



STORY CIRCLE JOURNAL

Vol. 22 No. 2, June 2018

The newsletter for women with stories to tell

Stories from the Heart IX SCN's 9th Women's Writing Conference "Widening the Circle, Opening Our Hearts" July 20-22, 2018



See the Conference Schedule inside. Here are some highlights:

- Friday night keynote: "What is Your True Name? Break the Silence, Write Your Story" by Linda Joy Myers, award-winning author in memoir, poetry, fiction and non-fiction
- Sunday keynote: "Our Heroine's Journey—Using Our Diverse Voices to Empower the World" by Bird (Lorraine) Mejia, award-winning poet, author, mentor, and storyteller
- Pre-conference workshops: "How to Improve Your Writing and Get Published: Flash Fiction and Flash Memoir," presented by Len Leatherwood; and "Marketing & Publicity: Strategies to Improve Book Sales," presented by Debra L. Winegarten
- 20+ breakout sessions throughout the weekend. Categories for all levels of writers—from beginner to seasoned writer—include creating a writing practice, journaling, blogging, memoir writing, poetry, the business side of writing, and personal and book promotion techniques, to name a few.

If you haven't registered yet, go to www.storycircle.org/Conference/ and register now. The conference hotel is the **Wyndham Garden Austin, 3401 South IH-35, Austin TX 78741**. To get the conference rate (\$119/night plus tax, double occupancy), call the hotel directly (512-448-2444; **please be sure to say that you are with Story Circle Network!**) and make your reservations **no later than June 19, 2018**.

Proudly Announcing the Winners of SCN's 2017 Sarton Women's Book Awards™

Memoir

Gathering From the Grassland

*Linda M. Hasselstrom – Hermosa SD

Biography

Lincoln's Generals' Wives:

Four Women Who Influenced the Civil War

Candace Shy Hooper – Boca Grande FL

Contemporary Fiction

Venetian Blood: Murder in a Sensuous City

*Christine Evelyn Volker – Richmond CA

Historical Fiction

Dark Lady: A Novel of Emilia Bassano

Lanyer

Charlene Ball – Atlanta GA

Young Adult Fiction

Defiance on Indian Creek

Phyllis A. Still – Gilmer TX

**Interviewed in this issue!*

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Letter From SCN's President



Dear SCN Sisters—

The conference is less than two months away, and I'm already looking forward to all the magical hours we'll spend together. Yes, there will be plenty of information-packed workshops and presentations and panel discussions about writing, publishing, and marketing. And yes, we'll have coaching sessions and opportunities to meet our Sartan authors. But for me (and for you, too, I suspect) the magic of a Story Circle conference is the magic of *us*, we members of the SCN community, sharing our lives and our writing and ourselves.

For Story Circle is more than just another organization of writers. It is one of a small handful of enduring writers' organizations created for and about women. We believe that women's stories are a vital part of human history, and that documenting our lives—in journals, memoirs, fiction, biography, poetry, drama, dance, and more—is not just a hobby or a pastime, it is a *responsibility*. Many Americans are also seeing the importance of this today, with “Nevertheless She Persisted,” with the widening #MeToo movement, and with TIME Magazine's choice of “The Silence Breakers” as its Person of the Year. Here at Story Circle, of course, we have always understood the need for women to break their long silence and tell the stories of their lives. We are very glad that the rest of the world is catching on.

Here's what you'll find in this issue of our *Journal*:

- our exciting conference schedule (pp. 4-6);
- the announcement of Sartan winners and finalists and interviews with winners Linda Hasselstrom, Memoir, and Christine Volker, Contemporary Fiction (pp. 8-9, 10-11);
- Linda Hoye's retrospective on her eight years with “One Woman's Day” (pp. 12-13);
- Carol Ziel's laugh-out-loud thoughts on “Gillette moments,” recently published in OWD (p. 14);
- inspiring suggestions from Len Leatherwood for creating a regular writing practice (p. 15);
- an interview with Linda Wisniewski, who personifies SCN's goal of helping women tell their stories (pp. 16-17);
- our always-wonderful feature, “True Words from Real Women” (pp. 18-23); and
- a lovely essay on friendship from Lois Ann Bull, a member of eCircle 9 (p. 24).

Truly, our June issue is full of wonderful stories by, for, and about wonderful, wonderful women. We love every page of it, and we know you will, too!

With joy for your journey,

Susan

Susan Wittig Albert
SCN President, 2018

Story Circle Journal

The quarterly newsletter of Story Circle Network, the Journal is published in March, June, September, and December. It is written by and for women who want to share their experiences. Its purpose is to encourage readers to become writers, guide women to set down their true stories, and encourage the sharing of women's lives. This newsletter is provided for information and is not intended to replace qualified therapeutic assistance. If you have special mental-health needs, please see a healthcare professional.

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We welcome your letters, queries, and suggestions.

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Change of address: If you move, please tell us.

The Susan Wittig Albert LifeWriting Competition May–June, 2018

SCN is proud to announce its **nineteenth** annual lifewriting competition, named in honor of our founder, best-selling author Susan Wittig Albert. We invite you to participate!

Topic: Uncertainty

How many times in your life have you been uncertain—*really* uncertain? What kinds of uncertainties did you experience? Financial? Professional? Romantic? Physical (as in health or illness)?

We invite you to think about one of these periods of uncertainty that stands out in your memory. Tell us about the kinds of creativities that emerged in your life as a direct result of letting go of the certainties you cherished and that cushioned you and made you feel secure. What did you learn from this period of uncertainty? How did you grow?

“Creativity can be described as letting go of certainties.” — Gail Sheehy

“If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor.” — Eleanor Roosevelt

“The mind loves to not know completely. Situations that are not familiar tune the system. To get smarter, do the unfamiliar.”
— Magaly Rodriguez Mossman

Awards: One prize of \$100, one prize of \$75, and two prizes of \$50 each. Winning stories will be published in a special section of the September *Story Circle Journal* and will be featured on SCN's award-winning website. Upon the judges' recommendation, other entries may be published in later issues of the *Journal* and in other SCN print or online publications. An award may be withheld if, in the opinion of the judges, no entry achieves the expected standard. The judges' decision is final.

Rules and entry information are here: <http://www.storycircle.org/Contests/index.php>

Story Circle Network's Mission

The Story Circle Network (SCN) is dedicated to helping women share the stories of their lives and to raising public awareness of the importance of women's personal histories. We carry out our mission through publications, websites, classes, workshops, writing and reading circles, and woman-focused programs. Our activities empower women to tell their stories, discover their identities through their stories and choose to be the authors of their own lives.

Italy in the Spring! Plus Writing with an Expert!

SCN is working with member and author Teresa Cutler-Broyles to create a writing workshop in Italy during the Spring of 2019. “**A Writing Adventure in Italy**” will be 8 days (excluding travel) and will be centered in the gorgeous Perugia area of central Italy, where Teresa is a visiting professor. There will be day trips to Florence, Assisi, and Rome. Teresa will facilitate an experience that will inspire you for years to come. Keep an eye out – details will follow soon!





Conference Schedule

July 20-22, 2018

Keynote Speakers

Linda Joy Myers—Friday Night Keynote Speaker

What is Your True Name? Break the Silence, Write Your Story

Our Friday-night keynote speaker is Linda Joy Myers, founder and president of the National Association of Memoir Writers, and an award-winning author in memoir, fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Her memoir, *Don't Call Me Mother—A Daughter's Journey from Abandonment to Forgiveness*, is a Foreword Book of the Year finalist and won honorable mention in the New York Book Awards and Indie-Excellence Awards. Her latest book, *Song of the Plains: A Memoir of Family, Secrets, and Silence*, was published June 2017 to instant acclaim. She has also written several how-to books on memoir writing.



In her words: "I enjoy meeting people who are passionate about capturing the stories of their lives. Writing a memoir is an act of faith and learning. Writers who tell a personal story feel exposed and vulnerable, but in that rich mud of family history, there are many opportunities for creativity, healing, and connecting with the world of art, literature, and the life stories that link us all."

Lorraine (Bird) Mejia—Sunday Luncheon Keynote Speaker

Our Heroine's Journey: Using Our Diverse Voices to Empower the World

Our Sunday luncheon speaker is Lorraine (Bird) Mejia. Born in Minnesota to a Mexican Mother and German American father, she became a marathon runner, artist, editor, librarian, educator, poet, author, and storyteller. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and an MLS in Youth Librarianship. Lorraine's poems have won several awards, and have appeared in anthologies such as *Between the Heart and the Land/Entre el corazón y la tierra: Latina Poets of the Midwest* and in literary journals including Willow Spring, Inkwell, and Calyx. Lorraine conducts her Wild Woman at My Door Women's Writing Workshop, inspired by her book *Wild Woman at My Door*, for groups of women to help them reconnect with their authentic selves. She has taught poetry classes to children, teens, and adults all around the country.



Conference Schedule

Friday Afternoon: Pre-Conference Workshops (There's an extra fee for each of these workshops. Please pre-register.)

Noon-1:45 pm: *How to Improve Your Writing and Get Published: Flash Fiction and Flash Memoir*
Len Leatherwood, Beverly Hills CA

"Flash" is defined as fiction and memoir pieces no longer than 1200 words and is a wonderful way to break into publishing. We'll explore the fundamentals of flash fiction and flash memoir and provide information on the growing demand for this type of writing. We will also discuss the benefits of flash writing for longer pieces of fiction and memoir. Come join the fun; your writing will gain both clarity and resonance.

2-3:45 pm: *Marketing & Promotion Strategies that Increase Book Sales*
Debra Winegarten, Austin TX

Book marketing is a completely different skill set from book authoring. This workshop will break the marketing mystique into manageable steps. As an award-winning author and a successful publisher, Debra Winegarten's hand-selling skills are legendary. Not only will you learn the marketing life-cycle of a book, you will design and develop a road map for marketing your book(s).

Saturday**Session 1: 9-10am****The Writing Life**

Writing Advice from the Trenches: Insightful Tips Every Writer Needs

Leslie Tall Manning

This workshop offers a comprehensive list of 75 do's and don'ts for you to incorporate into your writing life, from having a clear character arc to how to stay physically fit as a writer. Whether you are starting your literary journey or are a seasoned author of multiple books, you will glean new insights for growing as an artist.

Craft Matters

My Mother, My Muse: Writing About Your Mom Without Guilt

Andrea Simon

Join with an author whose mother was "outrageous and hilarious" and "an endless source of inspiration for all types of writing, from humorous anecdotes to serious drama." With writing exercises, helpful tips, and the sharing of supportive participants, you will be able to free yourself from that often-tangled umbilical cord.

