

June 11, 2020



Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#)

Website: www.bettybrandtpassick.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/>

[Twitter@BBPCOM](https://twitter.com/BBPCOM)

[Linkedin.com/in/betty-b-passick](https://www.linkedin.com/in/betty-b-passick)

E-mail: bbpassickauthor@comcast.net

Gangster Blog

WOW Writers' Conference, Sat., Oct. 24

Plan to join [Gloria Van Demmeltraadt](#) and myself—two award-winning authors—as we team up to teach a “Writing a Memoir” workshop at [The Women of Words 11th Annual Writers' Conference](#) on Saturday, October 24, 8:30-4:30 at Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, MN. Registration: ([link](#)).

“The Train” — WINK Magazine, May 2020

You will find my submission, “[The Train](#),” published in Issue 13 of *WINK: Writers in the Know* magazine—Art, humor, poetry, and the pleasures of a writer's life. The print magazine with a digital companion is dedicated to providing a platform for creative writers and artists nationwide. Nadia Giordana is Publisher/Producer/Host of *WINK: Writers in the Know* magazine, [WhereWomenTalk.com](#), *QC Cooks* and *That's Odd*.

“Black and White, Divorce at Christmas”

I wrote my first poetry as a young girl growing up in Fairbank. Poetry quickly became a natural outlet for me. My poem “Black and White, Divorce at Christmas” was chosen to be included in the anthology: *Thoughts and Prayers for Those Experiencing Loss*, by Kathryn Holmes. The book will be available summer 2020.

The Farewell (the rest of the story)

America was the third country to join the allied powers during WW II, after Japan delivered a knockout blow to the U.S. Navy in an attack on Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941.

All American presidents have faced daunting challenges. President Franklin Roosevelt's (s. 1933-1945) was gearing up for an all-out American effort to rush into war production—after its largest fleet had been destroyed—and draft men into combat.

Hundreds of thousands of men and women rushed to enlist in the armed forces. (cont.)



COMING!

**Sequel to
Gangster in Our
Midst:
Fall 2020!**

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The Farewell (cont.)

My father, Wilbert, age 19, worked for a farmer in Fayette County in '41, and could have used the 'farm exemption' to avoid military service.

Instead, in October 1942, accompanied by his father, he drove to the recruitment office in Waterloo, Iowa and completed an application for enlistment for a period of two years as an apprentice seaman in the U.S.

Navy. A month later he reported to the U.S. Recruiting Station in Des Moines and enlisted. After another ten days had passed, he took three weeks' recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Station in Great Lakes, Illinois, and by the end of December was on a new destroyer, built at the Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, headed to Ireland.

To the best of my knowledge, his father (Richard) never tried to talk him out of military service. Richard had enlisted during WWI, but, a farmer's son, was never called to serve.

Throughout time, fathers and sons have dealt differently with war.

When I wrote the farewell scene between fictional characters Walter Bierkoff and his son Leonard ("Epitome of Evil," *Gangster in Our Midst*, 2017), I had in mind the real life story of pastor-poet Rev. C. McKibbin, who succinctly summarized his thoughts about war in these four lines:

*We train up our boys with lessons of peace,
In home and in churches and schools.
And when they have come to manhood's estate
We send them to battle like fools.*

When McKibbin's son announced his desire to serve in the Navy during WWI, McKibbin bitterly opposed him. Ultimately the young man left home, without so much as a goodbye, and was later killed in battle in France.

Back to Walter Bierkoff. As Leonard prepares to depart for military service, Walter knows he must carefully weigh the difficulties he could face should his eldest son perish, never to be seen alive again.

The farewell scene takes place at the railroad depot on a wintery morning. Diamond-encrusted snowflakes have begun to fall from the grey heavy sky...

As the train pulled from the depot...he stared at Walter, wondering if his father would avoid his gaze. At the last moment their eyes met... Leonard remained on the landing until the tracks veered right at the quarter-mile turn, where the terrain's curtain dropped down between them, and home disappeared from sight.



Photo: Fairbank CGW Train Depot, Howard Durham, historian

Author Events

(June--December)

Writing a Memoir Workshops:

— **Tues., July 7, 6:30 pm**, (via Zoom) Independence Public Library, Independence, IA, Registration: 319-334-2470

— **Sat., October 24, 8:30-4:30**, WOW 11th Annual Writers' Conference (with author Gloria Van Demmeltraadt), Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, MN, 952-465-2623

Author Talks/Book Signings

— **Sat., June 20, 1 pm**, (Book Signing: *Gangster in Our Midst*) Sweet Reads Books and Candy, LLC 407 North Main St., Austin, MN, 507-396-8660

— **Sat., June 26, 5-9 pm**, (Book Signing: *Gangster in Our Midst*) Friday Night History Cruz, Paperbacks Plus Bookstore, 2539 7th Ave E, No. St. Paul, MN, (651) 770-0384