

# Writers' Notes

The Newsletter of

News and Information for Women Who Write. Inc.



Women Who Write, Inc.

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## President's Message by Dana Faulkner-Punzo



If my feet were able to write words on the floor as I danced, what an incredible story I could write! Unfortunately, my big toes do not dispense ink and the ground is never paper; however, the feeling is the same when I am experiencing something I call, "creative flow."

We all know this feeling. For example, you are writing a line of poetry, prose or whatever, and time stands still. You are in the moment, and as far as you know the words are just coming and you are smiling! There is no hesitation or judgment in these precious moments, and you feel alive.

Too bad this nirvana isn't what we normally experience in our artistic endeavors. After revising our work numerous times we become frustrated and often second guess ourselves.

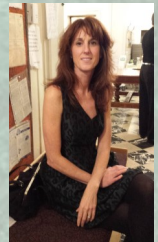
Luckily, we can lean on each other when this happens.

If you are feeling isolated, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or another member so we can chat a bit. We all feel this way sometimes. There are many WWW critique groups that would love to have you included.

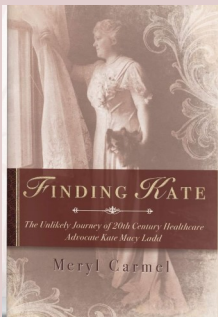
It took me about a year of practice to get into the pose fittingly named, "THE DANCER." When I am dancing this way it feels like I have completed the last page of a novel. I have done something beautiful and personal with my heart and soul.

I wish all of you the same in everything that you do in your writing life and in all things! Best,

Dana



## Finding Kate by Meryl Carmel



I am a historian and nature lover. Never did I imagine that a walk through a local park on the Natirar Estate would lead to ten years of research tracking down the little-known story of Kate Macy Ladd (1863-1945), a Gilded Age Standard Oil heiress and the original owner of Natirar in the Somerset Hills of N.J.

Using 19th century family archival material and a variety of additional sources I wrote *Finding Kate, the Unlikely Journey of 20th Century Healthcare Advocate Kate Macy Ladd*. Spanning two centuries and based on her bare bones memoir as well as diaries, letters, and reminiscences, the book reveals one woman's life of faith, charity, and resilience.



Kate Macy Ladd

What inspired me to decide to share Kate's unique story? I learned that she dealt with health issues for many years and used her experiences to help improve the lives of others. While in residence at Natirar, she established a small free of charge convalescent home for women and in 1930 she founded the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, which seeks to improve health by advancing the education and training of health professionals. After she died in 1945, Kate's mansion house was transformed into a state-of-the-art convalescent home for women. More than 20,000 women were cared for without charge.

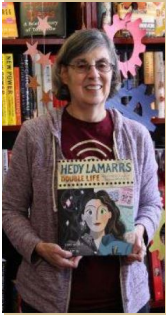
Notably, the Ladd mansion is one of the few remaining gems of the "Country House Era" in Somerset County. This spring a long-held dream of mine will come true when I present a program about the life of Kate Macy Ladd in the great room at Natirar. Perhaps you will join me? For more details see [www.findingkate.com](http://www.findingkate.com)



Ladd Mansion at Natirar

Writers' Notes-Editor: Maria Dewaik—Copy Editor: Dorothy Ryan

## Congratulations Laurie Wallmark by Dana Faulkner-Punzo



Thanks Laurie Wallmark for the signed copy of your newly released book *Hedy Lamarr's Double Life*. This is Laurie's latest picture book biography. So much fun driving to The Book Garden in Frenchtown for some conversation, laughs, and of course the tasty cookies! Check out Laurie's other books: *Grace Hopper*; *Queen of Computer Code* and *Ada Byron Lovelace* and the the Thinking Machine



## Open Mike in June

Join us in June for:

Event: Writers Who Read

When: Monday, June 3, 2019

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Where: Morris County Library

30 East Hanover Ave.,

Whippany, New Jersey



## Elissa Matthew's Program by Kathy Kane

If you're hoping to write the great American novel, you might want to consider turning your attention to the great American pastime, baseball.

That was the advice of Elissa Matthews, author of *Where the River Bends*, as she led us through standard story structure in a refreshing and fun way using a classic baseball diamond. Elissa's February 9<sup>th</sup>

presentation, **How to Fire Up a Dynamic Plot**, was lively, relatable and provided a wonderful analogy for the building blocks of a great story.

