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JUNE 2025

By the Book

Susan Mary Malone
turned a love
of writing into a
successful career

Also inside:
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EDITOR'S NOTE

School's out for summer!

"School's Out" is a song by Alice Cooper that he released in 1972. It was the fall of my senior year, and while I heard the song on the radio, it was not part of the genre I listened to regularly. I was not familiar with the lyrics other than a couple of the lines.

Looking at the lyrics today, I find part of them humorous. I had no idea the song included a children's poem, which many of us recited on the last day of classes each year that began with, "No more pencils, no more books." I'll bet you can finish the next line! The second verse seems to mock the singer's education when he says, "We can't even think of a word that rhymes."

For the younger kids, summer brings a lot of free time with family and neighborhood friends. Ennis offers summer programs including recreation and library activities. Many older youths will have summer jobs and, hopefully, will be able to find time for family vacations and perhaps a week at a summer camp.

I looked forward to summer, but just because of the change of pace and activity. I have enjoyed a lifetime of learning, whether it was for vocations or hobbies. I don't agree with the next line of Cooper's song:

School's out forever!

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Author Susan Mary Malone enjoys spending time with her English Labrador Retriever.

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BY THE BOOK

— By Angel Morris

Susan Mary Malone turned an inauspicious beginning into a successful career, which today includes seven books: two novels, a short-story collection and four works of co-authored nonfiction. “I’ve always written. My best friend and I were famous in elementary school for writing truly bad poetry!” she admitted.

A Tarleton State University graduate, Susan’s journalistic endeavors began in college. “I was the editor of the JTAC at Tarleton, which was my most-fun job ever. Journalism had bitten me, and we were in the era of Woodward and Bernstein. A very heady time,” she recalled. “At one point, I was called ‘the most hated person on campus,’ as we published a paper with hard-hitting campus news. Some of which wasn’t pretty!”

From there, Susan became a novelist. “I wrote three novels that went nowhere, thankfully! I’m quite happy they died a deserved death,” she said. “I often quote Hemingway, who lost his first three novels on the train. He was, of course, devastated, but much later he said it was the best thing that ever happened to him.”

Susan became published in 1993. “*By the Book* was an award-winning literary novel not so much about domestic abuse, but more why someone stays, and how the main character found the courage to leave,” she described. “Then was *I Just Came Here to Dance*. A literary novel that’s a myth within a myth. I study mythology, Joseph Campbell being a hero of mine.”

Literary fiction is Susan’s genre of choice. “I want my worldview to be challenged in some way when I read, and by sophisticated, beautiful writing,” Susan described. “I believe into my soul the old adage of peace through culture. The more we understand the ‘other,’ the more those ‘others’ no longer seem so different.”

Up next for Susan was *BodySculpting: The Weisbeck Way*. “Chuck Weisbeck used to train all the pageant ladies for their swimsuit competition. His program was great!” Susan enthused.

Fourth and Long: The Kent Waldrep Story told of the Texas Christian University football running back who took a normal hit, which landed him on his head, paralyzing him from the neck down. “He was an absolutely wonderful man, and from his foundation, he named The Americans with Disabilities Act. I miss him still,” Susan shared.

Susan has co-authored work with her brother, a psychiatrist. *Five Keys for Understanding Men: A Woman’s Guide*, and *What’s Wrong with my Family? And How to Live Your Best Life Anyway* offer relationship guidance.

Susan said she writes fiction from discovery. “Which just means, something — although it’s usually a character’s voice — will pop into my head, and keep popping into it, until I finally sit down to write,” she explained. “Then it just all flows. Of course, once the first draft is down, the hard work comes in.”

Susan’s favorite short-fiction work is included in *Over the Pass, and Other Stories*, an award-winning collection of short stories of the heart. “Many of these were previously published in literary journals and anthologies. The title story was originally included in a hoity-toity hardcover called *Wild Women*, which also included Margaret Atwood, Erica Jong, Ursula K. Le Guin, Alice Walker and others,” Susan said.

A freelance book editor for 30 years, Susan recently retired and is finishing revisions on a novel set in a Texas vineyard and winery. “Whatever I’m working on at the moment is always my favorite project. You have to be completely in love with your world and characters while you’re immersed in them,” she shared. “You need that

for the fortitude to keep going. Writing fiction is not for the faint of heart.”

Susan has been inspired by many authors. “It’s nearly impossible to narrow this down to one favorite, but if I have to say, it’s *A River Runs Through It*. I can’t count how many times I’ve read it. And whenever I want to break my own heart, I read it again. For I, too, ‘am haunted by waters,’” Susan admitted.

Born and raised in Fort Worth, Susan has lived many places. “I loved living in Montana — in the summer! One winter there was enough for me.”

Susan moved to Ennis in 2002. “I’m not a city girl,” she joked. “I just love it here. Even though we have ‘amenities,’ this is still quite a small-town feel. The folks I do business with all know me well, and I, them. I have good friends here. This is a great place,” she praised.

As someone who breeds, raises, trains and shows English Labrador Retrievers, Susan has also formed a bond with Ennis Veterinary Clinic. “I so love my veterinarians and staff. Many have become friends,” she shared.

