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May is A-MAY-zing

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The merry month of May is a-MAY-zing this year because of connecting with communities I find inspiring and supportive.

First, I attended a remarkable reunion for fellow students at ASU - the American School in Japan. This was a cluster-reunion, not so much focused on a particular graduating year, so it was creating a place and space for connecting, catching up, and sharing why our multi-cultural, international education made such a difference in our lives. More on this in a moment.

Second, the community of fellow authors in the California Central Coast is creating a brand new event, and I'm thrilled to be taking part. It's the inaugural Writers-in-Action Conference in San Luis Obispo. Details on this in a moment, too.

And to include my entire community of readers, of course I'm doing a special Mother's Day sale that extends through the end of May.

My late mother was one of my biggest supporters, and I miss her more than I can say. She helped me create my first Charl-Tee events, and we would invite mothers and daughters, aunts and nieces, grandmothers and granddaughters, and women-friends of every description. I like to think she'll be watching over us as we celebrate this year.

I also want to honor and acknowledge the women in my life who are aMAY-zing mothers: my sister Linda, my step-daughter Amelia, my best friends Erin Gray (whose daughter is my God-daughter) and Karen Pearson (whose son is my God-son), my "other mother" Elaine Evans, and several other women who are close friends.

And there are many ways to "mother" other than biologically. Friend and mentor Judith Briles births her own book-babies, but also shepherds many other authors' projects with firm guidance and constant encouragement. She's a role model, as are other we can admire for their nurturing and supportive qualities.

This month is a busy and productive one, with special events, and with lots of writing, so I work on both the next novel, and the next story. I hope May is just as amazing for you, and that you enjoy some special celebrations, and some time for special reads.

"Otters" Book on Sale

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In case you haven't yet heard about "When Otters Play", here's the otters' shout out!



From Mother's Day through the month of May, my latest book [When Otters Play](#) is just 99 cents on Amazon for your Kindle. This engaging story features a sea otter mom and her pup -- possibly the cutest creatures in the ocean. When I visited the Monterey Bay Aquarium and worked with their director of the Sea Otter Rescue program, I fell in love with these creatures, and wanted to take one of the pups home. Instead, I put him right at the heart of the story, where he gets to enchant my readers as much as he enchanted me.

This book is a Novella -- nearly long enough to be a Novel -- and it just won its first award! It won for [Regional Fiction at the Los Angeles Book Festival Book Awards!](#)

Give yourself a treat and read something great in honor of Mother's Day -- or give this captivating little book as a gift.

Perfect Reads for Moms

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And in case you'd like to grab OTHER great Mother's Day reads, I joined forces with my friend Tammy Grace and several other authors, and we're doing a four-day sale of our books. From May 10 - 14th, you'll find a beautiful selection in our [Perfect Reads for Mom promotion](#).



My book is part of the promotion, and so are some beautiful downloadable Mother's Day images I know you'll like. You can print these on cards, or send in your email messages.

This terrific event was organized by [Tammy L. Grace](#). Like me, Tammy writes a coastal series, and we've discovered a wonderful synergy by cross-promoting our books to one another's readers.

I think you'll enjoy her [Hometown Harbor Series](#), set in the picturesque San Juan Islands of the Pacific Northwest. She also writes a second series, this one set in Nashville. The Cooper Harrington Detective Novels feature Coop, a lawyer turned private detective, who solves murders with his faithful golden retriever.

Writers in Action Conference

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Sisters in Crime is a terrific national organization with chapters in several parts of the country. I'm a member of the [Central Coast Chapter](#), which will be hosting its first Writers Conference on May 19th.



We're starting small with a one-day conference, and it'll be chock-a-block with workshops, presentations and panels offered by some of the most accomplished authors in the region -- a practical event for aspiring authors, and a behind-the-scenes adventure for readers! Join us!

- [Writers in Action - From Idea to Publication](#)
- [PG&E Energy Education Center, 6588 Ontario Road, San Luis Obispo](#)
- [Saturday, May 19th, 9am to 5pm](#)

ASIJ Reunion

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I didn't used to attend reunions, but Mom convinced me to attend my first five years ago, and I enjoyed it so much that now I never want to miss one. No doubt every reunion has some sweet moments of reconnecting with old friends, or discovering "new" people we never really knew back in the day. This reunion had all those elements, too.



