



WORDS OF WISDOM

from Diane Amento Owens

Local author and Wise Woman Write founder Diane Amento Owens brings women together to write, share, and grow.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Birthdays are better than the alternative—or so says the old joke. This may be a comforting thought when faced with a milestone birthday, as I am this month, but unnecessary for the fourth birthday of Wise Women Write™, also in January. On January 9, 2007, 11 women gathered with me around a big table at the Barnes and Noble in Kierland. The bookstore's community relations manager had wanted a class for boomer-aged women, so I accepted her invitation to teach eight free classes, designing the workshop around what I thought was a catchy title with topics appropriate to this age-group.

Besides being an ex-English teacher, my other credential for leading the class was a book I had co-authored with my writing group, an anthology called *LifeLines*. While *LifeLines* didn't lead to Oprah's couch as we had hoped, it became my lifeline to a new path: Working with women. Hearing and encouraging their wonderful writing. Creating community.

In four years, I've learned that Wise Women Write isn't just the name of my workshop. Nor is it only the name of the book I'm working on. It is a simple statement of fact and the best advice I can give any woman. Wise women write. Writing helps us claim our lives and our truth, and as we traverse through midlife, writing helps us figure out who we are and where we've been. As Anais Nin elaborates, "We write to taste life twice, in the moment, and in retrospection."

Another thing I've learned is that writers need other writers. A writing group becomes a safe place to experiment and grow with other writers who provide feedback and encouragement. The group also provides deadlines and the discipline of commitment. Writing may be a solo act, but writing without readers is like the proverbial sound in the forest with no one to hear it.

An unexpected gift of these four years has been the fun and camaraderie of being part of a writing community. Your best friend may not understand the agony of rejection, but your group will. They'll laugh if you share a goofy rejection letter and then tell you to keep trying. If you show up with half-finished work, your group will applaud you for showing up at all and tell you to keep going. Your husband may not understand your excitement when you know you've used just the right combination of words, but your wise women writers will. And they'll be the ones laughing at the funny spots and crying when your words touch them.

So yes, it's with pride that I celebrate Wise Women Write's fourth birthday. As for my own birthday, I'm actually looking forward to my sixth decade. During my fifties, I began writing creatively, wrote a book, and started Wise Women Write™. Now I'm buckling my seat belt for whatever lies ahead!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Wise Woman **Betsy McPhee's** story, "It's the Thought That Counts," was published in the short story collection [*Patchwork Path: Christmas Stocking.*](#)

In November, "Saying Goodbye to the People, Places, and Things in our Lives," an anthology containing **Maryann McCullough's** short story "The Guest in My Mother's Home," was published by [*Dream of Things.*](#)

Also, in August of 2011, **Maryann's** essay, "A Room of One's Own," will be published in the anthology "Young at Heart," part of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series.



Dr. Trish Dolasinski recently spent five days in the deep south on a research mission for her first novel. Always a busy freelance writer, **Trish** will soon have an article published in the national magazine, *PTO Today*, coming this spring.

Award-winning memoir writer **Susan Pohlman** has started writing a monthly column, "Weathering Tough Times in Marriage," for [*Chat, Chew, and Chocolate.*](#)

Also, **Susan** is the most recent writer invited to speak at "Authors at the Teague." Want some inspiration for the new year? Join **Susan** for her lecture and book signing on January 22nd at the [*Velma Teague Branch Library,*](#) 2pm.



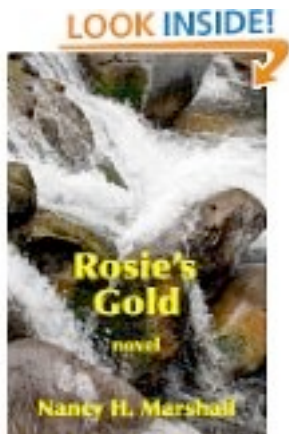
Got news to share? Contact Wise Woman Write Newsletter editor [*Windy Lynn Harris.*](#)

JUST PUBLISHED

Wise Woman **Nancy Marshall** just published her debut novel, *Rosie's Gold*. Congratulations, **Nancy**!

From Nancy: "If folks belong to a book discussion group, *Rosie's Gold* has themes that lend themselves to a good discussion: recovering from sexual abuse, Vets and PTSD/alcoholism; how to resolve confrontations; Native American sweat ceremonies; and healing from trauma. Questions at the end of the book lend it easily to discussion."

Reviews of Rosie's Gold can be found on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



Nancy kicked off her book tour at Dog Eared Pages Bookstore on December 19th.

[Get your copy today!](#)



COMMUNITY NEWS



The Arizona Consortium for the Arts unites, advances, collaborates, partners, and supports individuals and organizations in all aspects of arts, performing arts, literary arts and cultures in Arizona. Visit their website for information about *The Blue Guitar Magazine* and how to become a free consortium member.

