

## **Kingwood writer pens mystery series**

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**By Barbara Vosbein**

Mysteries of one kind or another occur in everyone's life, but Kingwood writer, Gayle Wigglesworth makes mysteries happen for Claire Gulliver, the protagonist of "Washington Weirdos," the second book in her "cozy" series.

Wigglesworth wanted to be a writer since she was a young girl growing up in southern California.

"I wanted to move to San Francisco and write mystery novels," she said.

By the time Wigglesworth was 24, she was living in San Francisco, working at a bank and writing her first mystery novel.

Unfortunately, her story scared her so badly that she stopped working on it, tucked the manuscript away and turned her attention to a career in banking.

For years, she didn't even read mystery novels.

In 1980, Wigglesworth's interest in writing returned. She seriously considered selling her house and moving to the country to write, but her life took a different turn. She met David Wigglesworth, married and continued to work in the banking industry.

In 1984, the buy-out of the company for which she worked landed Wigglesworth the offer of an exit package that included a year's salary. "I took it!" Wigglesworth said.

For the next five years Wigglesworth devoted herself to her writing.

"I wrote eight books between 1984 and 1989," Wigglesworth said.

"They weren't mysteries, exactly. They were life stories with elements of mystery in them."

Though Wigglesworth received a lot of rejection letters on her books, many of the editors were very encouraging.

“One editor wrote that he really liked my writing, my plot and my characters,” Wigglesworth commented with a wry smile. “But he didn’t like the fact that the story was set in the banking industry, and the banking industry was an important part of the story.”

In 1989, Wigglesworth returned to work in banking.

“I couldn’t see writing when it seemed that nobody was going to have the chance to read my books,” said Wigglesworth.

Over a 12-year period, Wigglesworth rose to the position of senior vice president at her company.

During that time, she also started reading mystery novels again.

Avid travelers, Wigglesworth and her husband were attending a lecture at a travel bookstore near San Francisco when she had a new and interesting idea for a mystery novel.

The owner of the bookstore sparked Wigglesworth’s imagination. She thought he would make a great subject for a mystery series, and as a result, a middle-aged librarian turned travel bookstore owner, Claire Gulliver, was eventually born.

“Claire has become a person I know so well,” Wigglesworth said. “I know exactly how she thinks.”

Wigglesworth completed Claire’s first adventure, “Tea is for Terror,” set in England before she retired from banking in 2000.

She rewrote the book after her move to Kingwood and her retirement, then entered it in several literary contests.

The first chapter of “Tea is for Terror” received honorable mention in a contest held by Futures Magazine and placed second in a contest sponsored by Mayhaven Publishing.

Encouraged by such favorable results, Wigglesworth submitted “Tea is for Terror” to Sharolett Koenig, publisher of Koenisha Publications of Hamilton, Mich. and also a sponsor of the Futures Magazine contest.

“Tea is for Terror,” the first book in the Claire Gulliver series, was published in September of 2004 by Koenisha.

Wigglesworth speaks highly of her publisher.

“Sharolett Koenig is very professional. To date she has published 30 to 35 books. She does everything from editing the manuscripts to the typesetting. The books are printed as they are ordered.”

“Washington Weirdos,” the second book in the series and published by Koenisha in November, 2005, takes Claire on a trip to Washington D.C. where a compelling, edge-of-the seat drama plays out.

“The third book in the series, “Intrigue in Italics,” is set in the north of Italy and is scheduled for publication sometime in 2006,” Wigglesworth said.

“Cruisin’ for a Bruisin’,” the fourth book in the series, takes place on an Alaskan cruise and has also been completed.

“Sometimes I get an idea for a mystery, then I decide on the setting, and sometimes I decide on which country I’d like to visit, then decide on what I’d like the mystery to be.”

“Tea is for Terror” and “Washington Weirdos” are available at Murder by the Book, and can also be ordered at any bookstore and on Amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com

Following her move to Kingwood, Wigglesworth also wrote a cookbook for her family filled with family recipes and traditions.

“My daughter-in-law does Thanksgiving according to my book,” Wigglesworth said, her pleasure obvious.

“Gayle’s Legacy, Recipes, Hints and Stories Culled from a Lifelong Relationship with Food” is available on Wigglesworth’s web site.

Wigglesworth is a member of Sisters in Crime and Mystery Writers of America.

She regularly attends meetings of The Final Twist, the local chapter of Sisters in Crime that meets the first Saturday of every month except June and July at the Baldwin Boettcher Library located at 22248 Aldine Westfield Road.

Wigglesworth also attends mystery-fan conferences including Malice Domestic and Bouchercon.

“I enjoy participating in the panels and book signings at the conferences,” Wigglesworth said. “May is Mystery Week in Texas so I’ll also be participating in panels held by Sisters in Crime at local libraries and bookstores.”

Speaking to clubs and organizations, especially book clubs, is also something Wigglesworth is comfortable doing.

“I spoke to a book club in Houston that had read “Tea is for Terror,” Wigglesworth said.

“The hostess cooked dinner using recipes from my cookbook. I helped her to put together the menu, and I provided the dessert.”

Wigglesworth has also taught cooking classes in San Francisco and is an accomplished potter.

Originally, Wigglesworth and her husband planned to stay in the Houston area for five years, then return to San Francisco where most of their family still lives.

Eight years later, they are still happy to still be living in Kingwood and plan to stay in the neighborhood.

Wigglesworth hopes to have several book signings for “Washington Weirdos” after the holidays. Dates will be posted on her Web site, [www.gaylewigglesworth.com](http://www.gaylewigglesworth.com) New recipes are also posted on her Web site every month, and e-mails from fans are always welcome.