
Memoir Writing Workshops By Ina Hillebrandt, Bestselling Author And Publisher, Attracting Crowds

Unexpected Numbers Contribute To Copier Meltdown in Burbank

The cry, "Quick, we need more copies!" sent pages scurrying as a full house arrived to attend Ina's Memoir Writing Workshop, held in Burbank on a recent Saturday. "It was exhilarating to see such a diverse group of people turning out for the class and determined to improve their writing," Louise Paziak, in charge of programs and publicity for sponsor Burbank Public Library, commented gamely. She added, "I wanted to thank you for providing our patrons with a wonderfully creative afternoon. Creative writing is still vitally important in this era of text messaging and cell phones...Everyone had a story to tell and it was really fascinating to listen to them share their memories. I thoroughly enjoyed sitting in on your class."

Hillebrandt's particular brand of Memoir Writing Workshops focus on fun and creativity, and easy to use techniques. This most recent event drew an Emmy award winning comedy writer, a writing teacher with an MFA in creative writing, several actors, and people of a range of ages, countries and lifestyles. The workshops are aimed at helping both new writers and published authors break through blocks or find ideas to structure their memoirs, at people who've been stuffing notes into shoeboxes for years and want to get organized, and people who ask, "Where do I start?" The goal of most is to create a history of life stories for the family. What surprises many is that they wind up creating treasures that even folks who are not their mothers savor.

Ina Hillebrandt, the creator and facilitator of Ina's Writing Workshops™, uses her experience as a Fortune 500 consultant, creativity and humor coach, and author ("Pawprints," the book of furry memoirs, an Amazon.com bestseller, plus other books and writing in different media). Her "How to Write Your Memoirs...Fun Prompts that Make Writing...and Reading...Your Life Stories a Pleasure!", and special creativity tools including **Ina's Weird Prompts™**, help people access memories as well as their own creative genies. Selected stories created by students are posted on www.InasPawprints.com, which gets over 100,000 hits monthly, and are also eligible to be published books of the class' works, "Stories From The Heart." Vol. 2 became an Amazon.com bestseller, and a new volume is due for release in May. Authors are invited to perform in Spoken Word with Music shows, to publish their own books through Pawpress, or given input on seeking outside publication.

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Classes are keyed to helping individuals tap into their memory banks, fire their inner critic, and find or retain their own writing voice. Participants are encouraged to share their memories, in tales they often don't realize are intriguing to others. For example, take encounters with deadly "naks" (snakes) and lions in India during the time of the British Raj. Eliza Crawford, our heroine, writes of walking right up, unbidden, and putting her head into a lion's mouth while at the circus. "The lion tamer did it. Why not I?" she asks, with a twinkle in her eye. The snakes? Eliza's husband (a highly placed police official who guarded international VIP's) deals with an everyday occurrence -- lethal vipers in the house, and the whole family warily sidles around cobra worshippers at annual Nak Fairs. Another workshop member, Henry Markosian, whose family fled Armenia during The Troubles, entertains the group with an old Prince Albert can filled with marijuana seeds, a chewable delicacy when he was a kid, and other tales of growing up in the States on "Anderson Ave.," in a small town ten miles (and a world away) from Salt Lake City, Utah.

"How to Write Your Memoirs' and the exercises open the floodgates to memories long buried but not forgotten," Kay Roberts says. Aside from writing exceptional memoirs, Kay is a major contributor to Fairy Tales for Grownups™, included in our next "Stories From The Heart" collection, vol. 3. She's also a standup comic and actor (Kay began all these artsy activities after the age of 60). Excerpts from her memoirs delight readers both in and outside the class with lines such as, "Winkie...was part of a litter produced from an illicit affair between Bunny's Great Dane and the neighbor's boxer...When I first started dating young men I found out what kind of shape they were in when Winkie bounded out the front door. The fit ones would easily clear the fence."

And then there's Big Louis, Louis Weinstein from South Philly, a man adept with words, women and camels.

People who attend Hillebrandt's workshops say, "Ina has a gift for opening people up. She glows as she works with participants, and shares her own stories, which help people feel free to tell theirs. I found myself going down a path I wouldn't have started on my own." (Christine Julian, published poet, drum workshop facilitator).

Other comments include:

"Makes my week!"

"Interesting and inspirational."

"Step by step instructions in the book make it easy to write."

"Ina is a good speaker. Really useful information presented in an easy to understand manner."

"Ina is very relaxed, and it makes other people relaxed, too."

"Ina's energy is energizing. I feel I can write."

“It was really helpful when you answered my question about how to structure a memoir, ‘Think of a log line for film or TV. What would you tell someone your book is about, in one or two sentences?’ That really helped me.”

“It’s just plain fun!”

If you’ve been thinking of putting pen to paper but were afraid you couldn’t do it well enough, or have just been putting it off until you have time, you might consider coming to one of Ina’s Memoir Writing Workshops. “We are so glad our Dad attended these classes before he died. We got to know so much more about him...and we didn’t realize he was such a good writer. We’re so pleased other people like his work.” (Family of the late Earl Boretz, first-time writer and contributing author to the “Stories From The Heart” books. Earl wrote touching pieces about his wife, brother-in-law and sister, and created a whole family of fictional relatives for his real cat Mo, short for Mozart. One of Ina’s favorite tales centers on how Mo’s sister brought in funds when he decided to toss his litter box into the race for governor of California.)