Success is Contagious

by Windy Lynn Harris



Windy has been published over 60 times in magazines and newspapers across the country. Visit her freelance writer [website](#) to learn about her manuscript submission coaching class. Let Windy teach you how to get your creative writing published too!



I am one of the founding scribblers here at Wise Women Write, and I want to share the biggest lesson I have learned from this wonderful and supportive writing community over the last four years: SUCCESS IS CONTAGIOUS! Each and every one of the writers in my life add to my own understanding and appreciation for the craft of writing. Watching the Wise Women around me reach amazing new heights each year is thrilling and encouraging. Their successes prove to me that hard work really does pay off in the writing world. For that, I thank you all.

By choice, I am the lucky woman who gathers information for this newsletter each quarter, so I'm usually among the first to know when there is good news to share. Whenever I hear that a writer friend has been published, I throw my fist in the air. Yessss! She worked hard and it paid off! It will pay off for you, too.

This month I interviewed one of those encouraging successful writers among us, Jennifer Fabiano, author of *Savor the Love* (far right in the photo above). Along with a resume of published essays, Jennifer is also a collector of her children's quotes, and this year she produced a book from motherhood journals that were miraculously spared in a home fire. I nudged Jennifer to answer a few questions below, but if you want to read the whole story behind the compilation of Jennifer's book, please visit her website, [Savor the Love](#).

You have honed a great first-person voice in your Wise Women Write group and some of your assignment essays have gone on to be published. Did this help you write your book?

Definitely. Publishing pieces of my work out in "the world" gave me the confidence to move forward. I believed that someone would actually want to read what I wrote. That's a big first step!

What was your inspiration for writing this particular book?

I love being a mom to my kids! It's the best job in the world. Holding on to one small piece of their childhoods by capturing the things they said motivated me. Plus, I'd tell my girlfriend what they said (she has no children) and she'd say, "You've got to write that down!" She helped me by revealing to me how precious these verbal tidbits were.

Your *Savor the Love* website is interactive. Tell us about that.

That has been so much fun! The website gives other moms/aunts/grandmas/etc. a place to share what their children are saying. You can also read what others have written. It makes you smile, makes you laugh, makes you want to go give your children a big hug!

Do you have plans to write another book? Can you tell us about it?

I do. It centers around my children, only this time it will be a collection of essays about them.

It took a lot of time and determination for Jennifer to take a sooty box of papers and turn it into *Savor the Love*, but she did it. And you can meet *your* writing goals, too.

Fiction writers, nonfiction writers, book writers, essay writers, pen-wielding editors and thought-provoking bloggers--we've got them all here at Wise Women Write. Take a minute to look around you today and nod at the success of the other writers in your life. Smile, throw your fist in the air, and carry that joy with you as you create your own masterpieces. I look forward to adding your good news to the "announcements" page soon!

Returning the Favor

by author Susan Pohlman



Read Susan's award-winning memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*, [available in bookstores now!](#)



PART EIGHT:

SIGNING THE CONTRACT

Join award-winning author Susan Pohlman here each month as she walks us through what it takes to make it in the publishing world today.

After receiving the long-awaited call that someone wanted to buy the manuscript, I danced the jig of happiness around the kitchen for a week straight. Guideposts Books loved the story and made a solid offer. The next step was agreeing on a contract. This was no easy task as contracts are complex and publishing has a language unto its own.

I hunkered down with a variety of sources and researched every clause so that I could understand exactly what I was

signing. Judith, my agent, negotiated on my behalf and guided the process to completion. You get one chance at this, so it is important to fully grasp the future ramifications of your decisions.

Like everything else, the contract process takes time so don't be impatient! We went back and forth for weeks until both sides were happy with the contract. Putting my signature to the page was a moment of sheer joy and validation, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. It was merely one more step in the direction of the bookshelf.

The next phase of the journey, though, was simply delightful.

Visit Susan at www.susanpohlman.com to check her upcoming event schedule and learn more about her memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*.

WISE WOMEN WRITE @ NITE

Wise Women Write @ Nite Presents Laura Munson

Through a special arrangement, Wise Women Write @ Nite presents Laura Munson in an “event before the event” at Xavier, a one-hour intimate conversation for writers before Laura takes the main stage. Laura is the best-selling author of *This Is Not the Story You Think It Is* and the NY Times Modern Love column “Those Aren’t Fighting Words, Dear.” The response to Laura’s column crashed the NY Times’ servers, and it was the most emailed column for weeks.

Yet Laura is more than an overnight sensation. She has been a writer in the trenches for years. In fact, she has 14 unpublished fiction manuscripts! Want to know how Laura persevered through rejection and doubt? Come join us at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, at the pre-event to Laura’s 7:00 Speaker Series presentation at Xavier.

