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Janice Peacock: Author, artist, teacher

By Jeff Gomez



Janice Peacock Photos provided

Lamorinda resident Janice Peacock is always challenging herself. Whether it's mastering techniques in glass art, writing a mystery series, or picking up computer skills thanks to COVID-19, she's always learning something new.

Peacock—who has a degree in linguistics and has worked on speech recognition software—grew up in Southern California and moved north when her husband got a job in the area. The couple moved to Lafayette from Concord in 1993 and have been fans ever since. "I love the fact that we have a real downtown and a real feeling of community and cohesiveness," says Peacock. "It's been a really a wonderful place to live and I've tried to do what I could to make it an even more awesome place."

Peacock's two main interests are glass art and writing. Her love for glass art began in childhood thanks to a collection of small glass animals. Her passion since then has resulted in opportunities to teach and learn all over

the world, including throughout America and Europe. A few years ago, however, she realized she needed something more. "The glass work is great, but it only exercises one part of my brain."

Her background in linguistics and technical writing led Peacock to try her hand at fiction. But rather than start with short stories, she decided to plunge into the deep end and write a novel. She figured a good way to do this was by participating in National Novel Writing Month, an annual event where people are encouraged to write a 50,000-word book in only four weeks. She got off to a great start but, after checking in with a fellow writer, discovered she'd jumped the gun: the event takes place in November, but Peacock had started in October. Undaunted, she finished that first novel and spent the following month writing a second. Since then, she's published a book a year.

Peacock's specialty is cozy mysteries, a type of crime fiction featuring amateur sleuths where the focus is on solving a mystery rather than grisly details of murder and death. After penning four books as part of her Glass Bead mystery series, last year she introduced a new heroine—Ruby Shaw—in her latest book, "Aloe and Goodbye."

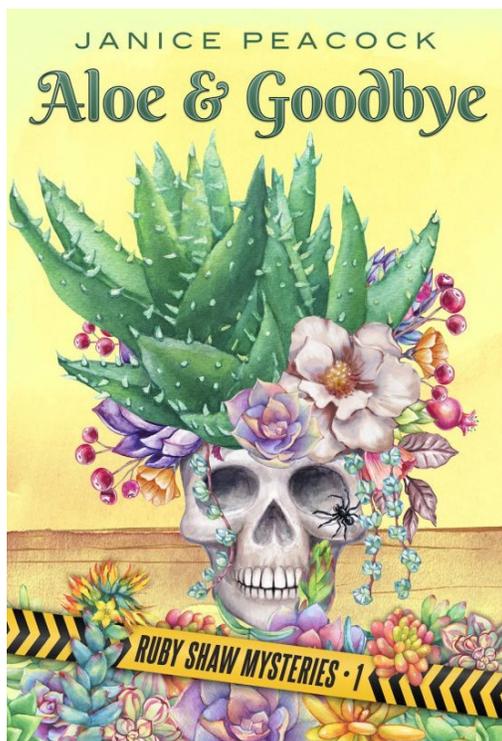
The idea sprang from a premise Peacock had been carrying around for a long time. "I kept thinking about what it would be like if you were an artist, but you could no longer make art." The story takes place in the fictional hillside town of Paradise, Arizona - a location loosely based on Jerome, Arizona, a place she discovered when she was doing a residency at a glassblowing studio in nearby Sedona.

"It would be easier for me just to do writing or just to do glass," says Peacock, "but I love doing both and I'm passionate about both."

This past year, writing took a backseat to teaching micromosaics, a form of glass art that goes back hundreds of years. After the Coronavirus scuttled plans to teach at studios throughout the country, Janice pivoted to conducting Zoom classes online. Her three-hour classes require no experience and have proven popular with students all over the world.

Now that restrictions around COVID-19 are beginning to ease, Janice says the thing she's looking forward to most is traveling. "I would love to go somewhere tropical. I really love the ocean and would like to see a sea turtle. I've seen many a sea turtle, but I'd like to see another." Whether that future trip will inspire either pieces of glass art or a new mystery series, only time will tell.

Learn more about Janice Peacock at janicepeacock.com



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[back](#)

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