Instead of just an author theme park...

E.I. readers create an author inn and park

I challenged you to come up with something even better (???) than the Charles Dickens theme park featured last issue. In response, Bonny Conway has given you a park to roam in, and Tom Mullarkey has provided the night's lodgings.

Introducing

The Ellery Queen Inn,

featuring ----

--- The Rex Stout Wolfe Den: Festooned with orchids and featuring an ultra-sized bed w/ yellow sheets and a fridge full of beer. A robot named Archie caters to your every whim
--- The Nevada Barr-Room: Actually, it's a tent in the woods behind the facility. You are provided a lantern, a canteen, and a sleeping bag. Other than that, you're on your own.
--- The Reginald Hill-side Suite: The clerk hands you a guide to the room and you spend the rest of the night wandering around trying to make sense of the directions.
--- The Raymond Chandler Room: You are given an office with squeaky wooden floors, dirty windows half-hidden by broken Venetian blinds, and a black rotary-dial phone next to your thin-blanketed cot. And you will like it
--- The Dean Koontz Room: Bedding down on a comfortable queen-sized bed in a nicely-appointed suite, you awake the next morning in an alley in West Hollywood, carrying only a wallet devoid of money and holding someone else's driver license.
--- The Agatha Christie Wing: The entire floor is invited to a gathering of tea and crumpets. One doesn't show, and he is found dead later, fully-clothed in his empty bathtub. The assembled congregation dissects the situation, until an elderly woman determines that the murderer is ------------------ you.
--- The John Dickson Carr Room: You are shown to a windowless room and locked inside. It's up to you to find a way out.

Guests enjoy the ambience of the Dooley Wilson Room at the Ellery Queen Inn.

--- The Stephen King Concourse. No one knows for certain what transpires behind these many doors, but you will be peeing merrily in your pants before the night is through.

Tom Mullarkey

Visit scenic Park Twain

Come on inside Mark Twain Park find out how he got his name watch for his quotes on sidewalks it's an adage walk of fame wander down Huck Boulevard skip over to Sawyer Lane if you see ole Injun Joe hide cause he'll cause you pain topiary river boats they never get off the ground try to climb upon their decks dream you're Mississippi bound there's a booth with Mark Twain's books buy up a volume or two reading is empowering with rewards your whole life through

Bonny Conway
Extra Innings #30

In which we celebrate writers, their enablers, and Vin Scully

Madison, Wisconsin April, 2012

The All-Stars: Madonna Dries Christensen, Rex Owens, Jacob McLaughlin, Randi Lynn Mrvos, and Den Adler

Limerickologist: Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks,

Cryptographer: Janice Kaat
Word Whisperer: Jan Kent

With poetry by: Bonny Conway, Pat Goetz, Craig W. Steele, and G. Nolst Trenité

Head of office security: Pat Downes

Web Weavers: Celeste Anton and Emily Baker

Fisher of the Internet: Steve Born

Editor-in-Coach: Marshall J. Cook,
Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Continuing Studies.

I publish Extra Innings monthly and distribute it free to an open enrollment mailing list. To get on the list, email the Coach at:

mcook@dcs.wisc.edu

Extra Innings comes to you through the good graces of the writing program at continuing studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, led by Christine DeSmet. Find out about workshops, courses, conferences, and critiques services at:

www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/writing

Extra Innings is a proud booster of

Write by the Lake
The School of the Arts at Rhinelander
Weekend with your Novel
and the Odyssey Project

No added sugar, carbs, trans-fats, or taste. Contains your recommended daily dose of nouns, verbs (transient and intransient), gourds, adjectives, adverbs and other artificial sweeteners, pronouns, antonyms, prepositions, propositions, conjunctions, contradictions, contractions, eruditions, bloviation, chiasmus, charisma, metanoia, paranoia, trace metaphors and the occasional halfwitticism.

Back issues available at:

www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/writing/extrainnings

Free Little Libraries flourish

Several issues ago, I told you about the Free Little Library wife Ellen and I share with the neighborhood. The concept is simple: take a book, or return a book, or donate a book, or all three, any time, day or night.

My friend Rick Brooks and Todd Bol of Hudson, WI, created the Free Little Library movement, and Brooks worked tirelessly to get the word out.

"We’re now in 34 states and 17 countries,” Brooks says. He estimates that there are between 400 and 500 LFLs in use around the world.

Ellen and I have found that we rarely need to restock our dear little box. In fact, we have a stack of books on the counter by the side door, waiting for there to be room for new stock.

Dane County, home of the movement and site of World Headquarters of this newsletter, has over 40 little libraries charted on the LFL website.