ONGOING FREE WORKSHOP ON THE WESTSIDE

Ina donates time to conduct a free Pawprints Writing Workshop weekly at a senior center, facilities courtesy of the City of L.A. Dept. of Recreation & Parks’ Felicia Mahood MultiPurpose Center. Time: every Monday morning 10:15-noon. Place: Felicia Mahood. 11338 Santa Monica Blvd., LA, CA 90025. Spaces are limited, so please arrive early. Workshops are sponsored in other locations across Southern California.

More workshops are forming. For information, or to set up a consultation, custom single workshop or series for your group:

Please contact Ina at InaH@InasPawprints.com. Website: www.InasPawprints.com

Tel: 310-571-5048.

MEDIA: Ina and selected contributing authors are available for interviews. Ina’s bio follows. Phone contact: 310-497-5653. E-mail: InaPaw@aol.com or AnnaP@InasPawprints.com

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- 👤 **Author:** *Pawprints*, Amazon.com bestseller about close encounters of the furry kind; *Diving Boards: Jump Starts For Stories – OR – If You See A Man Alone On The Beach In Mexico, It Means His Wife Is Upstairs Throwing Up In The Room*. Developed *Pawprints Writing Clubs™* and *Pawprints Literacy Plus*, life enrichment/memoir and fiction writing for seniors, building literacy skills plus promoting the importance of kindness to animals for kids. Developed companion workbooks – *The Student Prints* – for grades 1-12, and *How to Write Your Memoirs...Fun Prompts to Make Writing...and Reading...Your Life Stories A Pleasure*, for adults. Compiled, edited, published books of students' writings, including the *KidPrints* series; the most recent adult book, *Stories From The Heart, Vol. 2*, named Amazon.com bestseller. Wrote/designed/published Edited/published *Go East, Young Man, Go East*, a book of memoirs by C. Alan Tichenor, who worked in the Middle East as global oil boom was beginning. Contributed to *The Hardest Challenge* – based on interviews with widowed men and women (conducted research, edited verbatims, provided analysis and structure, for TIAA/CREF). Other books in development include; "Sensual Spirit" by poet-performer Chrystine Julian (pub date March '07); *Stories From The Heart, v. 3* (April '07), more "Pawprints," a new first-in-series children's book, a novel, and a second volume of prompts. Published articles in various journals. Designed, edited and wrote newsletters.
- 👤 **A/V:** Wrote, and/or directed and produced audio and video programs for NPR plus industrial clients; script doctor, Kansas City Jazz Festival co-hosted by Harry Belafonte and Danny Glover.
- 👤 **Teacher/Trainer/Speaker:** Produce, write and emcee *Pawprints Players* spoken word with music shows. Appearances/interviews include *New York Times*, *Omni*, ABC, NBC, Fox, PBS, radio. In addition to *Pawprints* work, developed The *Un-Workshops™* featuring *Comic Release™* for stress reduction, anger management and team building for adults, and *Idea Magic™* for creativity. Subsequently, brought in to "lighten up" the staff at ESALEN, design and conduct *Un-Workshops* for THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB, the NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, FORTUNE 500 corporations such as SEARS, SCHWAB, VISA, CITICORP. Co-led Educator Workshops for JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE'S program. Participated in "Author Day" events in New York, Carmel, and Los Angeles, presenter at Crystal Stairs Childcare Institute Conference; City of LA Dept. of Recreation & Parks, etc.
- 👤 **Wellness Work with Youth, and with Troubled Youth and Adults:** Conducted national study for GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE and PLANNED PARENTHOOD on teen pregnancy – with recommendations contributing to lowered rates of incidence. Worked with young people on other social issues, product development and marketing, including SCHOLASTIC BOOKS, FISHER-PRICE, CBS (violence on television), ABC and HBO. On staff, Quaker Committee on Social Rehab (drug addiction halfway house, NYC); consultant, patient adaptation to Hansen's Disease; consultant, program/marketing design, Weight Watchers. Developed *Grief Lifters*, an *Un-Workshop* to help people deal with the loss of a spouse – clients include Hyatt Classic Residence, City of L.A. Department of Recreation and Parks.
- 👤 **Strategic Planning Consultant:** 20+ years: President, Hillebrandt Consultants, serving **Fortune 500**, including IBM, CITICORP, SCHWAB, SCOTT PAPER, etc., and nonprofits such as The Rockefeller Foundation. **Additional Public Sector Experience:** New York City: RED CROSS (blood drive); ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION (women's nutrition); AMERICAN THEATRE LEAGUE, MAYOR'S OFFICE, NYPD and NYFD (strategic planning projects). Washington D.C.: education and persuasion campaigns: Social Security; films on aging. Los Angeles: three years with City Dept. of Recreation & Parks as writer and publicist; went on to conduct "Pawprints" programs for youth, *Un-Workshops* for seniors and others in varied age and ethnic groups for the City of LA Rec & Parks Dept.
- 👤 **Education and Personal:** Hillebrandt received her AB in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania, with a minor in Psychology; graduate studies in Anthropology and Social Psychology at Tulane University. She studied improvisational acting with Gary Austin, founder of The Groundlings, and dance with Luigi, recent recipient of a lifetime achievement award for his work with jazz dance. She has been named a Woman of the Year by Who's Who, and is a biographee in several Who's Who editions. Ina speaks a bit of French, loves to dance, hike, ride horses, sail, laugh, cook and travel. She contributes to and does pro-bono work for many animal conservation groups. Ina has a daughter, two cats, and the cats' friends, including a squirrel, who occasionally drop in for dinner.