

The tricks of the trade

Valley authors to discuss craft with aspiring writers

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Special to the Valley Press

Two authors have book sales topping the 1 million mark, and another two may see their work turned into television movies. This is the kind of local talent awaiting voracious readers and fledgling writers who attend the Meet the Authors program at the Lancaster Library Saturday, Oct. 28.

The annual event will bring together literary enthusiasts and more than a dozen local authors for discussions about how books are written and published, legal tips and suggestions on successful writing.

"I think all the authors in our area enjoy participating in programs like this because it shows upcoming writers that getting a book published is achievable," offered Gina Cresse, an Acton resident whose Devonie Lace mystery novels are the subject of industry talks that could send her fictitious heroine onto television screens. "Before I began writing I'd been thinking about it for quite a while, and then one night I couldn't sleep. I got up and started in ... and that was it."

The other local author awaiting a book to be turned into a television movie is Edward Mooney, while Dorothy Howell and Lauraine Snelling each have books that have topped 1 million in sales.

The public program, to be from 2 to 4 p.m., will be hosted by Antelope Valley Writers, a writers group founded by author Bonnie Stone in 1986. The library is at 601 West Lancaster Blvd., and there is no admission fee.

A wide range of writing styles and subjects is evident among the 15 high desert authors slated to take part in the program, fourth in the annual series. Their work includes mysteries, romance, books for children, travel, crime, bereavement, photography and journalism.

Published writers expected for the program, listed in alphabetical order:

Katie Corbett of Palmdale will soon see the publication of her first book, titled "Through This Reporter's Eyes." It's a compilation of stories that are products of many years of by-lined reporting in the Antelope Valley Press, and public relations work for the Lancaster School District and the Antelope Valley Board of Trade, plus her own public relations firm. She was a reporter and business editor for the Antelope Valley Press for 10 years and earned nine industry awards for her writing and editing.

Gina Cresse is the creator of the Devonie Lace mysteries, a series published by Avalon that now stands at five books. Cresse wrote a screenplay from the first book of the series,

"Plan B," and this led to negotiations currently under way for rights to option the series for television. Cresse has broadened her horizons by obtaining a feature film writing certificate from UCLA, and three of her screenplays placed in the top 10 in competition.

Marilyn Dalrymple, a Lancaster resident and published writer and photographer, is the author of "Bartholomew's Buttons," a children's book illustrated by her oldest son, Leslie Duffey, a former Lancaster resident. It's the second book about Bartholomew and his forest friends and will be published soon. Dalrymple leads the local Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators group meeting at the Barnes & Nobles bookstore in Palmdale.

Joan Fry, whose "Backyard Horsekeeping: The Only Guide You'll Ever Need" has been updated by a second edition, has also had countless short stories and articles published on subjects ranging from kite flying to the death of Billy the Kid, with many celebrity profiles in between. A resident of Acton and a creative writing instructor at Antelope Valley College, Fry also wrote "The Beginning Dressage Book" and "How to Cook a Tapir, A Memoir of Belize."

Lynn Gardner of Quartz Hill is the author of "Vanished: A Maggie McKenzie Mystery," the first of a new romantic suspense series with intriguing characters. Her earlier work produced a high-adventure series of nine suspense novels that featured characters Topaz and Treachery. All of Gardner's books are written from careful research, authentic locations and historical facts.

Kay Hendrickson is a well-known Antelope Valley freelance photographer whose photos of desert wildflowers have been widely published throughout the state. Her book, "The California Poppy," includes many award-winning photos made by the Quartz Hill resident. Her work has been displayed in the Ansel Adams gift shop at Yosemite National Park.

Dorothy Howell is a resident of Rosamond and writes as Judith Stacy. She's the author of 22 historical romance novels, with sales exceeding 2 million copies worldwide. Her titles include Harlequin Historical's Top Seller of the Year, a No. 1 on the Barnes & Noble Historical List and a RITA Award finalist. Her current release is "Stay for Christmas," an anthology of stories set in the American West during Christmas.

June Kolf, author of six books on grief and terminal illness, just completed "Standing on Holy Ground," a book about her experiences working with the homeless. A Quartz Hill resident, Kolf has also had nearly 200 articles on related subjects presented in national publications such as Guideposts and the Chicken Soup series. Kolf is also a volunteer chaplain at Antelope Valley Hospital.

Mark LaMonica's latest literary work is a humorous and intriguing book that challenges readers to consider that Shakespeare may have been the reincarnation of Buddha. The book is titled "Whacking Buddha" and has earned high praise for its peek into Elizabethan, spiritual and western cultures.

An earlier book by the Lancaster author-photographer-sculptor is "Rio LA," a photo history of the Los Angeles River that won the Southern California Booksellers Association's 2002 nonfiction award. He also wrote "Junkyard Dogs and William Shakespeare," called dog noir by Entertainment Weekly

Edward Mooney, a Quartz Hill High School teacher and Antelope Valley Press columnist, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his book "The Pearls of the Stone Man," which is being made into a TV movie. It was the first in a trilogy that includes "The Journey of the Stone Man" and "The Hope of the Stone Man."

Priscella Morrow of Rosamond has used her experiences working in children's library programs in Antelope Valley to create a book for youngsters titled "Totally Tubeys." After making a turkey out of a cardboard tube, she was surrounded by Tubey characters. That led to "Totally Tubeys," published by Highsmith. Morrow also contributes articles on library topics to Library Sparks, a periodical promoting creative ways to enhance literacy.

Lauraine Snelling, who has more than 2 million of her books in print, is a Tehachapi resident. A mother of three, Snelling long had a dream to write "horse books for kids," and this led her to pen "An Untamed Land" and "Return to Red River" and several other historical novels. The latest work by Snelling, who has authored more than 50 books, is titled "The Brushstroke Legacy," and like her other recent contemporary romances, reflects real issues of forgiveness, loss, domestic violence and illness.

Deanne Stillman's latest book is "Joshua Tree - Desolation Tango," an exploration of Joshua Tree National Park published by the University of Arizona Press. An earlier book, "Twenty-nine Palms, a True Story of Murder, Marines, and the Mojave," was named one of the best books of 2001 by the LA Times Book Review. Stillman is now working with author Mark LaMonica on a book about the Antelope Valley. She also writes for Rolling Stone, the LA Times, Slate and National Review Online.

Bonnie Stone is a Lancaster resident whose latest endeavor is "San Andreas Ain't No Fault of Mine," a fun and fact-filled guidebook to the Antelope Valley. It recently went into its fifth printing and is being sold in bookstores and specialty shops throughout the state. Her earlier books include two on military lifestyles, "Uncle Sam's Brides" and "Campfollowing," plus "Aloha Cowboy," the history of horsemen and women in Hawaii, and a children's book, "Civil War in Paradise."

Ann Vanino, a personal and professional leadership coach, is the author of "Leadership on Trial: Lessons from The Apprentice." The book is full of advice and resources on organizational and personal leadership. Vanino, who lives in Juniper Hills, is the founder of Moving Forward, dedicated to helping members of the business world build successful, prosperous and well-managed organizations.

"It should be a very interesting afternoon because of the wide range of subjects represented by our authors," said Stone, the program coordinator. "There are many

would-be writers who have questions about needing an agent, finding a publisher, and how to develop storylines and characters. Meeting our local authors can help answer many of these questions."