Danish TV and a Russian film crew have come to Madison to tell the story, and National Public Radio, USA Today, and NBC Nightly News have covered it.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Continuing Studies, where Brooks works, embodies the “Wisconsin Idea” of taking knowledge to the boundaries of the state. Brooks and Bol have taken it considerably farther.
BULLPEN BLOVIATION
MARSHALL J. COOK, EDITOR-IN-COACH

Do we look marvelous--
or is it time for a change?

It started with this short email from alert reader Joanne Johnson:
"Wish your newsletter was not in two column. Difficult to read."

I put on my graphic designer hat (which I got second hand from Blake Kellogg’s) and pondered: If I go full measure, I’ll have to come up a point or two in type size, because long lines are hard for some folks to read. Also, I’d sacrifice flexibility in dropping in silly pictures and such. But if two-column is bothering Joanne, it’s probably bothering other folks, too.

I asked Joanne if she thought I should run her comment and see what the rest of you think. She responded:
Looking at the newsletter again, it's not the two columns I don't care for. It's the fact that many articles do not end at the bottom of the page and continue at the top of the second column. This means I have to scroll back up to the top of the page. Sounds like a little thing. I would like to know what others think.

With my floppy old hat still perched on my balding pate, I pondered further: I could keep the two columns but adopt a horizontal rather than a vertical format, which means each story would fit a two-column box rather than run all the way down the column, so the trip from the bottom of one column to the top of the next would never be very long.

That wouldn’t help for a full-page article, though, and most of our columns and stories fill the page.

Definitely time to let the rest of you sound off on the topic. Please let me know if you’ve got opinions-- keep as is, go two-column horizontal, go “full measure” (one column) or maybe some fourth option? Email the Coach at mcook@dcswisc.edu.

The lovely and talented Mrs. Editor-in-Coach (center) tours Madison’s famed State Street with her goddaughter, Elizabeth Ramey (far left) The old timer on the right is one of State Street’s famed panhandlers.
I recently spoke about memoir writing to a group of Snowbirds, in Florida for the winter. They were enthusiastic writers and avid readers. I began the program by explaining the difference between writing family history, autobiography, and memoir.

Family history involves extensive research and can take years to collect and write. I know people who have been gathering the pieces for decades and have yet to organize and write it. Family history includes hundreds of people, and facts are crucial.

Autobiography is, of course, about you, the writer. It covers your entire life, usually in chronological order. Like family history, it’s factual.

Memoir is where the writing becomes fun and creative. Because memory is elusive, memoir is told the way you remember an event or occasion. A sibling might swear you have it all wrong, but that’s his story; this one is yours.

A compilation of stories can cover a variety of subjects, or it might have a theme: your coming-of-age years, or your experiences as the operator of a dude ranch for handicapped children, or the year you rode the rails during the Great Depression.

Don’t make the mistake of thinking your life is ordinary and not of interest to anyone. Even if your children and grandchildren don’t seem interested in the tales told around the table, they’ll someday be glad you recorded them.

Writer Charles Baxter said: “It’s wrong to believe that only professional writers can write something of value. I’m trying to convince these groups [family history] that all of the intentions they’ve had for writing are worthy; and I am here to give them permission to write, as if they need it, though often they do, and to convince them that writing leaves a trace, and there wouldn’t be a trace of what they thought or felt or knew about their families, or what they believe about God. There will be no trace of that unless they write it.”

Memoir is written like any short story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It includes detail, narrative, and dialogue. It doesn’t matter if you don’t recall exact settings and conversations; recreate it the way it might have been.

I published a story called “Gramma Might Have Told Me,” based on a single visit with my grandmother. I recall only one thing we talked about that day, but I created a scene in which the child asked questions and Gramma related information. These were things that I learned as an adult while doing genealogy, but in the memoir, I suggest that Gramma might have told me these stories when I was a child and perhaps not paying particular attention.

Of course, you should never totally fictionalize your life for the sake of a good story. A number of authors have gotten in trouble on that score, most recently James Frey (*A Million Little Pieces*).

A friend, who for many years facilitated a life history writer’s group, advised her students, “If you feel daunted by writing your life story, write one story at a time. Keep at it and soon you’ll have a book.”

Without knowing that I would one day compile the reminiscences I’ve written over the past 25 years, that’s what I was doing—one story at a time.

What compelled me to compile the stories now? After being published in two anthologies by Silver Boomer Books, the guidelines arrived for the next book they’re planning (on widowhood). I commented to the editor that I’d have to pass on this one; I’m not a widow. She replied, “You’re a writer. It doesn’t have to be about you being a widow.”

