apricot would replace MRMS, but it will not work for our needs after all. Back to square one. MRMS is the system that keeps track of our membership in CWC, so we know how many members we have and if they have paid dues. The problems with MRMS mostly affect the larger groups, but it is also not very user friendly. It looks like another year or two before we can hope to replace it.

Though we don't have a new Nor-Cal chairperson, we did elect Kymberlie Ingles as Co-Chair, so she can do some training and help out.

The idea of a Zom leadership conference in the Spring was brought up.

It was interesting to find out how the new "Zoom" meetings are affecting our branches and CWC as a whole. Most of the groups are doing well, keeping membership, and having good attendance at online meetings, and saving the money they used to spend on a meeting place. Only a couple groups have seen a drop off in attendance. As for CWC and NorCal, it is actually helping finances in both.

There was much talk about how producing an Anthology helps not only the members to hone their craft, but also encourages new members to join so that they can be a part of it.

We tossed around ideas on how to best utilize the Zoom meetings throughout the state. The NorCal website now has a calendar showing Zoom dates for every chapter. Click on a calendar entry to get full details. Check it out at cwcnorcalwriters.org.

Fremont Area Writers

"Fourth Monday"

Writers' Salon

Monday SEPTEMBER 28th 7:00 – 9:00 PM

For details on Zooming in September, contact Tony Pino
up.dragonfly.com@gmail.com or 510-745-0761

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

Happy National Literacy Month

Dope!

I saw your photograph today.
The night-shot
with the orange moon

over ribbons of darkening hills.

Then I left myself
left my meetings, my calendars

my car appointments, my training.
I became one of those soft
victims of beauty you know:

the dope.

They called us dopes,
the ones struck by a summer girl
in a yellow sundress.

(the one everyone wants).
Because of her, dopes like me flunked algebra
(The first time I took it).

I'd linger alone at windows
gazing at tumbling clouds
and bees plunging into laurel blossoms.

I'd bicycle through orchards
chased by menacing dogs.
"Yep, that's him" they'd say. "A dope."

I was alone in that orchard,
like the orange moon in your picture
hung over ribbons of darkening hills,
a lonely, solitary light.

Tony Pino

Red Sky

Red Sky,
Oh My.

Close windows, doors,
Clean floors.

Time to eat,
Veggie treat.

Stay healthy,
Dance briskly.

Overwhelmed,
Take charge at the helm.

Don't aimlessly wander,
Take time to wonder.

If you start to stray,
Then, start to pray.

Don't give up,
Give thanks and look up!

Sue Curtzwiler

© 9/13/2020

Where's the Sun

shadowless grey days
burning red skies hide the blue
swallowing the sun

Nancy Guarnera

© 2020

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)

Slave

You separate me
the mother of my child,
from my child
to take "it" as your own
to slave for you
for life
even though she is merely eight.
a flower stripped of her petals-
her stem ripped of its roots,
that is what you do.
I am a stone,
my rough edges of numbness.
shaved by you
over and over again.
the scars written on my black face
are tiny rocks
taking the force of a river.
then I become the river
the life of the ocean.

Rekha Ramani

© 2020

Tea Party – A Still Life, Almost

by Joyce Cortez

A lovely flower print of white peonies on a green background spilled over the edges of the antique round table, set for four. Each place setting offered a lemon-yellow placemat, woven of the finest linen, ironed to perfection. Two plates and a small bowl, stacked one upon the other centered the mats. They were a mixture of solid colors and patterns, but a pleasant combination all.

The sideboard buffet held all the accoutrements one could desire for a party such as this. On a white milk glass stand with the hobnob base and frilly edges, jiggled a fruited gelatin salad. A pink oval Depression glass platter offered sandwiches of thinly sliced cucumbers, cut into triangles, crusts removed. Anchoring the service, stood two rose-patterned, three-tiered serving stands of delectable deserts—mini-blueberry scones, candied-walnut-topped bonbons, and petit fours. Small glass jars of lemon curd and raspberry jam chilled in a silver serving set nearby. Silver serving pieces gleamed from the early morning polishing. The antique tea set steamed with steeped tea. Low, clear glass vases filled with fresh white daisies and yellow freesias spotlighted center stage on the table and sideboard alike.

