



Ink Spots



The Newsletter of Fremont Area Writers *The "Centennial" Branch of the California Writers Club*

Nancy Guarnera Editor-in-Chief

Vol. 107 March 2021

inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org

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

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FAW General Meeting on Zoom – March 27th

Guest Speaker

Mary Anna Evans

The Writing Life

by Knuti VanHoven

At the FAW General meeting on **Saturday, March 27th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm**, Mary Anna Evans will discuss her experiences and discoveries as the author of over a dozen books, spanning short story and poetry collections, as well as the creation of her multi-award winning Faye Longchamp mystery.

In Evans's first novel, Faye is an enthusiastic archeology grad-student who's hired to lead a group of volunteers to investigate the history of the "Sujosa," a centuries-old "tri-racial isolate" of English, African and indigenous tribal members who formed a now four-hundred year old community in the hills of Alabama. Things get dangerous when Faye digs up something completely unexpected: proof of a much more recent murder!

Evans discovered her own love of reading as a child in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Her fondest memories involve being curled up with a good book. Since then, she's had a life that's provided the fodder for her own stories. She's been a bank teller, a gift wrapper, an environmental consultant, a community college instructor, and a university administrator. Add a stint as an offshore roustabout, then winning her degree in Chemical Engineering and raising three children, it's clear that she's amassed enough background knowledge for many books to come!

Join Mary Anna Evans and FAW for this Zoom event from **2:00 to 400 pm on Saturday, March 27th**. **Admission is FREE** and all writers, seasoned or just starting out, are welcome!

For your zoom link, email scottfrombayside@yahoo.com. Please arrive a few minutes early.

For more information about FAW check out our website: <https://cw-c-fremontareawriters.org>.

For information about Mary Anna Evans go to: <https://maryannaevans.com>.



Mary Anna Evan
<https://maryannaevans.com>



TERRY TOSH
FAW President

President's Message

Focus on Marching On

Hi, great minds of FAW. I'm done talking about tragedy, pestilence, pandemics, and gloom and doom. Who's with me?

This month I want to focus my personal efforts on recovery, bright spots and Marching On. I think we all need some happiness and joy to overwhelm us and give us a lift.

Get out 'a that chair/bed/house...get some sunshine. Take a mask-free deep breath, even if you have to drive or get a ride somewhere to a secluded open-air secret place of your choosing!

There is so much good and wholesomeness to be experienced. After our wonderful, eye-opening topic of mental health issues from February's guest, Barbara Meyers, I am more determined than ever to encourage everyone to step up and connect, however you can, with someone you love and cherish. Someone that needs uplifting. Go on and do it now, then write a SIP note telling us of your experience and success(es).

I'll start.

Several years ago, I decided to get me a bicycle so I could get some exercise while also getting out of the house/ gym. As I was already beyond my "spring chickendom," I knew it would be short-lived unless I stepped it up and got one with pedal-assist. (Look it up)

I have since become so attached to my bike that I look longingly forward to the times that I can just run out the door, hop on my bike and take off for a good hour or five, while exploring the many trails that have sprung up around the Bay Area. It is so freeing to be able to skip past streets and curbs and cut across acres where no cars or other motorized vehicles can venture. I won't belabor the point here, but just state that there are plenty of ways to get lost and away from the everyday humdrum of life and obligations.

Smile, laugh, sing, skip, dance, shout...(maybe not all in public, but you get my drift).

Keep the Faith!

***Sincerely,
Terry***

FREMONT AREA WRITERS MONTHLY CALENDAR

SECOND SATURDAY

Meet Your Local FAW Authors

Second Saturdays

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Half Price Books
39152 Fremont Blvd
Fremont

THIRD SUNDAY

Literary OPEN MIC

Third Sundays

Sign-up 3:00 PM

Reading 4:00 – 5:30 PM
Half Price Books
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 Dumbarton 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
Zoom Manager



TISH DAVIDSON
CWC Representative
Social Write-In Host



AMBER DeANN
Facebook Page
Social Media



BOB GARFINKLE
Historian
Past President



NANCY GUARNERA
Ink Spots Editor
SIP Notes Coordinator



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

If you have an accomplishment related to your writing, and would like to share it with other FAW members in this space, please send it to inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org. Please keep it to 80 words or less. Put **FAW—KUDOS**—and **Your Name** in the subject field of your email. Thanks!