That invitation opened the door to a subject I’d never fully explored: *How my mother’s widowhood and her subsequent death profoundly shaped my life*. With that theme in mind, I seamed the pieces together.

Ned Burke, publisher of *Yesterday’s Magazette*, started his publication 40 years ago based on the belief that everyone has a yesterday, and everyone has a story to tell. Time’s a’wastin’. Write your stories.

Coach’s note: Madonna’s memoir, *In Her Shoes*, will be published later this year. I’ve read it and heartily recommend it.
We all live in a brave new world of speed-of-light electronic communication. E-mail has evolved into social media – Facebook, Yahoo, LinkedIn, Google + and the rest. We’ve seen the democratization of freelance writing with the explosion of on-line newsletters, e-zines (such as Extra Innings), news services, and blogs, both corporate and personal.

My experience with on-line writing has been a mixed bag. I’ll relate my journey hoping some of you will also share your plunge into the frigid waters of electronic media.

I applied on-line to the electronic newspaper Examiner by submitting several newsletter pieces I had written. I wanted to write about gardening; they needed writers to cover the Dane County area. I thoroughly enjoyed the research for each article and learned on-line skills like searching for and embedding pictures and links in my articles. I wrote three articles a week, 100-150 words each. While I was assigned an editor, that person never suggested edits; nor did I have any evidence they read my pieces. I made very little money.

I applied and got the job reviewing books and authors. My mentors, Marshall Cook, Laurel Yourke, Christine DeSmet, and Emily Auerbach all-- with non-judgmental grace-- agreed to be interviewed. I published 700-word interviews on each. A pleasurable exercise, but I didn’t make a penny.

I applied to write for Examiner on ‘Green/Sustainable Issues’ and again was accepted. I wrote three columns and earned less than $30 in nine months. At that point I began to question if it was a good use of my time.

A friend of a friend suggested I check out Suite 101, a much higher quality on-line publication—and they did provide editorial review. I applied to do book reviews and was again accepted. I wrote reviews on books I had read in the Book Talk series led by Emily Auerbach. I had the advantage of insights gained during our classes. My editor read every article and helped polish my work; however, I had few readers, so I stopped submitting.

I stopped writing for Examiner last December. Friends said they’d been waiting for me to come to that decision on my own. I still receive 2-3 e-mails a week from Examiner asking me to submit articles again. They have threatened to drop me if I don’t submit something soon, an empty threat.

My publishing contract for my novel requires a webpage and blog, which I created in December and constantly update (www.rexowens.us). I scoured the web to learn how my favorite authors use their websites and blogs. I learned the website is a way to promote your work, the blog a way to connect with readers. My publisher of course wants me to blog about my book.

I’ve written previously in Extra Innings about the futility and self-promotion of many blogs. I post two blogs a month, and so far the world is underwhelmed. I haven’t yet used all the search engine optimization (SEO) tricks – I’ll do that when I have a certain publication date.

While blogs in particular have democratized personal journalism, the quality is often lacking (boring and filled with ‘blah, blah, blah’). Fortunately, we have a choice – not to read them.

However, you may also find blogs that are well written and interesting and allow you to connect directly with the writer – which is, after all, what makes blogs unique. I subscribe to author C.S. Lakin’s blog, Live Write Thrive.

I’m fortunate to be able to contribute a monthly column for Extra Innings. Many of you are aware it had a previous life as the hard copy Creativity Connection and is now a monthly e-zine for writers, and Marshall continues to have his hand firmly on the rudder.* I also enjoy writing my own blog because I can share my writing process, mishaps on my writing journey, and how my novel evolved. There are lots of opportunities to write in electronic media. You too may want to consider adding your voice to the world.

*Coach’s note: my hand would probably be in the till rather than on the tiller, but E.I. has but two revenue ‘streams’-- subscriptions, which are free, and advertising, which we don’t accept, so we don’t even have a till.
As a pre-teen in the mid-1950s, my greatest freedom came while riding my bike out of Waunakee into the farm country of Wisconsin’s Westport township, and my route included this nondescript, concrete bridge that carried Division St. traffic at the edge of town. As soon as I crossed the bridge, I had left town and was riding a narrow country road between rolling farm fields and acres of woods. I was free.

I steered my maroon, balloon-tired bike down the Waunakee Park hill (visible at far left) and tried not to wipe out (did we call it that then?)* in the loose gravel at the bottom. I followed the narrow park road tracing the outfield curve of the baseball diamond, then cut across the grass and climbed up and over the stone bridge across Six Mile Creek (above the left abutment of the concrete bridge). Since there was no path between the bridges, I bounced across the park lawn and up the slope to this bridge where, as soon as I felt the pea-graveled pavement beneath me, I crossed the unnamed ditch that carried runoff to the creek, and just that quickly I was riding between two farm fields.

