



San Francisco Writers Conference 2013

By Joan Gelfand

Every year for the past ten years, the SF chapter of the WNBA has had the pleasure of hosting an information table at the SFWC. Over the years, the conference has brought the chapter numerous new members and served as an impromptu information center for writers seeking information on such wide-ranging topics as the UN, writing workshops, or eBooks.

All of the staffers are volunteers. Like all good volunteer jobs, this commitment is gratifying in so many ways. Here are just a few comments from WNBA members who worked at the 2013 SFWC in various capacities:

As the children and their families arrived for the free session with author R. L. Stine on Saturday morning, I was amazed at their sheer joy and anticipation. They were true fans of Stine, lovers of his horror books for kids (Goosebumps series), and delighted to be meeting him in person. Soon the Room of the Dons filled with kids, parents, grandparents, librarians, and teachers. When Stine began his presentation, I was as enthralled as the rest of the audience as he led us through an interactive storytelling session. I giggled like a 10-year-old at the silly ideas the kids added to the composite story of the "Haunted Car." What I learned was that I am never too old to enjoy outrageous creativity. And Stine is one of the best at that.

Kate Farrell, WNBA/SF Vice-President

WNBA-SF Chapter Secretary / 22-Day Platform-Building Coach Teresa says: "WNBA members who played a role at the premiere San Francisco Writers Conference celebrated SFWC's 10th anniversary with its co-founders Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen (WNBA-SF Chapter past-president and past-vice-president, respectively), organizational team and advisory board. I, Teresa LeYung-Ryan, am so thankful that I gained a new focus to help my clients after co-presenting "Getting to First Base by Building Your Fanbase" with Elisa Sasa Southard and "Be Your Own Editor" with Mary E. Knippel. Other rewards included seeing many colleagues showcase their expertise, reconnecting with California Writers Club colleagues and out-of-state clients, being honored by author Margie Yee Webb (yes! another WNBA & CWC cheerleader) who took fabulous photos, meeting writers with brilliant projects, and, witnessing wonderful volunteers who made the conference magical for everyone. I feel the afterglow still. Thank you, Elizabeth and Michael! Thank you, everyone!"

Teresa Le Yung Ryan, writing coach and author of *Love Made of Heart*

I was on three panels at SFWC 2013. My favorite moment happened during my first panel "Why Now Is The Best Time To Be a Poet." The panel was moderated by WNBA member Joan Gelfand, and my fellow panelists were Brian Felsen of Bookbaby and poet/professor Andy Jones of U.C. Davis. Often when poetry is discussed at writing conferences the emphasis is on how to get one's poems published or how to get noticed

as a poet, but this time our conversation took a different turn. Instead of discussing publishing, we discussed the pleasure of writing poetry: how absorbing that is, how much fun, how it takes you into a world of joy and creativity. In the end we decided, "Poetry is the highest form of Leggo's." It made me happy to remember that, if you love writing, creating a poem is one of the best games you can play.

Mary Mackey - WNBA member and author of "The Widow's War" and "Sugar Zone," as well as 13 previous novels and 4 collections of poetry.

The San Francisco Writers Conference (SFWC) celebrated the 10th anniversary this year and as a SFWC volunteer for the past several years, I always look forward to connecting with the many writers, presenters, and others in the community created by Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen of the Larsen-Pomada Literary Agency and who are also members of the WNBA-SF. I especially enjoy reconnecting with friends and colleagues from the WNBA-SF. Writing Coach Teresa LeYung Ryan, who I consider as my mentor, first introduced me to WNBA-SF by singing the praises of this national organization that promotes literacy and the love of books in the community. When I ran into some of my California Writers Club (CWC) colleagues at the conference, I similarly tell them about WNBA-SF and the benefits of belonging to a national organization in addition to a local organization like the CWC.

Margie Yee Webb, author of "Cat Mulan's Mindful Musing"

As the Co-Liaison for the SFWC Poetry Track, I had the honor of speaking on 3 panels ("Using Verse to Make the World A Better Place," "Using Form to Make Your Poetry Powerful," and "Name That Tune: Poetry and Music.") I also had the pleasure of facilitating a workshop on Thursday and attending the open mic poetry on Saturday evening. I think one of my most gratifying moments was when I finished my interview with Author Solutions and Suzette Conway invited me to do a series of webinars for the company.

One of my most inspired moments was listening to my co-presenter Camille Dungy on "Using Verse to Make the World a Better Place." Also, moderating "Why Now Is the Best Time to Be a Poet" with the brilliant Mary Mackey, Brian Felson, and Brad Henderson was just downright fun and invigorating!

There is so much fabulous information shared at the conference, so much great networking and just plain camaraderie, cheerleading and sharing of experience. At this point, after being involved in the conference in one way or another (I started as a host at the WNBA table, then moved to volunteer, then presenter, and now to Co-Liaison of the Poetry Track!) I have a wonderful feeling of being part of the SFWC family.

Thanks to Michael & Elizabeth for being inclusive, generous and creative!