KUDOS to Cherilyn Chin who has published her essay, "Coral Reef Bleaching—Is There Hope?" in *World Oceans: A Reference Handbook* by David Newton which came out on February 28. You can find the book at https://www.amazon.com/World-Oceans-Reference-Handbook-Contemporary-ebook/dp/B08W5DN7RG/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=world+oceans+a+reference+handbook+by+dauid+newton&qid=1615762851&sr=8-1

She also held a **Zoom workshop** on March 17, "Storytelling to Protect the Planet." If you missed it, you can access it on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/3GhJxUcvxEY>. Yes, that is Jane Goodall standing next to Cherilyn! You can read Cherilyn's blog, "Ocean of Hope" at <https://protecttheoceans.org/wordpress> and follow her on Twitter @protectoceans. *Congratulations, Cherilyn!*

KUDOS to Tish Davidson whose advice on beating writer's block was featured on Liz Barrett Foster's blog Eat Like a Writer as part of "59 Cures for Writer's Block." <https://www.eatlikeawriter.com/post/59-cures-for-writer-s-block>. *Congratulations, Tish!*

KUDOS to Evelyn LaTorré who will present "Why and How to Write Your Memoir," at the CWC Peninsula General meeting on March 20th at noon. The meeting starts at 10:30 and also features Helen Sedwick presenting "Four Legal Issues Every Writer Should Know About," at 11:00. Admission fee is \$5 for CWC members. Learn more and sign up at: <https://cw-peninsula.org/current-meeting/>
Congratulations, Evelyn!

KUDOS to Jan Small who has self-published *My Life as an Artist*, part 2. Copies are available from the author. *Congratulations, Jan!*

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-fremontareawriters.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-fremontareawriters.org, and we'll publish it in the **Writers' Corner**.

A walk in the woods Are humans *really* smarter than animals? Skin deep
What was that noise? When I was young and stupid, I... I wish I could or was...
Hanging on by the tips of my fingers... Oh no! Did I just drink the Kool-Aid?
Power is... My most embarrassing moment was... When I was little...

A Word from Our Editor



Nancy Guarnera
Editor-in-Chief *Ink Spots*

Welcome to our March 2021 issue of *Ink Spots*. I hope this finds you and those you love, healthy and happy. Hope you are all wearing your masks and social distancing. Please get vaccinated when it's your turn.

We will be reinstating our Member's Spotlight feature soon. Would someone like to take on the responsibility for writing this? You would interview a different member each month, write up an article of 450 words and submit it to the **Ink Spots email address (see below)** by the 1st of each month. We'll need a photo of the member, too. Email me if you'd like to volunteer for this opportunity to flex your writing muscles.

After checking out Cheryl's Blog, I have decided to run an FAW bloggers' list in the newsletter, so we can all see what our FAW Bloggers are up to. Bloggers, get in touch with me, if you'd like to be included.

Zoomed **General Meeting** will be on Saturday, March 27th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm; our featured speaker will be mystery writer, **Mary Anna Evans**.

The "Fourth Monday" Writers' Salon will be on Zoom on March 22nd from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Contact Tony Pino for more info. (*See page 19*)

The **FAW Zoom Social Write-In** was a big hit this month and will be continuing. Watch for flyers. (*See page 9*)

You should be receiving your **Bi-Monthly SIP NOTES** on the first and third Mondays of each month. If you decide to send us a **SIP NOTE**, please send it to me at nguarnera16@comcast.net. Please put **FAW—SIP NOTE Submission—your name** in the **subject field**. Thanks to those of you who have already submitted! I need more, so contribute observations, journal entries, poetry, short essays...the more inspiring, the better. COVID fatigue has set in for many of us, and we all need a little inspiration to get our positive, can-do mojo back up and running. It's hard to say where we are in the curve. If we follow the new improved CDC guidelines, we may be getting back to "near normal" sooner than we thought. Please, keep wearing a mask, social distancing, and get vaccinated.

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

Stay safe and healthy...
Cheers! Nancy

Newsletter Submission Guidelines

Please send all submissions for *Ink Spots* to inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org by **April 1st for the April 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. April 1st for the April issue, etc.)
Please submit your work as attachments, rather than in the body of your email.

WORD COUNT:

Feature articles (Presidents Message, The Spark, features, etc.): **450 to 475 words max.**
Creative Submissions: **1,000 words max.** (unless you are willing to have longer pieces serialized)
Weekly SIP NOTES: **400 to 475 words max. Kudos: 80 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. Thank you!