However, I attended the [American School in Japan](#) -- with an American curriculum, and 40 nationalities represented in the student body. What made our reunion most special was that our tireless organizers -- Nick Connor and Dave Sakamoto -- put together a weekend of both fun and significance. They invited three guests from Tokyo -- the new Head of School and his wife, as well as the Development officer, so we enjoyed a direct connection to the school and got a great update.

And they asked five of us alumni to speak on the theme of how our international, multi-cultural education affected our lives as we created careers. [Jackie Connor](#) spoke about being a Los Angeles judge; [Ester Tsakalidis](#) spoke about his spiritual work in Israel; [Gary Hild](#) spoke about his entrepreneurial journey; [Lois Pearce](#) spoke about his media and public affairs company; [Wise Young](#) shared about his breakthrough work on spinal cord injury healing; (Each of them was so inspiring!) I spoke about my life in the arts. All of us had one important thing in common: we were able to discern context -- the background against which a project succeeds or fails -- because we had grown up accustomed to being with people who, because they came from different cultures, thought differently. Thinking differently -- being different -- turns out to be not a liability, but an asset, the very thing that allows us to "make a difference." I came home so moved, touched and inspired! So did my husband, who bravely came with me. And I rediscovered how very much I care about all these dear people with whom I went to school, who they are now in the wide world, and how we can continue to encourage each to keep making a difference.

I've gone back to Tokyo twice in the last decade, and did some teaching, speaking, and performing at ASIJ both times. I'm ready to go again! Perhaps one day you'll have a chance to visit, too. Click on the logo if you'd like to visit the website.

Becoming Julia Morgan - Updates

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As you know, I was part of a marvelous production last autumn about the remarkable architect Julia Morgan. Since then, our director Linda Wilson and I have been approached by several other organizations that also own Julia Morgan buildings, about presenting the play at their facilities.



Our next production will be [Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland](#), California, a hauntingly beautiful site, the entire middle portion of which Julia designed over a period of 25 years, while she was also overseeing construction of the Hearst Castle. Julia was the second of three architects on this project, and her unmistakable hand is visible in the grace, functionality and even whimsy of what would otherwise be a sobering location.

The absolutely amazing team of people we're working with there are so excited, and so professional, that it's a joy to work with them. In addition to selling regular tickets, they'll be offering special "packages" that will include my talk on Sacred Geometry, a tour of the extraordinary property, a book signing, and a VIP reception. Wow! This will be a very special experience for all who attend!

If you know of a Julia Morgan location you think might like to present the show, let me know! We have a wonderful PowerPoint presentation that shows the highlights of the show and is really fun to watch.

This month, keeping things moving forward on all "Julia" productions, Linda and I:

- [Visited Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland](#), and met with their fabulous team. Staged Readings will be performed August 3rd, 4th, and possibly 5th.
- [Met with our playwright Belinda Taylor](#), who is thrilled we'll be performing close to her home city.
- [Attended -- dressed as Julia Morgan and Phoebe Hearst -- the annual Victorian English Tea at The Miverva Club, Santa Maria](#). Their board and members are discussing having us perform the play there, a venue built by Julia and very similar to the Moresby Club.

Watermill

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The iconic Jerome Robbins ballet "Watermill", for which I'm one of the original marshallers, is coming back for another revival I play koto, working with a small ensemble of fantastic marshallers who also specialize in Asian instruments.



Though through the decades we've always performed at the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center, the home of the ballet company, this time we'll be performing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, which will be an honor, and a new challenge.

- [Watermill](#), a modern ballet
- [Brooklyn Academy of Music](#)
- [October 24, 25, 26, 27](#)

My Heart is Grateful . . .

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. . . for my mother and all she did for me, for the other mothers in my life, and for the quality of motherhood that is expressed in every culture, and in species all over our planet.



. . . for the chance to connect and reconnect with childhood school friends, and share the values we learned at our international school.

. . . for my theatre communities and theatrical colleagues, whose creativity is inspiring and brings magical moments to live performances, and to audio performances.

. . . for my author communities for how we support each other, and mentor those who are heeding the call to write and need guidance about how to take those first steps.

. . . and to you, my readers, those who've been with me for several years, and those who are just joining the Milford-Haven saga. This will be a great year filled with new publications, many events and several performances, so there's adventure and fun ahead!

As always, love and gratitude, [from my heart to yours!](#)