



WEST VALLEY  
BRANCH

MAY 2009



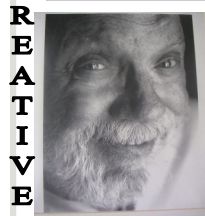
## Mothers, Memories, and Memorial Day

Do you have a screenplay? Working on a novel? Do you long to hear how your Big Idea can be developed into a movie? Our May speaker can tell you not only how it can be done, but how it **was** done, and done not once, but many times.

We welcome Don Kopaloff, well-known agent, as our May speaker. Don began his career several years ago and quickly worked his way up to become Co-Head of the Motion Picture Department at the William Morris Agency in New York.

From that corporate position, he segued into a job with Creative Management Associates, who brought him to Los

### AGENT FOR



Don Kopaloff

Angeles. Shortly thereafter he was hired by Avco Embassy Pictures and made executive vice-president in charge of production. During that period he developed the *Poseidon Adventure* and *Panic in Needle Park*. This stimulating career eventually came to an end, and Don returned to the agency business. He started his own agency, and subsequently sold it to ICM.

He then represented Academy Award winning writers Edward Anhalt; James Poe; Stirling Silliphant (*In The Heat of the Night*); and Dalton Trumbo in the later stages of his career. Another close associate, not an Academy award winner but "...one of the truly great writer-directors" - was the late Mel Shavelson. (*Seven Little Foys, Houseboat*)

Don will explain the creative process of converting a novel or script into a film production at our May meeting. Please join us for this stimulating presentation.

## END OF THE BEGINNING GRADUATION 2009



Samantha Berley

Life takes on a whole new meaning when you reflect upon an uncertain past. This semester will be my final semester in college, just as four years ago was the end of high school, and eight years previously was the end of junior high. Those eight years have become blurred as the lines between my dreams and my realities have meshed into a completely surreal experience.

The words I have to describe high school and college fall short of their meaning and become arbitrary. Yet I still envision every moment as my life has revolved around those eight years like a needle on a record player. I reabsorb those memories back into my head, infusing them with new experiences and new hopes.

(con't pg.9)

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

### Tips on writer's block



- Lenora Smalley

Almost all successful writers have an opinion on writer's block. Some procrastinate because they are perfectionists and won't go ahead if their writing is not perfect in their eyes. Although it seems incredible, some writers are unconsciously afraid of success.

There are writers who consider it a down period, just a dry period in their writing lives that causes them to wait until they "feel" like writing again. Unfortunately, this attitude often means they stop writing for months.

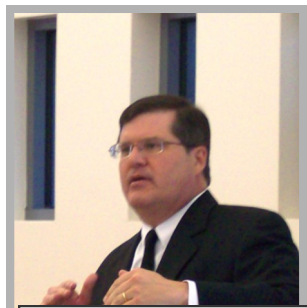
The best solution to overcome writer's block, in my opinion, is to do the opposite. WRITE every day no matter what you write, whether it's recipes for the favorite dishes you remember at your family's Thanksgiving dinners, your reaction to a recent conversation with a neighbor or with a friend on the phone, a summary of the TV show you saw last night, the fun you had last weekend, or your dread of going to the dentist tomorrow.

When the paper is blank and you stare at it, start where you are and WRITE, even if it is a description of the room you are sitting in. Instead of waiting to write WHEN the feeling comes, write without editing UNTIL the feeling comes. Then the dam built by all those beavers of which we are unaware will be broken and the flow will start again.

(con't pg. 2)

Our April speaker, Steve Mazur, is an organized guy. The former lawyer and point man in numerous pitch sessions presented his case for successful comedy scripts. All scriptwriters must get organized, follow the proven plan, and keep to the Rule of Three.

A good comedy script is neither a happy accident nor the product of a brainstorming bull session. A good comedy script, Mazur assured us, is



Steve Mazur

## FORMULA FOR A COMEDY SHOW

### NO. 1 PREMISE

2. THEME
3. STRUCTURE
4. CHARACTERS
5. DIALOGUE
6. JOKES



as well calculated and laid out as a classic business plan. Mazur gave an animated and facile explanation at the April meeting. First, start with a premise - the Big Idea. For example, in *Some Like It Hot*, two men must dress like women to hide their identity. The next building block: a theme.

"What's your message behind the Big Idea?" Mazur asked. "In *Tootsie*, the main character learns to be a better man after being a woman." (Cross-dressing has its uses in many productions, it seems.) Structure that will support and develop the premise and message is the next consideration. Any plot must have rising tension, a climax, and anticlimax which all lead to a clear or satisfying conclusion. With the foundation laid out and defined, writers and producers next decide on the characters. Finally, at the very end of the process, the dialogue and yucks are plugged into the waiting premise, theme, and structure. "If you thought the characters and the jokes came first, you're dead wrong," said Mazur.

**Rule of Three :** Funny = expectation + sudden surprise + reaction

After we digested these new truths and threw many questions at the affable speaker, he introduced the Rule of Three for comedy writers. Once a comic script begins with a real world intro and develops along the line of reality, it must insert a big deviation from viewer expectations. (A fantasy "miracle" is allowed to change the real world in the first fifteen minutes.) The quirky action, an unexpected event, makes for humor.

