Portrait of the artist in his own words

**Littman launches two careers—his own and Shel Silverstein’s**

I’ve been a cartoonist/illustrator most of my adult life.

Right out of high school I got a job as an associate editor in the comic book industry. I did filler pages and edited dialogue balloons for Hillman Periodicals. *(Airboy, Crime Detective, The Heap, more)*

Then I got drafted. Took my basic training at Fort Belvoir, VA, and thought that I would be the camp cartoonist (instead of a combat engineer). I had a weekly comic strip in the camp newspaper.

One week I did a strip that made fun of the camp commander. The next day I was on orders to Korea as a combat engineer.

A good lesson—don’t screw with the boss.

While installing a mine field north of Seoul, I didn’t duck in time and spent some time recovering in Tokyo. While there, I did two gag panels: ”Tokyo Tickles Me” and “Jabberwocky Japanese” for English language Japanese newspapers. Some Vermont publisher wanted to do a book of them but I was sent back home due to an illness in the family. The publisher found someone else.

Someone named Shel Silverstein.

**More Wally, page two**
Wally’s World
from page one
When I was discharged, I decided to further my education, with the help of the GI Bill, I was able to enroll at Pratt Institute. where I took two majors, Illustration and Advertising Design. I met my wife there and we had our first child during the finals of my senior year.

I thought of becoming a cartoonist then, but with mouths to feed, I opted for advertising. I was an art director, creative director and TV producer for 48 years.

Finally, I decided it’s now or never; in 2001, I became a full time cartoonist.

I’ve sold a fair amount of gags but wouldn’t consider it to be a living. I keep plugging away and hope that in time the rewards will be greater. 

Coach’s note: Wally’s work-- words and pictures-- will find a home here anytime.

Extra Innings
The writers’ newsletter for the brash and the bashful
Number Five Madison, Wisconsin, March, 2010
Editor-in-Coach: Marshall J. Cook
Columnists this issue: Madonna Dries Christensen, Jim Herod, Perry Stone
Feature writers: Janice Kaat, Becky Meyer Pourchot, Carol Hornung, Rex Owens, Monette Bebow-Reinhard
Fiction: Jan Kent
Cartoons: Wally Littman
The Masked Man: Clayton Moore

I publish Extra Innings monthly and distribute it free to an open-enrollment mailing list. To get yourself on the list, email the Coach at mcook@des.wisc.edu

Extra Innings comes to you through the good graces of the folks of the writing program at the Division of Continuing Studies, Liberal Studies and the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Christine DeSmet, Rita Mae Reese, and Laurel Yourke. Find out about their workshops, courses, online workshops, conferences, and critiques service at: www.des.wisc.edu/lsa/writing

They’re the absolute best.

Extra Innings is a proud booster of Write by the Lake
The Writers Institute
The Rhinelander School of the Arts
Weekend with your Novel and the Odyssey Project

No added sugar, honey. No carbs, no trans fats, no salt-- pretty tasteless all in all. Like its predecessor, Creativity Connection, this newsletter contains your recommended daily dose of nouns, verbs (transigent and intransigent), gourds, adjectives, adverbs and other artificial sweeteners, pronouns, antinouns, prepositions, propositions, conjunctions, contradictions, contractions, eruditions, bloviation, chiasmus, charisma, metanoia, paranoia, trace metaphors and the occasional half-witticism.

Wally Littman

“Not to read Dick Francis because you don’t like horses is like not reading Dostoevsky because you don’t like God.”
John Leonard
The Missouri Muse

Seeing your way clear to write

By Perry Stone

The annual eye check-up: I have one every several years whether I need it or not. This year Dr. Wendell Scott’s machine called me two days before time, reminding me of my appointment and that it had been four years since I had shown up for my last. I pushed the number 1 to verify I would be there this year, since my situation is such that my eyes are my glucose meter. Pain and redness signal high sugar levels while my vision blears if sugar levels go low. Scary are the moments when the mind doesn’t focus on what the eyes are looking at. With that thought in mind, it was my belief an eye exam wouldn’t hurt.