All stood at the ready. Stock still, with the exception of the gelatin salad which sparkled with excitement, waiting for guests to arrive.

More Notes from the World

Writers Forum – FREE Zoom Event
Presenters share writing journeys and offer tips about writing.

Details and Zoom URL:
www.TheWriteSpot.us
Click on "Writers Forum."

Sunday, Sept 20, 2:00 PM

Hannah Jern-Miller *The Ways of Music*,
healing power of song writing

Dave Seter "Fargo Airport, Waiting In
A Bar" using collage in writing.

Wednesday, Sept 23, 6:30 PM

Nancy Julien Kopp "Writing It Out,"
from *The Write Spot: Writing as a Path
to Healing*. ►

Brad Yates How "tapping" can help writers; known world-wide for creative/humorous use of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT).

Sunday, Sept 27, 2:00 PM

Novelist **Amanda McTigue** will share stories on wild creativity we need to heal, write, and restore our spirits

Wednesday, Sept 30, 6:30 PM

Story Power editor **Kate Farrell** in conversation with **Lisa Alpine** and **Mary Mackey**, sharing exciting and hilarious adventure travel stories.

For more info go to **www.TheWriteSpot.us** or contact Marlene Cullen
mcullen@comcast.net a member of the CWC Redwood branch

Tell Me A Story

FAW “Tell Me a Story” Up-date!

“Tell Me a Story,” our collaborative writing project, is now over 13,000 words and 23 of our members have contributed. The working title is **“A Time, A Place . . . and The Right Person.”**

We’re in the final stages of the story. Those who’ve participated seem to have enjoyed the experience and are anxious to read the story once it’s complete.

We started serializing the story on Wednesday, July 1st and will continue to send out installments until it’s complete. Keep an eye on your email. A final copy of the story will be sent by email to all FAW members, once it’s been thoroughly edited.

This serialized version has been given a preliminary edit. We will do a final edit once the story is complete. If you notice inconsistencies, POV issues, continuity problems, things that don’t make sense, or holes you could drive a MAC truck through, please bring them to our attention. Thank you!

It will need a title, so once you’ve read enough of the story to inspire an idea, send us your suggestions.

Thank you to all of you who participated; and to those who did not, thank you for reading it and sharing your thoughts.

A Time, A Place... and The Right Person

(working title)

14

They got into the car, this time with Andy in the driver's seat and Fredricks as his passenger. The car surged forward, down the tunnel and out the other end. Soon they were driving past farms, and then into the outskirts of a city. From the back seat, Fredricks could not tell where they were, but it did not look like New York or anything he knew in the vicinity.

“Huh...” Shineglass grunted, “I think we've been redirected by a higher authority. This is not World War II Paris. I'll check in for instructions. When the car chooses to stop, you should probably get out and stretch your legs. Then we'll see where the car takes us after this stop.”

A few minutes later, the car pulled up in front of a two-story, brick apartment building, and parked itself. The building was old and needed some attention. Fredricks got out of the car and lit a cigarette, while the sergeant rummaged around in the trunk.

“Take this,” Shineglass said, handing him a brown, oversized gym bag with a faded pair of silver wings on the side.

“Hey, I've been looking for this!” he blurted, tossing his unfinished cigarette aside.

“Enjoy it while you can; it’s not yours to keep.” He paused. “Go and give it to the woman inside.”

“Which woman?”

“You’ll know her when you see her.”

Fredricks entered the building; and there she was, at the top of the stairs. She was young and quite lovely, with gleaming honey-colored eyes and raven hair flowing over her shoulders and down her back. Barefoot and wearing a long, red Japanese robe tied at the waist and embroidered with pink and blue flowers, she looked, to him, like a young Geisha ready to entertain a client.

“Astra?” he whispered, casting his eyes over her and wondering just how much time he would have to “stretch his legs.”



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

With a quizzical expression, she smiled at him and pointed to the bag, saying nothing. Unable to mask his lust for her, the smile he attempted became a suggestive smirk. He started up the stairs as she started down. She stopped—two steps above him. She was still smiling, but he could tell she didn't trust him.

She reached for the bag, and he pretended to give it to her. But as she took hold of the strap, he grabbed her wrist. She resisted and shoved him with her free hand. As he lost his footing, he released her and the bag, and tried, to no avail, to catch himself before falling over backwards.