Mazur emphasized that "funny" is a clash between the real world and the wild world. And there are four combinations of these two factors: Real character in a wild world (Will Smith in *Men in Black*), wild character in a real world (Inspector Clouseau in *Pink Panther* films), wild characters in a wild world (Marx brothers' films) and real character in a real world (*When Harry Met Sally*). Films that use continual high jinks and wild antics are rarely successful. People tire of the over-use of a punch-line because the needed surprise - or the Rule of Three - is not considered.

Most of our CWC/WV members had not realized that the world of comedy writing is supported by a very somber infrastructure. Who knew that the writers were organized, thorough and responsible business men and women? Steve Mazur made it all perfectly clear. We'll never look at *Tootsie* the same way again.

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

(Con't from pg. 1)

ELDR

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**Frequency:** Quarterly

**Newsstand/Subscription Rate:** \$14.97/year **Nonfiction:** Pay varies.

**Columns, Departments:** ELDR Travel, ELDR Yoga and ELDR Tech.

**Queries:** Required E-queries: Yes

**Unsolicited mss:** No

**Submission formats:** Electronic Rights: First-time print and online

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Acquisitions editor

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534 E. Spokane Falls Blvd., Ste 203  
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**Description:** Publishes scholarly works, general nonfiction, literary essays, poetry, poetry translations and short fiction.

**Statistics:** 16 titles/yr (300 submissions).

**Proposals:** Query with synopsis and sample chapter/poems. Prefers hard copy format. Accepts simultaneous queries. Responds in 4-6 months.

**Payment:** On acceptance

For writers who want to find an agent:

The Charlotte Gusay Literary Agency

10532 Blythe Ave.

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**Commission:** 15%

**Memberships:** Author's Guild

## Musings on Maternal and Fraternal Memories

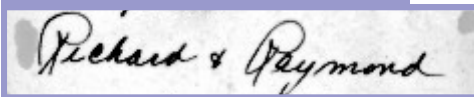


Editor,

I'm sorry, but I will not be submitting a column this month. It's because of the topic. 'Women'! Aside from the fact that I've always craved their company, I know little about them. Moreover, if one generalizes about either gender, one will surely enrage both. Mama didn't raise no idiots.

What she did raise was a difficult set of twins — one mildly handicapped, one overactive — both too bright. Imagine the anxiety of this elementary school drop-out (late in life she, effortlessly, got an equivalency diploma), with a husband away fighting the Axis and two infants to raise — alone! It must have been terrifying. But she managed.

When I think back on her, I get no vivid picture — just a word — 'beautiful.' My image of her was formed long before my esthetic taste — and has irrevocably colored it.



She was my inspiration — encouraging me to new heights, and my judge — chastising me when I fell short. I was her constant disappointment and her eternal hope.

I have said she had little formal education. But, oh the things she knew!! Why pop-corn popped. Where words came from. Why the sun rose and set. Endless poetry!! Countless stories! Songs, with which she lulled us to sleep in a warm, clear contralto — pitch-perfect — a gift she dismissed. A natural mimic, she absorbed information like one of the ragged cellulose sponges she used to endlessly clean our apartment.

She had worked as a 'domestic' during the Depression, and had cultivated a rich-woman's sense of propriety. (Even now, I sense her formality — which she equated with elegance — creeping into my writing.) Our 'situation' was to 'middle-class' as a custard pie is to high comedy. Yet, at my mother's table, with seemingly invulnerable roaches peeking out of cracks in the walls, no one dared to bite from a piece of bread. Instead we broke bites off before buttering, in the manner of the wealthy.

She raised us almost single-handedly (my father being gone in the pursuit of a living 60–70 hours per week), kept house, and sewed leather-goods piecework to help our income.

We never really understood each other — only peers can do that. But we were, in our own ways, devoted to each other. In idolizing her, I never acknowledged her vulnerability. In being impressed by my brightness, she didn't question my viewpoint. We were both poorer for this, but didn't know it.

Once, when I had done something particularly baffling to her, she said, "People like you have their own ways." Her tone plainly said 'people like you' included Da Vinci, Einstein, and Rasputin. Clearly, my romanticism comes directly from her.

She died, suddenly, the day after Thanksgiving, when I was twenty years old. It left in me both a huge hole and wonderful memories. Both have grown over the years.

To this day, I find myself thinking of some fact and marveling that she knew it.

Anyway, sorry for the digression. I'll try to do an article, next month.

Sincerely, Ray Malus *Editor's Note: No problem, Ray. I found supplementary material.*

Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother:  
I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.  
~William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*

**Musings  
On  
Twins**

It is not economical to go to  
bed early to save the can-  
dles if the result is twins.  
~Chinese Proverb



"I wish I had a twin, so  
I could know what I'd  
look like without plastic  
surgery  
- Joan Rivers



**All who would win joy must share it; happiness was born a twin. ~Lord Byron**



## NURTURING

My mother loved plants,  
not just flowers in full bloom  
or yards of colorful beds  
like brush strokes in her garden,  
but the very beginnings,  
the birth of each seedling.

My mother saved egg cartons  
and tufts of cotton from a  
large roll  
and made dampened beds,  
individual nests for the seeds  
she carefully placed in them  
and exposed to the friendly  
sun.

My mother tended the seeds;  
as time went on they germinated.

Warmed by the sun in their  
moist home  
they cracked open  
to reveal fragile green  
shoots.....  
life had begun.