Craft Matters

Writing Emotional Truth: Engaging Readers through the Power of Your Words

Mary Dingee Fillmore / Virginia Simpson

Without emotions, even the best plot will not connect readers to your story. These two award-winning authors will offer what they've learned about working with the inner critic (censor) and getting emotions down on the page through specific exercises and examples to create engaging scenes.

Breaking Into Publishing/Marketing

Building Your Platform (panel)

Susan Wittig Albert

This panel of authors will discuss how they have built their platforms using websites, blogs, social media and other strategies to create and maintain a community of readers.

Session 2: 10:30-11:30am**Craft Matters**

Using the Power of Personality to Enhance Your Writing

Cinda Brooks

Learn to discover personality types and use them to diagnose your story characters. By developing your characters as they face stress, decisions, relationships, and conflicts, you will pump power into them and give them depth.

Take Home Workshops

Let the Circle Be Unbroken

Sandra Shackelford

Are you thinking about starting a Women's Writing Circle in your community? Join with a writer who has spent the last 12 years working with and encouraging women to write and share their individual truths in story form. As well, she will share what she has learned from those who educated her as she, too, trod the writers' path.

Getting Personal

Life Happens: Write Through It Using the Celtic Calendar as Guide

Mary-Elizabeth Briscoe

Learn to use the Celtic Wheel Calendar as a guide for developing a healing, daily writing practice throughout every season of life. You will experience a deeper connection to self, which allows for the discovery of your own authentic voice.

Getting Personal

Wild Woman at My Door: Reconnecting to Authentic Self

Bird Mejia

Somewhere during most women's journeys, we find we have lost our selves. That is when Wild (Wise) Woman, every woman's authentic self, comes knocking at the door. Mejia uses the writing of master poets as inspiration and models to help you reconnect with the wild woman inside of you. This workshop is intended for every woman; no writing experience is necessary. Exercises will incorporate movement, music, and art. Whether your wild woman is buried deep inside you or has been dancing for years, you'll leave stronger and more empowered to nurture your authentic, wild woman self.

Session 3: 2:15-3:15pm**The Writing Life**

Prune & Bloom: How to create space for what matters most

Jen Halligan

We wake with good intentions (I *will* write today!) but the demands and distractions of our days often have their way with us and we retire disheartened because we didn't make the progress we'd hoped for. Come learn how we can prune clutter from our lives so we can bloom in the direction of our dreams.

Breaking Into Publishing/Marketing

Sarton Winners Panel

Susan Wittig Albert

This panel of Sarton authors will share the stories of their work from the inspiration for their award-winning books to publication and beyond. Come prepared to be energized.

Craft Matters

Polishing your Stories

B. Lynn Goodwin

An author and long-experienced writing coach shares tips for improving writing and then will have a writing exercise to give you the opportunity to apply them to a piece of your own writing.

Getting Personal

Shaping Family Stories into Compelling Stories

Annette Gendler

Do you have a box of family journals or letters you always wanted to do something with? This workshop introduces you to approaches to creating compelling stories from family history. We'll study how to develop a narrative from documents, conduct research, write scenes, and use literary devices to shape our stories.

Session 4: 3:30-4:30pm

Take Home Workshops

Facilitating Stories from Amazing Lives**Joyce Boatright**

This overview of an 8-session course, which can be expanded to a year or chunked into smaller sessions around topics, will provide you with a take-home detailed plan for teaching life-writing in your community. The curriculum for "Stories from an Amazing Life," developed by a presenter who has taught lifewriting since 1991, will be available on a Flash drive PDF.

The Writing Life

Getting Unstuck**B. Lynn Goodwin**

What eats away at a writer's confidence? This workshop will analyze what stops us and draft plans to circumvent or dive through a writer's blocks.

Breaking Into Publishing/Marketing

Paths to Publishing Traditional, Hybrid, Indie/Self-Publishing Workshop**Susan Wittig Albert**

New technologies open new routes to publication. Which is best for you? Explore the possibilities with an experienced author/publisher.

Getting Personal

Don't Cut Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face: The ReStory Guide to Writing**Jeanne Guy**

Using the ReStory Reflective Writing Process, you'll learn a method of exploring, sharing, and reframing your thoughts about yourself and your writing in order to experience a better writing life. You'll also receive easy but important tools to tap into and fire-up your creativity, thus positively impacting your writing.

Sunday**Session 5: 9-10am**

The Writing Life

Write Your Travels - Inside and Out**Mary Dingee Fillmore**

Traveling is an ideal time to write a record of your experiences, but also to pass on what you are seeing, and why, to armchair travelers. We'll talk about different formats for writing up your travels and widening your circle of readers. Let's go!

Other

Self Healing Yoga Class**Bird Mejia**

Shakti Naam Yoga is a self-healing yoga derived from the Yoga of Immortality in India. It uses sound therapy, mudras (yoga hand postures) and breath work to allow the body/mind to heal in ways optimal to the individual.

Take Home Workshops

Gathering Women's Writing: How to Create an Anthology**Susan Wittig Albert**

Interested in collecting women's writing? A panel of experienced editors and anthology-creators will talk about how they went about the process of gathering, editing, and publishing writings by women.

Craft Matters

Getting Started: Shaping Your Writing Voice**Sandra Shackelford**

This workshop is all about you, drawing you out and preparing you to write all the stories you've been wanting to write until life got in your way. Not anymore! Today you will be given the tools and the confidence to put the stories of your remarkable life on paper.

Session 6: 10:30-11:30am

Breaking Into Publishing/Marketing

The Story Within You**Teresa Lynn**

This workshop will introduce you to book creation by demonstrating how to take your passion and use it to create a keepsake book that is also suitable for marketing your story.

Take Home Workshops

Give a Hoot for Your Community OWLs (Older Women's Legacies)**Mary Jo Doig**

Older women are precious jewels who hold extraordinary stories, yet often believe their lives are ordinary. This workshop provides tools to locate your community women, guide you through each stage of an OWL workshop, and access to a facilitator guide and creative workbook that will lead to a treasured OWL booklet for each of your participants.

Breaking Into Publishing/Marketing

The How-To's to Successful Blogging**Len Leatherwood**

Have you had good intentions to start or continue a blog only to find yourself not following through even though you know it's a great writing and marketing tool? This workshop will help you understand the natural obstacles intrinsic to regular blogging and provide strategies to overcome those obstacles. It will also teach you the value of timed writing and will give you ways to approach blog topics in a new and creative way.

Getting Personal

Breaking Silence: Revealing Truth, Releasing Secrets, and Finding Your True Voice**Linda Joy Myers**

We struggle with our voices: we're too loud, too quiet, too ____. Fill in the blank. Writing stories invites us to break these barriers, but family secrets and conditioning to stay silent haunt us. We'll discuss the power of the #MeToo movement for memoirists and practice writing in our true voice.



2017 Sarton Awards Honor Excellence

There was excitement around the country when Story Circle Network recently announced the winners of its 2017 Sarton Women's Book Awards. Winners and finalists are listed below, and also in this issue you'll enjoy profiles of two of the winners, Linda M. Hasselstrom and Christine E. Volker.

The award program is named in honor of May Sarton, who is remembered for her brilliant contributions to women's literature as a memoirist, novelist, and poet. Awards are given annually to women authors writing chiefly about women in memoir, biography, and fiction published in the United States and Canada and selected from works submitted. Sarton award winners are published by small/independent publishers, university presses, and author-publishers. Winners receive a cash award; winners and finalists receive a package of benefits. Guidelines for the 2018 competition are available on the SCN website: <http://www.storycircle.org/SartonLiteraryAward/guidelines.php>

"Announcing the Sarton winners is always exciting for us," says Susan Wittig Albert, our founder and president. "Honoring outstanding women authors and their independently published books is a special privilege for SCN. Indie publishing requires courage, commitment, and a passionate belief in the importance of story. It allows writers to partner with others to write, design, produce, and market their books outside of the traditional routes. We are proud of our winners, who have met many challenges on their way to publication."

MEMOIR:

Gathering from the Grassland – Linda M. Hasselstrom of Hermosa, SD

Finalists:

You Can't Buy Love Like That – Carol E. Anderson

Playing with Dynamite: A Memoir – Sharon Harrigan

Nowhere Else I Want to Be: A Memoir – Carol D. Marsh

I Know It In My Heart: Walking Through Grief With a Child – Mary E. Plouffe

BIOGRAPHY:

Lincoln's Generals' Wives: Four Women Who Influenced the Civil War – Candice Shy Hooper of Boca Grande, FL

Finalist:

Love, Bill: Finding My Father Through Letters From World War II – Jan Krulick-Berlin

CONTEMPORARY FICTION:

Venetian Blood: Murder in a Sensuous City – Christine Evelyn Volker of Richmond, CA

Finalists:

This Is How It Begins: A Novel – Joan Dempsey

All That Is Solid Melts Into Air – Carole Giangrande

A Quiet Fear – Thia Keen

HISTORICAL FICTION:

Dark Lady: A Novel of Emilia Bassano Lanyer – Charlene Ball of Atlanta, GA

Finalists:

Eden: A Novel – Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg

Amah and the Silk-Winged Pigeons – Jocelyn Cullity

When It's Over – Barbara Ridley

YOUNG ADULT FICTION:

Defiance on Indian Creek – Phyllis A. Still of Gilmer, TX

Finalist:

The Tower – Lynn Yvonne Moon



Linda Hasselstrom

Rancher & Sarton Winner

by Pat Bean

Linda Hasselstrom's curiosity about the plants and wildlife that inhabited the South Dakota ranch, which became her home when she was nine years old, began a lifelong habit of note-taking. From that early beginning, Linda went on to write seven books about the ranch and her life, of which the most recent, *Gathering from the Grassland*, won Story Circle Network's Sarton Award for Memoir.

"I wanted to remember the way an antelope stamped its feet and snorted, or how a hawk flew over us," said the author about her efforts at note-taking. "The writing evolved as I did, changing as my view of the ranch, and its relation to the rest of the world, changed – through high school, college, graduate school, and eventually returning to the ranch."

Linda's passion for nature, protecting the environment, educating the public about grasslands and ranching, and encouraging women to tell their own stories, come across as strong themes in her books. A poet, essayist, writing motivator, and anthology editor, she has a bachelor's degree in English and journalism, a master's degree in American literature, and has been teaching writing in one form or another for 45 years.

