

# *Our Tuesday Nights Out*



## *Write To Be*

Somersworth Housing Authority  
First Anniversary  
Write To Be  
October 2005 ~ October 2006

*Our Tuesday  
Nights Out*



**Somersworth Housing Authority**  
First Anniversary  
**Write To Be**  
October 2005 - October 2006

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## *Our Shared Respects*

**We Will** respect our confidentiality - what happens here, what is said here - stays here.

**We will** honor the right to pass.

**We will** start on time and end on time.

**We will** treat all writing as fiction unless specifically asked by the author to treat it as Autobiographical. Therefore, our responses will be about the writing, not the writer. We will rely on terms such as: "the writer", "the narrator", "the character" - rather than "you".

**We will** only comment on the text, on what we remember about the writing itself, and not relate it to our story and talk about ourselves.

**We will** let each person finish speaking before adding our voice.

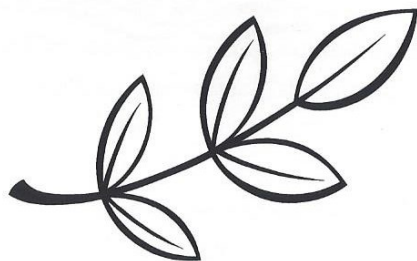
**We will** avoid making assumptions or assigning intentions, beliefs, or motives to others.

**We will** assume everyone who comes offers positive intentions, and if necessary, we will talk to one another, taking the time to check things out if a comment doesn't feel right.

## *The Writers...*







## **Writing** **Sonya Barr**

Writing has changed my life in so many ways. I have learned in to honor myself, and my feelings, thoughts, and love of writing, of course. Writing is a way for self-expression, inner healing, and a way to bond with others.

I have learned that everyone has a story, and those stories should be passed down to future generations to insure that we don't forget where we came from or who we are becoming.

I guess the only thing I can say is that writing is positive, a soul cleanser, a brain bender, and a spark to my creative side.

### About the Author

I am a wife and mother of three beautiful children. I haven't lost my love for writing since the fourth grade. I believe that every experience in life, positive or negative only adds to your ability to create a story. I started writing poetry, and then I progressed to short stories. I am working on my first book. Writing is a great stress release.

I love to read, write, cook, and play. I am grateful for my family, friends, life, and Nancy Eichhorn, and the strength and support of my writing endeavors.



### Our Tuesday Nights Out Nancy Eichhorn

I believe in the power of writing, in the possibilities that arise when a circle forms each week to honor stories. There's a grace, a flow. Writing transforms lives. I found my voice on the page, and as I continue to experience my Self on paper, I find the courage to share my voice out loud. I wanted to share this incredible journey with other women.

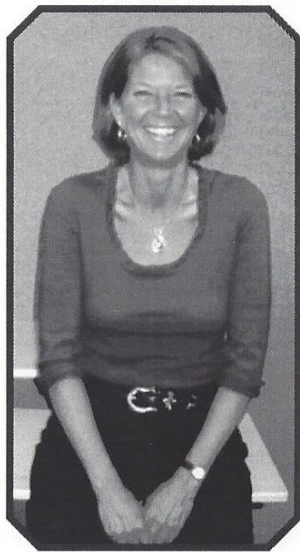
When I called Teresa Johanson to offer a writing workshop at the Somersworth Housing Authority, she had no idea who I was. At the time, neither did I. Yet, she gathered a group of women together, and on a Tuesday night in late October we wrote to our first prompt—the story of our name. We've been writing ever since.

When I was 16 years old, I longed to belong to a circle of women. I craved a place where I felt valued, respected, loved, and heard. I landed with a group of older women, introduced by my boyfriend's mother. Every evening after work we gathered on Cappy's front porch, sipped iced tea in the summer, hot chocolate in the winter, and swapped stories. I loved to listen. I didn't speak. I was far too shy, too insecure, too young. Being in their presence, learning about their lives through stories, however, fascinated me. I remembered every detail for days, replayed conversations in my mind, added in stories of my own, whispered what I wished I'd said out loud.

I've spent the past year on Cappy's porch; only this time, I have a voice. And I feel honored to be part of this incredible circle of women, women who know what matters most—love, honor, family, caring, support, loyalty, Self and God. I am truly, richly blessed.

### About the Author

Nancy Elizabeth Eichhorn was born March 30, 1960, in San Francisco, California. She facilitates "Write To Be" workshops, is earning her doctorate in clinical psychology, and is faithfully committed to personal work through writing. She knows her life's purpose is to share space with others as they find their voice on the page, and she loves writing in sacred circles where stories are honored. The unconditional love she receives helps her heal in untold ways.



### Writing Jeannie Eisenstat Fall 2006

How writing has changed me this year?

It started with a simple invitation  
By a friend, to go to a free class being offered  
To anyone who wanted to come.  
Years ago, I wrote, maybe I should try it again.