As he fell, he wondered if he might break his neck. When he reached bottom, he was lying on his back, spread-eagle, looking up at the top of the staircase. She was gone; though he heard a door slam and the click of a lock on the landing above him.

He'd had the bag and lost it. His employers would not be pleased. It didn't feel like anything was broken. If he could walk, he might still retrieve it.

"Hey, Fred!" It was Shineglass at the entrance of the building. "Chop, chop. We have to go; Paris is waiting!"

Paul K. Davis (with editor)

15

Overwhelmed by a feeling of inadequacy, Astra cautiously approached the University on foot. She was expected to find this Professor Dubois in the imposing 12th century building which was probably filled with dark corners, shadows and Nazis. How was she supposed to carry out this mission? Doubt and dread came at her at full speed. Thoughts, unwelcomed, whirled through her brain. "*Dad, why didn't you tell me of our heritage? I'm not prepared for this. I was happy in my ignorance. You told me mom died in an auto accident when I was three.*"

Astra clutched her grandmother's beret, unconsciously her fingers fluttered across the dried blood.

She shuddered. "Oh, my gosh, Mom?" It was like looking in a mirror, the black hair, the honey-colored eyes. And Mom was smiling. A smile Astra had been denied most of her life. As she heard the words "my daughter," a hand reached toward her giving her a wonderful feeling of reassurance. And then the vision was gone. But there, in her hand, was her grandfather's brown leather travel bag.

Astra's mind now held a clarity of purpose she had not experienced since this bizarre series of events had begun. Emboldened, she embraced her mission. Full of new energy, she didn't notice the car stealthily rolling along Rue Saint Jacques toward the Sorbonne, following her.

"There she is, and she has the gym bag!" exclaimed a smirking Fredricks.

Shirley Ferrante

16

Within minutes of arriving at the Sorbonne, a pale green fog of a magical potion swept over Astra. She fell to the ground and entered into a deep sleep. And then a space creature arrived and shot Astra with its ray gun. It heaved her lifeless body into its flying saucer and away they went to its castle on the far side of the Moon. The creature looked at her with lust-filled eyes, but when it finally got a whiff of her human scent, it vomited all over her. The creature then bit Astra on the neck, like a vampire. This made it possible for her to go outside the castle building without a space-suit and she now smelled more like it did. The creature could not help but fall in love with Astra, and took her, hand-in-tentacle, on a walk down a road that led to its other pink castle, located in the broad flat plains of Mare Mosciviense.

Before the creature could take her upstairs to its bedchamber....

Bob Garfinkle



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

17

Astra opened her eyes. What was she doing on the ground? Wisps of a pale green fog drifted in the air around her, but seemed to be fading. Though she remembered quite vividly being abducted by a ghastly creature from outer space and taken to the dark side of the moon for sexual shenanigans, she knew it couldn't be real. She was still in Paris, at the Sorbonne. And she didn't really have time to think about imaginary space creatures.

Neither Astra nor the men following her knew about the experiments the Nazis were doing in localized areas of Paris. They were testing various forms of gas for use on the front lines. The Gestapo had targeted the Sorbonne that night with a substance that caused bizarre hallucinations. They expected Professor Dubois to be in his office that evening. The gas and its effects should make him an easy target, and leave anyone likely to come to his aid unable to do so.

Astra got to her feet and oriented herself. She picked up the gun, still wrapped in the sweater. She wondered what had become of her grandfather's traveling bag, and it magically appeared in her hand. *"Okay, so that's how you work—I think about you and voilà, you appear."* Astra opened the bag, slipped the gun, still wrapped in the sweater, inside and snapped it shut.

She had no idea what time it was. Even the clock on her cell phone, which she'd tucked away in the bag, was useless. Astra hoped she wasn't too late. She took a deep breath, thought of August 15, 1943 Paris, the Sorbonne, and the professor, and gave her mom's beret a quick tug. The last of the pale green fog swirled around her, shimmered, and faded into the dark.

Fredricks came to first. The engine was still

running, but the car wasn't moving and was at an odd angle leaning against a street lamp. Shineglass was unconscious against the steering wheel. Ephemeral scraps of green fog still floated in the cool night air.

