

# SPUR

## A WRITE IT OUT® NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Ronni Miller

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*WRITE IT OUT® (WIO) is a motivational and expressive writing program  
for individuals of all ages since 1992*

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### EDITORS'S MESSAGE

Encased in my studio instead of my car, I listen to the splatter of rain on the roof. A rainy day, unusual for me who has been spoiled by sunshine most of the other days of the year here on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Yet it's a comfort to listen as well as type on my keyboard lost in other thoughts, places and time that float in my head and spew out on the screen. Times in the last months when morning temperatures where in the thirties in Washington, DC and a sweater and a jacket kept me warm in Woodstock, New York and it was only September! A thirty-five hundred mile car trip alone over the last few months took me to teach and see clients in Massachusetts and New York and visit family and friends in New Jersey, North Carolina and Virginia. "This is my last hurrah, I told my kids." They laughed and said, "Mom, you've been saying that for the last few years." I'm a nester as well as romantic. Renting a home for years in Woodstock, New York once I sold my own home there, was a favored writing retreat for a month or two where I could recharge as well as create. Within days I had transformed the space into my own with paintings, linens, books, kitchenware and even a chair I brought from home. The car looked like a gypsy van, and I glowed surrounded by my stuff. This year the car was almost empty and everything fit neatly into the trunk. No rental. No haven to transform into my own. A few days here, a week there, ten days in an Inn, accommodating to the beat of other's lives, foods and habits while enjoying the stimulation as a guest. Most of my hand written spiral journal remained empty. Much of my computer journal was non-existent. Volumes of spoken conversation centered on things of the moment, where to eat lunch, what to make for dinner, what would the weather be, and many stories to listen to of experiences and problems. I came home drained,

exhausted and flattened feeling unlike myself. It took almost a week until an incident at a congregation I attended sparked the kernel of a story, and when I returned home that evening I couldn't wait to sit down and write it in fiction. I knew then I had returned. I had returned to myself where a few words spawned a thought and within seconds a creative image charged forward. I was off the road and settled down in a familiar space and realized just how important it had been for me to have that familiar rented space while spending months away from home. Understanding and more important accepting my need for a home away from home, a place to dream, imagine as well as create with the leisure of quiet and aloneness was a revelation and one as a writer and creative person I've come to understand. One would say that's simple and after so many years wouldn't I have known that? No. For me, understanding my own actions, reactions and interactions takes time, but when I can write about it splay the words from my head to the keyboard and read it on the screen I understand it. It's why I believe that expressive writing is the path to wellness and understanding and expressing your own life journey through the written word whether it be an essay or a book, is the route to happiness and self-fulfillment of understanding and accepting oneself. This year, I've decided to devote more of my time to private clients, to help them find this path to happiness. As you will see on the Workshop Schedule I am still facilitating some classes in expressive writing, memoir writing and a new class in playreading for those who prefer to work while in the company of others.

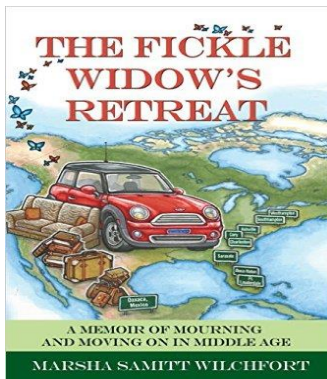
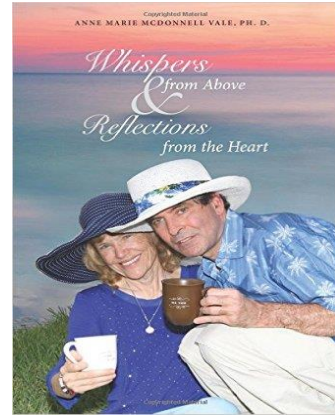
## **BOOK MIDWIFE APPOINTMENTS**

The time is NOW. Gather your pages of assorted notes and writings, or just ideas for a book and make an appointment with me so that we can birth your book together. Your story needs to be told whether as a memoir, novel or even a collection of poetry. This written journey is your opportunity to connect with the importance and meaning of your life and document the story you want to tell. I believe that expressive writing is the path to wellness and understanding and expressing your own life journey through the written word whether it be an essay or a book, is the route to happiness and self- fulfillment of understanding and accepting oneself. Private appointments at a reasonable price are available in person or through Skype, as a number of my clients have discovered who live all over the US. Contact me at 941-359-3824 or [RMillerWIO@gmail.com](mailto:RMillerWIO@gmail.com) to discuss your project.