While her work with Labs keeps her hopping, Susan’s true passion still lies



in writing, enamored by all the Texas authors who inspired her to become one. Hoping her work might encourage others to follow suit, she shared this wisdom: “I learned my craft — inch by inch over time. You learn to write by writing, and it takes a minute.” **NOW**

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BusinessNOW

Dr. John Sullivan, General Surgeon

— By Sandra Walters



Growing up on a farm in Illinois, John Sullivan discovered his passion for medicine at an early age. While other kids were playing outside, young John could often be found carefully dissecting animals that had passed away, driven by an intense curiosity to understand what had gone wrong. “I loved anatomy,” he recalled. “I’d open up a dead animal and try to figure out which organ had failed. That fascination never left me.”

That early curiosity blossomed into a dedicated career. Dr. Sullivan completed both his undergraduate and medical degrees at the University of Michigan — an impressive accomplishment achieved in just seven years. With guidance from a mentor, he continued his training at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, specializing in laparoscopy and endoscopy through residency and fellowship programs. By 2006, he was board-certified in general surgery and had earned the prestigious title of Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Dr. Sullivan’s ability to communicate fluently in Spanish, German and Portuguese has helped him connect with a broad

Dr. John Sullivan, General Surgeon

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To Dr. Sullivan, how you treat a patient is just as important as what you treat. “Establishing trust is everything,” he emphasized. “I see my relationship with each patient as a contract — a fiduciary responsibility to always do what’s right. As an independent surgeon in Ennis, I’m my own boss, so my focus is entirely on what’s best for my patients.” He added, “Knowing when not to operate is just as important as knowing how.”

Navigating today’s health care system presents challenges, particularly with insurance. “High deductibles are causing people to delay or skip essential preventive care,” Dr. Sullivan explained. “Declining reimbursements and the increasing complexity of running a private practice are pushing many physicians into corporate employment. That shift changes the nature of the doctor-patient relationship. I worry that people are placing their trust in a system that, unlike a dedicated physician, can never truly care for them.”

Beyond his private practice, Dr. Sullivan plays a vital role in the Ennis medical community. He is chief of the Department of Surgery at Ennis Regional Medical Center where they have recently recruited two new orthopedic surgeons. His leadership has helped expand affordable surgical options for patients in the area.

Fulfilling his dream of practicing in a small town, Dr. Sullivan not only works in Ennis but calls it home. He lives here with his wife, Dr. Meg Sullivan, his partner in both life and parenting. Whether he’s outdoors hunting and fishing, mentoring his two sons or volunteering in the community, Dr. Sullivan remains deeply rooted in the values of service and connection. If you’re looking for a surgeon whose life’s work is grounded in empathy and purpose, Dr. John Sullivan at Ennis Doctors Center would love to hear from you. **NOW**



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By Bill Smith

Zoomed In:
Alexander Strauss and Petra Marenger

Alexander Strauss and Petra Marenger found a great place to enjoy their morning coffee at Minnie McDowal Park. Originally from Austria, they came to Ennis last year with Alexander’s employer, Rubble Master.

Alexander and Petra are from rural areas in Austria, and they said they enjoy the small-town flavor that Ennis affords. They enjoyed attending the Polka Festival last year but said they will be returning to Austria before the event begins this year.

“We like coming downtown on the weekends here because we get to see some of the same people each time,” Alexander said. “We are not fans of the big cities.” They said they enjoyed the bluebonnets and the friendly people in Ennis.



Cindy Lovelace shares her experience with Relay for Life.



Congressman Jake Ellzey addresses the Ennis Lions Club.



Ellis County Master Gardener Mary Ann Mezzapelle gifts a plant to Rhonda Smith.



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Tomatillo Duck Enchiladas With Cilantro-Sour Cream Sauce

CookingNOW

IN THE KITCHEN WITH

HEATHER FRENCH

— By Bill Smith



Heather French put her roots down in Ennis several years ago and moved into her husband's family farmhouse in 2014. "My mother-in-law offered basic cooking instruction during my newlywed days, and resources like TV chefs and social media added to my knowledge," she offered. "I've come a long way in my culinary skills since the burned Hamburger Helper meals I served to my new husband that first year!"

The recipe below is something Heather tried on a visit to Austin almost 10 years ago and fell in love with. "I've never been good with names, and despite trying to locate the place repeatedly, I just decided to learn to make it myself," she added. She also mentioned that her favorite meal would have to be a traditional Thanksgiving spread. **NOW**

Tomatillo Duck Enchiladas With Cilantro-Sour Cream Sauce

Serves 6.