One of her books, *The Wheel of the Year: A Writer's Workbook*, contains much of what the years have taught her about writing, and has been praised as "one of the best sources of encouragement and practical advice." For the past 22 years, much of Linda's teaching has taken place at Windbreak House, a writing retreat she created using a former home, located a half-mile from the ranch house where she now lives.

In 1991, in *Land Circle*, Linda wrote: "The outdoors is our natural habitat ... Sit outside at midnight and close your eyes; feel the grass, the air, the space. Listen to birds for ten minutes at dawn. Memorize a flower." That she follows her own advice is clearly evident in her latest book.

Gathering from the Grassland is written in journal form, as was her first book, *Windbreak: A Woman Rancher on the Northern Plains*. This sequel revisits that same landscape 30 years later. For it, Linda says, she spent a year observing the changing of the seasons and the daily life of her feathered and furred neighbors.

"At the same time, I studied the personal journals of my parents and other relatives, trying to understand their lives from an older and wiser perspective; hoping that

making sense of the past would allow me to see my way into the future ... I just kept on taking notes in my journals, as I do every day, and eventually began to think about the subjects that have occupied my interest during the past few years.

"I am 74 years old, childless, unmarried, and have no siblings, not even any cousins who are in ranching." Linda realized other ranchers face similar questions about what will happen to their lands, and she began to think the story of an aging rancher/writer, one who was enjoying this latter phrase of life, might be a worthwhile subject to explore.

Linda's advice to writers is simple. "The best way to overcome all failure in writing is to write. Every day. No matter what you write, if you write every day you will be a better writer at the end of the year than at the beginning. The best way to improve your writing is to read excellent examples of what you want to write."

Taking her own advice, Linda says one of her favorite books is Andy Goldsworthy's, *A Collaboration with Nature*. In it, Goldsworthy writes: "For me, looking, touching, material, place and form are all inseparable from the resulting work. It is difficult to say where one stops and another begins. Place is found by walking, direction determined by weather and season."

Linda says much of her own writing is also affected by weather and season, and what she encounters when rambling. "I am a rancher, whose purpose is to raise cattle while preserving the grassland that nourishes them, but many specific days in ranch work are affected by whether it is snowing or the sun is shining. ... I'm free to let the environment create the writing I do, along with the physical work of creating my life here."

As a writing motivator, Linda often quotes Winston Churchill: "Never give up. Never never never never give up," then adds that she may have thrown in a couple of extra nevers to reflect her own view. As an example of that philosophy, Linda notes that her first book, *Windbreak: A Woman Rancher on the Northern Plains*, was rejected by

26 publishers before it was finally published. That book, she points out, places on record a great deal of information about the lives of family ranchers.

“Many environmentalists – and I count myself one – were uninformed or misinformed about the role cattle ranching plays in preserving the great grasslands that provide so much of our breathable air and so much of our American food – without pesticides, herbicides or machinery. I wanted to tell that story.”

Linda believes, however, that her participation in the Wind anthologies, the three collections of the writings of rural women that she helped edit with two other plains women, Gaydell Collier and Nancy Curtis, may be even more significant. “Those books may last longer in the world ... because they are the writings of ordinary rural women who might never have seen their words in print. We three editors helped these women speak directly to generations of readers about the realities of rural life.”

The three anthologies are: *Leaning into the Wind: Women Write from the Heart of the West*; *Woven on the Wind: Women Write about Friendship in the Sagebrush West*; and *Crazy Woman Creek: Women Rewrite the American West*.

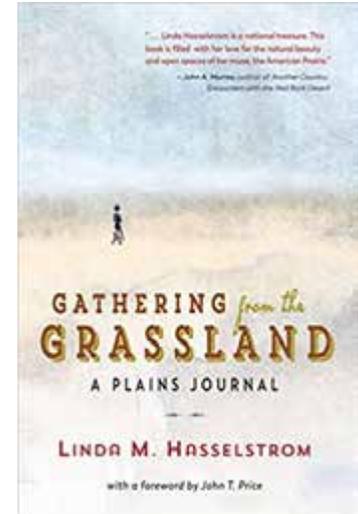
While Linda approaches her job of writing with professionalism and seriousness, she doesn't spend all her time pounding a computer. “A writer needs to have other employment, preferably beloved work that demands concentration.” For example, she notes, “On August 18 I wrote: Last year on this date I froze fourteen pints of green

beans and started a poem about picking beans. This supports my theory that it's good for a writer to be doing something else besides writing. Doing nothing but writing may make us guilty of too much introspection, or navel-gazing as a friend calls it. Picking beans resulted almost immediately in the beginning of a poem, but of course the writing business doesn't always work that way. ...

“Sometimes I am too busy with my daily chores to write, but those chores inevitably lead to writing because the writing is always in my mind, so that when an idea is ready, I can capture it. I am constantly alert for islands of writing calm in every day, and because I am watching for the calm of writing, I find it.”

In winning the Sarton Award, Linda hopes other women will see her as an example of someone who has survived many failures and setbacks, and yet kept on writing.

That *keeping on* is what Linda believes to be the key to happiness for a writer.



Pat Bean is a retired, award-winning journalist who traveled around this country for nine years in a small RV with her canine companion, Maggie. She now lives in Tucson, and recently published her book about those years, *Travels with Maggie*. She is passionate about nature, birds, writing, art, family, reading and her new dog, Pepper.

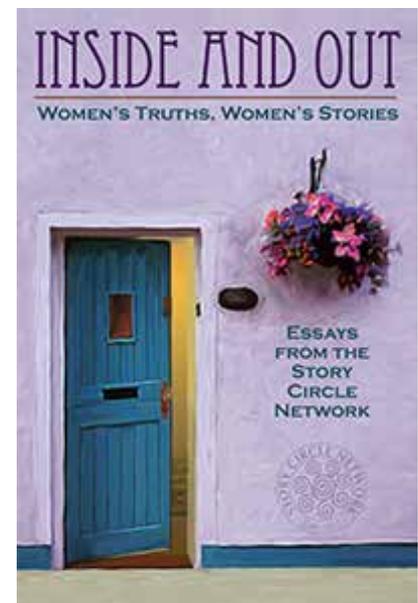
Inside and Out: Women's Truths, Women's Stories

Inside and Out: Women's Truths, Women's Stories is the newest book from Story Circle Network. It's a 250-page soft-cover anthology of women's lifewriting, drawn from SCN's annual collections of work by its members. Edited by Susan Schoch, *Inside and Out* includes 76 essays selected from 8 editions, 2009-2016.

An editorial team (Susan Albert, Mary Jo Doig, Pat LaPointe, Susan Schoch, Jo Virgil, Jude Whelley) recommended the selections. Sherry Wachter created the evocative cover and designed the readable and appealing interior.

Inside and Out is a remarkable gathering of women's voices, each individually an insight into the author's experience, made more powerful together as a chorus that sings the shared truth of women's lives.

You can order your e-book or print copy via Amazon. Just put the title into Amazon's search bar, and you'll find us!





Christine Volker: Her Debut Novel is a Sarton Winner

by Pat Bean

It wasn't writing, but travel that early on infatuated Christine Volker, whose mystery, *Venetian Blood*, won Story Circle Network's 2017 Sarton Award for Contemporary Fiction. "I distinctly remember, when I was thirteen, looking up from the sands of Fire Island, New York, and spotting a Pan Am plane high above, flying to Europe. I said to myself, I will be on that one day," Christine writes on her web page. "My thought wasn't purely to escape my mundane existence, but to sail beyond boundaries, to experience the world from a different perspective, and to feed my budding interest in foreign languages."

It wasn't until the author was in her early 40s, during a tumultuous and painful time when her first marriage was in shambles, that Christine started writing. "It was a way to create, and to give voice to my feelings. I ended up writing about a woman with a common link to my past, and Anna was born. I had lived through enough and found the confidence to pick up the pen." Anna eventually became the main protagonist in *Venetian Blood*.

Christine grew up on suburban Long Island, where summers meant the sun, the sea, the beach, and a town library in walking distance. She would visit the library with a friend and return home with an arm full of books.

Proud of her public-school education, Christine says she developed a love affair with foreign languages in the seventh grade. Then, at the University of Albany, she followed that passion by majoring in Spanish, minoring in German, and spending her junior year in Madrid. School vacations that year were spent traveling to different corners of Europe and Morocco. Those experiences "unveiled a new and exciting world of diverse traditions, languages, cultures and history."

After earning a master's degree in library science, Christine moved to California, hoping to work in the foreign book collection of a university library. Instead, finding that library jobs had been cut back, her Spanish landed her a job in international banking. A few years later, to advance in her career, she left to earn an MBA in finance at UC Berkeley.

"Time has brought clarity on what's important. Family and friends are first, life on earth, and legacy, what I leave behind, are next. I always remember what John Keats, the English Romantic poet said: 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.' Of course, that wasn't true for him. But I see it as a symbol of caution: what will you do – even if it's small – by making a difference for the future, and avoiding that fate?"

She chose to write in the mystery genre because it possesses a natural intrigue that propels readers forward, and she chose the foreign setting to add depth to the story. The bonus of that decision, Christine admits, is that it allows her to explore that chosen setting, both personally and in her imagination. "The mystery can be layered with character and complexity so that it achieves much more than a pure whodunit. I've spent my entire life fascinated by what's foreign ... I'm up to my eyeballs in wanderlust. I love traveling."

Long Island, where she grew up, was not a diverse place, Christine says, and that may be the reason she wanted to escape it, to discover what was on the other side of the ocean whenever she dipped her toes into the Atlantic, or heard her grandparents speaking Italian. "I don't know why I have this thirst. But one thing I do know: if we'd seek out different places and care enough to understand the people inhabiting them, we'd have less strife on this earth."

Christine points out that her book started with Venice. The city and its language enchant her – and she has visited at least a dozen times. "Venice speaks of duality, of opposites. The sea is a protector and an invader, the buildings, perched above the water, have reflections, the ancient origins of the city had two masters – Byzantine and Roman ... It was the perfect setting for Anna, who is the microcosm. Overly rational, repressed emotionally, she doesn't realize that her two sides are at war. She's also afraid of drowning – pretty terrifying in a city of water. Lastly, we have the cautionary tale I wanted to tell of a sinking city – a symbol of what rising seas will bring around the world.

"Surprising in a city of water and stone, *Venetian Blood* has references to more than 60 wild animals, some through Anna's musings on their beauty and surprising feats," the author notes. "A few even hold a key to a deeper mystery. Humans tend to get too wrapped up in their own

dramas and desires, not giving much thought to nature, and taking for granted that the planet will somehow muddle through. We've reached the point where that's not true anymore. I hope readers come away with more admiration and respect for wildlife in their hearts."

