

INK SPOTS

*The Newsletter of the Fremont Area Writers, A part of the California
Writer's Club*

Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Managing Editor

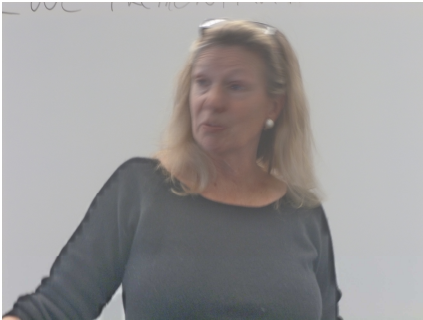
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Visit us at <http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org>

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PURPOSE: For the purpose of providing a forum of educating both members and the public in the craft of writing and in marketing their works. This is served by the monthly public meetings, workshops, and seminars, which are open to all writers and the general public, and is conducted for the purpose of educating writers of all levels of expertise.

FAW REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS



Jennifer Basye Sander

Our guest speaker Jennifer Basye Sander did her presentation to the FAW Members last November 26, 2011. She is the co-author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Self-Publishing." She offered advice on how to create great book titles and insights about what editors and publishers currently are seeking.



The group

Please Note: No general membership meeting on December 2011. Next meeting is January 28, 2012.

OPEN MIC FOR WRITERS

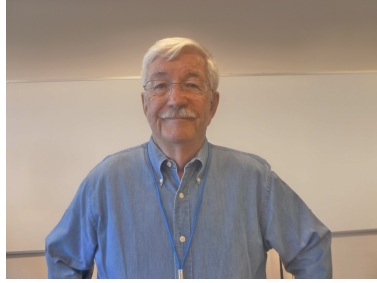


**Tony Pino delivering his poem at
Open MIC**

Open MIC nights for writers, presented by Fremont Area Writers, are held every third Thursdays at Paddy's Coffee Shop at 3900 Smith Street in Union City.

Readings are given from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Aspiring writers get 5-10 minutes to read portions of their work to a live audience.

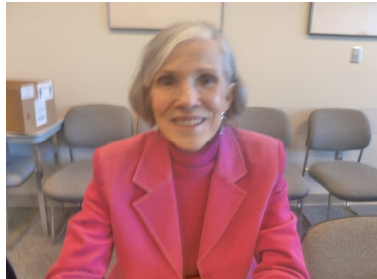
Open MIC sessions are free and open to the public.



Art Carey has a story, "Last Call at the Do Drop Inn," in online Pedestal Magazine. It was among contest entries that had to include the phrase "nobody thought that's where it was supposed to go." It's at

<http://www.thepedestalmagazine.com/>

Art also has a piece of short fiction in a just-out science-fiction anthology from Red Skies Press, "First Contact Imminent."



Nancy Curteman got a contract from Solstice Publishing for her mystery novel "Murder Down Under," which is set in Australia.



Dawn Armstrong, Author and Entrepreneur and Vice-President of the Fremont Area Writers, will be our speaker on our next General Membership Meeting on January 28, 2012.

"MUSE TO MONEY: Go from Brainstorm to Big Bucks in 6-9"

Got a great idea brewing and a burning desire to turn it into a marketable product? Start with a book!

Dawn Armstrong, will give you an overview of how to go from Brainstorm to Bestseller in 6-9 days/weeks/months depending on where you are in your creative process. While this information packed talk focuses on the creation and marketing of Dawn's recently released book: SENSATIONS: A Little Book of Love..., concepts can easily be applied to most goods and services. <http://littlebookoflove.net>

AUTHORS BOOK TABLE



Carol Hall is the Chairperson of the Authors Book Table. It is a free service of the Fremont Area Writers. Two long tables are set up at each regular meeting, enough space for eight separate titles.

Authors may display a short stack of one title per meeting. Multiple titles will be allowed as space permits. Books will be set up on a first come, first served basis. Authors will be responsible for collecting payment for their own books before the meeting, during the break, and after the meeting.