LAURA MUNSON
Xavier College Prep Speaker Series 1/27/11

7 PM

This Is Not The Story You Think It Is...
A Season of Utterly Happiness
LAURA MUNSON

Laura's published a memoir called "This Is Not the Story You Think It Is" is an international bestseller. The short version was published in the New York Times "Modern Love" section, the responses to which crashed the New York Times website. "This Is Not the Story You Think It Is" has been featured and reviewed in *Vanity Fair*, *Elle*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Woman's Day*, *The Huffington Post*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Washington Post*, and numerous other newspapers and magazines across the world. *Book of the Month Club* named it one of the best books of the year. While the entry point to her memoir is a marital crisis, this is a book about empowerment; about living in the present moment, and committing to being responsible for your own happiness no matter what's going on in your life.

January 27th 7:00 PM
<http://lauramunson.eventbrite.com/>

Piper Performing Arts Center
4710 N 5th Street
Phoenix, AZ

Proceeds to benefit the Fresh Start Women's Foundation

To register for the writers' pre-event:

1. Purchase your \$35 ticket to the Laura Munson Speakers Series (which includes a copy of Laura's book and a contribution to the Fresh Start Women's Foundation). <http://lauramunson.eventbrite.com/>
2. Then, email a copy of your event registration to Diane Amento Owens at dianewrites@gmail.com.
3. Laura loves helping and encouraging writers and will not charge an additional fee to the writers' pre-event. Since Laura is a huge proponent of reading and learning through books, your admission to the writer's event will be one self-help book (can be gently used) for the Fresh Start Women's Foundation.

Spinning a Good Yarn

book review by Trish Dolasinski, Ed. D.

Dr. Trish presented "Action Planning and Goal Setting for Writing Success" to 43 women at the Scottsdale Society of Women Writers in November.



Visit Dr. Trish at her new blog, [I Believe in You](#), and learn how to make a difference in the life of a child.

WE ARE NOT ALONE: THE WRITER'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

In [*We Are Not Alone: The Writer's Guide to Social Media*](#) (Who Dares Wins Publishing, 2010), Kristen Lamb walks readers through the steps necessary to connect with the current social media trends. She shows authors how to create their personal brand, build a platform, and network professionally in order to market a book.

By completing a variety of sequential exercises, the reader is guided through the maze of social media with a perspective that makes the entire journey less daunting. Without assuming that all varieties of social media hold the answer to every writer's marketing needs, Lamb establishes the basis for the big picture.

The new social rules bring the global village closer and connect writers to others who have common interests, "... recognizing that our world is becoming

increasingly technological and that this technology can either . . . alienate or congregate," says Lamb.

Conversation is a powerful tool of connection.

If you are not quite ready to immerse yourself in the complete techno-world of social networking, this book will still provide strategies to add to your marketing toolbox. The reader will learn how to write stellar bios that are super-duper short (100 words), super short (300 words) and short (500 words). Yes, all are short, says Lamb, because ". . . this is the 21st century and we don't have all day to read about your life."

Although written in a light-hearted and friendly tone, the organization of content tends to be disjointed. Fortunately, the sequential exercises at the end of each chapter save the day and refocus the reader, providing a plethora of information.

In short, Lamb sets the expectation for the modern-day writer: Value the importance of social networking if you are serious about marketing your book.

FABULOUS WWW BLOGS

Looking for something great to read today? Link to the good stuff from here:

[Wise Women Write](#) is a community of new and established writers gathered together by author Diane Amento Owens. Read Diane's blog for encouragement, support, and mentoring in your own writing life. You can also find Wise Women Write on [Facebook](#).

[Moments that Matter](#) is written by Susan Pohlman, award-winning author of the memoir "[Halfway to Each Other](#)." Susan shares new moments from her world with the same blend of blatant honesty and lyrical prose that captivates us all in her book.

[The Backstory Cafe](#) is the cyber-coffee-shop where freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris' fictional characters come to hang out after a long day in her office.

Visit [Sharing the Stories](#), by Maryann McCullough, where she posts a thought-provoking (and often laugh-provoking) new story at the beginning of each month.

[Being Rudri](#) is the creative spot for musings from Arizona freelance writer Rudri Bhatt Patel. Her inviting tone and nostalgic thoughts will charm you.

[Method to the Madness](#), written by Dawn Maria, is one woman's quest to find balance, a literary agent and a permanent way to get pet odors out.

The new [I Believe in You](#) blog by Trish Dolasinski provides ideas and strategies for parents, teachers and mentors to steer youth toward the path of successful adulthood.

[Capture the Moment](#) at Jennifer Fabiano's *Savor the Love* website where you can read funny and touching quotes from kids around the country, then add a few of your own.

[Mary Holden](#), freelance writer and editor, shares her wit and wisdom on Salon.com.