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Peggy Tabor Millin  
828/298-3863  
[pmillin@clarityworksonline.com](mailto:pmillin@clarityworksonline.com)  
[www.clarityworksonline.com](http://www.clarityworksonline.com)

CREATIVE WRITING: A DIFFERENT APPROACH FOR WOMEN  
**Peninsula Women Invite Writing Teacher for Retreat**

Though they live only 30 miles apart, two peninsula women, Betsy Fletcher of Port Townsend and Kathy Sievert of Sequim, met after registering for a writing retreat in North Carolina. The two were so inspired by their experiences, they invited the retreat leader, Peggy Tabor Millin of ClarityWorks in Asheville NC to give a retreat in Port Townsend September 25-October 1, 2006.

Fletcher and Sievert differed in their reasons for choosing to travel to North Carolina to attend a writing retreat. Fletcher, like many women with an unexpressed desire to write, had been devastated by a bad experience with a college writing instructor. She was determined, however, to finally face her fear of creative writing so when she saw a "Fearless Writing Retreat for Women" on the web, she stopped to read more. "The fact Peggy emphasized the creative process drew me, that and that it was only for women." Sievert worked as a professional freelancer for ten years, writing features for *Fifty Something* and the lifestyle section of the *Sunday Peninsula Daily News* and for the *Sequim Gazette* before leaving the field last fall. "I always felt comfortable writing," she says, "but I'd forgotten how to have fun with writing. I could do interviews and run the columns off fast and well, but I wanted to write from inside me and surprise myself." After registering, Sievert was told she had breast cancer. This news added a healing dimension to her motivation for attending a retreat with other women. "I love how there's such synchronicity in the universe, and we are exactly where we are supposed to be. I believe the retreat with Peggy was an essential part of my healing process."

Women have rich inner lives they share primarily in relationships with other women. While they want to create from the center of themselves, the academic critical analysis approach to writing can stunt their creative expression. "If encouraged and supported to find their own way with their writing, women intuitively go right to the heart of what matters to them. What the pen brings forth is raw and true. The writing that comes from their willingness to be vulnerable is not only rich and powerful, it taps the universal experience that readers relate to." Through a process she calls Centered Writing Practice™, Millin leads women through self-doubt and self-imposed limitations to the creative freedom necessary to write openly. All her retreats include group writing and reading, free time for writing, and time for discussion and questions.

Fletcher has now attended four of Millin's retreats. She credits them with freeing her to write. "Peggy makes it so safe—no rules, just dive deep and keep the pen moving. Writing with a group of women is magical. I'm more confident. Not that all my fear is gone, but I'm willing to go ahead anyway." Sievert feels she broke free too. "Peggy used our writing to point out what works rather than what doesn't. As a former teacher, I really appreciated this positive approach." Fletcher and Sievert meet frequently to write at a Sequim café. They also attend poetry classes with Sarah Zale at Peninsula College together. Introduced by Fletcher, Zale and Millin will co-teach a one-day workshop at Fletcher's home in Port Townsend October 7.

**The Fearless Writing Retreat for Women** at Port Townsend will begin Monday, September 25, and end Sunday, October 1. Chevy Chase Beach Cottages will host the event. Fee for the program and meals \$1163. Registration deadline is August 18. Enrollment is limited.

For further information, see [www.clarityworksonline.com](http://www.clarityworksonline.com). To register contact Millin at 828/298-3863 or [pmillin@clarityworksonline.com](mailto:pmillin@clarityworksonline.com). Lodging reservations made separately at 360/385-1270.

**Writing It True**, a workshop for emerging and accomplished women writers of poetry, memoir, and fiction, is Sunday, October 8, 9-4, at the home of and Wendell Nicholson, 640 Taylor Street, Port Townsend. Limited enrollment. \$85 includes lunch. To register contact Sarah Zale at [sarahwrite@olympen.com](mailto:sarahwrite@olympen.com) or 360/460-8589.