"What the f...!" Fredricks muttered to himself. "Shineglass! Are you alive?" Shineglass moaned, but didn't move. "Hey, Shineglass, wake up!" Nothing.

Fredricks sorted himself out on the backseat so he could grab Shineglass by the collar and shake him. "Andy, wake up."

The sergeant groaned and then mumbled, "Wha' happ'n...."

"I don't know, but you drove us into a light pole, the car is kaput, and the girl is gone! Oh, and there are Nazis headed this way...but the clowns and the tigers are gone."

Astra found herself standing in front of a young man with tousled white-blond hair seated at a large ornately carved desk in a room full of overstuffed bookshelves. He poured over a notebook filled with handwritten equations occasionally making a notation in pencil. So engrossed was he in his work, he seemed not to notice her.

"Monsieur Martin Dubois?" Astra spoke softly, with a tinge of urgency.

"Mmmm...?" Without looking up, he waved a dismissive hand in her direction, "I'm busy! Office hours are tomorrow, come back then."

"I'm sorry Monsieur, this can't wait." Astra's tone became more insistent.

"I said, I'm busy. Please leave." This time Dubois looked up; his scowl changing to an expression of confusion as he realized she was not one of his students. His electric-blue eyes were intense and an unmistakable combination with the hair.



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

"Pardon moi, Mademoiselle. I thought you were one of my students. Please, sit." He gestured to a chair, smiling at her. "What is it that cannot wait?"

Astra settled into the chair opposite him, and took a deep breath. "Your life is in danger. I'm here to get you to safety."

He softened toward her, but stated the obvious, "Mademoiselle, we're at war; everyone's life is in danger."

"But not everyone's survival will impact the future as yours will. Your survival will make a huge difference."

He smiled at her, as one might a child with an overactive imagination. "And how would you know what my future will be?"

The clock behind him said 11:32. They needed to get to Gare du Nord by midnight if they were to make their connection. She did not have time to tell him what was going on; he would likely not believe her anyway. She could hear the sound of German voices approaching.

She stood, "Monsieur, would you hold this for me?" and handed him the leather bag. Smiling, Astra looked him in the eye as he stood and accepted the bag from her. With one hand, she leaned in, took hold of his arm, and with the other tugged at the beret. She thought of their destination, and the date and the time, but had no idea where the two of them might find themselves once the beret did its magic...or even if she could take him with her.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Dubois just managing to grab the book he'd been working on as the room began to shimmer and fall away. Astra held her breath and hoped for the best.

Nancy Guarnera

18

She landed off balance in the darkness. Something nearby crashed to the floor accompanied by the sound of breaking glass. The sharp odor of carbolic hit her nose. Astra felt like she was falling even though both her feet were planted firmly. Was this a version of the green fog? Before she could decide if she was hallucinating, she heard a groan followed by a string of French expletives.

"M. Dubois?"

A scrabbling noise, then flame broke the darkness. M. Dubois held a cigarette lighter unsteadily in one hand and clutched his lab notebook in the other. The leather bag lay at his feet. The flickering light illuminated a closet full of mops and pails. The carbolic odor came from a broken bottle whose contents now dribbled across the floor.

"Let's get out of here," Astra whispered. "We're supposed to be at the train station before midnight to meet someone who will take you to safety."

She stepped forward and cracked the door open, only to shut it at the sound of German voices. The voices died away replaced by the rumble of a heavy engine and the piercing wail of a train whistle. "I think we may be at Gare du Nord after all," Astra said.

She inched open the door. The corridor was empty. "Let's go."

Dubois struggled to hold the lighter, pick up the leather bag, and hang on to his book.

"Give me the book," Astra directed.

"Never," snapped Dubois. "My life's work is in this book."

"Then put it in the bag and let's go."

"Why should I trust you?" Dubois asked.



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

"Because otherwise you're going to die." Astra grabbed the bag, opened it, pointed to the book, and said, "In."

As Dubois lowered the book into the bag, something shiny caught his eye. "What is this?" He reached under the sweater and pulled out the gun.

"Put it back," demanded Astra.

Dubois shook his head. "You take the bag. I keep the gun."

There was no time to argue. They crept down the now empty corridor.

"Who is this person we are meeting?" Dubois whispered.