As writers, we know that a good story needs a good plot. And a good plot has structure. Our creative rebel may whisper that she doesn't want a formula. Our practical side retorts our reader wants to be drawn into the adventure and constructing a dynamic plot is the way to do it. In the hands of a good writer, the reader never knows what hit her! It's just another great day at the park.

Elissa reminded us how, in all great stories (think of

Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* or Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*), our character's ordinary world needs to get disrupted. A knock at the door, a murder, a boring life in Kansas. They are faced with a choice/decision. They may resist but ultimately, they need to go through that first doorway, or get to first base. The author gets to choose how (hitting the ball and getting on base or getting hit with the ball or being walked). Without this the story sputters and dies.

As the character rounds the bases things get difficult. She learns a lesson and shifts her thinking. As she moves from second to third, the situation worsens. Now she enters "the dark night of the soul." As she moves from third base back to home, she is not the same person. Things get resolved. There is closure for the character as well as the reader. As Elissa said, "she has mastered two worlds." Our heroine crosses home plate and disappears into the dugout.

The reader releases a satisfied sigh, wipes the mustard from her lips and checks the schedule for the next game.





# The Scam, A Cautionary Tale by Maria Dewaik & Doris Parmett



I had the pleasure of attending my first “table read” and it just happened to be a funny play about a serious issue written by WWW’s own, Doris Parmett. It was presented by the Somerset Valley Players in Hillsborough, NJ on March 23, 2019.

Doris, as you all know, is an award winning-author and national best-seller whose works include contemporary romance novels, mysteries, short stories, magazine articles, and poetry.

This was a delightful tale of how the intended victim of a crime out-smarted her scammers. She was on to them right from the first phone call. By convincing them that she was an easy target, with the help of her friends, she turns the tables. With a little conning on her part, she drives the scammers crazy but lets them believe that they are succeeding and will soon be in the money. Just when they think they are done, she has them arrested. Proving that not all senior citizens are gullible and vulnerable to these crimes.

The actors brought this story to life and gave a wonderful performance, introducing the audience to Doris’s wonderful sense of humor, her devious little mind in getting back at the crooks, and providing a glimpse of her friends and their loyalty to her in helping her pull off this counter scam. Truly a great show.— Maria Dewaik

## AFTERTHOUGHTS—by Doris Parmett

There are so many emotions a writer experiences when writing a book. Having written a play and seeing it come to fruition by professional actors is not only terrifying beforehand, but simply wonderful afterward, providing it’s a success. Thankfully, my play *The Scam*, table read by the Somerset Valley Players, March 23, 2019, was successful.

I wrote *The Scam, a Cautionary Tale*, after I received a phone call from a scammer pretending to be the executive vice-president of Publishers Clearing House. I either won \$10,000 a week or a ten million dollar settlement. HAH! Scammers who target the elderly deserve to be behind bars. Just because a person is advanced in years doesn’t make them stupid. My advice: If it’s too good to be true, it isn’t true. Hang up.

If you’re me, you turn it into a play. A play which I copyrighted. A play I was fortunate enough to have award-winning director and playwright, Billy Mitchell, whom I met at our 2018 Conference, ask to read. Billy sent me emails I shall always treasure. Then Todd Bennington, a teacher, producer, actor, director, asked to see the play. That, dear readers, is how my written embryonic words came alive.

My emotions ran the gamut, from fear, to anticipation, to hearing the audience constantly laughing as my scammers out scammed the scammers. I’m forever grateful to the wonderful actors who helped in the birth process.

Our wonderful webmaster, Andy Skurna, took pictures of the cast and me on my i-Pad, for which I sincerely thank him.

I also want to thank the many talented members of WWW, teachers, and those I don’t know, who not only came to the table read, but laughed in all the right places.

P.S. Todd Bennington told me afterward that of all the table reads they’ve done that should have been humorous, *The Scam* was the only play that worked.

To which I humbly say, ‘Thank you.’

Doris Parmett





## Women Who Write Now on Twitter

In an effort to keep up-to-date with today's technology, our VP Social Media, Joanne Flynn Black, is working hard to help promote our organization. She has set up two accounts for us:

Twitter @women\_who\_write  
Instagram women\_who\_write

Come Follow us! And let Joanne know if you'd like us to post about anything writing related.