Your Bi-Weekly SIP NOTES

WEEK #31 DEC. 9TH TERRY TOSH

We made it to December, fellow FAW-ites! What an accomplishment that was, no?

Let's take a collective breath, relax, and make a pact not to let anything that comes our way this month, stress us out, ok?

I hope you were able to join us for the Zoom "party" we had, compliments of Tish and Scott. It was a nice break from the norm.

For those who weren't able to get in on our November general meeting, we discussed and decided to have our Holiday Party on Zoom this year. We met on Saturday, 12/12 at 2pm (Happy Birthday, Jan!). This was a time for everyone to practice their flash writing skills with a few writing prompts; Tish and Scott Davidson were our hosts and facilitators. It was a fun experience, and an opportunity to chat and re-connect after such a bizarre Year of SIPing. We gave away Amazon Gift certificates to our two lucky winners, Terry Connelly and Rekha Ramani. Congratulations, Terry and Rekha!

(Thank you, Nancy Guarnera for sharing your excellent terms—SIP and SIP Notes. CWC has asked if the organization can register it for CWC use, and Nancy has agreed. Once again, congratulations, Nancy!)

We are truly Blessed to have such a talented and eclectic group of individuals in our branch. In the Spirit of the Season, I count it a privilege to have been able to lead as well as learn from your vast collective storehouse of knowledge and wit. You are all truly amazing people, and I look forward to what you will share of your talents in the coming year.

Enjoy your opportunities as you discover them in our new norm.

Love to All of you from Anita and me.

*Sincerely,
Terry Tosh*

Happy Women's History Month

WEEK #32 DEC. 28TH EVELYN LATORRÉ

How Living in Another Country Prepared Me for The Pandemic

by Evelyn LaTorre

(Reprinted from *Conscious Connection Magazine*)

The author: *Evelyn Kohl LaTorre grew up in rural Montana. She has a Doctorate in Education from the University of San Francisco. She has worked in bilingual public education. She and her husband are volunteers with the Peru-American Medical Society translating for U.S. physicians who go to Abancay, Peru to offer free services at the hospital where she worked in 1965.*

This time of the pandemic and protests has the power to transform our society—and each of us as well.

We have been gifted an opportunity to gain a clearer sense of our values, and we can use this unusual occasion to discover what we believe and show who we really are. Those who have lived in other cultures may already have a sense of how transformational an in-depth exposure to others' lives can be. The revelations of a philosophy other than our own can shake us to our core and lay bare our previous, narrow thinking about other groups and ourselves—if we are open to it.

Living abroad over an extended period increases our self-discerning reflections. We experience new ways of living and being, which can lead us to examine ingrained beliefs. If we give thought to the unfamiliar behavioral patterns that surround us, we see ourselves in a new light.

The late Michael Crichton wrote in his book, *Travels*: "Often I feel I go to some distant region of the world to be reminded of who I really am... Stripped of your ordinary surroundings, your friends, your daily routines...you are forced into direct experience [which] inevitably makes you aware of who it is that is having the experience."

Feelings of unease at being out of our regular routine and away from the familiar, is what many of us experience as we shelter in place, wear masks, and curtail travel. I describe in my book, *Between Inca Walls, A Peace Corps Memoir*, how living in rural Mexico, then in the Andes of Peru, was transformational . . .



Your Bi-Weekly SIP NOTES *(continued)*

WEEK #32 DEC. 28TH EVELYN LATORRÉ

(continued)

... and changed the trajectory of my life. Living away from home without modern conveniences prepared me, in some part, for resilience to today's deprivations. The following are a few of the maxims, with examples, that I learned living in other cultures.

Slow down, listen, ask, and learn

During Peace Corps training in Puerto Rico, I was too eager to be helpful and "clean up" what I saw as the cluttered yard of the family I lived with. So, I removed refuse from holes scattered around the premises. Later, I found out that placing leftover food in pits was the family's composting system. I shouldn't have disrupted and instead observed or inquired first.

When unable to foresee future unknowns — plan for the present

When the Peace Corps had no assignment or living arrangement for me, I joined with another unassigned volunteer, Marie, and together we found our own placement and housing in Abancay, Peru, where we taught P.E., formed 4-H clubs, and had many life-changing adventures.

Be flexible

While waiting for housing to be built for us in an unpopulated Andean community that we hoped to develop, Marie and I learned first aid in Abancay's hospital. Houses were never built, so our move never happened, but we were able to teach teens in a different impoverished community some basic medical skills.