Christine says receiving the award named after May Sarton is kind of like a perfect circle, as Sarton also wrote about nature and family. "I'm honored to be chosen for an award in her name. It's a stamp of approval, particularly important for a debut novelist, and for that I'm very grateful."

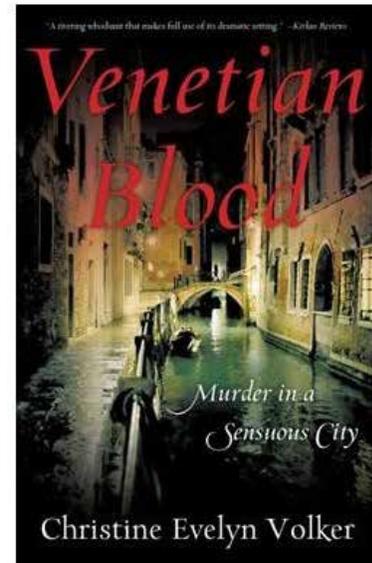
The best piece of writing advice she received, Christine mentions, was to let her characters get into impossible situations, and then not to rescue them. She says she found that hard to do in her earlier drafts, that she would let Anna escape too easily. "I was heaping all of this misery upon her, which wasn't fair. But without that misery, she couldn't grow, find her inner strengths and become more whole. To other writers I'd say: Reach for the heights, be fearless, and know that you are the only one who can tell your story."

While Christine has received many awards working for a global financial institution, which has allowed her to live in Italy and England, what she is most proud of is her second-chance family. "At some point, we're faced with the choice to either close down, or stay open to what may come our way. In 2002, seven years after my separation and subsequent divorce, I had come back from a solo vacation in Peru, convinced that solo would be a permanent feature of my future. But I ventured forth and met Steve. Marrying in 2003, with dedication we forged a strong partnership and a part-time home base for his two sons, now grown and flourishing."

Of course, Christine is also proud of completing her first book, and finally getting it published. "*Venetian Blood* started almost as an impossible hope, and it's been thrilling to see it in print. I poured everything I had into the book, revising, polishing, adding complexity, with the years rolling by. Finally, in 2017, it entered the universe of books with the help of my publisher, She Writes Press."

Though Christine says she was a seat-of-the-pants writer for *Venetian Blood*, she is being more organized for her next mystery, one that takes place in the Peruvian Amazon. She has also written a children's picture book that she hopes to get published.

"As the years clicked forward, it's not surprising that I chose to write international mysteries, exploring unique foreign places and cultures, examining the precariousness of the earth, and touching on truths we all share. The moral of my story, I suppose, is that even a curving path can bring you to your destination."



Spring 2018 Online LifeWriting Classes for Women

Fiction:

- Muscle-up the Gut of Your Story: How to Write the Novel (June 4-July 2, 2018)

Poetry:

- Summer Poetry, Summer Verse Writing (June 11-July 9, 2018)
- Haiku for Health: How the Ancient Practice of Haiku Connects Mind, Body, and Spirit (Part B) (May 28-June 25, 2018)
- Found Poetry to Found Prose (May 28-July 9, 2018)

Session 2: Independent Study Program:

- June 18-July 9, 2018:
Lynn Goodwin

Summer 2018:

Our next class schedule will be posted in mid-June. Classes will run July 16-September 10, 2018.



The Roots of OWD

by Susan Wittig

As the One Woman's Day blog changes leadership, SCN speaks with the OWD founder, Linda Hoye, about its beginnings and what comes next.

You brought up the idea of *One Woman's Day* back in late 2010. Do you remember where that idea came from? What prompted you to do it?

Yes, I remember exactly where the idea came from. In the summer of 2010 I was privileged to be one of the judges for SCN's annual lifewriting competition. One hot summer afternoon, when I was sitting in the lawn swing on my patio reading some of the entries, I was struck by how the events of a single day can hold so much richness, even changing the trajectory of a life.

I saw, through the lens of these stories, the ordinary become extraordinary. I felt a touch from women whose lives looked very different than mine did on the outside, but with whom I shared things in common nonetheless. I saw that there was richness in everyday moments.

I had started a personal blog a couple of years earlier and had formed real connections through it. I wondered if we could create a collaborative SCN blog where we could post short vignettes about our ordinary days. I wondered if we might find, through our shared stories, that we have more in common than we realized. I wondered if we might come to appreciate the gift of every day just a little bit more.

The Board agreed to give it a try and we launched on January 1, 2011 with a post from Stephanie Barko (<https://onewomansday.wordpress.com/2011/01/01/january-1-auld-lang-syne/>)

I envisioned, over time, a rich tapestry made up of moments taken from the days of our lives and that's exactly what *One Woman's Day* has become.

As a form of publishing, blogging wasn't new in 2010, but it *was* new to many SCN members. Was it difficult to get them to share their lives online? Has that willingness changed over the eight years you've been managing OWD?

SCN members embraced the concept of OWD. Our goal at the time was to post at least weekly; in our first year we far exceeded that.

The arrival of social media platforms, like Facebook, changed the way we interact online and we collectively allowed ourselves to get lazy. As bloggers, it became easier

to micro-blog on social media with short status updates and many chose to leave blogging behind. As readers, it was easier to scroll through short status updates and click a "like" button than to dig into narratives with more depth.

OWD was impacted by this trend in the years that followed and, though we've continued to feature a growing number of contributors and reach new readers every year, the overall number of posts hasn't yet surpassed that first banner year. (Notice I said *yet*.)

These days, we're hearing a lot about privacy concerns and there's a growing disillusionment with social media platforms that use algorithms to curate what we see. We're also coming to understand that our constant scrolling and liking is affecting our cognitive ability. In light of all of this, we're returning to blogs. What a great opportunity for OWD to grow!

Over 110 SCN members have contributed to the blog, some of them just once, others as many as 15-20 times. Do you have any favorite posts you'd like to point us to? Why do these stand out in your mind?

One of our first posts in 2011 was from Sharon Lippincott. It embodied exactly my vision for OWD: the story of an ordinary day that turned out to be something else. <https://onewomansday.wordpress.com/2011/01/07/january-7-stranded-in-iceburgh/>

Juliana Lightle contributed two very different posts about a single shocking event—one a poem, the other, in 2013, a short narrative I've never forgotten. <https://onewomansday.wordpress.com/2013/07/17/july-17-star/>

More recently, Mary Jo Doig contributed a beautiful glimpse into her in-person writing circle that made me nostalgic for the group I left behind when we returned to Canada a few years ago. <https://onewomansday.wordpress.com/2017/04/11/april-11-a-mindful-meditation-of-our-womens-life-writing-circle/>

We are always changed (even if only a little) by the projects to which we give our time and attention. How has OWD changed you?

That's an interesting question. I think my epiphany that there were nuggets of story tucked within every single

day coincided with a personal restlessness and dissatisfaction with giving the best of myself to a corporation. As OWD began, my focus started shifting and I paid more attention to simple moments that once passed by in a blur. Every post served as a reminder to focus on simple and ordinary moments. My life today looks very different from what it looked like back then. In a sense, the OWD contributors helped me get here.

As you hand OWD over to Kali' Rourke, what are your hopes for its future?

As mentioned, I'm encouraged by what I see as a blogging renewal. Blogs might look a little different than they did in 2010 (maybe it's time for an OWD makeover?) but they're still--and again--vibrant online communities.

OWD gives us an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing narrative of women's experience with a readership around the world. It's a place where we can read about the experiences of other women and find connection. It's a place that reminds us to pay attention.

I challenge all SCN members to take time to reflect on a day—any day—and mine treasure in the form of story from it. It's there. I promise. (And then submit a post to OWD, of course!)

After these seven years, I'm still excited about OWD. I'm confident that it will flourish under Kali's leadership and look forward to watching it grow. I'll still show up there from time to time with glimpses into my ordinary and extraordinary days. Consider this your personal invitation to show up there, too.

Linda Hoye is on the other side of a twenty-five-year corporate career and is embracing a simple, happy, and creative life. A writer, photographer, gardener, and somewhat-fanatical grandma, she lives in British Columbia with her husband and their doted-upon Yorkshire Terrier. Find her online at www.lindahoye.com.



In Memoriam – Cathy Scibelli

by Donna B. Russell

Cathy Scibelli, dear friend and SCN member, passed away early Easter Sunday morning, April 1, 2018, at age 63, after a long battle with cancer. Cathy and I met through SCN, and she often quipped that we must have been sisters in a former life because we had so much in common.

Cathy loved being part of an online writing circle, and was thrilled when she received a copy of *Inside and Out: Women's Truths, Women's Stories*, in which her story, "The Power of Pebbles," was published. Her blog and Facebook posts were informative and entertaining, and featured the antics of her little muse, Stretch, a 3-inch bear with a giant ego.

She will be remembered for her upbeat, positive outlook, her sense of humor, and indomitable spirit. Cathy will be greatly missed.



From the Blogs:

One Woman's Day



by Kali' Rourke

The stories we share on One Woman's Day are always unique because the women who write them are a kaleidoscope of expressions and experiences. It's a pleasure to provide this venue to share stories about those ordinary days that are, in reality, anything but, and the extraordinary adventures we go on that touch us and teach us. Recently, **Carol Ziel** wrote about a day of humor and self-realization, and we share it here for you to enjoy. Find out how you can contribute to our One Woman's Day blog: <http://onewomansday.wordpress.com/about/>

Assembly Required

by Carol Ziel

I tried to brush the vanilla icing from my lip. It stuck. Or rather "they" stuck: a small colony of coarse white hairs had gathered at the corner. This burgeoning village of whiskers had joined the unicorn hair that sprung from between my eyebrows, and the straggly chinny-chin-chin hairs that could easily be braided into a ZZ TOP kind of look if left unattended. I used to hang on the sink watching my father shave. Never in my childhood fantasies did I contemplate having similar Gillette moments.

Now, even before I begin to shave, I must find my glasses. I have two pairs: not the cute little reading half-glasses in funky colors from Walgreens, but serious nerd glasses—one for reading and the computer, and one for distance. Then there is my somewhat new hearing aid.

Finally, the "pad of the day." I used to have a collection of shoes. My current collection is adult incontinence supplies. I used to buy one Victoria's Secret push-up bra or matching panty each pay period. They came in glorious jewel tones. Now my undie drawer is packed with Fruit of the Loom and black sports bras. It would take more than the color black to make a sports bra sexy. And my breasts are no longer even in alignment.