"His name is Claude Bastille. But I don't know what he looks like."

"Claude Bastille!" Dubois practically shrieked. "That bastard. He was my best graduate student, until one day I caught him trying to steal my lab notebook. Oh, he had some excuse, but a week later, I caught him copying my equations. I ripped the paper from his hands and told him never to enter my lab again."

"But Bastille is supposed to be a good guy who will keep you safe."

"Ah, Mademoiselle," sighed Dubois. "We are at war. In war, there are always some people who can be bought. I am afraid that describes Bastille."

The sound of more voices reached them as three men rounded the corner and started up the corridor toward Astra and Dubois.

"There he is," Dubois shouted. "The traitor, Bastille."

He clicked off the safety and raised the gun.

Tish Davidson

19

Astra grabbed Dubois' forearm. "No!" she beseeched him, but the gun went off. Bastille's hands covered his face as the bullet slammed into the wall inches from his head.

"Professor Dubois, you're making a mistake," Astra pleaded.

There was a pop, and a voice behind them said, "Put the gun down."

Astra and the professor turned around. A man, in a disheveled raincoat, holding some kind of small cylindrical gadget, was pointing it at them. Another man, with a smirk, stood next to him.

The man from my dream? Astra thought. *What's he... What's going on here?*

Bastille snarled, reaching for his pocket. "Shineglass, stay out of this!"

"Stop!" Shineglass raised the weapon higher, but Bastille's hand continued into his pocket.

There was an unpleasant, high-pitched whine as Shineglass' weapon went off and a cloud of rainbow-colored powder filled the corridor. It showered down upon Astra and the professor, and reached all the way to Bastille and his cronies.

Astra coughed, scratching at her face. Dubois dropped the gun and rubbed his hands. Everywhere the powder touched bare skin, itched.

"My throat," Bastille coughed, scratching at his neck. His cronies ran away cursing and rubbing their exposed skin.

Astra reached for the gun, but the man from her dream kicked it away from her.

"Sorry, my dear," he leered. "You have something I need." He reached for the bag.



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

"No!" Astra looked down, but the leather bag was gone; in its place was an ordinary gym bag.

"Shineglass, you bastard." Bastille managed through spasmodic coughing. "Do you want the Nazis to win? If you give them Dubois, it's over." He began to reach for his pocket again.

The whine from Shineglass' weapon sounded in Astra's ear. She threw herself on top of the gym bag, covering her head and face with her arms. Astra heard Bastille's body collapse to the floor, what was left of his pathetic voice yelping in pain.

"Professor Dubois, come with me," Shineglass ordered. "Fred, let's go."

Undeterred, Fredricks grabbed Astra by the wrist and yanked her off the bag; then let go in astonishment. The bag was gone.

Astra struggled to sit up. Fredricks raised his hand, ready to strike her.

"Now, Fred...or you can take your chances with the Nazis." Shineglass grabbed Dubois' arm. In his other hand, he now held something that looked like a cell phone.

Reluctantly, Fredricks joined Shineglass and the struggling Dubois; and the three of them disappeared in a haze of light.

"M. Dubois, don't go...." Astra called to him, but it was too late, he was gone. She could hear the sound of boots approaching. She struggled to her feet, grabbed the gun, and looked at Bastille, still writhing on the floor.

She ran toward him, thinking of the bag and it appeared in her hand in its brown-leather form. As she reached Bastille, she opened the bag and stuffed the gun inside; Dubois' notebook was still there. Smiling, she locked it and slung it over her shoulder.

"Give me your hand," she yelled at Bastille. As he reached for her, she grabbed him. Thinking of the

time, the place and Sylvia Silverwing, she tugged on her beret. The corridor faded just as the Gestapo arrived, brandishing weapons.

Carol Lee Hall

20

Astra held the leather bag in one hand, Bastille's hand in the other, and continued concentrating on Sylvia. It had never taken this long to reach a destination before. Moving the leather bag to the crook of her elbow, she tugged at the beret a second time. Bastille pulled his hand free from hers, and as soon as they were no longer touching, disappeared.

No problem. She didn't like him anyway, and was almost positive she shouldn't trust him. She had the equations and notes written by M Dubois in the bag...and the beret...she didn't need Bastille.