Holiday Book Fair

December 10-11, 2011 was the Holiday Book Fair, sponsored by the Fremont Writers Club. It was an early start on the Christmas book buying. It was held at the Union City Library.



There were around two dozen Bay Area writers who graced the occasion by displaying, selling their books and signing copies of their works to dozens of guests.

Ellen Sussman, author of the best-selling "French Lessons", the guest speaker, was enjoyed by everybody.





Holly Payne, author of “The Kingdom of Simplicity” also spoke. Her book is the 2011 grand prize winner of the Writers Digest Self-Published Book Awards.

Carol Hall made the whole room festive with her holiday decorations. **Richard Scott, Ken Weiss, Myrla Raymundo, Dawn Armstrong, Geraldine Solon** and **Art Carey** welcomed the guests.

Holiday treats, prepared by **Richard and Shirley Scott**, were enjoyed by all.

The following authors graced the FAW Book Fair:

Ellen Sussman
Stephanie Casher
Marcus Araiza
Jafar Yaghoobi
Gemma Nemenzo
Jane Lester
Ina Wong
Jon Drury
Jon James Miller
Holly Payne
Alon Shaley
Bob Garfinkle
Dawn Armstrong
Myrla Raymundo
Art Carey
Carol Hall
Geraldine Solon
Karin Ireland
Betty Aurchard
Tina Glasner
Brad Blake
June Chen
Valerie Frankel
Jill Pipkin
C. S. Lakin
Marjorie Johnson
Jack Hasling
Myles Garcia

Thank you **Geraldine Solon**, Book Fair Organizer, for a wonderful gathering of renowned writers. It was enjoyed by all.

THANK YOU GUESTS WRITERS

The Union City Library Manager **Mira Geroy** would like to thank the guests writers for donating their books to the library. The library catalogued the books and distributed them to the various locations throughout the Alameda County Library System.

FAW CHRISTMAS PARTY

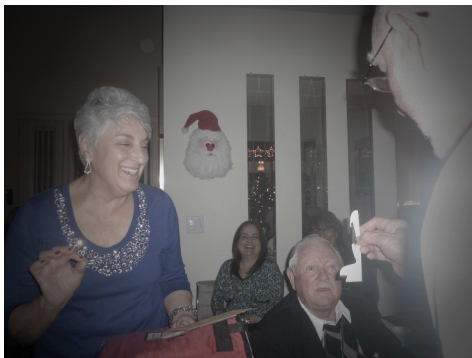
It was a glittering night with all the Christmas decorations and Christmas lights at the home of our President Richard Scott and Shirley Scott in Fremont last December 17, 2011.

It was FAW's annual Christmas Party. Members brought delicious spread complete with Richard's delicious appetizer.

The members had an Exchange Gift participated by everybody. There were singing and camaraderie. It was a night to remember.



The beautiful house with bright Christmas lights.



The gracious hostess Shirley Scott



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This is The End (of 2011)

It has been a great year for the Fremont Branch of the California Writers Club, and we have all shared in its joys and discoveries.

We had an excellent workshop hosted by three of our very qualified members, we've had excellent speakers, and some (I hope you will agree) interesting "first hour" discussions, writing prompts, and other special activities.

We had a picnic in July held at a place that may soon be renamed in honor of the CWC. See Bob Garfinkle for more information on this.

Just this month (December) we had back to back Book Fair days at the Union City Public Library—a special thanks to our Treasurer, Geraldine Solon, for her tireless work in setting up and running the show. Then, on Saturday, the 17th, our annual Holiday Party was held.

On the topic of the Holiday Party, I want to thank all who attended. It was (indeed) a full house. There was excellent food, great conversations, and a wonderful opportunity for us all to do a little networking.

These are only the highlights of 2011.

What can you expect for 2012?

I'm not going to tell you. Well, that's not entirely true. I'll give you some hints.