The breast situation at least has an interesting story. I had to crawl my 70-year-old body through my locked truck's back window to retrieve a key. While my breasts were wedged on the console, my butt was hanging out under a perfect blue sky, bent in an unflattering penitent position. Although I did retrieve the key, backing out was a problem of mythical proportions. Embarrassment gave me momentum. With a pop that was startlingly like a champagne cork, I flopped out. True, the key was in hand, but one breast hung further south than at the beginning of the adventure. Apparently, ligaments are not what they used to be either.

I long to jump out of bed, pulsing with the promise of the day. I miss the time when my breasts were perky and pristine, bladder snugly in place, my eyes piercing and hearing sharp, and when the only cane I owned belonged to a sexy Halloween tap-dancing costume. I miss 4-inch heels and disco clubbing. I miss the time when my mail was more than AARP catalogues, Medicare supplement notices, and life insurance advertisements.

But most of all I miss a time when assembly was not required to start my day.

Carol Ziel has been an SCN member for six years and is grateful to be nurtured by such wonderful women writers. She is also a gardener, grandmother, social worker, Quaker and Goddess-centered woman, who primarily writes poetry but is branching out into more essay types of writing. More to be revealed.

Kali' Rourke, Coordinator of SCN's One Woman's Day blog, is a retired Mortgage Banker and Escrow Officer who is now a full-time volunteer and philanthropist in Austin. She is a Mentor and is a board member of BookSpring, which makes children's literacy its mission. She writes about the parallels between parenting and management, mentoring, personal stories, and living with Burning Mouth Syndrome, in her blogs: **Kali's Musings** and **A Burning Journey**.



Writing Tips from Our Teachers

In every Journal, we bring you something valuable from one of the talented instructors in our Online Classes program. Len Leatherwood, Coordinator of that program, steps up to the mike this issue, offering us her highly effective method for becoming a better writer.

The Value of Writing 20 Minutes a Day

by Len Leatherwood

One of the easiest and best ways to start or improve your writing is to begin a practice of writing just 20 minutes a day. This is a simple enough approach, which involves a timer, your computer (or pen and paper), and you. Your only job is to write continuously for those 20 minutes and not to erase or stop. Do not be concerned about spelling, grammar, or paragraphing. Just get those thoughts on the page and shift as many times as your thoughts shift. No rules for those 20 minutes except to write.

Benefits of Writing 20 Minutes a Day:

Increasing fluidity, developing voice, discovering who you are and how you think, feeling good about yourself by doing something every day related to writing, calling yourself a writer, forcing you to stop being such a perfectionist, chronicling your life in these entries, creating a body of work.

If you blog daily, you will increase readership, open yourself up to people writing similar things on the Internet, create a community of writers, increase your chances of attracting an agent, and others' posts will spur your own writing.

Challenges to Writing 20 Minutes a Day:

1. I am boring and so is my life.
2. Why would anybody care about what I'm writing?

3. I am wasting my time. I will never make money doing this.
4. I have nothing to write about. I am blank.
5. I am not a good writer, why am I bothering?
6. My family is complaining that they need me, and I should be more attentive to them.

Ways to Combat Negative Self-Talk:

Set a timer, pick up your computer or notebook and make a list of the negative messages you tell yourself. Then, defend yourself against all that negativity by coming up with the reasons why those messages are not 100% true. To the claim, "My life is boring and nobody wants to read about it," you can ask, "Is it true my life is 100% boring?"

Your response: "Well, no, I have a few interesting moments." Then, a follow-up question: "Is it possible that people like to read about everyday occurrences sometimes?" Your answer: "I like reading about ordinary life, I guess others do too." Suddenly, your life being too boring isn't as powerful anymore. That makes you more inclined to write. Try this approach; it actually works.

Writing just 20 minutes a day will build your writing muscles, and learning to combat negative self-talk will help develop a positive approach to living. Combine the two and you will be well on your way to becoming a healthy, happy writer who produces work every day.



Len Leatherwood, SCN's Online Classes Program Coordinator, has taught writing privately in Beverly Hills for the past 17 years. She has received a state and national teacher award for the past 7 years from the Scholastic Artists and Writers Awards, the oldest and most prestigious writing contest for youth in the U.S. Len is a daily blogger at 20 Minutes a Day, as well as a published writer of 'flash' fiction/memoir with pieces appearing in flashquake, longstoryshort, All Things Girl, SCN's Real Women Write anthology, and Provo Canyon Review, as well as A Cup of Comfort Cookbook, currently on Amazon. In 2015, she was a nominee for a Pushcart Prize, the best of the small presses.



Linda Wisniewski: Author, Teacher, Mentor

by Pat Bean

You might say Linda Wisniewski's writing career began with Monk's Bread, back when she was an elementary student. That's when she was awarded a loaf of Monk's Bread for winning an essay contest—about bread. But it would be many years before Linda acknowledged that writing was her career.

Born and raised in Amsterdam, New York, where all her family worked for the town's rug mills, Linda chose a different route: education. She has a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Buffalo, a master's degree in library science from Villanova, and a post-master's in information resource management from Drexel.

She calls the jobs she held over the years "quite the journey." Linda started as a welfare caseworker, worked as a clerk in a Social Security office, and then as an employment counselor and vocational rehab counselor for Pennsylvania. After that she went back to grad school and became a librarian, and then worked at several pharmaceutical companies as a medical librarian, and later in reference at a small public library. During these years, Linda also had her own business doing online market research for the pharmaceutical industry.

But for the past 20 years, this SCN member has worked for herself as a writer and teacher.

"I'm one of those writers who always wrote, but didn't make it a career until I was over fifty," Linda says. It was at this age that Linda read *Writing from Life* by Susan Wittig Albert, and then joined Story Circle Network. Her connection with other writers, and participation in workshops, resonated with Linda, whose memoir, *Off Kilter: A Woman's Journey to Peace with Scoliosis, Her Mother, and Her Polish Heritage*, was published in 2008. Her decision to teach writing was made, she explains, because she came to love the teachers she studied with so much that she wanted to share the experience with other women.

"The Older Women's Legacy circles at SCN inspired me to teach at retirement homes. At one time I facilitated a Story Circle, then started a spiritual writing group at my Unitarian church that ran for five years. I love watching my students use my exercises to express themselves, and seeing their sense of fulfillment," she relates.

"When I started, I cobbled together a six-week course for the continuing education division of Bucks County Community College. ... That first class had about six

people. Two were retired women physicians born in India. Their stories about the assassination of Gandhi when they were girls paralleled mine about JFK when I was in high school. It opened my eyes to how much people have in common."

After learning how new she was to teaching, the students were kind, and even gave her a pot of mums at the last class. "I felt like a big success," Linda recalls.

She went on to teach memoir writing at the Philly Writers Conference, at retirement villages and assisted living facilities, to adult education classes, and now mainly at the Pearl S. Buck Writing Center. There she teaches an eight-month course that meets once a month, supplemented by online sessions where she posts readings for discussion and where students post and critique each other's writing. Linda also volunteers at the historic Pearl S. Buck House because she was inspired by Buck's work for biracial children, civil rights, and women's rights.

The Buck House is one of the only homes of a woman writer that is on the National Register of Historic Places. "And one of the few that includes the actual furniture and household goods the family used there, so it's a little glimpse into the 1940s farm life of a well-known writer. She raised Guernsey cows," notes Linda, adding that the goal of the House is to provide opportunities to appreciate other cultures.

She began thinking about her memoir, *Off Kilter*, after one of her writing teachers, Maureen Murdock, suggested she try to find a common theme. "I found three: scoliosis, my mother, and my Polish heritage. Actually, the common theme behind all three is 'suffering is good.' Typical 1950s Catholic female," says Linda, then laughs.

"Anyway, I organized my pieces into rough chronological order, and linked them around my journey out of that sad world view into discovering that I could create my own happiness. Many readers have told me they relate to my story, and that of my mother, who was silenced and silenced herself in a marriage of verbal abuse. Maybe growing up is what happens when you discover you can

make choices different from your parents yet still love them.”

For inspiration while writing the book, she relied on Anne Lamott’s advice in *Bird by Bird*. “You can write anything one little piece at a time,” says Linda. She also followed the advice of poet Jane Kenyon, who wrote: “Be a good steward of your gifts. Protect your time. Feed your inner life. Avoid too much noise. Read good books, have good sentences in your ears. Be by yourself as often as you can. Walk. Take the phone off the hook. Work regular hours.”

“Today, Kenyon might say ‘take Facebook and Twitter off your phone.’” Linda also likes Cheryl Strayed’s writing advice. “It makes me laugh, and for some reason, keep writing.”

Meanwhile, Linda exemplifies SCN’s goal of helping women get their stories out to the public. She encouraged and assisted Laura Mitchell Keene, an African-American woman whose husband was renowned artist Paul Keene, to write her own story, after learning that Laura Keene was a descendant of Aaron Burr and his East Indian servant, and was someone who had lived through the eras of Jim Crow, racial segregation, the Great Depression, WWII, the civil

rights movement, and the second wave of feminism. Linda then helped Keene get the book published. You can read more about this at: <https://tinyurl.com/y825f58s>

While Linda says she would like to be one of those people who can jump out of bed and write, she has to first get organized, settled, tidy up, and do errands, which means her best writing time is in the afternoons. Her writing space, she says, is a “lovely” large home office that also serves as her quilting, yoga, and meditation space. “The sewing machine is set up opposite my desk, yoga mat and blocks against the wall, meditation cushions in the corner. Good lighting and a nice view of the bird feeder from my second-floor window.”

Asked how she keeps writing and submitting in the face of rejection, Linda recommends *The Art of Slow Writing* by Louise DeSalvo, one of the “older” women writers she admires these days for their ability to keep going and going. “DeSalvo advises us not to equate our worth as writers with the number of pages we write rather than with the excellence of our work. That’s where the satisfaction and fulfillment come from,” Linda says, “not in the constant push to be seen. I aspire to excellence, though I know it’s a moving target.”

Linda has two grown sons, and currently shares a home with her retired scientist husband in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where she writes for two local newspapers. Her work has been published in the Philadelphia Inquirer, The Sun, Massage, gravel, Christian Science Monitor, The Quilter, and other places. Her unpublished novel, *Where the Stork Flies*, was a finalist for the 2015 Eludia Award, and her essay, “Late Blessing,” was a top 15 finalist for the 2016 Ruminant Magazine Spiritual Nonfiction Award. You can also enjoy her work in our 2017 Real Women Write anthology, and in SCN’s newest book, *Inside and Out*.