Astra arrived with a thump: a hard landing. It took a few moments to recover—traveling this way didn't seem to be getting any easier. She looked around to see where she'd landed. There was no sign of Sylvia, or her cozy parlor; the place she expected to be. Instead, she seemed to be in some sort of terminal with lots of other people, waiting in lines and all focused on their own business. No one seemed to notice her arrival.

Overhead, she read Schweiz Basel-Stadt. *Basel—what am I doing in Switzerland?* She wondered if there was something wrong with the beret. Or, maybe, it was smart enough to recognize a villain, even if she wasn't. Perhaps it had some sort of built-in security system. But, she didn't have time to think about that now.

Some distance away, she glimpsed Bastille; he was talking with two stern-looking officials in uniform. Both had swastikas on their hats. As she watched them, Bastille caught sight of her and pointed wildly in her direction with a sneer.

Not good! Both men wore gun belts. Astra



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

remembered enough of her history to know that Switzerland, while neutral in WWII, was divided into three sections, German, French, and Italian. She must be in the German section.

That swine, Bastille! He would give Dubois' note book to the Nazis. She knew she had to protect the professor's work, even if she hadn't been able to protect him. Astra still wanted desperately to help him, if she could.

The officials were heading in her direction, followed by Bastille.

"Der Pass?" An official held his hand toward Astra as they approached her.

"Was ist das?" the second customs official said, pointing to the leather bag, which to him most likely looked like a gym bag.

Oh, my God! A border crossing. They want my passport and to inspect the bag!

She had seen toilets close by.

"WC!...Women's toilet!...Toilette!" Astra yelled, communicating her distress with as much body language as she could muster and dashed for the bathroom still holding the bag.

Marjorie Johnson

21

"Mademoiselle, it is I, Bastille."

She tugged on the beret and the air shimmered around her. As she faded away, Bastille burst in and lunged for her. He missed, falling to the floor of the toilette where she'd just been standing. "Merde!" he shouted.

* * *

She could smell coffee. As the room coalesced around her, she noticed Sylvia sitting on the sofa sipping from a cup.

"Would you like some, dear?" Sylvia asked and filled a cup for her. "You look frazzled. Tell me all about it." Sylvia motioned to Astra to have a seat on the sofa next to her.

"Well, I'm back, and I didn't have to use the gun." She dropped the bag on the floor and sat on the edge of the couch. Holding her cup in both hands, she inhaled the rich, full-bodied aroma as the steam warmed her face.

"Mmm...", she relaxed. She took a sip. Delicious, but bitter. "Is there sugar?" Another sip was sweet to the taste; Astra loved magic.

"The beret was a life-saver on more than one occasion, though I have some questions." She felt safe with family and hoped that Sylvia could enlighten her.

"I'll do my best, dear. But these "tools," and how they operate, are often specific to the user."

"Each time I used it by myself, it worked fine. It took me to the place, time and person I focused on. It took me to Dubois without a hitch."

She took a sip of coffee as a plate of pastries settled on the couch between them. "Oh, thank you, I'm so hungry!"

Sylvia smiled, as her young charge gobbled down a crème puff.

Astra sipped more coffee and continued, "But when I took someone with me, it was different."

Surprised, Sylvia asked, "You were able to transport someone with you?"

"Oh, yes. First, I took Professor Dubois with me to Gare du Nord. We ended up in a broom closet, but neither of us was hurt; and we were away from prying eyes. And then I tried to bring Bastille here, but the beret took us to the German sector of a border crossing in Basel, Switzerland, instead."

"How very odd."



Tell Me A Story (Continued)

"When I told Dubois we were meeting Bastille, the professor freaked out."

"Freaked out?"

"I'm sorry, objected strenuously. He accused Bastille of trying to steal his work. Dubois even tried to shoot him."

"But why would Bastille do such a thing? He has been a loyal part of our resistance cell for a long time."

"Dubois suggested that he'd been bought off." Eyeing an éclair she continued, "Anyway, I wondered if the beret 'knew' Bastille was dangerous, so it re-routed us. It looked like he was betraying me to the Germans in Basel, so I left without him. I hope that was the right decision."

"Oui, Cherie, under the circumstances, I think so."