I was free—not controlled by obligation or the will of another, free to ride without parental interference as far and as long as I could—as long as I made it home for supper, of course.

We all, I suspect, carry that craving for freedom. We take it to bars, to basketball games, to saunters along dirt paths along curving streams in thick woods. As a boy, my single-geared Schwinn provided my wheels to freedom, and this little bridge at Waunakee’s eastern edge, about a dozen miles north of Madison, provided the route.

As often as I could get away, I took myself across that bridge and rode south on Division St., across the Chicago & North Western Railway tracks, pedaling between long rows of corn past Jerome Ripp’s farm-field airport, through Westport’s rolling countryside about six miles to my grandparents’ rustic cottage with its grand view of Madison and the capitol from Lake Mendota’s north shore.

A kid’s getting out of town may not seem a big deal, especially in a small village. Waunakee had 1,042 people in the 1950 census, and my friends and I could pedal our bikes a few blocks and almost accidentally wind up in the country.

But for me it was huge: My mother seemed to think any kid more than two blocks from home was missing or delinquent, and a quick ride out of town was the only way I found to escape that control. This bridge—my bridge to freedom—never failed to provide that escape.

Today Waunakee is nine times bigger, and things have changed, of course. Jerome Ripp died some years ago, but the airport he created in 1946 for his Piper Cub is still there—and immortalized on his tombstone. My grandparents’ cottage belongs to my cousins, and the second floor is still unfinished, though the building is dwarfed now by million-dollar homes. Division Street is there (I stood on it to take this photograph), but it’s inside the village limits, and it carries hundreds more vehicles on a new alignment that is much too wide for this narrow old bridge. The bridge remains, however, carrying a path on which more generations of kids can ride their bikes, not into the country as I did, but between school and home in the subdivisions covering those rolling fields I loved. The bridge keeps the kids safe from cars and trucks on the busy street, even if it can no longer provide the excitement and the freedom of getting out of town.

* Coach’s note: I think we just called it “crashing” then. And I’ll bet we didn’t call ourselves “pre-teen.”
SPEAKING
ANAGRAMMATICALLY

PRESBYTERIAN:
BEST IN PRAYER

ASTRONOMER:
MOON STARER

DESPERATION:
A ROPE ENDS IT

THE EYES:
THEY SEE

GEORGE BUSH:
HE BUGS GORE

THE MORSE CODE:
HERE COME DOTS

DORMITORY:
DIRTY ROOM

SLOT MACHINES:
CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY:
IS NO AMITY

ELECTION RESULTS:
LIES - LET'S RECOUNT

SNOOZE ALARMS:
ALAS! NO MORE Z 'S

A DECIMAL POINT:
I'M A DOT IN PLACE

THE EARTHQUAKES:
THAT QUEER SHAKE

ELEVEN PLUS TWO:
TWELVE PLUS ONE
TITANIC TEA

Clouds of steam drifted up from Spode tea cups of Titanic's first-class passengers as they sipped their morning tea beverage served in second-class cups warded off chilling air as people strolled decks on the maiden voyage in cramped quarters of steerage passengers drank from squat mugs held in working-class hands as if a tea cup would be too delicate cups, saucers, mugs of all classes mingle together at the bottom of the sea where icy Atlantic waters can't discern differences

Bonny Conway

The “unsinkable” Titanic struck an iceberg and sank on its maiden voyage on April 15, 1912.

TWO

I am, at heart, of two parts, a whimpering child and a roaring monster.

They fight over me often. I'm not sure how they determine the winner, but usually it's the one who's had the most rest and a good steak, which is oh, so very rare.

But usually it's a draw, as they go simpering or roaring to their separate corners, to stare or sulk 'til the bell rings again.

Pat Goetz
WRITE ON!

Thoughts pace non-stop within my brain, impatient to be borne upon the slab of wood pulp that lies mocking me this morn.

My mind’s awash in swirling plots, not knowing which to choose, until, at last, my muse decides which cache it wants to use.

Ticonderoga clenched in hand, I scribble without pause. As blood emerges on the page, my writers’ block withdraws.

Craig W. Steele

IAMBIC RHYTHMETER

I really tried to comprehend what’s “rhythm” versus “meter.” I struggled to the bitter end, but failed to fathom either. So though my writing may offend, I have concerns for neither.