Wealth, poverty, and happiness don't have clear lines

Letters I received from the U.S. complained about such deprivations as having to make do with a used car. I walked several miles daily to the schools in poor areas where I taught P.E. I rarely had the equipment needed for the sports I taught. We improvised.

I taught the students lead-up games that would develop the skills they needed for futbol (soccer)

and they kicked around a knot of rags when we had no ball. Students' skills improved and we had more fun than my friend said he had in his used car.

Have compassion for yourself and others

Upsets during trying times can create tension, but are often short-lived, so loosen up. When members of the girls' club forgot to bring the ingredients they'd promised for making banana bread, initially, I was upset. But we asked nearby neighbors to supply what we needed. The generous neighbors dined on our bread with us, and the experience turned out better than if all had gone as I'd planned.

Celebrate the strengths you develop in getting through trying times

More than once, rides to important events in Peru broke down, were extremely late, or failed to come through. Marie and I became adept at finding other ways to reach our destinations. Challenges gave us great stories to tell. So, in these trying times...

Think, then write about your own unique life and experiences

You'll find time if you limit your news intake to only the stations that broadcast trusted facts and read books that open your eyes and heart to others' experiences and ways of being. Breathe deeply, walk in nature, then sit down with journal in hand, and take stock of where you've been and what you're grateful for.

Think of this time away from the cacophony of traffic, meetings, and demands, as a present. Use it to contemplate what you truly value. For many that is deepening relationships, completing a project, or helping others.

It is in hard times that we learn who we really are—instead of misplaced anger that turns to despair and mockery of those who follow healthy guidelines, see where you can help others who are struggling with childcare, earning a living, or need encouragement. Make masks, read to children via Zoom, or write your own memoir. Journaling and focusing on the parts of life that are going well are other worthwhile activities.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who traveled the country and had many challenges in her life said: "You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face."

Monthly Writing Opportunities

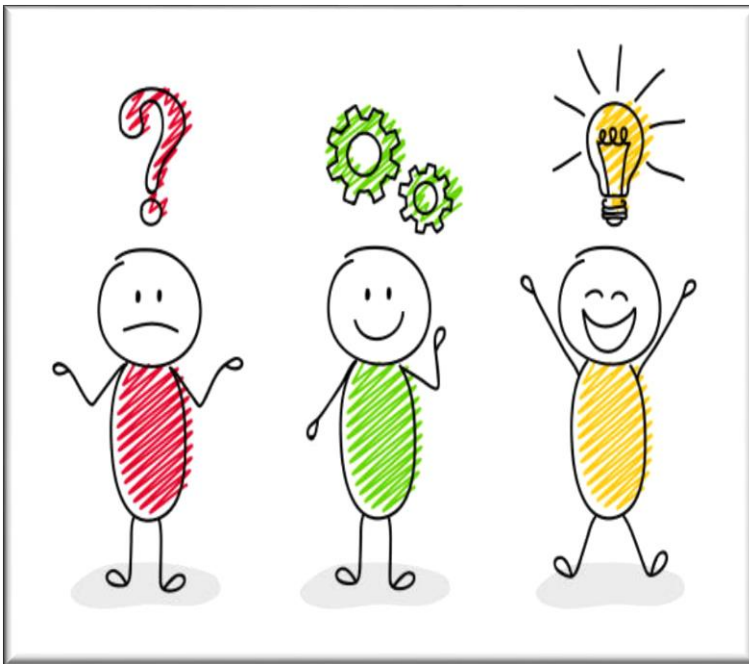
You Are Invited to the

FAW Zoom Spring Social Write-In

2nd Saturday, April 10th from 2-4 pm

**Get to know other members through
personal impromptu writing.**

When you sign in, the computer will randomly assign you to a room with several other FAW members. Once everyone is gathered, you'll get three writing prompts. Choose one and write for 8 minutes. You can write memoir, fiction, or poetry, but the writing prompts are designed to encourage you to write about yourself so that we can get to know each other better.



After you write, there will be time for all four people in the room to read their responses to the prompt and chat, then the computer will reassign everyone to a different room, the prompts will change, and the process will repeat.

All FAW members will get a Zoom invitation on the Friday before the Social.

Example prompts: I never thought I would meet... It was the worst job...
The most interesting thing I ever found...

See you there!

Important FAW Information:

— PLEASE READ —

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

FAW is updating its **membership database** to make sure we have current information for everyone.