“I Was Transformed”

“One of the transformational events in my life happened in 2006 when I was awarded a scholarship to attend the National Story Circle Network’s Memoir Conference in Austin, Texas. From the moment I walked into the Wyndham Hotel, I knew I’d found “family.” Women milled about. They smiled and greeted each other warmly. This sorority of like-minded sisters had stories to tell. Many of them in their sixties resembled me, their hair also short and silver-white, glowed beneath the room’s fluorescent lights. They, too, had come to open themselves to learning, to take the first or second or third step in writing about people and experiences that had, for better or sometimes for worse, shaped them and their unique lives.

During that conference, I was transformed. I became empowered, gathering up the courage I needed to begin writing about my own odyssey. Because of this experience, it became my mission to bring what I had experienced at that conference back to my community. I returned to Green Bay and found a place to conduct my Women’s Writing Circles. And so began my efforts, encouraging other women to write their stories in a safe, supportive, non-judgmental, non-critical, non-competitive environment, thereby becoming empowered through the act of writing and in some instances, healing old wounds through engaging in the creative process.”

—Sandra Shackelford,
Green Bay WI, August 2017



True Words from Real Women

A selection of short pieces of lifewriting by our members, edited by Jo Virgil. This month's topic is **"A True Friend."** Future topics are listed on the back page. Please contribute your own True Words to the Journal by using this link:

<http://www.storycircle.org/members/frmjournalsubmission.php>

Nadia

Madeline Sharples – Manhattan Beach CA
<http://madelinesharples.com>, madeline40@gmail.com

We sat across the table
 covered with a crisp white cloth.
 Her face glowed in the light,
 her radiant smile punctuated
 by deep, long dimples in each cheek.
 Simply dressed in black slacks and a white sweater
 she looked comfortable in her own skin.
 She spoke confidently in English.
 And, when speaking her native Italian,
 she spoke slowly so we could
 understand her words.
 At this first meeting
 in the quiet La Casa Volpi Ristorante
 just outside the city,
 eating bread dipped in oil
 from olives grown and pressed nearby,
 and drinking smooth, dark Chianti,
 it was clear we would be friends.
 Her warmth and love oozed from every pore.
 We lingered over contuccis and vin santo,
 not wanting to end this evening
 and our time in Arezzo in northern Tuscany.
 Then, before parting, we hugged
 so tight I knew she would forever
 have a place in my heart.
 She must have thought so, too.
 The next day, as we were leaving her city,
 she gave me a piece of herself—
 lavender picked from her garden
 neatly packed in a heart-shaped bouquet.

Being a True Friend

Sarah Fine – Toronto ON
 e-circle 3, e-circle 4

I have old friends
 People I've known for 40 years or more
 Women and men I trust will be loyal
 And step in to help
 In case of illness
 I have the proof
 But what makes them true?
 Is it the years gone by?
 Shaping and smoothing our friendships
 Through the restless 20s
 When we danced in social times
 Marched for peaceful worlds
 And sang along to protest music
 The speed dating 30s
 Where we navigated romance
 With hours of conversation
 They are the "family" I chose when
 My first family just didn't measure up
 We celebrated weddings and births
 Meeting for lunch and connection
 During the parenting 40s
 The workaholic 50s
 Asking each other hard questions
 Listening to our broken answers
 We retired in our 60s
 Stood together for divorces and funerals
 Old friends giving me the chance
 To help when needed
 And put in the 10,000 hours it takes
 To be a true friend

There's Something About Mary

Debra Dolan – Vancouver BC
Debradolani958@gmail.com

We never know where, or under what circumstances, a “bestie” will come into our life. In 1981, I met Mary—a crazy, adventurous, purple-wearing, rainbow-loving, daring individual. I was en route to the South Pacific from central Canada when I stopped in Vancouver. Both hired by Mothers Pizza at the same time, we laughed privately at the hideous uniforms. Given that Mary had traveled previously in Australia and New Zealand, it seemed logical to connect and share information. What a wonderful surprise to discover that we both loved McDonald's, playing tennis, and were mutually ready to break out from our sheltered, shy ways. Alcohol and men were on our agenda that spring and summer, and we would let nothing interfere with sealing a friendship that has lasted nearly four decades. Every day we did not get fired it was a victory, as we liberally accessed the wine keg before, after, and during shifts, frequently arrived late visibly drunk, and flirted incessantly with every single (!) male patron.

Mary remains the most independent and fearless person I have ever met. She has traveled extensively, lived, worked, and loved on her own terms, and has a deep, deep joyous appreciation of life: “When I wake up I get to have peanut butter and toast. How fabulous is that?”

She has loved me and valued our friendship through my best, my worst, my meanest, my most confused, my most unlovable times. Some of the wildest times in my life have been us together. She was with me the night I met Glen and when our eventual marriage turned oh-so-sour and I was scared, sad, and betrayed. Mary comforted me as I trusted with my deepest realities. When I retreat into solitude and have not been available in her time of loss or injury, she forgives. When I cancel plans because life feels so overwhelming and I am pained, she is never angry. When I contact her in an hour of need or sharing happy news, she is always available. Her laugh is infectious, her storytelling and birthday parties legendary, and her hugs—long, meaningful, and sincere!

Everyone needs a Mary; do you have one?

Love Blooms in Valdosta, Georgia

Jane Gragg Lewis – Laguna Niguel CA

He quietly came in the back door with a secret hidden in his hand and looked through kitchen drawers until he found what he needed—a notepad and a pencil. Sitting at the kitchen table, he covered the paper with his arm and wrote his note.

He placed the note on the nightstand beside her bed. On top of it, he put the crushed, wilted secret that had been concealed in his hand—tiny yellow and pink flowers he had found in the backyard lawn.

The note, written in his kindergarten way, said, “I love you, Mommy.”

My Unorthodox Friend

Sara Etgen-Baker – Anna TX
Sab_1529@yahoo.com

As a youngster, I generally liked playing with other children and having friends. But given a choice, I was more inclined to go off by myself than do any of the dozens of things other children did to amuse themselves. So when they weren't looking, I slipped away and searched for a quiet place where I could be alone. Only then could I hear birds chirping, watch leaves stirring, feel my breath drifting onto the breeze, and see the clouds floating overhead. I enjoyed the tranquility and relished the texture of solitude with its depth and freedom. Like dry ground welcoming the rain, I let the solitude soak into my soul. And quite honestly, I never grew out of my love or need for solitude.

Yes, I often visit the world of people but invariably desert that world and seek solitude. Why? For some reason, I just never wanted a communion of souls. Why not? Being truthful is important to me, but I have difficulty being truthful with myself, let alone with others. And if I can't be truthful, I feel disloyal. Plus, being in even the best of company is sometimes exhausting, and I tire easily. Perhaps, like Kahlil Gibran, I grow weary of “rendering courtesy to those multitudes who believe that humility is a sort of weakness, and mercy a kind of cowardice, and snobbery a form of strength.” Maybe I have the writer's curse, wherein—even in solitude—a writer never feels alone.

Honestly, I'd have to say I'm never alone. Ironic, isn't it—to be alone but not alone? Within my solitude, I find my innermost self and discover that I'm one with the Universe, or with that Spirit that some refer to as God. I suddenly find myself in the world, yet undisturbed by its multiplicity. Yes, I prefer solitude; it is my consistent companion and unorthodox friend. To quote Thoreau, “I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep....”

Solitude is necessary for me; that's where my creativity dwells. I can no more live without creativity than I can live without sleep.

Lost Friend

Lois Halley – Westminster MD
loismhalley@gmail.com

We were born two weeks apart and lived next door to each other until my family moved when we were 10 years old. Until then, we spent part of each day together—free-range children who had a whole block of backyards to play in.

Every morning when we weren't in school, one or the other of us climbed the splintery fence that separated our yards, rejecting our mothers' advice to go through the front gates. It was so normal to be together that we both had a difficult adjustment when I moved, but we visited often and remained true friends.

Many days in our teen years were spent on your front porch sharing hopes and dreams. Marriage separated us by even more miles, but we reveled in the fact that we were best friends since birth.

Time doesn't just slip away—it travels at lightning speed. Much too soon, we turned 70. After not seeing you for several years, my husband and I were able to visit you. Now a widow, you were living in a small but sunny apartment.

You took us to your favorite restaurant and several local sites of interest. We promised to always be there for each other and celebrated the joy of our friendship.

I could see it happening even then. Your apartment was so crowded that there were only pathways to walk. Your bed was piled high with things. You confided you had to sleep on the sofa. You couldn't use the shower because extra clothes took up the entire rod. Trash was piled up in your kitchen.

Trying to be tactful, I talked to you about downsizing. Inside, I wondered how this could happen to my friend who was brought up in a spotless home where the beds were always perfectly made and the lacey curtains blew from the soft summer breezes.

Later you stopped seeing your doctor and taking your medications, got rid of your car, ceased your activities, and cut off communication. Where are you, my true friend?

CONGRATULATIONS to **Patricia Dreyfus**! She is this quarter's winner of a free 1-year extension to her SCN membership. Patricia was randomly selected from a pool of this issue's True Words and Circle Voices authors. It's great to know that she'll continue to be a part of Story Circle.

A reminder to our members to submit your work to your writing circle or to True Words. Sharing your writing is an empowering experience – and you might win a year of membership, too!

My True Friends

Patricia Roop Hollinger – Westminister MD
woodscrone@gmail.com

My marriage ended in divorce
Who would ever listen to my voice?

A divorce often brought on shame
'Cause folks were ready to place their blame.

Who would listen and share my pain?
I needed a friend not afraid of rain.

Joy said, "Sure come on over,"
When I told her I had lost my lover.

Gerry was there whenever I called;
With my angst she was never appalled.

Lana and I laughed and cried,
When I left her my tears were often dried

Jan, "I just need to talk."
At this request she never balked.

These were all true friends that I needed.
Often their words of comfort were heeded.

The Real Deal

Abby November – San Diego CA
novemberabby@yahoo.com

A pal, a bud, acquaintance may not:
stand test of time or the tears of joy and sadness.
A real friend shares your tears and tissues full of sadness.
The real deal can see me without my smiling mask:
And loves me most without face-paint,
For she sees through the facade.
A steadfast and patient friend is the real deal.
But kicks your butt when needed
(and you know you needed that).
The Real Deal holds your heart safely in her palms.
Shops with you and tells you when you look sloppy or slutty,
(unless that's the look you are going for).
Even when decades pass, greys don't, bladders weaken,
she is always in your heart and soul;
The real deal is in your DNA.