Doctor Scott has a unique scheduling system were you walk right back to the examining room at your designated time, something I have noticed few doctors aspire to. A younger nurse had been hired sometime after 2006, and she prepared to give me the examination before the doctor wasted his precious time counseling and prognosifying (or is it “prognosticating”?)

“Look at the chart above and read the letters,” Nurse New tells me, “A big o and a backward 3.” “What else?” “Just a big O and a backward 3” I smiled “There’s six letters there. You don’t see the others?” “Six!” I squinted and stretched my neck. “Just a big O and a backward 3 is all I see.” “Are you sure?” she asks me, like I don’t know what I see. And then she says, “Did you drive here today?” Disbelief was plain in her voice.

The thought “DANG I’m BLIND” flashed across my mind. However, once composed, self-control forced me to realize blind didn’t seem to be that bad. Nothing was blurry. I could distinguish the difference between tanned cleavage and beige sweater. I stared again at the eye chart and squinted harder. Nurse New moved closer beside me. I felt her ear next to mine and envisioned her squinting at the chart.

“AAHH,” she said in my ear. “You’re taller than I thought.”

After she adjusted the angle of the mirror that reflected the chart, six letters came in to view. The big O and backward 3, apparently a file number, disappeared. Tested, scanned, pressurized and dilated, I passed the ordeal with 20/25 vision, showed no ill effects from diabetes, and saw a story to write about.

Bless you and yours Coach

Paw Joe

Perry’s column was a regular feature of Creativity Connection and will now occupy a regular space in this newsletter. Maybe next issue he’ll get his head examined.

Perry also sent along this cartoon, snared from the Internet and not carrying attribution.
From the Nethermost
Writing Scenes
By Jim Herod
I’ll be flying up to Wisconsin from The Nethermost again this summer to attend the weeklong Write-by-the-Lake course in Madison, WI. All of us need different things as we struggle with the craft of telling those stories which fling themselves into our consciousness. I figured maybe Bob Curry, Marshall Cook, Chris DeSmet or some higher authority would know exactly what I needed. This time I’ll be taking Scene Workshop with Lori Devoti in mid-June.

I have lamented for some time that I could never write a long, continuous story such as found in Abraham Verghese’s Cutting for Stone or Ian McEwan’s Atonement. All my stories seemed to come out as middle length short stories.

I talked about this with Marshall. He used exactly the right analogy with me. “Look, Jim,” he said. “Some folks are marathoners, some are middle distance runners, and some are sprinters. Find your distance and run like hell.”

Good advice. Athletically, I used to be a marathoner. As a writer, I have found my place as a sprinter and middle distance writer. It seems clear that we get our athletic abilities in our genetic heritage. What about how we find our story lengths?

Maybe for me the length where I feel comfortable developed because I came to serious fiction writing in critique groups. In these, there are always limitations on the length of submissions. As a result, I grew up as a writer pacing my stories in 2500 word batches. For example, to account for the bloodstain on the floor in the front bedroom of my grandparent’s home, I wrote a collection of short stories about a man whose destiny would place him in that room on December 7, 1862.

When these were finished, I sewed the stories together. My grandparent’s descendants and the people who had been told that the house over the hill and within sight of the Cumberland River is haunted all believe that what I wrote is historically accurate. It’s not. I made up most of tale in a collection of 2500 word short stories and published it as A Journey Beyond Innocence.

So, what’s next? Will there be another collection of short stories sewn together to tell about the German soldier who ended up in a 1941 Alabama POW camp? Three months ago, I might have said yes. Not now. Lori Devoti gives me a new vocabulary. What happens to the POW will not be told in a collection of short stories, but in a collection of scenes, with a beginning, a conflict, and an ending. The plot should make the reader stay up late at night, eager to see what happens next, eager to see how the next scene will evolve.

Lori Devoti gave homework for her students before the class starts. I pulled up some of my writing on the computer and, based on the outline for the class, started throwing out sentences and rearranging paragraphs. She suggested books for reading. I downloaded one of them onto my Kindle and now interrupt my wife’s painting as I read to her from The Scene Book by Sandra Scofield.

The author writes, “I came to believe that what readers care about most are characters, and that what they remember best are images and actions.”