Please, if you've made a change to your name, email address, phone number, mailing address, or your CWC/FAW member status within the past two years, send your new information to our **Membership Chair, Anita Tosh** at nanatosh56@gmail.com. Please send by March 30th.

Membership Status Levels and descriptions include the following:

***Active:** Active members have published a book within the last ten years. Or you may be eligible if, within the last three years, you have published articles in periodicals of general circulation or self-published a book. Active membership is open to all writers including: fiction, non-fiction, playwrights, scriptwriters, poets, book reviewers, photojournalists, self-published authors, and includes other publishing industry professionals, (critics, editors, publishers, copyeditors, and teachers).*

***Associate:** Associate members are currently writing with the intention of publishing or were last published more than ten years ago. This membership category includes non-writers working in writing-related occupations.*

***Dual:** Dual members have a primary, paid membership in one branch, and have, for an additional fee, dual membership(s) in other CWC branch(s).*

For more details, go to the CWC website calwriters.org and select **membership** and **qualifications**.

Thank you for sharing your updated information with us!

Here's the link for the NorCal events calendar.

**Use it to find out what other branches are doing and when—
guest speakers, conferences, special events, and more.**

<http://cwcnorcalwriters.org/events/>

A Very Important Reminder

Any CWC member can attend meetings of any other CWC branch for the same fee that the branch charges its own members. This applies only to meetings, not to conferences or special events. If you are interested in attending a monthly meeting at another branch, check the events calendar for branches in Northern California. It can be found at ***<http://cwcnorcalwriters.org/events/>***



Sue Curtzwiler
Volunteer Coordinator

The Season of Spring

Spring breaks the icy cold of winter with a little warmth, more sunshine, longer days, and early blossoms. Colorful daffodils and bright white narcissus are a couple of early flowers that poke through in many gardens giving us that inner smile and a sigh of relief that hopefulness is in the air. March 20th marks our calendar as the first day of spring this year.

After a long year of sheltering in place due to COVID, like the dew on the morning grass, there is a sparkle of hope breaking through the dullness because of the emerging vaccines. We've been longing for family gatherings, children's laughter, the restoration of businesses, and good old-fashioned fun. Now, with a spring in its step, life is marching toward us, cresting the hilltop as sun breaks through the dawn.

Writers, poets, and artists load that quill with ink and bring out the sketchpads, note pads, or laptops and tablets if you prefer. Pull yourself up by the bootstraps, march onward out of the house. Find your muse and get busy. Sometimes writing is done alone so that you can think out loud. Right now, I bet your best friend would welcome a bit of idle conversation to help you brainstorm as you move pen across paper. It's time. Yes, it's time to let creativity and wild imagination, doubt and anger from last year to run free, right down to your fingers and start a new creation. The budding flora deserves more than a glance. Embrace the signs of spring, study the shape of that daffodil, let the color fill your senses, enjoy the outdoors once again. It's time.

To quote the English poet, William Cowper ~

***"Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze."***

*Encyclopedia of Quotations, Philadelphia:
David McKay, Publisher, 1893*



Notes from the World

**LOW
COST**

CELEBRATE POETRY!

**LOW
COST**

Monday to Thursday, April 12-15

Manhattanville College special weeklong celebration is open to all.

\$30 donation Attend one, some, or all of the events.

Registration is required at <https://www.mville.edu/writers-hub-spring-workshops>.

(The times listed here are Pacific Time — Times listed on website are Eastern Time.)

Monday 4/12 4:00 p.m. A Poem Is a Room with Many Doors w/ Sheila Squillante

This 90-minute craft session will offer you several ways to access rich poetic material, to throw the door open and stride right in.

Tuesday 4/13 4:00 p.m. The Art of Revision w/ Sally Blumis-Dunn

Bring two poems to this 90-minute session. We'll discuss strategies for revising new or stalled work.

Wednesday 4/14 4:00 p.m. MEET THE WRITERS - TBD

Thursday 4/15 4:00 p.m. The Art of the Lyric Poem w/ Jennifer Franklin

Participants in this 90-minute session will read a packet of successful and beautiful short pieces, discuss what makes them gems, and take some time to write their own.

Two More FREE "Jane Cleland" Writing Webinars

Award-winning author Jane Cleland is offering two more **FREE** Zoom writing craft webinars to all writers. If you're available, and you're a writer, these will be interesting and helpful in understanding different aspects of the craft of writing.