Craig W. Steele

This is Craig’s first contribution to E.I. He’s a writer and university biologist whose creative musings occur in the urban countryside of northwestern Pennsylvania. His poetry has appeared recently or is forthcoming in The Edge Magazine, Caduceus, the Aurorean, Astropoetica, Stone Path Review, Popular Astronomy and elsewhere. He lives in Cambridge Springs, PA.
OUT ON A LIMERICK
ESTHER M. LEIPER-ESTABROOKS

Don’t look down your nose at the lively limerick

What do you think, hearing the word limerick? Edward Lear wrote childish examples (quite dull, and lazily repeating his first line as last line) while other rhymesters composed stuff Mom washed your mouth out with soap for. Happily, intelligent examples exist in-between.

In fact, the form is ancient, as shown by examples in early Mother Goose; the following wry but serious lyric dates from 1610:

Love is a pretty peddler
Whose pack is fraught with sorrows;
With doubts and fears,
With sighs and tears,
Some joys—but those it borrows.

Limericks are meant to make us laugh. Now rhymed exclusively AABBA, the first two lines and last line are set in trimeter, with third and fourth lines in dimeter, for a light, tripping effect.

As well as squeaky-clean, there are always scatological efforts, often gross rather than clever. Ideally wit, not shock-value, lightens the five-line form, which can be suitable for school kids. This early limerick of mine sold to the Frey Scientific company for textbook use:

DOGGONE
"Aha" gloated great B.F. Skinner.
"For I have come up with a winner.
My Pavlovian box
Has electrical shocks—
The critters can work for their dinner."

I provide titles for every poem, believing the lack is like having a teacup without a handle, useable but flawed. Yet most writers skip titles, as does this example by Tim Torkildson:

When the lovely young nympho from Narpet
Who kept house for tycoon, J.C. Harpett
Spilled a drink on his bed
The worried miss said,
"I'm afraid he'll have me on the carpet."

Last word: If you fear limericks are mere doggerel, consider the ‘greats’ who wrote them, including Tennyson, Swinburne, Kipling, Stevenson, and W.S. Gilbert of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. Don't be coy; you're in fine company, and as the Princeton Encyclopedia concludes (with nose only a little in the air), “Whatever its origins, the limerick has a secure, if eccentric, place in the history of English verse,” to which we Americans add our own native twists, which, dear pensters and punsters, is just as it should be!

Coach’s note: Did you catch the challenge imbedded in this limerick lark? Try you hand at writing your own limerick and send them to me at mcook@dcs.wisc.edu. Esther’s next column will be “Dog Eat Doggerel.” Don’t miss it.
The Avengers
(May 4th)-
I've been waiting to see this for four years, since the first *Iron Man* came out. As soon as Samuel L. Jackson made his cameo as S.H.I.E.L.D director Nick Fury in the post credits scene, I was thrilled. For the most part, the films that have been leading up to *The Avengers* have been pretty good. Now, in just a bit over month, the film bringing all of these heroes together will finally hit theaters. I can't wait to see what Joss Whedon brings to the Marvel universe. I think he is one of the few people who could take on this project with a positive result.

Prometheus
(June 8th)-
I'm not a horror fan, but I'm a sucker for a good sci-fi film, and this looks like it will mix the two genres quite well. Ridley Scott's *Alien* is a sci-fi classic, and he's bringing back that feeling with *Prometheus*, with cast members like Noomi Rapace, Michael Fassbender and Idris Elba.

Brave
(June 22nd)-
I've seen every Pixar film in theaters except for last year's *Cars 2*, with its substitution of Larry the Cable Guy for Paul Newman. Ugh. But it looks as if Pixar will return to form this summer with *Brave*. I'm glad they're finally having a female lead character for one of their films, and it should be interesting to see how Pixar takes on a fantasy film. Plus late night host Craig Ferguson has a voice role in the film.

The Dark Knight Rises
(July 20th)-
My most anticipated film finale since *The Return Of The King*. Christopher Nolan's vision of Batman, with his gritty, realistic Gotham City, has been fantastic. Usually the third film in a series can be poor, but I think Nolan will go out strong with this series. I already have my tickets for a midnight showing, and July can't come fast enough.

Skyfall
(November 9th)-
Daniel Craig is my second favorite Bond actor after Sean Connery. Even though *Quantum of Solace* wasn't up to par with *Casino Royale*, Craig was great as Bond. Sam Mendes is a good director, and I'm eager to see his take on Bond. Javier Bardem will be a great villain; he's already proved it in *No Country For Old Men*. I'm also anxious to see where Ralph Fiennes comes into play. Also this will be Judi Dench's final Bond film in the role of M, and I hope they give her a proper send off.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
(December 14th)-
The *Lord of the Rings* is my all time favorite film trilogy, so I'm counting down the days until the first of the two Hobbit films opens. I'm glad Peter Jackson is back in the director's chair and that Ian McKellen is back as Gandalf, and I'm sure Martin Freeman will do wonderfully as Bilbo. It'll be great to travel back to Middle Earth once again.