Like a good mother,  
my mother transplanted her  
babies  
to a large bed and permanent  
home,  
rich soil in our back yard.  
The plants grew strong and  
tall  
and bloomed in brilliance.

My mother loved flowers  
and tended her plants.  
She watched seed pods form  
and crack open in the dust of  
summer.  
Tenderly she gathered each  
germ of life  
ready to nurture it once more.  
-Lil Rodich



## My Mother Once Told Me...

My mother always told me "Let sleeping dogs lie." At first I thought it meant to not bother a sleeping dog. As I grew older, I discovered it meant to not bring up a touchy subject from the past. Another one: "You made your bed, now lie in it!" (What? of course.) Here's one that probably all moms told their kids: "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all!" - Judy Presnail

Two things I well remember.

(1) Keep your virginity, that's all a woman's got. That was scary but it worked.

(2) When I got married, her advice to me was.. "Make yourself indispensable and he'll never leave you"...well that also worked...whew! - Gloria Kositchek

My mother always told me that a woman needs to have her own skill or profession to use just-in-case... - Marganit Lish

My mother always told me that the freckles that had marched over my nose and cheeks were angel kisses. "You're loved," she emphasized. Being five years old, I believed her. Of course, later on I bought some freckle cream. - Sheila Moss



On the eve of my wedding, my mom pulled me aside. Was she going to tell me how to pamper my future hubby, what to cook, how to win every argument, how to entice in the bedroom? I had no idea. "Tina," she said, "your new husband loves to gamble. You need to learn to gamble too. For example, you need to take up the game of poker and stay right by his side." That was the extent of Mom's advice! I was more than a little shocked at the time, but it worked out just fine. I took a gamble on that advice, and learned "when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em." I have enjoyed the thrill and buzz of risk, while not triple-mortgaging the house, ever since.

- Tina Glasner

My mother always saw the good in people's character and their intentions. She taught me to overlook hurtful sounding statements and not take them too personally. "Half the time people mean no harm, they just don't realize that what they say can hurt. They are not being mean spirited intentionally." -Lil Rodich

Mother used to say, "Always expect the worst. Then you'll feel good if it isn't." - Dave Wetterberg



Mom had several special comments. "Clean as angel wings," after one of us had a bath. And "Consider the source" to express contempt. My sister Janice reminded me of several: "Never a lender or a borrower be" was a standard -- compliments of The Bard. Also "To they own self be true." "This, too, will pass." "There was a girl who would do anything for a fur coat and now she can't button it." "What if you're in an accident?" upon seeing someone wearing underwear with holes in it. And there's a saying Janice still uses for burnt toast, "First you makes it, then you scrapes it."

- Kathy (Hall) Highcove and Janice (Hall) Nelte





"Okay! I can do this!" I take a deep breath and continue this conversation with myself before I walk in to this dance hall. "Hold in your tummy, shoulders back, boobs up, tighten the butt. There! Now...go for it!"

I'm wearing one of my daughter's short perky little black dresses. It makes me feel young and flirty even though it's been ages since I went to a singles dance... like about thirty years.

With my head held high, and my best tall walk, I head for the bar. Just as I'm about to order a confidence drink, I feel a tap on the shoulder. I turn to see an older looking gentleman with well cut silver hair wearing a well fitting suit on a tall, well managed looking body.

"Would you care to dance?"

I've come here to dance haven't I? So without hesitation I say, "Yes."

While leading me through a fox trot which he does well, as well... he begins to make small talk.

"Can you guess my age lass?"

"No. Why? Would you like to tell me?"

"I'm proud to say that I'm ninety two and I go dancing every week. I eat very carefully... love the ladies... and...I have regular... bowel movements!"

I swear!

We dance through a rumba as he tells about his youth in Scotland, two wars, the wearing of kilts. He's showing no sign of weariness, while I'm ready to sit the next one out. I watch this gentleman dance the evening away with one lady after another. A charming character with a sweet Scottish brogue, who will probably dance his way into infinity.

As I'm cooling down with a Kalua and club soda, a much younger man approaches. He points to the dance floor, draws an invisible circle with his pointing finger, so I silently nod as we head for the dance floor.

Brown hair, tied-back ponytail, baby face with blue eyes, he appears to be about thirty-five or so. At about 5'8" I fit right into his strong arms, except...he has absolutely no sense of rhythm and keeps stepping on my toes. Twice so far.

"So waddeya do?,"... he asks.

Tongue in cheek I reply, "I... sing."

So he says, "That's cool!"

I'm praying that the music ends soon as we... thank God, dance in open position to a soft rock tune. I'm sure he cannot hear the beat as he wiggles his ass-ets like a fish out of water.

"So," he says, "What else do ya do?"

"I.... dance."

"That's cool!"

Before this dance is over I learn a few new pop phrases like,

'You look hot.' This doesn't mean I'm over heated. Or like,

'You are cool.' This doesn't mean put on a sweater. So much for the younger man.

Who could know that in mid life by some quirk of fate, I would find myself single again. Too young for the old and too old for the young, but still a little "cool," and sometimes even a little "hot."

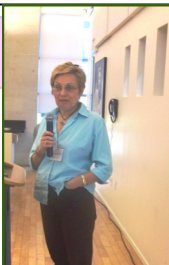
Couples of all ages, sizes and shapes circle around the floor in a merry-go-round maze of color in motion. As I watch this dancers parade, a third gentleman presents himself. This character is the spitting image of Adolph Hitler, complete with hair style, mustache and a heavy German accent. I swear!