Sign up in advance at <https://janecleland.com/events> to register for these webinars. You'll receive a link to the webinar the week before the event.

Saturday, April 17, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PDT

"The Art of Backstory: Using Flashbacks and Flash-forwards"

Saturday, May 15, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PDT

"Whisper, Don't Shout"

Jane Cleland is an award-winning author who writes crime fiction, middle grade, espionage, and the long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, all published by St. Martin's Minotaur. She's recently published the 13th book in the series, *Hidden Treasure*, and her 14th book, *Jane Austen's Lost Letters*, has been accepted by her publisher. Cleland contributes craft articles to **Writers Digest** and teaches writing at the university level.

More Notes from the World

★ CONTESTS ★ ★ NEWSLETTERS ★ ★ ETC. ★

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.

The Writer. Website and free newsletter. Listing of mostly pay-to-enter contests. writermag.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

Terrific Resource for Writers in the Age of COVID – FREE

The **Gotham Writers Workshop** in New York City has put together the **Inside Writing** 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.

Seasons 1 & 2 are archived at:

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

Season 2 (recent presentations)

Inside Writing: Satire and Parody

Inside Writing: Comics and Cartoons

Check out these **free** talks on your genre!

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

Free Online Workshops

scriptwriters check out
roadmapwriters.com

More Notes from the World

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

CWC Literary Review Extends Deadline

The CWC High Desert branch recently held a Zoom meeting featuring Managing Editor Elisabeth Tuck who discussed Q&A on the Lit Review submissions. She and President Donna McCrohan Rosenthal informed the group that there has been a serious lack of submissions from our CWC members for the 2021 edition of the Literary Review. They also announced that

the deadline for Literary Review submissions has been extended until April 15, 2021.

All CWC members are encouraged to submit.

Traditionally, 75% of the submissions are received in the last two weeks of the window, but even so, it looks like there may be less competition this year than in the past. This may be your chance to get published in the CWC Lit Review. Edit your best work, get someone you trust to proofread, and submit.

Guidelines are at <https://calwriters.org/publications/#submit>

Please be sure you follow **ALL** the directions. For best consideration, it is recommended that you do not wait until the last minute to submit.

FREE

Wednesday, April 7th

12:00 to 1:00 PM

The San Francisco Chapter

of the

**Women's National Book
Association**

Presents

**Pitch-O-Rama Prep
Workshop & AMA**

at

<https://wnba-sfchapter.org/april-7-pitch-o-rama-prep-workshop-ama>

Note:

This is a prelude to the WNBA Pitch-O-Rama held Saturday, April 10 (cost \$75). You do not have to be female or a WNBA member to sign up for the free pitch coaching session.

Genre-specific Websites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scriptwriters Network <http://scriptwritersnetwork.com>

Historical Novel Association <https://historicalnovel.society.org/>

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

More Notes from the World

Reedsy Learning

Free Writing Classes, Webinars and A Blog

https://blog.reedsy.com/learning/courses/writing/show-dont-tell/?utm_source=mailparrot&utm_campaign=learning_show_don_t_tell

Reedsy has lots of free classes and webinars for writers, as well as many archived blog topics.

Check it out!

TCK Publishing.com

2021

Readers' Choice Awards Contest

Voting from January 1, 2021 to November 13, 2021

Details at <https://www.tckpublishing.com/2021-readers-choice-awards/>

Winners will be declared and prizes awarded on November 30, 2021

2021

Poetry Contest

Submissions are open **now through March 31, 2021.**

Details at <https://www.tckpublishing.com/2021-poetry-awards-contest/>

Winner will be declared and awarded \$1,000 on April 21, 2021. Enter your poems today!

Additional list of poetry contests <https://www.tckpublishing.com/list-of-poetry-contests/>

Additional list of book awards contests <https://www.tckpublishing.com/book-awards-contests/>

Explore this site for contests, some free/some fee, in every genre!

Imagine 2200:

A New, No-Entry Fee, Climate-Fiction Contest by Fix, Grist's solutions lab

Looking for **short stories (3,000-5,000 words)** that envision a just, regenerative future.

What will the world look like in the year 2200—or anywhere between then and now?