What a great understanding! I’ve benefited already from the next Write-by-the-Lake. There is much more I must do before we come together for the first class. I know this for sure: the preparation is part of the fun. Lori Devoti would probably laugh if she knew that every time I create a scene from the conversations I hear while running, I ask myself, “Will Lori like this?”

Check out Write By The Lake and other great conferences, classes, and online workshops from the University of Wisconsin-Madison at www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/writing or email Christine DeSmet at cdesmet@dcs.wisc.edu
Meandering with Madonna
My reading compass
By Madonna Dries Christensen

On my reading agenda, there’s no better news than a new Anne Tyler novel. During the interim between her books, I fret. Has she published another book yet? Did I somehow miss it? What if the last one I read is the last she ever writes?

Having recently read her latest, Noah’s Compass, I now hold hope for another, sooner rather than later.

Anne Tyler has been around for years. You might have read some of her 18 novels or seen movies adapted from them: The Accidental Tourist (Geena Davis and William Hurt); Breathing Lessons (Joanne Woodward and James Garner); Saint Maybe (Blythe Danner and Edward Hermann).

Anne Tyler was born in Minneapolis in 1941, grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, and has lived for years in Baltimore, the setting for most of her work. She married Taghi Mohammad Modarressi, a psychiatrist and novelist with whom she had two daughters. He died in 1997. Her eleventh novel, Breathing Lessons, won the Pulitzer in 1989. The Accidental Tourist was a finalist for the Pulitzer, as was Dinner At The Homesick Restaurant.

For me, no other writer is as satisfying and consistent as Tyler. Her novels are peopled with characters who are endearing in their ordinariness. She understands family dynamics. Yes, there’s a sameness to the characters in each book, and that’s what I love; they are like one huge extended family. They could all come together at a family reunion and feel at home.

Unlike many novels, in which I cannot imagine knowing some of the characters, I know Tyler’s people. Hapless and quirky, they have believable conversations, the way people really talk. I can’t recall ever reading a four-letter word spoken by Tyler’s characters. You might say that’s not real. In my life it is. I avoid people who can’t speak without using profanity.

I trust Tyler to stick to one person’s point of view. What a blessing to not have to jump from being in one person’s mind to the next paragraph where it’s someone else’s. Not only does she create intriguing characters and conversation, her descriptions are unique. Sometimes one word in the sentence makes all the difference.

From Noah’s Compass: “The bed was shingled with glossy magazines.” Someone else (me, probably) would have written that the bed was covered, or littered, with magazines. But “shingled” is a whole different view. I see the magazines, parted in the middle and splayed open, overlapping one another, like shingles.

“All the buildings were scrunched together; their doors chewed looking … their brick crumbling like biscuits.” Ah, I’ve had biscuits like that.

Describing a four-year-old, Tyler wrote, “A knapsack almost as big as he loomed on his back.” Isn’t that exactly the way those overloaded bags look on a child? Like a monster looming over them?

Anne Tyler makes me giddy with pleasure. She’s not only good for readers; if she doesn’t make you a better writer, you aren’t listening.

Next issue, Madonna takes us along as she “paints the town read.”
First Person Personal
You don’t need to be a teacher to teach a fellow writer

By Monette Bebow-Reinhard
Got a nice compliment from a student writer the other day: “Are you a teacher?”

I was at my husband’s town-associated banquet and trying my darndest not to look bored, when one lady’s friend started telling her all her woes in her new expository writing class. I couldn’t help but ask – “Is that the kind of class where you have to write something factual to convince your readers of something?” I had the class but it was years ago and I was trying to remember.

Laurie told us about the article she was working on, where the teacher asked her: “what does being a writer mean to you?” I thought that was a little stiff for a class that a lot of students take because they ‘have’ to. This gal, for instance, was in a nursing program.

She thought she had the article pretty well written, except for the beginning. After I reassured her that the beginning is often the most difficult and the last finished, she told me that she wanted to start better than, “I started writing when I was five and found out how hard it was.” She said she had the worst time when she was five learning to write her name, and could remember the embarrassment to this day.

I told her she had the perfect beginning right there. Take us to that time when she was five and make us emotionally re-live it with her. She could then talk about how her writing felt like it was tied to her identity.