Expect an Agents' Day where you can both get coached in how to pitch your book, and then actually make a pitch to an agent. Can't wait for that.

And, how about something completely different? What would you say if I told you we are putting together an all day event, a bus trip to a casino for which you are guaranteed to get more back than you spend to go. (No, really!)

More workshops, more guest speakers, and more opportunities for you to expand your craft, your connections, and your future as a writer.

Wait, you say. When will all this take place? OK, you caught me. That's the reason we're only hinting just now. We will be doing all of these things, but the when and where is till just a tad "iffy." But, hang in there. It's gonna be some year.

For now, please accept my very best wishes to you and your families for this holiday season, and for the dawning of a new year. I also want to thank each and every one of you for your ongoing participation and support of Fremont Area Writers. Without you, we could not exist.

Happy Holidays!

Richard Scott

FREMONT AREA WRITERS OFFICERS

President – Richard Scott
Vice President – Dawn Armstrong
Secretary – Myrla Raymundo
Treasurer – Geraldine Solon
Past President & President, California
Writers Club – Robert Garfinkle



FREMONT AREA WRITERS CHAIRPERSONS

Carol Hall - Donation Drawing and
Authors Table
Nancy Curteman – Central Board
Representative & Hospitality
Art Carey – Public Relations
Ken Weiss – Book Exchange
Shirley Scott – Telephone Outreach

CALENDAR

BOARD MEETING -Second Thursday of the
month 7:00 pm-8:30 pm – De Vry University,
Fremont.
OPEN MIC - Third Thursday of the month –7-9
pm – Paddy's Coffee Shop, Union City
FREMONT AREA WRITERS REGULAR
MEETING – Fourth Saturday of the month, 2-4
pm, DeVry University, Fremont

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD



**Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Managing
Editor**

Myrla Raymundo welcomes you to our
December **2011** issue of the Ink Spots.
It contains the latest FAW news and
tidbits, poems, prose, essays and articles
written by our members.

Ink Spots is issued monthly and is
distributed to FAW members at the club
general meeting every month. It is also
emailed to those with email addresses.
Submit your articles in Word format
(.doc) and one or two pages maximum.

Submit your articles to
ligfinio.raymundo@sbcglobal.net.
Visit our Web - [www.cwc-
fremontareawriters.org](http://www.cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

FAW WRITERS CORNER:

We invite FAW writers to submit their writings to our Newsletter.

CHRISTMAS IS MAGIC

By Myrla Raymundo

In December, you can feel the magic. You could feel the cold air on your face and on your skin.

Christmas joys begin when you see people shopping everywhere and carrying packages for their loved ones, when you hear the sounds of choirs singing through the frosty air, when you see candles all aglow, when all houses are decorated with different colored lights, and when you see Christmas cards come and go in the mail.

Christmas is magic. There is joy everywhere. This is the time of sharing and the wonderful days of warmth and caring. The hearts are full of wonders with loving sounds to say to one another. Christmas is a gathering of families and is a season when friends drop by to visit.

And on Christmas day, you'll see the bright star shining leading to a manger where our Lord Jesus was born.

Christmas is magic. And it comes only once a year. Let us make it as magical as it can be, not only now but also through the year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Myrla Raymundo

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We welcome the New Year 2012. Now, still in its scanty cloth, we want to take care of it, nurture it and make the best of it.

Plans are underway to make 2012 the best ever. There will definitely be plenty of activities in our lives. We will gather our families to a nice and sumptuous New Years Eve dinner. Some of us will go to a New Years Eve Party and dance the night away until the sound of midnight, when we join the others in singing the joys of the holiday season.

For 2012, here's hope that our lives may be merry and bright and full of gaiety and happiness.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL AND MAY YOUR NEW YEAR BE FILLED WITH JOY AND HAPPINESS.