For contest details: https://grist.org/fix/climate-fiction-writing-contest-imagine-2200-prizes/?utm_source=winningwriters&utm_medium=email210124&utm_campaign=clifi

Deadline: April 12, 2021 Submittal portal:

https://grist.submittable.com/submit?utm_source=winningwriters&utm_medium=subemail210124&utm_campaign=clifi

\$8,700 in prizes and publication in immersive digital collection on the Fix website. **NO FEE!**

For more information and details check out <https://grist.org/> and <https://grist.org/about/fix/>

February Speaker Recap

Barbara Meyers Understanding Mental Health

by Sue Curtzwiler

"It is estimated that 1 in 5 people know someone or are themselves dealing with mental illness. During the pandemic it may be as high as 1 in 4...I decided to see how knowledgeable my audience was. I asked them to raise their hands if their lives were being impacted...I was shocked when nearly all of the hands went up."

~ Rev. Barbara Meyers



After leaving her software engineer position with IBM to follow her passion, Rev. Barbara Meyers was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist (UU) Community Minister in 2004. Currently, she is with Mission Peak UU in Fremont. Meyers' new book, *Held*, is a process guide for spiritual communities interested in helping those experiencing mental health issues in their lives.

During her presentation, she shared her own personal experiences with the mental health system, and the life she's built ministering to and working with people who have to bridge the gap between their "real world" lives and their lives as caregivers.

Her passion, that internal fire to study mental health issues, was realized when she made a dramatic career change. Her research showed double standards between families working through traditional illness and those who struggled with mental illness. For example, one family got a casserole to help ease daily tasks, and another family, the one dealing with mental illness, got no help at all. Where was their community when they needed it?

What exactly is the difference between mental health and mental illness? Generally, a definition of *mental health* means an individual has successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to cope and adapt to change.

In contrast, a *mental disorder* shows a behavioral syndrome creating impairment or distress in thinking, mood, or behavior that has been diagnosed by a mental health professional. Finally, there is a *continuum*, with evidence of a disorder moving toward mental health concerns. The profession now estimates that addiction is involved with 50% of mental illness cases.

Recovery? Yes, there is a recovery process. It's about change—people improve their mental health and wellness; live a self-directed life; and strive to live up to their full potential. However, problems may still exist, especially in the way others perceive and depict those with mental illness. There is still a stigma.

Meyers' had personal experience with mental issues and recovery. After struggling with post-partum depression, she was hospitalized—she felt like a damaged human being. Through a re-examination of her life, she experienced a spiritual epiphany—realizing that everyone is God's child. Through this awareness she found purpose: now her ministry is healing the whole person. The first step of recovery is to give hope. Presence, just being there for someone, can be everything; it's the gift of safety and comfort. We can learn to listen without judgment, validate feelings without giving advice. For example, taking someone to the doctor—keep it simple without too much talking. Show empathy, put yourself in their shoes. Listen, and love above all else.

Rev. Barbara F. Meyers can be reached at Com_minister@mpuuc.org 510-796-5722

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

HEALING

Bring on the rain,
Air is dry,
Water level is low,
Ground is parched.
Please, Lord,
Give us rain.

Hum hum,
Pretty day.

Walk the dog,
Pet the cat,
Hug your kids,
Love your parents.

Air is cooling,
Light is fading,
Leaves are falling,
Beautiful sunset.
Few clouds.

Hum hum,
Pretty day.

Me and my dog
Nice walk today.

Hum hum,
Pretty day.

Focus – New Goals!
No more cane,
Learn to walk,
Heal-to-toe,
Bend my knees,
No more pain.

Lose weight,
Stand tall.
Now – shift my weight,
No more cane.

Hum hum,
Pretty day.

Healing from knee surgery (April and Sept of 2018).

This poem might have been “sketched” sometime during 2019.

Going through old papers recently, I found this poem that I wrote on a piece of large white paper, most likely from a restaurant table. With the poem were some cartoons: sunshine, stick figure walking a dog, music notes behind and above the head of the stick figure.

Think of child-like drawing of sunset, circle with straight lines like sun rays. Also sketchy clouds next to the sun.

Stick figure, young girl w goofy hat, walking dog and music notes behind and above girl's head.

Sue Curtzwiler
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Story Composting

By Tish Davidson

Have you ever wondered how stories that start in your brain as vague ideas end up on paper? Have you ever put aside a story that wasn't working, only to later find that you have subconsciously worked out the story problem that was holding it back? This is how that happens.