Well, before I knew it, she had a pen and paper out and was furiously scribbling this new idea – one that she had in the back of her mind anyway, one that just needed a little extra stimulation.

Just in the right place at the ‘write’ time, is all—and yes, it felt good to be asked if I taught writing. But the answer is no. Just like to help out, on occasion, if I can. Kind of makes all these years as a writer feel a little more valuable.

Monette Bebow-Reinhard earned a master's in history in 2006 and finds history writing very time consuming. On occasion she does get some fiction out of it, as with her second Bonanza novel, Mystic Fire, just out. In it, she takes the famous Cartwright family of the Ponderosa into the Civil War. When not whipping words into shape, Monette works as a volunteer museum curator. She lives in Abrams, Wisconsin.

Go to www.bebow-reinhard.com to read the first chapter of this book and Monette’s first Bonanza novel or buy at www.amazon.com or www.writewordsinc.com.
First Personal Personal

“Please let me to get published”

By Becky Meyer Pourchot

Part One of Two Parts

I sat down at my computer in the basement, ignoring the collection of Legos and My Pretty Pony accessories scattered across the floor. Although above my head on the main floor I could hear my toddler twins resolving property disputes with the heavy whacks of baby dolls, I chose to ignore them. Since I found a literary agent four months earlier, compulsive email checking had taken the forefront.

For the sixteenth time that morning, I clicked on the little blue envelope icon on my desktop and waited as Outlook filled my Inbox. I could feel my heart pound as the messages appeared. I read down the subject list: “PfizerViagra More Fun in Bed,” “BEcky, Get Lucky NoW”, and “Russian Women Need You For Hot Time.”

Unless attractive Russian women can do a good line edit, these emails were no use to me. The message I was really waiting for was from my agent to be titled something uneventful like: “Update” or “Publishing News” (although “PubliSher ReAdy To Make YOU MilliOns!!!” would have been nice).

Three weeks earlier, after eight rejections of my humor/gift book about my life as an absurdly imperfect housewife and mother, a publisher showed interest in my book. But rather than taking it as is, she requested I write it as a memoir. Having always dreamed of writing a memoir, I quickly put together a sample chapter and a table of contents. My agent looked it over and sent it off to the publisher the next week.

The waiting began, as did the obsessive email checking and the progressive destruction of the upstairs by my darling twins (whose favorite bedtime story had become Lord of the Flies). In my anxious state of waiting, I oscillated between success and failure. On good days I was an uproarious blend of David Sedaris and Erma Bombeck. On bad days I was a collection of Cathy and Garfield cartoons, circa 1983.

When faced with an event that I have no control over, I gravitate towards magical thinking. Going through fertility treatments, I wore a rabbit pendant, hoping that somehow the image of a bunny would inspire my ovum to function correctly. After I got pregnant with twins, I created a collection of talismans -- little birds statues, eggs, and acorns that I kept by the bed. I’d roll them around in my hands before bed and imagine my cherub like dolls entering the world, pink, alert, and already potty trained. For the most part my magic charms seemed to work -- although we seemed to do a lot of diapers in those early days.

Three years later I was at a crux again, waiting for some woman in Massachusetts, with an overflowing inbox of manuscripts, to decide my fate. I was tired of obsessing, rehashing scenarios, and feeling powerless, so I began to conjure up a magical plan. One day after getting all the kids to school I sat down at my desk and scrawled in pencil a note expressing my wish for publication. I then folded it up into my coat pocket and headed for the nearby nature conservancy, hoping that some deity with pull in the publishing world would be out there to hear my call.

What was Becky’s magical plan to get published? Tune in next issue for Part Two of “Please Let Me To Get Published” and find out.

Twin baby dolls?
First Person Personal
A stranger in town finds a writing community
By Janice Kaat
Arriving in Tucson, Arizona in September of 2007, my first goal was finding a writer’s group or at least writers. Nobody knew of a writer’s group in the area. The librarian did find a couple of numbers and emails for a couple of writer’s groups, but all attempts at contacting them by phone and email failed.

In January of this year the librarian emailed me with information about The Winter Writer’s Workshop that Pima Community College was sponsoring. It fit into my schedule, and the classes sounded interesting.

My day at the first Winter Writers Workshop was terrific. I had six classes with six different teachers and liked them all.