Django Unchained
(December 25th)-
It's been almost three years since Quentin Tarantino's last film, and that's long enough. He's made plenty of references to Westerns in his previous films, but now he's finally making one. As with his other films, *Django Unchained* has a great cast, including Leonardo DiCaprio in the role of the villain, which we don't usually see him play. I always get excited for a new Tarantino film, and this is no exception.

Seven films I want to see in 2012

So far this year, not one film that has captured my interest enough to make me want to go to the theater, and I love seeing films in the theaters. These seven give me hope. Let's hope they live up to the hype.
CRYPTOGRAM SOLUTIONS

Diana Jenkins first in with the right answer

The solution:
Free writing is where you let your mind go and your words flow. Don't think, don't stop, but most of all don't let your receptionist set rules. She's like a well meaning friend telling you what you can and cannot write. Give her a vacation so you can have free access to play.
"You" and "your" were the key, Diana reports.

Diane Swanson was the first to spot the typo, which didn't stop her from solving. “The ‘have’ in the last sentence didn't match the code (it would have read ‘hwve’), but I assumed it was a typo.
“Did I crack it?”
She sure did!
“I love this kind of puzzle!” she adds.
I discovered EXTRA INNINGS only recently,”
Craig W. Steele, our third solver, notes. “I followed Ester Leiper here from Writers' Journal. I look forward to future issues, as well as scanning the archives.”
He, too, had the correct solution and spotted the error: “‘have’ was encoded as NDYV; it should have read, NOYV. No fair, the red herring! :o)”
“It took me about 20 minutes,” our fourth solver, Diane Wittik reports, “as this was an unusually long one to crack. ...I solve these daily in The Tribune Chronicle from Warren, Ohio. It's called ‘Cryptoquip,’ with a play on words.”
And yes, she, too, noted the mistake.
Many of you asked for more, and Jan has kindly supplied another hit. As Craig has proven, people not named Diane or Diana are eligible to try, and even more Diane(a)s are welcome. Send your solutions to me at: mcook@dcs.wisc.edu.

THE WORD WHISPERER

Jan Kent

Don’t leave me dangling

Ooooh – let’s talk about danglers in grammar.

My trusty grammar book says that “A modifying phrase or clause must clearly and sensibly modify a word in the sentence.” (Don’t you just love that “sensibly.” It’s a word to live by.) If this doesn’t happen, the phrase or clause is a dangler.

Danglers are everywhere – even in prize-winning books. Once you recognize them you can at least keep them out of your own writing, if not out of your line of vision.

Born at the age of forty-three, the baby was a great comfort to Mrs. Wooster.
How about that? A forty-three year old baby!
Tail wagging merrily, Bertie took the dog for a walk.
Oh Bertie, you’ve got to quit that tail wagging.
After overeating, the hammock looked pretty good to Sam.
Don’t you just hate a piggy hammock?
So – go forth and dangle no more.

An anonymous entry in our “Author Theme Park” brainstorm

Just imagine a park called A Clockwork Orangetown.

Visitors could get rouged up and robbed by young boys speaking a strange language, while listening to Beethoven’s 5th Symphony.
(Though it was violent, the book’s language and theme were brilliantly conceived).
Name withheld on request.

"A certain ruthlessness and a sense of alienation from society is as essential to creative writing as it is to armed robbery."

Nelson Algren

KAAT’S COSMIC CRYPTOGRAM

Janice Kaat

For writers only
FGQP VQIJ WJJTI BSSJWNSWG NH FGQ JMKJDS RNV SG YGPX HGP FGQ. EQBANSFG YGPX WJJTI EQBANSF SNVJ, IG LJ KPKJBPGT SG PNJU JW NH NS NI SRPJG G'DAGDX NW SRJ VGPWNWZ BWT SRJ VQIJ SNDXAJI FGQP JBP.
Getting this letter was no coincidence

Hi Marshall,

I enjoyed Den Adler’s article [“Essays from Images”] very much. He commented that he enjoys “life’s little coincidences.”

In reply to that, I’m going to copy/paste part of a talk I gave a while back. It has to do with this concept. Hope you will pass this on to Mr. Adler....

Norma Sundberg
Coach’s note: With Norma’s permission, I’m passing it along to everybody.