Not wanting to hurt his feelings, I accept. He's twirling me around in a Viennese waltz. I don't have the nerve to say, "Do you know who you look like?" But I know he must be Adolph reincarnated, and Hitler is not anyone I dream of dancing with.

All in all, the evening is a charm, filled with characters that stories are made of. Occasionally, when the mood moves me, I will put on my silver dance shoes and head for a ballroom. I still love to dance and find it great exercise, in more ways than one.

## Open Mike Still Popular

Last month at Open Mike, we enjoyed readings from Rachelle Zukerman, Peg Shirley, Nancy Meyers, Leslie Kaplan, Ed Braun, Christina Steiner, and Yolanda Fintor, reminding us again what a talented group of writers we have among us. Signups are at the beginning of each meeting Try it. You'll like it. And so will we!



Rachelle Zukerman

Our first CWC/WV

President, Di Johnson, sends word of her new website. Di writes: *Bill has done a marvelous job of redesigning our website. It's chock full of information, graphics, and even has a mini concert with Di on flute and a friend, Elaine Litster, on harp. Check it out on the "Links" page. Click on:*

[www.SuperiorBookPublishingCo.com](http://www.SuperiorBookPublishingCo.com) or

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## NEW CONNECTIONS

**GOLD RUSH!**  
COMING  
IN 2010  
D. JOHNSON

# DUMPED

!!



Woman Mail Carrier: Hey, guess what? I'm a grandma! And oh, my boyfriend dumped me. He calls me at two o'clock in the morning and breaks up with me. Eight and a half year? and he breaks up with me. On the telephone!

I stay real calm, you know. This really pisses him off.

I say, "Is this what you really want?" He says, "Yeah." I say "Fine. Then you got it, pal! And you know what, you can just come over here and pick up all your shit!"

He says he can't come over till Wednesday.

I tell him, "Look, you're my ex now, Buddy. I don't take no orders from you anymore. Wednesday is not good for me."

Well, I phoned him later and said, "Alright, you can get your car and your crap Wednesday."

So, I took his car out of the garage, put all his junk in it and parked it on the street. Then, I left about an inch gap in the window and shoved his keys in.

Now, he phones and says he can't make it Wednesday.

I say, "You know what? I don't give a damn, and oh, there's no street parking on Thursday, pal. Oh, yes, your cruise-mobile is parked out front!" Well he calls me a few choice names and then says he wants his fancy framed poem back.

I tell him to go screw himself, it's mine and he says, Oh yeah? He'll come to my workplace with a United States Marshall.

I had just buried my dad only four days before this. My seventeen year- old daughter had delivered an accidental new family member. The father was long gone. Kids nowa-days! I will see him in court! Damn little video junkie!

So, anyway, next day I sent the poem off. Wrapped it real shitty, but...I mean ...there was plenty of padding and all so the glass wouldn't break.

We were supposed to go to Hawaii in three weeks. Where he got the money, I'll never know. He didn't work. I kept thinking, "Who the hell is he going to Hawaii with?" That's really expensive.

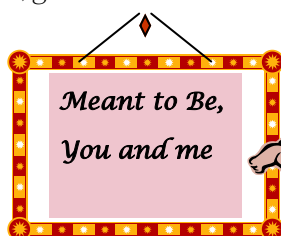
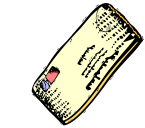
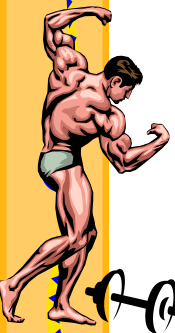
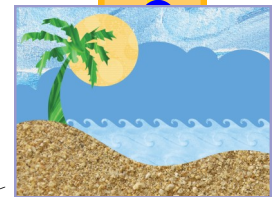
So you know what, once little Wanda was born, the three of us went to the closest thing to Hawaii—San Diego Sea World. Had a great time!

When I got back, there were four messages on the machine. That's before my number was changed. Oh yes, I changed my phone number and the locks on the doors.

The first three messages were just him blowing off steam, but the fourth one was after he got the poem back. He thanked me, was very civil. Like old times. He used to be so sweet. Well, thanks for letting me vent...

You know what, I could get him back if I really wanted, but, I'm going to lose fifteen pounds, get a new make over and find me a strong young buck!

- Bill Sorrells



## The sky in the corner of the drawer

©Howard Goldstein 2000



I'm rethinking wrinkled things  
Yellowed pages tied with strings  
Lavender sachets  
and pictures in tarnished locket  
The corners of old drawers  
Pressed petals  
Pockets  
of an old sweater  
smelling of mothballs

Something falls  
gently through the air  
Bright  
A poignant lock of hair  
Does anyone care?

I wince  
It evinces memories  
some hundred summers since  
I put it there

I smell the sea  
The salt-wet sand  
and feel the hand of one  
who touched me then  
She whom time took  
Never to touch again

But oh! the magic  
tragic  
tender wonder of that day  
My heart goes scudding  
with the clouds  
and sails the breeze blown blue  
above the bay



## THE PINK LADY OF MALIBU

The Pink Lady of Malibu  
Looked sweetly down as you drove  
through.