- 1 3- to 4-lb. whole duck
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. cumin (divided use)
- 2 tsp. salt (divided use)
- 3 Tbsp. lime juice (divided use)
- 1/2 medium-size white or yellow onion
- 1 1/2-2 lbs. (16 medium) tomatillos, husked and rinsed
- 1-3 jalapeños, deseeded
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 cup chicken stock (divided use)
- 1 pkg. flour or corn tortillas
- Shredded cheese of your choice (to taste)
- 1 10.5-oz. can black beans (optional)
- 1 cup whole kernel corn (optional)

Mild Diablo Verde Creamy Cilantro Sauce (found at H-E-B)

1. Rinse the duck in cold water; remove any stray quills or organ meat stuffed into the cavity and discard. Pat the duck dry with paper towels; place inside a gallon Ziploc bag with olive oil, 1 tsp. cumin, 1 tsp. salt and 2 Tbsp. lime juice.
2. Close the Ziploc bag; massage the duck through the bag to evenly coat with oil and spices. Place the Ziploc in the refrigerator to marinate during the next steps.
3. Roughly quarter the onion, tomatillos, jalapeños and garlic. Layer the chopped produce on a large baking sheet; drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle 1 tsp. salt across everything; toss to coat.
4. Bake in the oven, uncovered, at 425

- F until golden brown or slightly charred. Remove from the oven; blend the veggies together in a blender until smooth. To help reach desired salsa-like consistency, you may add up to 1/2 cup of chicken stock, as needed. Incorporate slowly to avoid salsa becoming too watery. Set salsa aside.
5. Remove the duck from the refrigerator and bag, discarding the marinade bag. Place the duck breast side up inside an Instant Pot; generously coat with 1 cup of the tomatillo salsa mixture. Add 1/4 cup stock to the bottom of the pot to prevent burning. Place the lid on the pot, locking it in place; make sure pressure valve is not venting. Cook on the highest setting (Stew or Roast) for approximately 40 minutes.
6. Once the timer signals completion, properly vent the pot; remove the lid. Remove the duck; set aside in a pan to cool prior to deboning.
7. Once the duck has cooled enough to handle, debone the meat; discard all excess fat, skin and bones. In a medium to large mixing bowl, sprinkle the remaining 1 tsp. cumin and 1 cup tomatillo salsa.
8. Mix into the shredded meat, reserving the final cup of salsa for the tortillas.
9. Lightly spray a 9x12-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Dip one of the tortillas into the remaining cup of tomatillo salsa, enough to coat the entire tortilla. *Note: Before continuing with the next steps, make sure you will have enough salsa to finish the enchiladas. If you see that you won't have enough to sufficiently coat the tortillas, you may stretch the salsa volume by mixing in 1/2 cup of chicken stock.*
10. Lay the coated tortilla on a plate, spoon a few Tbsps. of the duck mixture on top, fold and roll. Place the rolled enchilada into the baking dish, seam side down; repeat this process with the remaining tortillas until all of the meat mixture is gone. Sprinkle cheese on top of the rolled enchiladas. *Note: You can incorporate a can of black beans or a cup of whole kernel corn, if desired.*
11. Bake, uncovered, at 375 F for 15 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the tortillas begin to turn crispy on the edges. Remove from the oven; let cool before serving. Add cilantro sauce as desired.





HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

JUNE

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

6/6

Car Seat Inspection Event:

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is proud to partner with Ennis Regional Medical Center to offer a free car seat inspection event. No appointment needed. Free! 4:00-6:00 p.m., hospital parking lot, 2201 W. Lampasas St. For details, contact Danae Hicks, family and community health agent, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Ellis County at (972) 825-5175.

6/7

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-In/Drive-In:

Classic airplanes and fighters, helicopter and airplane rides,

Midlothian Classic Wheels Club, live music, children's activities and more! Free entrance and parking. Breakfast tickets: Adults and children 8 and over: \$8; children under 8: \$4. 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr., Midlothian. (972) 923-0080 or tbowen@waxahachie.com.

6/16

Mentors Care 6th

Annual Golf Tournament:

Prices vary; see their website. Registration: 9:00 a.m., Walnut Creek Country Club, 1151 Country Club Dr., Mansfield. Visit www.mentors.care/charity-golf-tournament.

6/19

Juneteenth Parade and Festival:

Unity in the Community of Ennis presents the second annual event. History, music, dancing and amazing food! Celebrating the end of slavery in Ennis, Texas, along with a bright and prosperous future in the heart of our community. Live performance by Texas Slim featuring Charles Myers. Parade: 10:00 a.m., Roger Maise Park, 900 E. Martin Luther King. For festival information, call (469) 285-4386. For parade information, call (469) 867-9531.

6/28

Ennis Freedom Fest:

Join the celebration with the Red White and Bike Parade that starts downtown, then make

your way in the evening to Veterans Memorial Park for the most beautiful fireworks display in all of Texas! Parade lineup: 9:30 a.m., downtown. Veterans Memorial Park gates open: 6:00 p.m. and include free kids' activities including rock climbing, paddle boats, inflatables and more. Live music begins: 7:30 p.m.; fireworks: at dark. Free shuttle service is available from Lions Memorial stadium beginning at 5:45 p.m. Food and beer available for purchase. For more information visit www.visitennistexas.com/freedomfest.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to bill.smith@nowmagazines.com.

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SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER!

Not Available for photo.

Charles Schaefer, winner of \$50 cash, said, "I live in OKC and came to Ennis for the Bluebonnet Festival. I love your town. Very neat."

A portrait of Makaylee M., a woman with long, curly brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a grey short-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

Makaylee M.
Central Scheduler

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