The first session was for all of us with writer Nancy Turner talking about Writing with the lights out.

She said to write as if this were the last story you could ever write. She talked about making it feel like you care. Hear your characters. Write with music. Get to know the place or what you are writing about. Don't start with the weather report. What is your theme? Time is important. Study your rule book, and then throw it away.

Then we got to choose what classes to go to. I chose How Could This Be? by Kit McIlroy. When you hear something or read something and you can't figure out how that could happen, let your imagination run with it and come up with a reason.

We got to write in this class. I got to read mine. The crowd loved it and I had fun doing it.

We got to write in our third class, too -- Dream/Life by Beth Alvarado. She said a writer should strive to see things as if they never saw it before. Also, try to turn the natural into the unnatural. She had us pick a number, a character, and a place. We had to write a story about the character at that age and their description of that place. She threw words at us during our writing, and we had to incorporate them into our writing. The words were pumpernickel, moon, saint, strawberry, flying saucer, and cowboy.

After lunch my next class was How the Sentence Tells the Story by Aurelie Sheehan. She had us read from four different authors to show how they used words to give us a feel for the story. She said fault lines in your life can become different languages. She wanted to know what part of where we came from scared us. That was a good thing to write on.

Next up, Writing on the Edge by Lydia Millet dealt with first sentences and how you should write a lot of them to get good at it. We had to write three first sentences and check which one we thought was best. Then she collected them all and different people read them. We voted on which one we thought was best.

With mine, only two people raised their hand on the one I had chosen. But almost all of them raised their hand on the last one: "Shut up you idiot, do you want them to hear us?"

We all came together again for Reality that Wanders into our Writing by Laila Halaby. She said that her fiction sounds more real than her non-fiction. She said you can get reality from family, news, smells, what you see, department stores and stuff you see along the road. She said to overwrite, capture the emotions, research, don't argue with your characters, and let the story unfold.

I met lots of nice people and got some names and numbers of people who want to start a writers group.

Janice wrote several pieces for Creativity Connection. This is her first piece for E.I.
Taking stock of emotions and interests

By Carol Hornung

When Dr. Temple Grandin spoke at Border’s Books in Madison, promoting her new book, *Animals Make Us Human*, a standing-room-only crowd welcomed her.

She has also written several books about her life with autism, but she was in Madison as an animal behavior specialist, speaking about emotions in animals. Do they exist? People tend to anthropomorphize animals -- bestow human emotions on them that probably aren’t real, so behaviorists had to step back and study what’s really going on.

Animals do have basic, real emotions, Dr. Grandin says, and this drives their behavior. They experience fear, which helps them avoid danger; rage, which gives them the ability to defend themselves; panic, a form of anxiety which creates a social attachment system within animal families; and seeking, which drives the animals to find food, water, shelter, and a mate. All these emotions enhance the animal’s ability to survive.

It occurred to me that these emotions are also a terrific guideline for writers plotting a story and trying to figure out how their characters should behave. Of course, human emotions are more complex, but the basic conflicts are there - fear, anger, loss, and desire.

Dr. Grandin also took questions from the audience on the topic of autism. She’s an advocate of having autistic people do as much as they possibly can. When asked why the autism rate is increasing, she said that for mild conditions, like Asperger’s syndrome, it’s just being diagnosed more. “The geeks and nerds, we’ve always been around.”

People with autism should develop their strengths. This, too, I thought was applicable to writers. In her case, she was an artist. She’d draw pictures of horses all day long, but her mother challenged her to draw other things. When young Temple created a picture of a beach, her mother put that picture in a nice, glass-covered frame and displayed it, as if to say, “what you’ve done before was fine, but this is really special.”

For writers, look at what you like to do. If you love writing pages and pages of description, take time to really work on a scene with dialog. If you tend to focus on characters, make sure you spend some time constructing a solid plot.

Whether it’s animal behavior, autism, or writing, we each look at the world from our own unique perspective and can learn so much from different points of view.