Not a stitch did the lady wear,  
It was too nude for prudes to bear.

Gawkers braked to a slower pace,  
But seldom looked up at her face.

Country crews set out the rocks to clean,  
While the artist wailed, "It is so mean!"

The shapely lady is seen no more,  
As drivers speed from Malibu's shore.

- Ken Wilkins

## WARM MEMORIES

We sat  
On towels bright as our beach umbrellas  
and tethered kites to  
weave over white seabirds,  
And felt  
The warm sand shifting under our feet,  
While we watched our children  
Slide the waves like a school of mermaids.  
Looking back,  
It was a perfect moment in time.  
Our breath flowed as easily as the tide  
As we listened to the murmurs of friends,  
The greedy shriek of seagulls,  
Punctuated by  
Boisterous voices of our buoyant offspring.  
I watched the passing parade of sailboats  
and felt  
Warmth, like sunlight, on our hearts.

The tide moved with the minutes  
But  
We shared  
these mothering moments,  
And memories we hope will never wash  
away  
In the tides of time.



- Kathy Highcove



## THE '30'S DEPRESSION YEARS BECAME GLORIA'S BEST YEARS

When the Great Depression swarmed down upon us, my father, being an electrician for the city of Detroit, was one of the first laid off. He moved his family to the home of his deceased parents in Williamsburg, Michigan. It was a small town where the sky was crystal blue and the crisp air cleaned your inner soul. We would continue to breathe that fresh air until the fog of the Depression lifted and my father would be called back to work. Meanwhile, I found the fog comforting.

Our new home was so big we divided it into two homes. What I remember most about our side was the parlor. I used to listen to my sister play the piano as I sprawled across a black leather chaise lounge, tufted with leather buttons. Next to the chaise lounge was a marble top table where incense burned inside a brass elephant. The fragrance streaming out of its trunk drifted up to Marie Dressler's autographed picture that hung on the wall...as the music of the piano kept time to the puffs of smoke.



My next favorite was the bathroom, one of the few indoor bathrooms in town. There was a commode with a dry sink and a pitcher for water. The door next to it led to a pull chain toilet and a wood framed, metal lined bathtub where I often floated in Ivory soapsuds.

I attended a consolidated school for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. I rode a motor-driven school bus in the spring and fall, and a horse drawn sleigh in the winter. Upon arriving at the warm two story brick building of our school, warm chocolate pudding was dished out to everyone. That was a treat because at home we ate oatmeal for Sunday night supper and on other nights we ate pike and pickerel that my father caught while fishing through a hole in the ice. He also shot pheasant and sometimes rabbit.

We often attended the socials in the basement of the little white church on the hill. Everyone brought a delicious dish to share. Sunday service was nice, too. There was a warmth and sincerity that I had never felt in churches of the big city. Here farmers dressed in their Sunday best drove in from the outskirts of town to hear the gentle words of the pastor with no frightening hell, fire and damnation. And when the church doors closed, it shut out the echo of the hateful words of Father Coughlin...but some managed to sift through cracks in the wood floor.



Methodist Church in Williamsburg

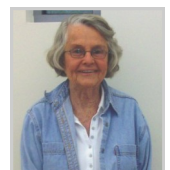
My father wasn't able to see much of the church where he was baptized. After the inauguration of President Roosevelt, a bill passed for road construction. My two uncles got the contract to build roads in central Michigan so my father moved away and went to work for them. But we happily remained in my favorite town, a town where during the winter I would ride down Old Maids Hill on my sled... and in the summer I played dolls by the water falls near our home.

All too soon, the fog of the Depression lifted and the city rehired my father. We would soon leave my favorite town. But not before I was twelve years-old, a 4H Club member who won the Healthiest Girl in Grand Traverse County...my most happy claim to fame.

*My mother taught me to swim at Elk Lake, Michigan. I was on the swimming and diving team in high school, Michigan State College, swam in the Senior Olympics in 1999...and still swim 45 minute laps today...always two or three times a week at the YMCA, where I first joined in 1935. Still trying to be the Healthiest Old Lady in Grand Traverse County.*



Young Gloria on the dock.  
Elk Lake, Michigan



- Gloria V. Kositchek



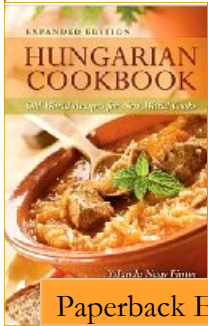


Yolanda Fintor

## BIRTH OF A COOKBOOK

About two years after the publication of my co-authored soup cookbook, *Souper Skinny Soups*, I had an epiphany. I was cooking one of my favorite Hungarian dishes, *chicken paprika*, when it hit me. I had all these wonderful Hungarian recipes

in my head, knew how to put together a cookbook and how to write a proposal. Also, I'd learned a lot about marketing, an asset that is a plus when approaching a publisher. And so, *Hungarian Cookbook, Old World Recipes for New World Cooks* was born.



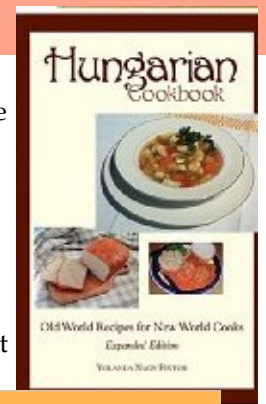
Paperback Edition

Research at bookstores showed there was a dearth of Hungarian cookbooks and the few that were available were published thirty or forty years ago. The need for an updated Hungarian cookbook was included in the query letter that I spent many hours creating. This letter had to arouse the interest of an editor.