GUATEMALAN BUSES: KILLER TOMATOES AND CHICKENS
by Evelyn LaTorre

If a “killer tomato” and a “chicken bus” collide, would it result in a chicken-tomato stew? These are names for the colorful buses of Guatemala. They careen around mountains in the countryside and through crowded streets in cities, but start their lives as mild mannered school buses in the United States or Canada. When school districts discard them, they are bought by enterprising entrepreneurs in Guatemala and other Central American countries. Buses painted a bright tomato red color, frequently with an armed guard to prevent robberies, stop every few blocks along city streets. Multicolored chicken buses, often transporting live animals, roam urban and rural roads.



The buses start out in American school districts as a school bus yellow. After years of transporting students they are retired, based on mileage or age. Then they may be used as spare buses until maintenance costs dictate they be sold. At that point a potential owner buys the bus at a bargain price with a certified check, money order or cash. He arranges for a Guatemalan driver to go north to Canada or the U.S. and get his prize. The driver's pay is \$1000, less expenses for lodging, food and gas during the two week trip. He joins the drivers of thousands of other used cars, trucks and buses taken down the Pan-American Highway from Brownsville, Texas, through Mexico to Guatemala and points south.

The new owner of a bus may pay from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to have the bus modified and painted. If it will be used on mountainous roads, it's cut shorter, so as not to overturn on sharp curves. Seats that previously sat up to 78 students are placed closer together with less padding to accommodate a maximum number of paying occupants. Manual transmissions replace automatic ones for greater control and better gas mileage. While the interior and the engine are being modified, the outside is painted with colorful, vibrant designs or tomato red. The bus is given a name that reflects its new personality. A bus route is applied for and a tax paid for the first year of operation.

Two men partner in operating a bus: the driver, who hopefully has a driver's license, and a helper who shouts out destinations, collects fares, sweeps passengers on and off and organizes luggage, livestock and produce inside and on the roof, often while the bus is in motion.

The bus system in Guatemala is difficult to decipher; there may not be a system. Scores of independent companies serve most places anyone wants to go. There is an extensive network going to every town, village and tourist destination, but it is complex and decentralized with no plan as to where the bus terminals are located. Riders can't predict where they'll be let off or how safe an area will be.

Compared with other modes of transportation, buses are inexpensive and therefore, crowded. The red city buses are temptingly cheap at 25 cents a ride, especially if you have to cross town.

"Killer tomato" buses earned their reputation they are easy targets of extortion and violence by street gangs, organized crime and drug cartels so they are driven by aggressive operators at high speeds. There is no authorized public transportation system in many cities so the drivers often rent from a bus owner and receive subsidies from the government when they help provide transportation. This money and the cash from passengers make them vulnerable to being robbed. Once extortion money is paid, the criminals often up the ante until it no longer pays to run the bus.

The cost of hiring armed security guards makes a profit even less likely and doesn't always discourage thefts. Justice has historically been weak to the point that the homicide rate in Guatemala is more than 48 per 100,000 inhabitants. (In Mexico it is 14; in the U.S. 5, per 2009 statistics.) In 2010, 130 bus drivers and 53 bus helpers were murdered, according to *El Periódico*, the Guatemalan daily paper.

On chicken buses there is little to fear except a bruised tailbone from bouncing over speed bumps at the entrance to each village. Occasionally, a zealot gets on for a few miles to loudly preach his religious dogma to the captive audience imprisoned like sardines in a can. He is soon replaced by Indian women dressed in blouses, skirts and head coverings of dizzying Mayan designs transporting their poultry and vegetables to and from the market.



How many people can fit into a chicken bus? Always one more. And, when there is a collision, it is a colorful stew.

Local footnote: Fremont Unified crushes its old buses because of an Air Quality Management Grant to get rid of diesel polluting vehicles. This has been done since 1996. Seventy-five per cent of FUSD buses run on compressed natural gas and twenty-five per cent on low sulfur diesel. When school districts have to downsize they often auction off their buses.

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