Virgin-Martyr

Patricia Dreyfus – Corona del Mar CA
<http://patriciadreyfus-writer.com>, padreyfus@gmail.com

Open any book of the certified saints,
 you will see their names listed.
 Old fashioned “girl” names
 with the suffix, virgin-martyr.

So many holy virgins it’s a wonder
 anyone begot Christian children.
 Even Ursula and her 11,000 anonymous best friends,
 traveled around Europe, died, untouched.

Young girls wearing a “crown of martyrdom,”
 each depicted as beautiful, die disfigured.
 Each sexually intact, were sexually attacked.
 They were obedient, but rebellious,

confrontational to male authority.
 Each opened her mouth and said, “No.”
 Her female body the reason for suffering,
 she achieved status only in death.

The boys were out there, defeating evil,
 winning virtue, saving souls,
 with no connection to sainthood
 and bodily state. Check out Augustine.

St. Teresa of Avila, had to lie low, play dumb,
 fearful of the Inquisition. Julian of Norwich,
 sealed up as an anchorite, her wisdom dispensed
 quietly, through the window.

Clare of Assisi chopped her hair,
 wore rags, begged for food.
 Even these mystics remained,
 always, always, ever virgin.

Which is why I love Mary Magdalene

An Unforgettable Friend

Judy Watkins – Myrtle Creek OR
Judywa77@gmail.com
 e-circle 3, e-circle 6, e-circle 9

What was her name? Why can’t I remember? I can see
 her as though it was yesterday, yet it happened a lifetime
 ago.

I remember her big bedroom—it was hers alone. She
 didn’t have to share it with her sisters. In one corner of the
 room there was a medium-green, small table with four
 chairs, a matching cupboard filled with tiny dishes, and a
 stove. We played with our dolls there and had tea parties at
 the table.

At my grandmother’s house there was a wooden cellar
 door that opened to the basement where she stored the
 fruits and vegetables that she canned from her garden, as
 well as the crocks of fresh sauerkraut and the 100-pound
 sacks filled with sunflower seeds from her garden. In the
 winter when it snowed, my friend and I used the cellar
 door as a slippery-slide, and every pond and puddle
 became an ice skating rink. In the summer, we clamped
 roller skates onto our shoes and raced up and down the
 sidewalks.

As I grew older, memories of this friend and the joys
 we shared continued to bring smiles to my face, yet parts
 of the memories confused me. I associated the bedroom
 with the war years in Washington, yet Grandma’s house
 and the cellar door were in North Dakota. How could that
 be? I remember so well the girl’s face, her long blond and
 curly hair, and her dresses with socks that always matched.
 Why can’t I remember her name?

I was in my 50s when I talked to my mother about the
 memories of this friend, hoping that she might fill in the
 blanks. My mother broke my heart when she said that my
 memories might have been dreams, because there was no
 such place or person. Could my mother be right? She was
 never a good mother and she worked all of the time. Did
 she have any idea who my friends might have been?
 Whose memory should I believe?

I sure wish that I could remember her name!!

Snow Angels

Jane Gragg Lewis – Laguna Niguel CA

1963:

She looks out the window and, as easily as butter on
 warm bread, a smile of the purest wonder spreads across
 the deep wrinkles of her face. She tells me, “It snowed up
 here.”

I look out to see what she’s talking about. “That’s not
 snow, Grandma. It’s clouds.”

“Clouds?”

“Uh-huh. Our plane is flying above them.”

“Oh, my goodness,” she says with a soft laugh. “I
 didn’t know a plane could go this far up in the sky.” Her
 simple remark reopens my eyes to the beauty of it all.

Still looking out at the fluffy white landscape, she asks
 with the unwavering faith of her childhood, “Do you think
 we might see an angel?”

A Set

Mary Jo West – San Clemente CA
mjwestsc@gmail.com

Outside our bedroom window
two Mourning doves
sit on a branch
of a Torrey Pine.

Where one goes,
the other follows,
a pair,
like the two of us.

Looking back,
our first meeting
seemed like a dream.

The world stopped
and our souls connected
to begin
a new journey.

Our six-decade marriage,
not without dissensions
but harmonious,

like a patchwork quilt
sewn with
love and affection,
bound by compassion
and mutual respect.

We give each other strength
in time of sorrow,
wisdom, in time of uncertainty,
delight in time of joy.

If ever two were one,
then surely we.

One afternoon, my brother Bob was watching his four-year-old son, Jimmy, play with his trucks on the living room floor. Bob felt so tired he could hardly keep his eyes open, and decided to take a short nap.

When he woke up an hour later, his head was aching, as though a hundred pound barbell had been dropped on his head.

How to Savor a Word

Jeanne Zeeb-Schechter – Valley Village CA
schechterzeeb@hotmail.com

The next time you're reading,
Listen for a word that calls your name.
Don't be in a hurry.
Eventually, it will find you.

When you locate your word,
Notice its shape.
Read it silently several times.
Listening for its music in your mind.

Whisper your word a few times,
Before you speak it into the world.
Feel how it caresses your mouth.
Relish its taste before it leaves your lips.

Sit with your word.
Reflect on all its meanings.
Be still, and be surprised
By its varied nuances.

This one word, your word,
Is a portal into your soul.
Meditate on it.
Pitch your tent and dwell in it awhile.

And, then carry it with you
Throughout the day,
Like an old friend
Who came to visit.

This is how you savor a word.

Spared

Mary Jo West – San Clemente CA
mjwestsc@gmail.com

Was it a migraine, a stroke, or what?

Then he looked up. Jimmy, taller and stockier than most kids his age, was standing on Bob's head, looking out the window, trying to get his friends attention.

What a relief?

Best Friends Forever

Ariela Zucker – Ellsworth ME
e-circle 4, e-circle 9

We were 11 when we met and 18 when our roads parted. For seven years, elementary school through high school, we were best friends. It meant spending hours together—walking back from school, talking about life’s meaning, and planning for the future. Secrets whispered in the dark of night on sleepovers, first loves revealed bashfully. I knew she was in love with him before she knew. Then she went her way; I went on mine. We still visited each other, wrote letters, shared.

Then I left the country; I got married, I had children. She did not marry and remained in the same neighborhood, in the house where she grew up.

Then my parents died; later, her parents died; she came to pay her condolences, I wrote to her and said I was sorry. Our parents were friends; they came from the same country in Europe.

Over 50 years have passed. Still, once a year when I visit my family in Israel, I pick up the phone (I remember her number by heart). We exchange current information; sometimes I visit her with my family—my husband, who knows her well, and my daughters, who are young women now. Over 50 years have passed, and it feels whenever I come as if the time stood still, as if I am 11 years old again.

She lives in the same old house that was her parents’ in the same neighborhood that hasn’t changed much. I wish her happy birthday on her Facebook page; I send cards for the holidays. We do not have much in common; we lived a different life for so many years, it’s hard to remember what held our friendship together when we were 11, then 15, then 18, then apart.

When I look at her, I see an elderly woman, as she probably does when she looks at me. But in her eyes, when we meet I can still see it—her as a child, as a teenager, as a young woman brimming with anticipations, and for a fleeting moment, I can see myself, too.



Jo Virgil, True Words Editor, has been a Story Circle Network member for many years and recently accepted a position on the SCN Board (Publication and Program member) and to serve as editor for True Words. Jo has a Master’s Degree in Journalism and has worked as a reporter, as a writing workshop teacher, as

Community Relations Manager for Barnes & Noble, and as Community Outreach Coordinator for the Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities. Writing and sharing stories are her passion.

A True Master at Work

Madeline Sharples – Manhattan Beach CA
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Three thousand miles separate Shanksville, PA and the El Segundo, CA gem shop where the tall elegant proprietor has restored, repaired, or polished over one hundred watch and bracelet parts, gold chains, silver metals and white and yellow gold rings retrieved from the ground after the crash of Flight 93.

“Look at this,” she said over and over, not able to grasp the force that had reduced these keepsakes to flat pancakes.

She sifted through the bottom of the baggie, through the dirt, holding up: a single pearl, a few purple beads on a short piece of string, a quarter. “There’s nothing to be done with these, absolutely nothing,” she said, her bright eyes brimming with tears.

She did manage to repair Andrew Sonny Garcia’s gold wedding band, identified by the inscription all my love, 8-2-69, that Dorothy Garcia now wears on the middle finger of her right hand.

A 16-word Challenge

The Gotham Writers Workshop issues an annual short memoir challenge, which was taken up by some of our members using 16 or 17 words (see page 11 of the March 2018 *Journal* for more). Rhonda Stanley suggested this fascinating exercise, and we want to be sure you meet her through her own version.

- Succeeding despite bipolar disorder. I take day by day, moment-to-moment, dealing with that in front of me. *Rhonda Stanley*



SCN's online writing circles allow members to share their poetry or prose with other women. Each month, they gather around prompts provided by a facilitator and share their experiences and worldview. Circle Voices is a showcase for our circle members' writing. For this issue, we are pleased to introduce e-circle #9, facilitated by Judy Watson, and a piece by member Lois Bull, writing about a special friendship. We hope you enjoy it. ~Sonja Dalglish, E-circles Coordinator

Friendship Forever

by Lois Ann Bull

The principal ushered me into Kindergarten mid-year. The classroom had twenty Wasp blondies and one very-dark-haired girl, Karen. She, being different, intrigued me. A friendship developed.

One day after school, Karen and I walked to my house, collected my new kitten, and continued to her house, where we fed the cat milk. Years later, her mother mused, "Looking at the two girls, all I could think was salt and pepper."

In second grade, Karen didn't come to school. I complained to my mother. She said, "Karen has Rheumatic Fever. She's home in bed. No school for awhile."

"Can I go to her house to play?"

"No," Mom said. "It's dangerous."

"Dangerous?"

"Yes, to her heart. She has to remain quiet."

"Oh," I said, " But she **will** be okay?" I wanted my mother's confirmation.

After what seemed like forever, Mom said I could visit Karen. "But you can't stay long."

Karen sat tucked up in bed under a quilt with a big smile. Not sure how to behave, I sat on the edge of the daybed to gossip.

"You're missing a lot of school work," I said.

"No, I'm not. A teacher comes everyday."

Wow! I thought. Teachers did that!

Karen's mother came and said, "You have to go now. Come back next week."

When I got home, I asked my mom, "Was it our classroom teacher?"