While pondering where to send the query, my soup cookbook coauthor, Carla Henry, suggested Hippocrene, Inc., a name she found in the food section of the Los Angeles Times, one that specializes in ethnic cookbooks. The query worked. They were interested and asked for my proposal.

The proposal led to a contract and then the work began. I had to kitchen-test each recipe because, like my mother, I didn't always measure ingredients, operating on instinct and memory. I had to know exact amounts of ingredients because I was writing this book for 'new world cooks.'

The first edition was published in 2001 in hard cover. Two years later the editor emailed me to say the publisher wanted to do a second expanded edition. Would I add two more chapters, one specifically on Hungarian wines. I decided to do the other chapter on breads. So, for the next few months I was up to my elbows in flour and yeast and came up with 13 more recipes. This edition was published in 2003.



Hard Cover

My editor surprised me again with an email in August, 2008 that stated my cookbook has shown steady sales activity through the years and the publisher wanted to reissue the book in paperback, but with a new cover. The cookbook would be available in the spring of 2009. Could an author ask for anything more?

One way I marketed the soup cookbook and the first edition of the Hungarian cookbook was to visit as many bookstores as possible. Traveling in an RV on three-month long trips enabled me to hit many stores throughout the country. I won't be able to do that this time so I will approach as many bookstores as I can comfortably drive to. I found most managers receptive to my two-minute spiel that ended with "would you be willing to order a book or two for your bookstore?" I never got a 'no'.

- Yolanda Fintor

### TRY THESE TIPS

*Compose a concise, attention-getting query; not all publishers require working through an agent so don't waste time looking for one; non-fiction books have a longer shelf life than fiction; do research on how your book will fill a niche.*

## The Graduate 2009

(con't from pg.1)

Four years ago around this time, I was graduating from high school. I didn't want to leave high school. I finally felt okay with high school and my life. Yet change was inevitable and so I began making preparations for college.

Eight years ago life seemed one surreal moment after another. I made my way through eight years of "firsts," and now I realize I'm not even close to being done. The economy is horrible and there is loss beyond my wildest imagination. I discuss with friends and family the state of things, what could have been done and what should have been done. There are no words for extreme anger just as there are no words that truly define fantastic experiences. Life simply is surreal.

The scattered feelings I have of growing up are not about the future and what is to come. They aren't even about the past and what I've become. Instead, this graduation is about the present. This culmination of the past four years is about the feel of the grass on my sandaled feet as I step up to receive my B.A. in English Literature. It is about looking to the sky and watching the clock tower click to the moment where I have culminated eight years of my life. It truly is about an achievement beyond my wildest imagination.

I have finally learned to live in the present. And after eight tumultuous years and a constant transient state of adolescence, the present is all my generation can ask for. And now, we wonder and wait for time to catch up to our thoughts.

- Samantha Berley

## Rain Memorial Day

It rains the day I see him  
A young boy on the road to manhood.  
His diploma in hand as a badge of honor.  
He proudly strides into the recruiting office  
A young boy who wants to serve his country  
His country that was so ignominiously attacked.



Is he mature enough  
To accept the consequences for his act?  
Is he aware that death awaits him?  
It rains the day the roadside bomb  
Explodes under his truck shattering his life  
It will always rain for the lost youths of war.

- Clare Goldfarb



HERO IN A WHEELCHAIR

Riding around in an Hummer was a young U.S. Lieutenant.  
He was looking to confront insurgents with his crew of three.

On a Bagdad street, they heard a whizzing sound.

An explosion occurred , an enemy mortar hit the ground.

The impact and shrapnel shook the Lieutenant hard.

He wound up in a hospital, part of his body gone.

Two legs had to be amputated, saving his life.

This American casualty, this hero of the war,  
now homebound, is moving his wheels around.

- Norman Molesko

## *Bright Yellow Valley Days*

- Marcy Young 2003

*On a bright yellow Valley day we*

*washed a pea green Studebaker  
built a nest of checkered tablecloths  
ate purple plums off backyard trees  
splashed in the blue water of a park pool.*

*On a bright yellow Valley day I*

*buried you under a flag of red, white, and blue.*







"What's next?" my spouse inquired as we rested on the lip of the Congressional fountain. "We have one day left in Washington DC."

"I need to find my old classmate, Chuck Burrell. He died in Viet Nam in 1969 and his name is on the Viet Nam Wall Memorial. Are you up for another long walk tomorrow?"

"No problem," replied the former Air Force captain.

The next day we walked a mile further than the day before. We found the Vietnam Memorial situated a few yards off a wooded path and settled into a shallow depression in the park. I stopped at the edge of the clearing and took in the clean lines of the structure and the profusion of green life rising over the wings of black granite. A group of people moved slowly back and forth on the sidewalk that ran the length of the monument. As they walked, adults and children brushed the etched names lightly with their fingertips as if they read stories in Braille.

"Halle-lu-u-ia, I'll fly a-way..." a gray bearded guitar player, his rough salt and pepper hair covered by a red bandanna, sang as he reclined under the white birch trees behind us. We remembered our mission, and slowly approached the memorial.