* * *

Spring peeps its head out of the clouds to see if winter has packed its bags and left. This means it's time to turn the compost heap and spread the compost in the garden. All summer, the detritus from kitchen and yard—wilted lettuce, potato peelings, coffee filters, used paper towels, fallen leaves—went into the compost bin. The unsung decomposers of our world—worms, slugs, and microorganisms whose names are known only to a handful of scientists—have been gorging themselves ever since, snug in their bed of organic decay. They have turned a jumble of useless bits of waste into a gift of nature—a rich, dark, glossy soil ready to nourish the garden for another year,

Just as the organic decomposers perform a miracle of nature to make healthy soil, writers' brains take a jumble of disconnected experiences, useless bits of information, and half-remembered conversations to make something astonishing and beautiful from their compost pile of words and feelings.

The keyboard sits waiting. You know your goal—a rich, dark, story to feed mind and soul. Once at the keyboard, you drift through random thoughts, unformed chunks of ideas, half-imagined pictures, stray phrases—The girl in high school who always smelled like patchouli oil. A llama you saw sticking its head out of a Yellow Cab one night in New York City. The chorus of a song that keeps repeating "love is an open door." A conversation overheard at Starbucks between two twenty-somethings, one burstingly pregnant, discussing a mutual friend's dilemma.

"They used to be Jennifer, but now they are Jeffrey, but they still want to date Henry just like before. But Henry already has a new girlfriend, and she wants to have a baby," the pregnant one nonchalantly explains.

It takes your middle-age brain a few minutes to grasp the use of *they* as a singular, gender neutral pronoun, a usage your high school English teacher would not approve of. Come to think of it, she wouldn't have approved of ending that sentence with a preposition, either. So now, you spend a little time thinking about your high school English teacher and the cute boy who sat behind you and kept kicking your chair. Didn't he end up going to West Point? Probably became a baby killer—but you're not going down that rabbit hole.

You try a few experimental paragraphs. Henry went to see his new girlfriend and found Jeffrey at her apartment. He stormed out and hailed a cab to go home. When the cab stopped, a man with a llama appeared and shoved the animal into the cab. No. No, No. This isn't working. You try again. The new girlfriend is married to the West Point graduate who finds Henry at his apartment and beats him up. No. Not that either.

Frustrated and convinced that you are the world's worst writer, you shut down the computer and go take a nap. Now the story composters get to work. The idea decomposers and phrase re-arrangers in your brain, known to the scientifically-minded as neurons and synapses, consider your random thoughts, unformed ideas, half-imagined pictures, stray phrases and disconnected remembrances that lay clumped like old potato peelings.



FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)

"Lots of work to do on this one," says one neuron to its neighbor.

"Yeah," the neighbor replies. "Better call in some extra dopamine."

"I hear there's some surplus serotonin over in the raphe nucleus," says another. "Better requisition it. We don't want another downer story like the last one she wrote."

The dopamine arrives, and the story composters go to work. They break down dead, lumpy sentences. They smooth out character flaws, change the setting, and rearrange the plot.

The serotonin trickles in lifting the mood as they shovel out some unlovely adverbs and add a few smooth similes.

"What about the ending?" a young neuron asks.

"That's for the author to decide," the group captain answers. "We never tell the author what to write. We just clear away the debris and provide a little nourishment, compost for the mind."

You wake up from your nap refreshed and head back to the keyboard. Suddenly the story bones become clear. Jeffrey's father was devastated when Jennifer announced she was to become Jeffrey. There was a violent blow up. They have not communicated in 18 months. Jeffrey was on his way to see Henry when he was jumped and beaten by a couple of Proud Boys who didn't like his looks. He ends up in ICU barely alive. While taking a couple of tourists who had just seen a musical to the airport, Jeffrey's cab driver father gets a call from his wife saying Jeffrey is dying. Throughout the call, the tourist wife keeps annoyingly half-singing, half humming "love is an open door." Does dad dump the tourists and rush to Jeffrey or does he keep on driving to the airport? Hmmm. Maybe a little more story composting is needed.

Fremont Area Writers

"Fourth Monday"

Writers' Salon

Monday March 22nd 7:00 – 9:00 PM

For details on Zooming, contact Tony Pino

up.dragonfly.com@gmail.com or 510-745-0761

General Zoom Meeting – March 27th

Our guest speaker will be Mary Anna Evans—Mystery Author.

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.

Need help with Zoom? Contact Scott Davidson scottfrombayside@yahoo.com by the Wednesday, before the meeting. Put **FAW Zoom Help** in the subject line. Start logging by 1:50 PM. Thank you.