I’ve come across a word recently that seemed to appear everywhere else thereafter: synchronicity. It appears to be a form of the word synchronize, yet I didn’t find it listed in either of my dictionaries or in the thesaurus as synchronicity. I first found it in Shirley Maclaine’s book, "Sage-ing While Aging," speaking of people and events in her life appearing supposedly coincidentally. In church we say “there are no coincidences," yes? The second time I found the word in Glenn Beck’s new book coauthored with Keith Ablow, M.D., Seven Wonders That Will Change Your Life. By this time I feel the word has spiritual connotations. “An Ohio friend, who moved to Maine, once said, ‘The people in our life’s path aren't there by accident!’” (pg. 59 of the book:)

Writing advice from C.K. Chesterton

A lot of us get discouraged looking at the mess we've made on paper. ... Just keep telling yourself: the first draft has to come before the second and the third. All good writing is rewriting. ... Don't give up. There is an embittered editor up in your brain who expects your first draft to be classic literature. Tell him to sit on it and spin. ... At 40, take a year off and work as a chanteuse in a roadhouse, leaning against the baby grand in your little black dress slit up to the thighs, a cigarette in your left hand, singing bittersweet ballads for lovelorn truckdrivers.

Fox sighting

Glad to report that Dave Fox should have his new website up and running by the time you read this. He promises a focus on travel, humor columns, and helping people tell their own stories.

Dave will be launching another great online humor writing class starting May 1: http://davethefox.com/classes/online-writing-classes.htm.

He’ll be taking what he describes as “a whirlwind blitz through the US in mid to late April” – a week visiting family in Denver and DC, a weekend speaking at the Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop in Dayton, Ohio, and a week in Seattle on the way back to Singapore.

Singapore! Yep. That’s where this citizen of the world and his bride now reside.

Sell-copy gone bad

Can we all agree that the “If you’ve ever wondered what it would be like...” lead in to the sell-copy for your novel is a bit tired?

But even if it were newly invented, I just don’t think this one works:

“If you've ever wondered what it would be like to create your own firm and sell it to a high-flying technology company on the verge of going public - only to see your best friend murdered and your dreams shattered by corrupt executives — then this is the novel for you.”

Can’t say that I ever have.

Time to PLAY BALL!
Does your tome need a trailer?

Have you ever thought about making a trailer for your book? Most publishers encourage us to promote our own work, and producing a trailer is one way to get the word out. Folks will charge to do it for you, but you can make one for much less.

First choose a format. Will you illustrate it yourself, shoot a short video, maybe compose a slide show? Take a look at some book trailers on YouTube and on publishers’ websites to get a feel for what will work best for you.

Think about what you want to show in one to two minutes maximum. You must introduce your story and entice folks to want to buy and read your book. You can add text to describe photos or do a voice narration with a video. Consider incorporating music. For slides, use dramatic animation and eye-catching borders.

A note of caution: if you decide to use images, research the many websites that offer them. You may have to purchase packages that start at $15 and go up from there. Before you decide to download images, remember to review issues concerning copyright.

I thought it would be fun to make a pre-book trailer for my picture book story, *When Sheep Won’t Leap*. Even though it has yet to be published, the story has garnered several prestigious awards. I decided to purchase a package from the photography website 123rf.com for a little under $50, which allowed me to download 16 medium-sized photos. I made these images into a Microsoft Power Point presentation and added pink and green borders and clip art. Dramatic transitions livened up the show.

Then, three different tunes—a soft lullaby for the beginning, a spicy salsa for the middle, and a jubilant closing piece—set the mood. Lastly, I uploaded the trailer to YouTube. The hard part was synching the music to the slides and converting the slide show to video.

I’m not a computer whiz, and if I can make a trailer, so can you.

*Take a look at Randi’s pre-publication trailer for When Sheep Won’t Leap at:*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_eHk4iNomY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_eHk4iNomY) I’ve seen it and love it. Note: If this live link doesn’t work, copy the url and paste it into your browser.

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**Boost Your Vocabulary**

*with these essential words*

**moxie**

MOK-see

noun:

1. Vigor; verve; pep.
2. Courage and aggressiveness.
3. Skill; know-how.

Moxie enters common speech from the 1908 Moxie, a trademark name registered 1924 for a bitter non-alcoholic beverage; it was used as far back as 1876 as the name of a patent medicine advertised to "build up your nerve," and it is perhaps ultimately from a New England tribal word.

**panache**

puh-NASH; -NAHSH

noun:

1) Dash or flamboyance in manner or style.
2. A plume or bunch of feathers, esp. such a bunch worn on the helmet; any military plume, or ornamental group of feathers.