## **CLIENTS PUBLISHED**

Two of my clients have just published their books and are available on Amazon. [\*Whispers from Above & Reflections from the Heart\*](#) by Anne Marie McDonald Vale, Ph.D., and [\*The Fickle Widow's Retreat\*](#) by Marsha Samitt Wilchfort . As Book Midwife I worked with them to birth their books as I have with many of my clients who have gone on to publish after our work together.

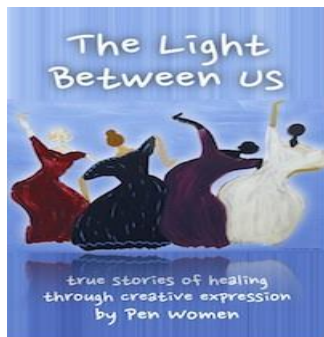
*Whispers From Above & Reflections from the Heart* is a book of Anne Marie's poetry, fiction, essays, biographies and photographs by her photographer husband Michael Vale. Many of her pieces were a result of assignments in the expressive writing workshop I facilitated the Center For Building Hope in Sarasota. Anne Marie shares in her book how and when she was diagnosed with a rare non-Hodgkin's lymphoma known as Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia (WM). She says, "My life is beautiful, and I'm very blessed. I've learned that a chronic condition does not define who you are."



Marsha's book *The Fickle Widow's Retreat: A Memoir of Mourning and Moving On*, is an outgrowth of her experiences after she buried her husband after his long battle with health problems. She bought a red Mini Cooper, her traveling gypsy mobile to lose and find herself on the road at age fifty-five from New York to Florida, renting buying and selling a number of houses along the way as well as accruing romantic and other experiences. She says, "Independence brought her to realize that home is wherever you dream about the most and writing helps find it." We worked together over a couple of years as she

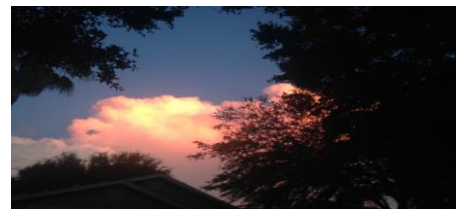
wrote the material, working long distances at times until it was finished and ready for the publisher.

## RONNI'S ESSAY PUBLISHED



Publication of "An Epiphany", my essay on how writing saved my life was just published in the book *The Light Between Us: True Stories of Healing Through Creative Expression* published by Pen Women Press. It can be purchased for \$11 through the website [www.nlapw.org](http://www.nlapw.org).

I took the picture on the right from my home in Sarasota, the day in July that I heard that my essay would be published. It symbolizes that epiphany for me.



## PLAYREADING of *EXPOSED*

*Exposed*, a two act play of a writer's journey had its first reading last April. My reading of the play to a small audience of over twenty people at my home, most who

didn't know my story, was important for me as the playwright to see what worked and what didn't. This autobiographical romp was received well. A special thank you to Toni Feldmann, scriptwriter who was in the audience and took notes that I've relied on for the next revision. The play illustrated events that impacted my childhood through to the present with brief scenes of significant occurrences that shaped who I am today. Another draft based on the Q&A responses that followed the presentation is in the works. The plan is to have it read by an actress other than myself, later this spring.

### **NEW HOME FOR EXPRESSIVE WRITING WORKSHOP**

Our expressive writing workshop has a new home at the JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (JFCS). It is located at the Gloria & Louis Flanzer building at 1753 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota 34236 on Wednesdays from 2:00-3:30 PM in the third floor conference room. The entrance to their parking area is off Indian Place, a small street between Main and Ringling. Our program is under the auspices of the JFCS's Cancer Support and Wellness Program that offers support groups and services to cancer patients, caregivers and family members for free. When the Center For Building Hope closed its doors at the beginning of October, Andrea Feldmar, program director brought our mission to JFCS. Come on out and reconnect with us. The writing program remains the same with warm-ups and writing activities to stimulate your feelings, memories and experiences. Only the room and building have changed.