"I lost Professor Dubois at the train station." Her eyes glistened as she realized that Dubois was probably dead. "Two men showed up; one in a long raincoat, who called the other one Fredricks. Bastille called the raincoat guy, Shineglass, I think. Shineglass sprayed us with itching powder. Fredricks tried to take the bag from me, but it disappeared, and then he and Shineglass took Dubois away with them in a flash of light."

Astra's face was wet with tears. "I'm so sorry...I failed you...and the professor." She sniffled and dabbed her eyes and cheeks with the handkerchief that appeared in the air in front of her.

"Ah, ma Cherie, this was not an easy assignment for you." Sylvia patted her knee.

"Who are those men, Sylvia?"

"Shineglass is Time Patrol. They're from the future and have been funded for decades by global fossil fuel interests. They pretend to be keeping the timeline clean, but their agenda is about controlling energy." Sylvia paused, "I'm not sure who Fredricks is, but I don't think you should trust him. Definitely don't trust Shineglass."

They sat in silence for a moment.

"Oh, I almost forgot, I have Dubois' notebook. He called it his life's work."

Sylvia got a queer expression on her face. "His notebook...then all we need is his offspring to carry on his work." She hesitated and then asked, "Astra, would you be willing to try one more time to save M. Dubois?"

Jan Salinas (with editor)

To Be Continued...

and watch for more installments in your inbox

August Speaker Recap (continued)

Blades then discussed the concept of “relationship lies” in romance. These are beliefs your character has that keep him/her from being successful in a relationship. Here are two examples: *people just want me for my money*, and *I’m too busy for a relationship*. Here are the challenges to these lies: *I have more money than you do*, and *looks like there are lots of people who can and will do what you’re doing*. Give your character a relationship lie and then introduce them to a love interest that is the only person who can challenge that lie. Then put them on the same “road,” so they can get together (for a HEA) in a way that makes sense.

These techniques apply to subplot characters as well, and will give all your characters a depth and dimension that elevates your writing, and will hold greater appeal for your readers. Romance readers will be looking for this plot structure; disappoint them at your peril.

Our speaker also shared some suggestions about writing sex scenes. First, “sex starts outside the bedroom.” Getting to a sex scene involves laying the groundwork in advance, often for a long time. Even a one-night stand or sex between strangers needs context...to make sense.

Blades uses the term “heat levels” to describe the

types of sex in a work. They are: clean (no sex), kissing, closed-door (acknowledging sex has happened, but not showing it), open-door (consummation), and repeated consummation. Pathways to sex include, but are not limited to, awareness of sexual attraction, flirtation, kissing, various levels of touch, all the way to some kind of climax.

Something to remember, if you plan to include sex in your story; it will change your book’s classification for marketing purposes. Tread carefully!

Blades gave us a few pro-tips: At the heart of most romance is the foundational idea that opposites attract. Here are a few tried and true tropes that provide this: enemies to lovers, friends to lovers, protector and protected, royal and commoner, forbidden romance, May/December, friends with benefits, ugly duckling, boss and employee. Be sure to identify your trope in the book’s blurb, and also let your readers know about any triggers in your book they should know about: level and type of sex, infidelity, rape, incest, abuse, domestic violence, etc. Any of these, if not mentioned, may pull bad reviews and damage your “rep” in Romance.

The link to Blades’ PowerPoint presentation is still active as of 9/20/20 (up since 8/22.) Check it now! <https://www.kilbyblades.com/2020cwc>

General Zoom Meeting September 26th

Our guest speaker will be Attorney Kelley A. Way.

Her topic, **Trust Funds for Writers**, will be an exploration on how to make sure your family continues to benefit from your creative work after you’re no longer here.

You don’t need a Zoom account to attend, but you do need to have Zoom on your smart phone, tablet, laptop, or computer—something with a camera and sound. Here’s a link for a tutorial to help you set this up: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>.

You will receive an email invitation with a link to use for the meeting. You will also receive a reminder email with the invitation and link the week of the meeting. If you need help with connecting to Zoom, contact Scott Davidson scottfrombayside@yahoo.com by Wednesday, September 23rd. Put **FAW Zoom Meeting Help** in the subject line and he’ll be in touch.

Please start logging into the meeting by 1:45 p.m.

See you on Saturday, September 26th. Stay safe, healthy and happy!