"No," Mom said. "Visiting teachers go to sick kids."

Karen got better.

In fifth grade, we pored over movie magazines. They consumed us. Audie Murphy and James Dean kept our hormones juicing. We'd study those trade publications, especially after she broke her arm. The whole class signed Karen's cast and I was jealous, wishing I had a cast.

Then she got her period at age ten. Her mother called mine. My mom woke me to tell me. I got an earful about how girls' bodies change. The next day, in school, I checked Karen out surreptitiously. She looked the same. I forgot about it. Six months later, I became a woman, too.

From age five to sixteen, Karen and I lived in each other's pockets. We traded secrets and longings. We read the same books and shared each other's families. Karen came from Armenian heritage. Her grandparents had been prodded and terrorized by the Turks.

"The Turks shoved bamboo shoots under their fingernails" she said. Stunned, it was years before I understood genocide.

My senior year of high school, we moved away. Karen and I kept in touch. College separated us, then marriage, and children, but Christmas cards flowed.

Thirty years later, when our nests emptied, we were in touch. Picking up where we'd left off, comfortable with each other, we laughed, giggled, and shared memories.

We met for lunch this year. Karen's hair had blond highlights. Her eyes still sparkled.

Words With Friends is our daily habit. Armenians live into their nineties. Hopefully, Karen will. I want her in my life for seventy-two more terrific years!

PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

Our SCN members offer writing-related help in 9 areas: Author; Editors (content, manuscript, copyediting, proofreading); Freelancers; Ghostwriters; Marketing Services; Publishers / Publishing Services; Speakers; Teachers / Coaches / Mentors; Web Services. If you're looking for help, look here first. If you'd like to be featured in our new directory here and online, please go here: www.storycircle.org/frmjoinscn.php

Susan Wittig Albert: Author of mysteries, historical fiction, memoir, and nonfiction. She is available for a limited number of speaking engagements. www.SusanAlbert.com
Author, Speaker

Patricia A. Dreyfus: Patricia Dreyfus was born in the previous century, near the center of the North American Continent, in Harvey, North Dakota. She has lived in California since she was three years old and is "of" that Golden State. Today she lives in Corona del Mar, California, with her first and favorite husband, Gary. <http://patriciadreyfus-writer.com> **Author, Editor, Teacher**

MaryAnn Easley: Award-winning author & educator, MaryAnn Easley teaches memoir & fiction writing, poetry & journaling, hosts literary salons & poetry events, and does occasional boutique publishing. Awards include Junior Library Guild Selection, teacher of the Year, Quick Picks, and California Reading Association Award of Excellence. authormaryanneasley@gmail.com **Author, Publisher, Speaker**

Jeanne Guy: Author, speaker and self-awareness writing workshop facilitator. She is a member of SCN's Board of Directors & the 2014 & 2016 Conference Co-chair. www.jeanneguy.com **Teacher**

Linda Hasselstrom: Poet and nonfiction writer who conducts writing retreats on her ranch on the plains of southwestern South Dakota. With a BA in English and Journalism, and a MA in American Literature, she has been a teacher of writing for more than 40 years. www.windbreakhouse.com **Teacher/Coach**

Mary Jarvis: Librarian, quilter, and author currently living and working in the Panhandle of Texas. Email: mej Jarvis@suddenlink.net **Author**

Pat LaPointe: Psychotherapist who conducts both group and individual consultation. She uses this experience to create programs designed to enrich women's lives through interactive writing workshops. She facilitates online and on site writing groups including groups designed to assist senior women in legacy writing. www.changesinlife.com
Author, Editor, Teacher

Juliana Lightle: High School English teacher whose career experiences include college administrator, corporate manager, author, horse breeder and trainer, and educator. She currently writes, sings, and wanders the world. <https://julianalightle.com> **Author**

Donna Marie Miller: Author of *The Broken Spoke: Austin's Legendary Honky-Tonk*, published in April, 2017. Her articles have appeared in several magazines including: *Elmore, Creative Screenwriting, American Rhythm, Austin Food, Austin Fusion, Austin Monthly, Fiddler, and The Alternate Root*. donnamariemiller2013@gmail.com
Author

Sallie Moffitt: Award-winning author whose work has been anthologized in Story Circle's True Words Anthology and published in literary journals such as Ten Spurs Vol. 5 and Ten Spurs Vol. 9. She has worked as an editor and has judged writing contests. salliemoffitt@yahoo.com **Author, Freelancer**

Krista Nerestant: A psychic/medium, NLP Life Coach, and Qi Healer, she hosts a biweekly podcast, is a board member of Save the Essex, Motivational Speaker and member of Latina Surge, MFONJ, Writers Circle and MWG. Currently she is writing a book titled Survival Mode — Child abuse, traumas and how I healed by tapping into the sixth senses. krista@self-ishlifestyle.com **Author, Speaker, Teacher**

Amber Starfire: Amber's most recent books include *Not the Mother I Remember: A Memoir* — finalist for both the 2015 Next Generation Indie Book Awards and the 2013-2014 Sarton Women's Literary Awards — and *Week by Week: A Year's Worth of Journaling Prompts & Meditations*. Amber is also co-editor of the award-winning anthology, *Times They Were A-Changing: Women Remember the '60s & '70s*. Her creative nonfiction and poetry have appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of San Francisco and an MA in Education from Stanford University. When she's not writing, Amber enjoys the wine, weather, and cycling in the beautiful Napa Valley. <http://writingthroughlife.com>
Author, Editor, Teacher

Stories from the Heart IX Registration Form

Send this form with your check to:
Conference Registration, Story Circle Network
PO Box 1616, Bertram TX 78605
To register online and use your credit card, go to
www.storycircle.org/Conference/frmregister.php

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Current Member of Story Circle? yes no

Registration Type		Regular Registration (2/1/18 - 6/20/18) member/non-member	Late Registration (after 6/20/18) member/non-member	Amt Due
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Registration (Fri keynote / Sat / Sun)		\$365/\$420	\$405/\$460	
Partial Registration (please check all that apply):	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday (Keynote/ dessert reception)	\$40	\$45	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday only (includes lunch)	\$195/\$220	\$224/\$249	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday lunch only	\$40	**	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday only (includes lunch)	\$130/\$155	\$138/\$163	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday lunch only	\$40	**	
Friday Pre-Conference Workshop (Not included in full registration: optional, extra charge.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Noon-1:45 pm session: Debra Winegarten	\$40 each	\$50 each	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3:45 pm session: Susan Wittig Albert			
Saturday/Sunday lunch preference: <input type="checkbox"/> chicken <input type="checkbox"/> vegetarian			Total due:	

What is included in my full registration fees?

- All General Sessions
- Workshop Sessions
- Friday Evening Keynote Address & Dessert Reception
- Two Meals (Sat. & Sun. lunch)
- Refreshments/Snacks
- Opportunity to sign up for free 15-minute Coaching Session

What is not included in my full registration fees?

- Optional Friday Pre-Conference Workshops
- Hotel rooms are not included. Contact the hotel to reserve your room.

Male guests are welcome at our three public events: the keynote address and the Saturday and Sunday lunches. Our conference sessions are designed for women only.

* Non-Members who choose to join SCN prior to the end of the conference on Sunday, July 22, 2018 will have a portion of their registration fee applied toward a one-year membership: those who registered for the full conference—or Sat & Sun—can pay an additional \$10; one-day attendees can pay and additional \$35.

** You MUST register for lunches by 6/20/2018! Registrations for these events will NOT be accepted at the door.

Refund Policy: Cancellations are accepted until June 20, 2018, and are subject to a cancellation fee of \$50 for a full conference registration or \$25 for a one-day registration. No refunds after June 20, 2018. Note: If you cancel past our refund deadline, and you were registered for Saturday and Sunday or the full conference, you will receive a two-year extension of your National membership.

 <input type="checkbox"/> This membership is a gift.	<h2>Join the Story Circle Network!</h2> <p>Annual Membership if receiving printed, mailed publications:</p> <p>_____ Canada & Mexico: \$85 (International MO)</p> <p>_____ International \$90 (International MO) 3/2018</p> <p>_____ USA: \$65</p> <p>_____ Annual Membership for ALL locations receiving <i>online</i> publications only: \$55</p> <p>_____ Internet Writing or Reading eCircle Membership : \$20/yr (in addition to national dues)</p>		Make your check to Story Circle Network PO Box 1616 Bertram, TX 78605
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Enter our 'Hot Flash' Contest!



Enter your flash fiction (no longer than 600 words) in our **Hot Flash** contest, open to all SCN members.

Winners will be announced publicly at the 2018 *Stories from the Heart* Conference in Austin, Texas, July 20-22. (If you are not yet a member, registering for the 2018 Conference will make you eligible.)

Deadline for the contest is midnight EDT June 22.

What is flash fiction? It's a short-short story (sometimes called a micro-story) that usually contains the four classic elements: protagonist, conflict, complications, and resolution. But there are no rigid requirements. Here, for example, is Hemingway's famous six-word story: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." Yes, there's an art to wrapping up a big story in a tiny package.

Your flash fiction topic for this contest: **Stories from the Heart**. Consider (but don't feel confined to) these possibilities and more: heartache, heart throb, heart attack, heartfelt, broken heart, beating heart, dancing heart, bleeding heart...

Hot Flash gives you an opportunity to explore the short fiction form and share your work. Get started on a story. You may win one of our three cash prizes and have your story shared at the conference and published in this Journal as well as on our award-winning website.

For complete rules and entry form, click <http://www.storycircle.org/Conference/hotflash.php>

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True Words

Tell us your story! We're always looking for writing that is rich in evocative detail, showing the struggles, challenges, and resolutions of real women living real lives. Submit your work here:

<http://www.storycircle.org/members/frmjournalsubmission.php>

Use these topics, or write on a topic of your choosing for upcoming issues of the *Journal*:

- September, 2018: Words of Wisdom (deadline July 15)
- December, 2018: Dreams Can Come True (deadline October 15)
- March, 2019: Mother Nature (deadline Jan 15)

CONGRATULATIONS to **Patricia Dreyfus**! She is the winner of a free 1-year extension to her SCN membership. Patricia was randomly selected from a pool of this issue's True Words and Circle Voices authors. Submit your work to your writing circle or to True Words, and you might win, too!

Real Women Write 2018

Are you writing with our annual member anthology in mind?

Submissions open on July 1st – fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

http://www.storycircle.org/journal/anthology_submissions.php

RWW is always a great chorus of SCN voices. Don't miss this opportunity to add yours!