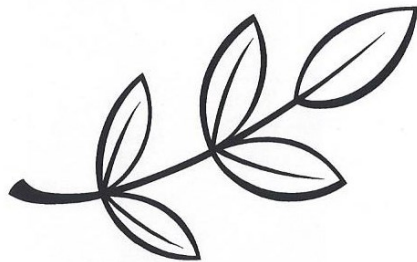
Tuesday Nights Out... Ladies only.  
Now what one would typically expect  
For a ladies night out...  
No shopping.  
No men.  
No dancing.  
No intoxicating drinking.  
Instead healthy snacks, with tea, coffee or water  
And writing.  
Must be boring! But I went...

It could surprise you how refreshing it  
Can be! After writing, with a writing prompt from Nancy,  
We talk, we eat, we laugh, and if we wish  
to, we share our writing with the group.  
We have a kind, caring, helpful teacher.  
Even though sometimes I'm tired, I still go  
For it truly is a quick but very enjoyable break.  
A chance to breathe in, to think, to reflect  
On, and remind myself that I have  
Something to say and write down,  
Even if it's just for my own record.



A witness, for me to pass on, to anyone  
That desires to read it but always  
Affectionately for those who know me and  
Love me.  
Maybe it can encourage or teach  
Make someone laugh, or just remind me  
That I have much to be thankful about.  
So don't be afraid, don't hesitate to  
Take advantage of the opportunity  
For the same thing could happen to you!  
You can be a writer!

Enjoy,  
Jeannie Eisenstat



### About the Author

Jeannie Eisenstat is very passionate about the things that are very dear to her heart. Foremost, her four, who have almost grown up into adulthood children: Amy, 24; Eileen, 23; Sara, 20; and Eric, 17. Other endearing interests are gardening, piano performance, and educating young children. She volunteers at Maplewood School in the Reading Department in Somersworth, New Hampshire. She interests the children in her charge in the pleasures of learning by reading elementary level books on various topics.

When the opportunity arises, she takes pleasure in providing reasonably priced, private childcare. She also provides ministry (teaching and music) weekly at her local church and has a deep faith in God and the spiritual aspect of life.

"Life is appreciated and respected as a beautiful gift," she says.





## Our Tuesday Night Out Writing Class

### Beverly Ellis

When I was called and asked to go to a writing class that was just starting up, my first thought was, I will go and see what it is all about, but I did not think I would have any interest.

Well, I have to say, I love it. Me, and the other women in our group, look forward to each Tuesday night. We share our writings with each other, and then we talk about the writing not the writer. We never assume a piece of writing is nonfiction or fiction because it could be one, or the other, or it could be both. Being given a subject to write about and sharing our writing with our group has brought us all very close. This of course includes Nancy Eichhorn. If it was not for her, and the love our group has for Nancy, I think we all would have missed out on knowing a very loving and caring person.

This class has been very helpful for my mental status. Over the months I found that writing really does help in good ways. Writing about pain, just putting it on paper so you can see it has helped me become stronger. I have gone through many medical issues and several deaths over the last few years. I am a stronger person because of the class and the support from all the members.

I just lost my son Jimmy. He got his foot caught in the lobster trap lines as they were going into the water. I also lost my brother Jack the very next morning from a long battle with cancer. Nancy was there to help me write out the obituary, and she was there in other ways, too. Our group was all there for me at the worst time in my life.

As Oprah says writing is very helpful and everyone should keep a journal.

## About the Author

I, Beverly Ellis, am a mother of three children. My daughter, Cathy, is the oldest. She was born in 1972 and is 34 years old. David, my youngest son, was born in 1977. He is 29 years old. My oldest son, Jimmy, passed away on August 9, 2006. He was 30 years old. My older brother, Jack, died the very next morning with cancer.

My husband, Jim, has been a great dad to my children; their father died when Cathy was seven years old.

I like to cook, which I did for work for twenty-five years at the Gateway Restaurant in Lee, New Hampshire. I retired from work and live on Social Security Disability.

I enjoy bass fishing with my husband, playing games and emailing friends on my computer, and watching my favorite shows on television. I also love working in my garden. I have many colorful flowers and plants. I am going to extend it right over to my neighbor's front yard next year. I have three fishing boys, an angel, and a lighthouse in my garden. The lighthouse is solar so it lights up at night.

"Writing has been a healing eye-opener and therapeutic for me."



## How Writing Has Changed My Life

By Laura Young

September 26, 2006

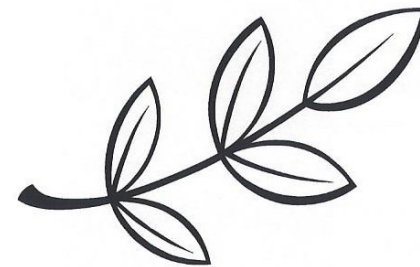
Writing has brought me a long way in life. It has helped me with my past and my present problems in my life. When I was upset or sad I would write. Now I find myself writing all the time. It doesn't matter if I am happy or sad. I just like to write now.