All Americans should see the Wall. All Americans should run their fingers over the engraved names of young men and women who died in the jungles, or in the air, or on the rivers that flowed like thick blood from the torn flesh of rice paddies and rain forest. Everyone should witness the painful resignation of families, gray-haired veterans and comrades who stand with bowed heads as they remember...so much ...that can't be put into words, just songs. Some veterans stand at attention and salute the names of their fallen comrades, some leave flowers, a poem, a tear.

"Let's go look for Chuck now," I urged my husband, who paused to snap pictures of the scene before us. "I think the kiosk over there contains the Book of the Fallen".

We continued down the low hill and joined the small crowd. We both fell quiet as we neared the solemn visitors as if we joined a congregation in a quiet woodland chapel. We waited in line and in a few minutes, it was our turn to look through the tome of names.

"Such a thick book," I said as Joe flipped through the well-thumbed pages. "And the names are listed in very small print. So many casualties. Incredible."

"Remember the nightly body count on the evening news?" he reminded me as he turned pages. "Here they are in black and white. First we'll find the Oregon section, and then the list of casualties for Salem. This is your hometown page. And let's see — right here is a Charles Burrell, who died in 1969."

"That's him." I peered closely at the data. "Even though the official cause of death is listed as 'non-hostile,' I had already investigated his record in the National Military Records and talked to his older sister Shelley. Chuck died in a C-123 cargo plane that crashed after he heroically delivered ammunition to troops under fire. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously."

"Impressive. That's a very special medal. Let's go look at names on the Wall. Charles Burrell can be found on the 1969 panel of casualties."

We joined the crowd's horizontal movement and scanned the plethora of names. Finally: "There it is! I see his name!" I felt a chill of recognition.

Charles Franklin Burrell — my grade school classmate, my wiseass teenaged buddy, my hometown casualty — was carefully etched on the '69 panel. Joe snapped a picture, as I pointed to his name and remembered his face. I thought about his family. The guitar player now strummed a quiet tune. Joe put his camera away and suggested that we return to the hotel. The sun was going down; the crowd thinned.

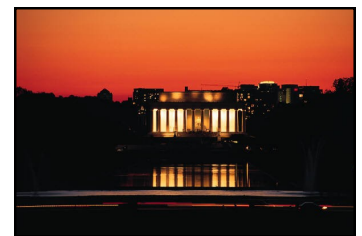
On the way back we revisited the Lincoln Memorial. We read again the moving speech at Gettysburg, also etched on a wall; *It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us. — that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

"Still meaningful today, isn't it?" I observed.

"Like never before. We need to always remember the costs of war."

"Let's drink to that. For real. I think the last thing we need to do is visit that Irish pub uptown... and lift one for Chuck and all his buddies."

We left the Wall, and the great stone visage watched our forms move into the twilight. In the distance, the gold dome glowed, and hundreds of lights lit the dusk before us, like stars on a giant flag. Long may it wave.





## " Blah,blah,blah..."



### Who Said What?

Use quotation marks to tell your reader that all the words enclosed within the quotation marks are someone else's words, not your narrator's. In other words, use them around *direct quotes* ... "Land ho!" shouted the boatswain ... gives us the boatswain's exact words .... In *The boatswain shouted that he saw land* we don't know what words the boatswain used to convey the message that land is in sight.

### Dialogue Tags

Expressions like *he said, she remarked, and Mikey screamed* are called *dialogue tags* and are set off by commas. Use these freely and don't worry about repetition. Every time the speaker changes, remember you must indent for a new paragraph and use another set of quotation marks for the next speaker.

"Where 's your pass"

"In my wallet, " I said.

If the dialogue tag comes within a quote, close the quote, insert the dialogue tag, and begin the quote again. If it breaks up a *single* sentence, set it off with commas.

"Haw the hell am I supposed to see it, " he said, "when it's in your wallet?"

(Notice that *when* is not capitalized.)

If the dialogue tag separates *two* sentences, put a period after the dialogue tag and begin the second sentence with the usual capital letter.

"It's in your wallet?" he said. "Well, how the hell am I supposed to see it in your wallet?"

Notice that in all the above sentences, the second quotation mark comes after the comma or period. This is always the case.

If a question mark or an exclamation point applies to quoted material, put it inside the closing quotation mark.

"Do you love me or not?" Sheryl asked.

If the entire sentence is a question or an exclamation, place the question mark or the exclamation mark outside the closing quotation mark.

Did Mother say, "I think I left the coffee pot on. "?  
.

## June Gloom? Nope. Pirates and Poetry...

My InFocus June file contains: a book review on Jewish pirates of the Caribbean, an article on self-publishing, poetry and other creative works. May InFocus featured My-Mama-Done-Told-Me quips, and June will list advice from your Old Man / Father Dear / Dad. Send pithy sayings. And other material. Can't guarantee publication, but I will take a look. - Kathy Highcove, InFocus Editor

If both the quotation and the sentence require a question mark or an exclamation point, the end mark goes inside the closing quotation mark.

Did Mother say, "I think I left the coffee pot on. "?  
.

If both the quotation and the sentence require a question mark or an exclamation point, the end mark goes inside the closing quotation mark.

How did you answer the question "What is your job experience? " ?

Quotation marks are not usually put around thoughts ...

I've never been so scared, he thought. ... but sometimes they are.