### **NEW WRITE IT OUT (WIO) COURSES AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA**

WIO courses in writing and play reading are being sponsored by THE LIFE LONG LEARNING CENTER AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA. Winter and Spring courses will be held on the State College of Florida (SCF) Lakewood Ranch campus beginning in January and continuing through March, 2016 on Thursdays morning and afternoon. "Memoir Plus" an opportunity to write life story material in any genre, and Playreading: The Human Experience is an opportunity to read parts from one act and a full length play are new additions to their catalog. Please see our Workshop Schedule for more details for registration.

### **CREATIVE WRITING IN THE MOUNTAINS**

Our Write It Out Creative Writing workshop in Greenville, New York has been meeting for one-week intensive's at the Greenville Public Library for over twenty years. This rural county in Greene New York surrounded by working dairy farms is forty minutes from Ulster County's Woodstock, New York by car. The little village with its library, elementary and high school, churches and supermarkets, restaurants and boutiques is home to year round people as well as second home dwellers. Traditionally through the years, this has been an intergenerational group



September 2015. Seated from left to right: Delores Ferrer, Arline Muller. Standing from left to right: Julia Farrell, Shelly Scholz, Ronni Miller, Roberta Kudlack, Barbara Sanborn & Suzanne McHugh. Pauline Otty, Sue Quinn, Nicole De La Cruz, Maureen VerPanck & Autumn Bonneau were unavailable for the picture.

of people with children as well as adults participating and bonding by the end of the week. Writing and sharing true and fictional stories is the common denominator that sparks the togetherness of this group year after year. It's one of the highlights I look forward to each year to catch up on the new chapters of a novel as well as poems and essays generated during the year as well as a result of our exercises in class. Our workshop will meet next year from October 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Please see the Workshop Schedule for more details.

### WELLFLEET RETREAT



Just after Labor Day 2015 my client Pat Campbell joined me for a writing retreat in at The Holden Inn in Wellfleet, MA on the Cape with the Atlantic Ocean and its fabled *mountainous* dunes just minutes away. Expressive art and writing exercises with the culmination of the *Book of The Senses*, paintings and writings of the sensory experiences of the Cape, enhanced our



work together. Pat is working on her memoir and since she lives in Massachusetts we're able to meet each week on Skype to continue the birthing of her book.

### WE LOST NORMA



Ronni and Norma

Norma Pitzer Kelly died on September 5, 2015 at the age of fifty. We lost a friend, a fellow writer and one who inspired us all to think positive. Her journey was too brief but in her time on earth she accumulated experiences as an avid long distance pedal biker, kayaker, traveler, wife, mother and writer. Her work included running an island B&B, work in the insurance industry, and a reporter. She battled fourth stage cancer for five years and barely



ever missed a writing workshop at the Center For Building Hope regardless of her aches and pains. Among other things she was a techie and connected to social media. “You’ve got to put more things on Facebook”, she admonished me many times. “How will anyone know what you’re doing?” I’m still remiss in that department, yet I hear her voice of advice and persistence. She was one of the few people I’ve had in workshop over twenty-four years that could write a complete short story in the space of five minutes in one of our spontaneous writing activities. At night when she couldn’t sleep, that was often, she wrote often mystery stories she read in class, and at the end of her life was writing a novel based on her Cuban roots. Unfortunately, the memoir she finished detailing her loss of husband, parents and her cancer diagnosis all in the same year has not been recovered. To all of us who remain we must remember her encouragement and wisdom to champion on in spite of obstacles.

### **TRAVEL RETREATS TO CAPE COD AND TUSCANY 2016**

This year we are trying something different and listening to your suggestions that we arrange these writing retreats at your time and convenience in the summer and fall of 2016. If you’re interested in either of the locations, (please see our website [www.writeitout.com](http://www.writeitout.com) for information). If we have sufficient numbers (at least 7 for Tuscany) and any number for Cape Cod I’ll arrange the writing retreat. If you’re interested in this unique experience to spend a week immersed in the culture of an Italian Tuscan village at a four-star villa and/or New England fishing village at an historic Inn while involved in expressive writing contact me at [RMillerWIO@gmail.com](mailto:RMillerWIO@gmail.com) or 941-359-3824.