*Last issue Carol wrote about the often uneasy passage from novel to movie version.*
Received in the Bullpen

Calls and responses
to E.I. #4

Yah, you betcha
Marshall, thanks for Extra Innings. Always enjoy the insights of the writing life. “Netting an Editor” (thinking like a fisherman) was useful, and “You are what you read” was particularly enlightening. I’ve finally read Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard (she’s my favorite author, but never read her Pulitzer winner) and just started Thoreau’s Walden. Great fodder for an outdoor writer like me. Finally, laughed out loud at “Sounds a lot like Stephen Wright. “I was reading the dictionary. I thought it was a poem about everything.” As Margie from Fargo would say, “that’s a good one.”

Got a request for another submission to Wisconsin Trails, and just started a blog on the WSJ website. Things are picking up in my writing life. Hope all is well with you.

Eric
Eric Frydenlund has a marvelous column monthly in the Wisconsin State Journal.

Mark this well
For some interesting bookmarks, check out http://www.forgottenbookmarks.com/

Ray
That’s Ray Hamel, my favorite trivia maven and crossword puzzle constructor. He read Madonna’s great piece on bookmarks in #4 and sent this link. I checked it out and loved it.

John catches Coach’s mistreak
Ooops. The title of Jennifer’s book is Girl with Skirt of Stars.
Thank you for doing the newsletter!

John Ertel
I had the title as “Girl with Stars on Skirt” for my cover interview with Jennifer Kitchell, last issue. Thanks to John and sincere apologies to Jennifer, whose great novel deserves proper citation. The good news is, John only discovered the error when he went to buy the novel on Amazon.
Embarrassed Editor-in-Coach

Nice author thanks Coach anyway
Wonderfully rich issue, Marshall! -- and thanks too for the interview questions from you which helped shape my own thinking -- a strange and wonderful business, this writing. You're an excellent writer and coach -- Thanks,

Jennifer Kitchell
It was my joy to do the interview.
Still contrite Editor in Coach

Looked like Stephen Wright to Wally, too.
Hi Coach.
#4 looks great. Impressed with the 4-color.
Loved the Stephen Wright stuff.
Cheers,

Wally ILttman
All the next issue needed was a Wally Littman cartoon-- and he sent us two!

If you want to sell your novel, put cows in the title
I've just skimmed so far but find it just great!
Is it okay for me to forward the newsletter to my writer friends and various and sundry friends so you can build your readership?
My ex husband has a cousin who lived, may still live in Altadena CA.

You mentioned the Guernsey and Potato Peel Pie ...etc. I HAVE THAT BOOK. Loved it. Picked it up at Borders mainly because the Guernsey title hit me in the face. I knew it wasn't about cows but the theme of the story fascinated me. We had Guernsey cows back in Ohio. We've been to the Hoard's Dairy farm in Janesville Wisc. They have, or had Guernsey cows.

I'll get back to reading the "rest of the story!"
Thanks again for your patience with me about the article. I'm really excited!

Norma Sundberg
Her article will appear next issue.
This newsletter is free to all who want it; I’d be delighted to have you forward it to various and sundry.

Larry has his own mountains
Hey, Coach!
Another enjoyable issue. Someday I'll send you a picture of 'my' mountains – appropriately named the Crazies....
Winter well, my friend.

Larry
That's Larry Tobin, editor and publisher, novelist, and good guy, in response to my nephew's picture of the San Gabriel Mountains of Southern California last issue.
**Dang newsletter has the best possible effect on Debbie**

Hi Marshall,
I opened the newsletter for a quick glance before going back to work. (That would be "work" work, as opposed to "writing" work) I started reading the Jennifer Kitchell interview and was totally inspired. The next thing I knew I was at the end of the whole dang newsletter. Lunch time found me dusting off my flash drive that holds numerous unfinished stories. I opened one and instantly became part of that world. I read, revised, and wondered why I had given up on it. I think it's going to be good story. Unfortunately, the hour passed by in about 10 minutes.

Anyway, thanks for some great reading, the kickstart I sorely needed, and that awesome photo of the mountains.
Have a good week.

**Debbie Wingate**

PS. I've done better than I expected on my memoir. The hospital gift shop (in Rhinelander) is carrying the book. I've sold a couple hundred dollars from royalties, and I have 5 good (4 unsolicited) reviews on Amazon.
You helped make it a good week, Debbie. In the words of Larry Tobin, winter well.

