

WHO'S GONNA BE BENICIA'S POET LAUREATE #8?



JOEL FALLON-1

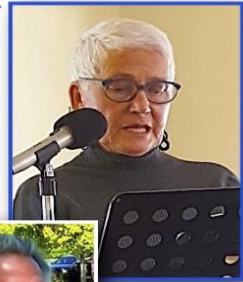
BOB SHELBY-2



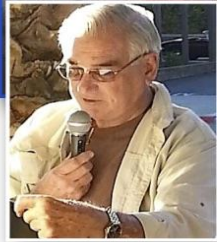
RONNA LEON-3



LOIS REQUIST-4



DON PEERY-5



JOHANNA ELY-6



TOM STANTON-7



MARY SUSAN GAST!



Mary Susan Gast is a poet, theologian, human rights advocate, and musician who, as she ages, finds it increasingly difficult and immaterial to differentiate among those identities. All are tied together in a concern for the human condition and an urge to look below the surface of events for deeper meaning. Each is rooted in respect for the power of shared stories and images to break down isolation, expand imagination, generate compassion, and connect us one to another. A resident of Benicia for more than two decades, Mary Susan lived her first 18 years on a small farm outside the tiny town of Baroda, Michigan, then took off on adventures unforeseen by anyone, including herself. She picked up advanced academic degrees from Michigan State University and the Chicago Theological Seminary. Other sites and circumstances for intense education have been Zambia, Samoa, Russia, China, South Africa, Washington, D.C. and the piney woods of Mississippi. In her many incarnations as assembly line worker, community organizer, pastor, non-profit executive director, and bishop, she has always written. Her social commentaries as well as her poetry and music have appeared regularly in periodicals and randomly in collections. From her past experience, Mary Susan brings to the Poet Laureate position two skills that may prove noteworthy. The first is fostering a sense of community even among unlikely collections of people. The second is frequently referred to as herding cats. These abilities give rise to the image of a "Poet Lariat" – one who rounds up the poets, not to corral them, but to bring them together that all may flourish.

First Tuesday Poets: Tuesday, September 1, 7 p.m.
Benicia City Council: Tuesday, September 15
Introductory Event: Sunday afternoon, September 13
 Further details to follow



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