

In 'Jasper's World,' friendship is more important than a ton of dog treats

By Sophie Braccini



Local author Sarah Gunn just received the prints of her first book, "Jasper's World." Photo Sophie Braccini

Sarah Gunn has been carrying the stories of Jasper the dog in her mind for many years. It has been a long process, but the local author is now published and starting a new adventure: promoting her new children book, "Jasper's World."

In doing so she meets in the classroom with young students who get interested in her characters and their adventures, as well as in the story-writing process.

Gunn is a Moraga mother from England who raised her two children here and continues to serve the community as a reading tutor at Camino Pablo Elementary School. When she came to California, she did so with her British roots and as she started imagining stories for children set in the British countryside with its pastel colors and lush greens that came naturally to her. There she created the adventure of Jasper, a feisty Jack Russell belonging to a local vet.

The figure of Gunn's father-in-law, who was a local vet in the southern British countryside, came to her mind. Her husband Neil had grown up there, with two successive family Jack Russells. Gunn remembers one of them and heard

stories about the other one, and she loves that breed of dog for its energy and spirit. She also remembers fondly visits she made with her father-in-law to local farms, and still has with her the images of a Christmas Eve night when he delivered a lamb.

But she also wanted to tell a story that illustrated a life skill for her young audience and she chose friendship. Not just any friendship, but the friendship between Jasper and Nellie, a young sheep who was adopted by a nearby farmer who the vet often visits to attend to the farm animals. So beget "Jasper's World." Let's not spoil the mystery, but in that sweet story, something happens to Nellie and her friend Jasper will save the day.

Gunn believes that friendship can flourish between very different people, including different species and breeds. The author has incorporated in her story how one can complement and teach things to the other and enrich each other's experience. She is also a keen observer of dogs, and as she transcribes in the story of Jasper's thoughts, they are quite believable. The dog is driven by his instinct and his unique abili-

ties, such as his remarkable sense of smell.

Gunn worked with an editor at Mascot Books to get her book published. She explains that its model is a hybrid, part self-publishing, part traditional promotion by the publisher, putting "Jasper's World" out with Barnes and Noble, Amazon and the Ingram Content Group, which places books at such places as Costco and Whole Foods. She submitted her story idea and there was a lot of back and forth to tighten the plot, make the story shorter with a lot of room for illustrations, something Gunn really wanted.

She explains that it took about two years to edit the text to its final form, decide on an editing format, and work with the illustrator, Thomas Hilley. She details how the editor proposed a number of illustrators, and how she chose one who best brought Jasper to life and matched the vision she had in her mind.

The final books arrived at her place mid-June. Before school ended Gunn took a printout of it to read in one third-grade and one second-grade class at CP. The young students enjoyed the experience and asked many questions, she said. Of course they wanted to know if the book was based on a true story and if Jasper really existed.

They also asked about the writing process itself and Gunn told them that for a book it works just like what they do in class: It takes a lot of rewriting and editing before the story is finished. The children were also interested by the fact that Gunn is a familiar face around the school; for them writing and publishing a book now appears to be something within reach.

Of course the children asked if Jasper would have other adventures, and Gunn says that he very well might. The children proposed other life skills the dog could explore, such as perseverance.

Gunn says that she will spend the summer contacting independent bookstores in the area and offer to come and do readings. One of the first ones will be at Orinda Books, where Gunn will appear from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 10 as part of that local bookstore's Summer Fun for Kids program. The book can be purchased there or online.

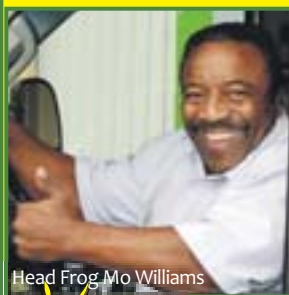


College Prep • Grades 8-12 • Small Classes

Now Enrolling for Fall 2017

19 Altarinda Rd., Orinda, CA 94563
925.254.7553 • www.OrindaAcademy.org

LeapFrog Plumbing



Got gas? Many people think plumbers deal only with water and sewage. Not true! We install and repair all types of gas lines and fixtures too.



Mo's sizzling summer specials...

- Outdoor kitchens
- New gas lines for cooktops and dryers
- Fire pits & patio heaters
- Pool heaters & hot tubs
- Natural gas barbecues

We're poly-pipe certified (approved vendors of PG&E - better than iron)



CA Lic 929641

(925) 377-6600

www.LeapFrogPlumbing.com



LeapFrog Loot \$25 off

Any plumbing job*

LeapFrog Loot \$100 off

Gas line installation over \$600*

LeapFrog Loot \$150 off

Tankless water heater installation*

*1 coupon per service, exp. 7/31/17

We Hop To It!

Family-owned and serving Lamorinda since 1993

green solutions!

In Memory

Nancy Taber Moore



Nancy Taber Moore passed away peacefully on June 7 at the age of 99.

Nancy was born on Sept. 19, 1917 in Winters, California to Percy and Nancy Taber. Nancy was raised in Berkeley, California, attending Jefferson Elementary School, Garfield Junior High School, Berkeley High School, and the University of California, Berkeley, where she earned a degree in Textiles as an honor student. She married Robert Hill Moore of Seattle, Washington on Nov. 23, 1944, whom she met at an Officer's Club dance in 1943. They were married for 42 years until Bob's passing in 1986.

Nancy and Bob lived in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon before settling in Orinda, California in 1956. Nancy worked as the executive secretary for the president of the Western Pacific Railroad during WWII and became a fulltime homemaker when Bob returned home from wartime duties in the Pacific in 1945. Nancy and Bob raised three sons, Bob, Don, and Ken. She

was locally active in the AquaBears Swim Team, the Orinda Book Club, the Orinda Garden Club, and St. Stephens Episcopal Church. Additionally, she was a lifetime member and very active in the Prytanean Women's Honor Society of the University of California.

Nancy loved her home state of California and loved to travel. She was just as at home at Lake Tahoe, where she had a vacation home, as she was in Orinda. Her lifelong passion was gardening. She maintained an extensive camellia and rose garden and was always surrounded by her Collies and cats. When not gardening, Nancy traveled extensively with friends and family.

Nancy is survived by her sons Bob (Lois) of Truckee, California, Don (Wendy) of Lake Oswego, Oregon, and Ken (Audrey) of Bend, Oregon; grandchildren Erik, Robyn, Kevin, Kyle, Christopher, and David; and great-granddaughter Jaden. Nancy was preceded in death by her granddaughter Christine in 1980 and her brother William in 1992.

If you wish to donate on Nancy's behalf, her preference would be: Prytanean Women's Honor Society, c/o Cal Alumni Association, 510-900-8200

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

Theater View Veterinary Clinic



"Dr. Laurie" Langford

Theater View Veterinary Clinic, owned by Dr. Laurie Langfold, is excited to announce a new addition. Dr. Amelia Ausman has joined our team. Come check us out.



Phone: (925) 317-3187

Fax: (925) 334-7017

Email: theatervieworinda@gmail.com

www.theaterviewvetclinic.com

1 Bates Blvd., Suite 200, Orinda