"What did I say wrong?" Lydia wondered.

Use single quotation marks around a title or a quotation within a quotation.

"The teacher said, "Artie screamed 'Go to hell!' as he went out the door. "

If the quote within the quote comes at the end, put both the single quote and the double quote in.

The teacher said, "Artie screamed, 'Go to hell!' "

### Other Uses

Around nicknames when they are used with a given name ...

R C. "Chuck" Nixon

Colonel Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin ... but not around shortened first names or nick-names used regularly.

Did you invite Ken and Chuck?

Around titles of short works like poems, short stories, and essays.

Sandburg recited "Chicago, " his most beloved poem.

Around words used as words.

Mr. Kaplan told him to look up "snuk" in the dictionary.

Around words being defined.

When he said " bad, " he meant "good. "

## New Play Opening

Dean Stewart's new play "**Rain Check**" will be produced in the New Works Festival at College of the Canyons on Saturday, May 16th, 2009 at 8 pm and Sunday, May 17th at 2 pm. The play will be staged with others in the Black Box Theatre in the College of the Canyons Performing Arts Center in Valencia.

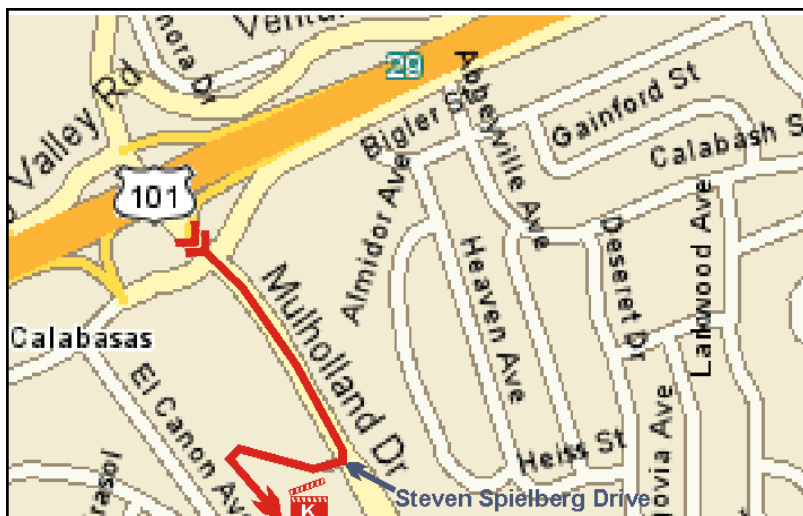
**Jack London 10/11/2009**  
**Writers Conference**

Visit the website!



Coordinator: Dale King,  
JLC@sfpeninsulawriters.com

[Newsletter@sfpeninsula@writers.com](mailto:Newsletter@sfpeninsula@writers.com)



From the 101 Freeway exit on Mulholland Drive. Travel south on Mulholland and turn right at Steven Spielberg Drive. Then turn left and follow the route to the large parking lot on the left for Villa Katzenberg. If you are stopped by the MPTF Security, tell the official that you are attending a CWC meeting.

### MEETINGS

The California Writers Club meets the first Saturday of the month at the Motion Picture and Television Fund complex:

Villa Katzenberg

23388 Mulholland

Woodland Hills, CA 91364-2733

### NEXT MEETING

Saturday, May 2 nd. 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

### MAILING ADDRESS

c/o Dave Wetterberg, 23809 Friar Street

Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

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[cwcwestvalley.org](http://cwcwestvalley.org).



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### Submission Guidelines

1. Submit a work two weeks in advance of publication.
2. Keep prose short, between 200 and 300 words. Contact editor if work is longer.
3. Poems also should be short, approximately three to four stanzas.
4. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any work submitted. Space might be limited and the omission based on editing difficulties.
5. Works not used may be stored and used in a future issue of InFocus.

**American Association of University Women (AAUW)**

**And the AAUW Children's Theatre Troupe**

Present an adaptation of the Classic story

***Heidi***

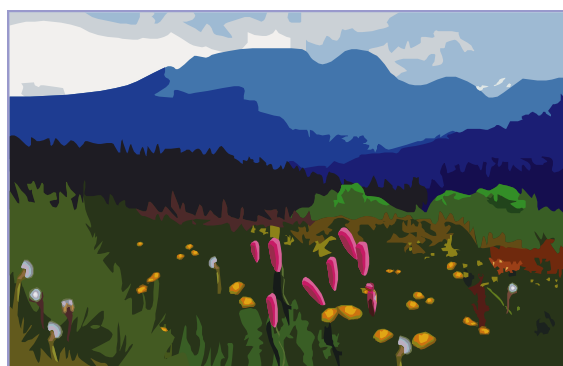
**Written by Ms. Erica Stux**

Performances held at the **Community of Christ Church**

located at **3701 Alamo Street, Simi Valley, CA**

and are scheduled for the following dates:

- **Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**
- **Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 at 2:00p.m.**
- **Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**
- **Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 2:00p.m.**



Tickets to all shows are available at the door for a \$5.00 donation per person.

Doors open 30 minutes prior to show time. There will be one 15-minute intermission, during which concessions will be available for purchase.

Proceeds earned applied toward the AAUW scholarship program for local individuals pursuing higher education goals.



CWC West Valley

23809 Friar Street

Woodland Hills, CA 91367-1235