## Miscellaneous

**Karen DelleCave** sold a short story to *Highlights for Children* magazine.



## Volunteers Needed



As you all know, Women Who Write, Inc. is a non-profit group that was created 30 years ago to assist women writers in every phase of the writing process, with critique groups, workshops and discussions.

We cannot do all of this without our wonderful member volunteers.

If you feel that you can help out in any capacity, no matter how small, please contact either:

Ginger Pate at  
([webliasion@womenhowrite.org](mailto:webliasion@womenhowrite.org))  
Dana Faulkner-Punzo at  
([president@womenhowrite.org](mailto:president@womenhowrite.org))

There are so many ways you can help. We need volunteers to help our conference committee in planning our next conference. Also needed are people to help plan programs and events, set up workshops and so much more. Our volunteers are what makes this organization great and we truly appreciate everything they do.

Everyone is welcome to help out. Thank you.

## A Writers Retreat by Dana Faulkner-Punzo



I never thought that becoming a grasshopper, frog, or tiger could influence my creative writing process! Exploring emotions inside my body through creative movement was the key that unlocked words that truly needed to be expressed. We worked as a group, as partners, and solo during this workshop. Amazing music and movement really opened my eyes, literally! For example: Working with a partner, we were dancing eye to eye, and were instructed not to look away for a few minutes. I immediately felt embarrassed at first, but stayed with it. The group wrote, and discussed how we felt, or didn't



feel about each exercise. Some of us laughed, others cried, some said they felt nothing. This truly was an enriching creative experience that I recommend to our members. I will look into a similar program for WWW in the future. There are many ways to enhance our creativity, and I want to play with all of you!

Dana



## Women Who Write Website



A reminder to all that our Directory is found online on our website at [www.WomenWhoWrite.org](http://www.WomenWhoWrite.org). To access, click on the tab on the right side of the page that says **PRIVATE**. The password to use is "Member." The directory will have all the information you need about our organization, including coming programs and workshops. Please take some time to read through the pages to familiarize yourself with all that we strive to offer our membership, along with some very important information.



## Winter Gathering 2019 by Maria Dewaik

This year's Winter Gathering brunch was held at The Madison Community House. We wanted to try something new and felt that a familiar location with ample parking and room to roam would be a great venue for our gathering. Since our Writing Conferences have always been successful at the Community House, we thought what a great place for our gathering. The staff were great and provided us with some delicious foods and drink. There was plenty of room to walk around and network and enjoy chatting with those members that we don't get to see often enough. It was a nice time and everyone enjoyed it.



Founding member Mary Lee Waldron was honored at the Gathering.

Dana Faulker-Punzo, our President, and Ginger Pate addressed the gathering and Dana thanked everyone for coming out in the cold for some warm conversation and cheer.

New member Susanna Pitman remarked:

"As a member for less than a year, I really enjoyed meeting so many other women who share a passion for writing. It was nice to talk about different writing styles and paths to publishing. I met women from all over the writing spectrum, from those who write as a hobby to others who pursue writing as a career. These connections are growing into friendships. I'm looking forward to future events!"



## Goldfinch Launch 2019



*Goldfinch*, The literary Journal of Women Who Write, Inc. Volume 21 for 2018/2019 was another success. Editor-in Chief, Mary ann Mosa, along with Andy Skurna, Desktop Publisher, did a great job of putting out another great issue which showcased the talents of our wonder authors and poets. A special thank you to Donna Piken for the beautiful cover art used for this publication.



Thank you to the Editorial Team of Joanne Flynn Black, Vivian Fransen, Maureen Lanagan Haggerty, Donna Piken, Carol Van Den Hende and Pat Weissner for their hard work in helping put together this issue.

Some of the authors treated us to a reading from their work and there was cake and goodies served as well. An truly enjoyable time.



## In Memoriam by Ronnie Hammer

Babette Bergner, a long time member of Women Who Write, was a well respected author of memoir writing and poetry. She passed away in November, 2018.

Babette was born in Morristown and spent her life here. She earned her PhD in English and taught at St. Elizabeth's College. She and her husband, Walter, sold their Morristown home several years ago and moved to the retirement community of Cedar Crest, in Pompton Plains New Jersey.

She started a writing group at Cedar Crest, based on the format of Women Who Write, which she greatly admired. Her writing group became popular and in great demand.

Babette gave credit to Women Who Write in her poems that were published in *Goldfinch*.