Panache is from Medieval French penna, from Italian pinnacchio, feather, from Late Latin pinnaculum, diminutive of penna, feather. It is related to pen, a writing instrument, originally a feather or quill used for writing.

**lucifugous**

loo-see-FOO-guhs

adjective:

Avoiding light.

Lucifugous combines two Latin roots, luci-,"light," and fugere, "to flee."
THE LAST WORDS--
*lots of them*

**English Pronunciation**

*by G. Nolst Trenité*

Dearest creature in creation,
Study English pronunciation.
I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.
I will keep you, Suzy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.
Tear in eye, your dress will tear.
So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.
Just compare heart, beard, and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word,
Sword and sward, retain and Britain.
(Mind the latter, how it’s written.)
Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as plaque and ague.
But be careful how you speak:
Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;
Cloven, oven, how and low,
Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.
Hear me say, devoid of trickery,
Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,
Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,
Exiles, similes, and reviles;
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, mica, war and far;
One, anemone, Balmoral,
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;
Gertrude, German, wind and mind,
Scene, Melpomene, mankind.
Billet does not rhyme with ballet,
Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.
Blood and flood are not like food,
Nor is mould like should and would.
Viscous, viscount, load and broad,
Toward, to forward, to reward.
And your pronunciation’s OK
When you correctly say croquet,
Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve,
Friend and fiend, alive and live.
Ivy, privy, famous; clamour
And enamour rhyme with hammer.
River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
Doll and roll and some and home.
 Stranger does not rhyme with anger,
Neither does devour with clanger.
Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,
Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,
Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,
And then singer, ginger, linger.
Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge and gauge,
Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.
Query does not rhyme with very,
Nor does fury sound like bury.
Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth.
Job, nob, bosom, ransom, oath.
Though the differences seem little,
We say actual but victual.
Refer does not rhyme with deafer.
Feoffer does, and zephyr, heifer.
Mint, pint, senate and sedate;
Dull, bull, and George ate late.
Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,
Science, conscience, scientific.
Liberty, library, heave and heaven,
Rachel, ache, mustache, eleven.
We say hallowed, but allowed,
People, leopard, towed, but vowed.
Mark the differences, moreover,
Between mover, cover, clover;
Leeches, breeches, wise, precise
Chalice, but police and lice;
Camel, constable, unstable,
Principle, disciple, label.
Petal, panel, and canal,
Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.
Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,
Senator, spectator, mayor.
Tour, but our and succour, four.
Gas, alas, and Arkansas.
Sea, idea, Korea, area,
Psalm, Maria, but malaria.
Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean.
Doctrine, turpentine, marine.
Compare alien with Italian,
Dandelion and battalion.
Sally with ally, yea, ye,
Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.
Say aver, but ever, fever,
Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.
Heron, granary, canary.
Crevice and device and aerie.
Face, but preface, not efface.
Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.
Large, but target, gin, give, verging,
Ought, out, joust and scour, scourging.
Ear, but earn and wear and tear
Do not rhyme with here but ere.
Seven is right, but so is even,
Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,
Monkey, donkey, Turk and jerk,
Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.
Pronunciation (think of Psyche!)
Is a paling stout and spiky?
Won’t it make you lose your wits,
Writing groats and saying grits?
It’s a dark abyss or tunnel:
Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,
Islington and Isle of Wight,
Housewife, verdict and indict.
Finally, which rhymes with enough,
Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?
Hiccough has the sound of cup.
My advice is to give up!!!

Forwarded to E.I. world word headquarters
by Sara Barnes, owner of Booked for Murder,
world’s finest bookstore, forwarded to her
from her sister Martha ten Sijthoff Barnes.

This opening-day edition of Extra Innings is
lovingly dedicated to
William Julius “Judy” Johnson
October 26, 1899 or 1900 - June 15, 1989
the great third baseman for the Homestead Grays
and Pittsburgh Crawfords, who played a key role
in the Crawfords winning the 1935 Negro League
World Series--
and to his teammates, Josh Gibson, Oscar
Charleston, and Cool Papa Bell,
and to
John Jordan “Buck” O’Neill,
the Ishmael of the Negro Leagues, and to
Leroy “Satchel” Paige,
who may have been the greatest pitcher who ever
lived.

Lineup, Madison Marvels, opening day 2012
Gordon, Dee SS (Dodgers)
Gordon, Alex LF (Royals)
Ethier CF (Dodgers)
Freeman 1B (Braves)
Uggla 2B (Braves)
Duda RF (Mets)
Freese 3B (Cardinals)
Martin C (Yankees)
Fister P (Tigers)