When I first found out about the writing class, I was like, "No Way, that's not for me." I have a hard time reading and writing, and I don't like to read out loud either. But Teresa said, "Try it. You might just like it." So I did. I was so nervous.

So here you have a woman with learning disabilities, depression and OCD. Someone who couldn't read and write well. Now I am a different person. I am either reading or writing all the time. I am also doing word games and challenging myself all the time now. I love the class. I can't wait to go every week. My vocabulary was only small words; now I am learning bigger and better words to use in my writing. I try to make better strides in my work. When I first started the class my stories were like one-liners, now I am up to paragraphs, and I try to be the first one to read mine out loud. I am so proud of my writing. I feel my stories are getting better every time I write. I have also started reading books and really enjoying them.

For the first time in my life I feel wonderful about myself and the other women in my group. I am shy at first until I open up. And believe me, that didn't take long at all. Nancy made me feel wanted and never made any judgment on me. Nancy always has a positive attitude toward all of us, and she has made us feel like we are important. I feel if it

wasn't for Nancy helping me through some hard times this past year, I would have never made great strides like I have. It's like therapy group every week. We work on different topics, and a lot of times they are about how one of us is feeling. I feel that my writing has made me a better person, too. And being a better person means having a better life, too. I know writing isn't going to solve all my problems, but it helps to relax me so I can deal with life's challenges.





## About the Author

Hello, my name is Laura. I was born and raised in Brockton, Massachusetts. I graduated from Brockton High School in 1982. The first job I ever had was as a nurse's aid. I did that for a while. Then I got married and had two kids. By the time my youngest was four years old, I was living, first with my brother, and then later I moved back with my mom. My ex-husband went to prison, and I had to raise my kids on my own. It was a real hard job, but my family helped me as much as they could. My friends were a big help to me also. You see my children are kind of difficult. They have ADHD, learning difficulties, and OCD. It was very difficult raising kids when I have learning disabilities and OCD myself. We have had a long hard road. But we made it. My daughter is a junior in high school. She is still having difficulties in school, but I am getting her all the help she needs. My son has graduated from high school, is now married and going to college to be a chef. I have one granddaughter and another grandchild on the way. I can't wait until the baby comes. I am hoping it's a boy.

I have been living on my own for six and a half years now. I was a cook for a long time at the Gateway Restaurant. Then I went for the job that I had dreamed about for a long time—I work with developmentally disabled adults at The Institute of Professional Practice. I have been with this job for five years now, and I love it. It is very rewarding to go home every night knowing I have put a smile on my clients' faces.

Me? Myself? I had a very confusing childhood and part

of my adult life, too. I had mixed emotions about who I was and what I was here for. When I started writing classes, I finally figured out that I was not happy being with men so I went forward to pursue being with a woman. Now I have a wonderful partner who understands my feelings and cares for me very much. When you put all of our kids together, we have five, and I love them and care for them all, too. When I was comfortable, I told my family, and they all accepted my decision. Which I am glad about because I was going to be happy no matter what anyone thought.

I have learned that I have to put my foot down, and let everyone know I have choices in my life, and no one can make them for me. I am a very loving, caring, honest, thoughtful person. I go out of my way to make anyone and everyone happy. I have great friends and family. I wouldn't trade them for anything. Some of my friends have gone through a lot of the same problems that I have over the past 11 years, but I can stand tall and say I did it. I am proud of my life. My life is a lot better now that it was 11 years ago. I am finally happy and that was because I made the choice in my life to better me. Well, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.





## Writing Laura West

Writing is a wonderful stress relief. It allows me to express myself freely without having to worry about hurting anyone. It also allows me time to socialize with other neighborhood women which gets me out of the house for a couple of hours. It is also a nice way to spend time on rainy days. Through my writing class, I learned that not everything needs to be perfect, and there are many good ways to deal with stress.



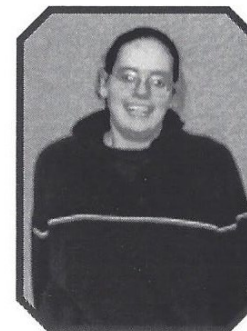
## About the Author

My name is Laura West. My husband, Charles, and I have a beautiful daughter named Jazmine, and I am currently three months pregnant with another child. I love being a stay-at-home mom. The rewards definitely outweigh the struggles.

I have many hobbies. I love to write because it helps me express myself clearly and organize my thoughts. I also like to sing. I sing all the time. Both of these hobbies can be great stress relievers. I enjoy playing the piano, though I have to admit that I'm not very good at it. Oh well, I can't be good at everything. Another interest of mine is theatrical arts.

I am most thankful for my friends and family. My mother-in-law has been a great help to me in many hard times. Friends lend a listening ear when I need one without passing judgment, and where would anyone be without their family?

I live in the small town of Somersworth, New Hampshire, but grew up in the tiny town of South Berwick, Maine. I enjoy living here and hope I never have to leave. Someday I would like to buy a nice house to raise my children in, and eventually I would like to own a dog and a bird.





*Our Stories...*