**Jim Herod**

I downloaded *The Girl with Skirt of Stars* onto my Kindle. The Kindle tells me that I am only 28% finished. The story brings back memories.

Back when my boys were still in strollers, we pushed them along the South Rim. As I looked over the edge, I knew --- absolutely knew --- that I was not seeing the Canyon. The first thing I had to do was to let the boys grow up. While they were doing that, I read *The Man Who Walked Through Time* and *The Man From the Cave* by Colin Fletcher. Finally, the time came when I was free enough. I walked from the South Rim of the Canyon to the North Rim, and then walked back to where I left the car. It was so glorious, I knew Martha had to see the Canyon. So we rafted through. It was glorious again. So I arranged a trip through with just family and friends.

I wrote about the walk in a short story.

So, you see, I am eager for Lilli and Jerome and Lee to set out. If they go in a motorized raft, I will be very disappointed. If you keep correspondence with Jennifer Kitchell, tell her I am eager to put my feet in that cold river again.

**Pat has love-love relationship with book/movie**

One of the very few movies that followed the book excellently and didn't disappoint me when I read the book AFTERWARD... was *Schindler's List*. They actually complemented each other, but didn't distort.

**Pat**

Carol Shay Hornung wrote about having a love-hate relationship with books that are made into movies, and Pat Guetz responded. She's a longtime friend, a former columnist for CC-- and I hope a future one for E.I.

**For a good time, call...**

Like most libraries, the Grove Hill Public Library is hoping to get its catalog on line. Our hope is that patrons can wander through the library from their home computer, reserve books, and request purchases. Working with the library to get this done has put me into contact with lots of vendors and with other small libraries already having their catalogues on line. I had sent an email to a librarian in north Alabama whose experiences I was sure could help me. She replied by email that our librarian should call an 800 number and that she should ask for Robert Stone, with name changed to protect the innocent.

I sent the number to our librarian. In a short while, I got a call from her saying they needed my help. There was an undisclosed problem. So, I cleaned myself up and drove uptown.

What's the problem? Why do I need to get involved?

Trying to be cooperative, I called the 800 number. A computer answered and redirected me to a different 800 number in order to talk. I certainly did not want to talk to a computer and go through a collection of “push 1,” “push 2,” or whatever. So I called the other 800 number.

A female human answered.

I asked for the guy as I had been told. “May I speak to Robert Stone?”

“With whom?”

“Robert Stone, please.”

“Did you want a boy?”


“If you want boys, you have to call another number.”

Silence.

Blush.

Laughter.

Hang up.
The two librarians were falling out of their chairs. Apparently, watching my embarrassment made their day. Humph!

I sent the librarian in north Alabama an email telling her that the number she gave me led to a pornographic site. She replied “Oh, my! So sorry! The number is 1-800 … .” and then she told me the number she meant to tell me the first time.

I’m told a hearty laugh is good for a person’s health. If so, then Grove Hill’s two librarians will live forever.

Jim Herod

Ask the Reader

Where Do You Write?

(Subject continued from two issues ago)

I often write in my head. In bed. Or the bathtub. Or while doing a household chore like folding laundry or washing dishes. In my log home in Wellsville, New York.

I have an idea book and sometimes will write in it in my writing room. I at least jot down the gist of the story or article, a beginning, or an outline.

But then I have to put the words of the complete manuscript on paper. I prefer writing longhand on scrap paper. Since the surfaces in my writing room are not conducive to this, I go into the dining room and write on the table there. In the summer, I may also write at the patio table.

Eventually I go into my writing room to type the manuscript on the computer.

Although those are my preferred places, I have also written at a meeting or workshop for my writing group: Creative Writers of the Southern Tier. Or at a writer's conference, for example in Brockport or Chautauqua, New York.

Andrea Lozinsky Schoenthal

Ask the Coach

Does the dean know what you’re doing?

How did you get the university to agree to putting out a monthly newsletter when CC was a quarterly? I’m assuming it’s less or no staff time on their part? only server space?

Mary Ramey, Dayton, Ohio

They don’t know about it.

Just kidding. Ha, ha. I’m such a kidder.

Actually, it’s no staff time on their part, except for poor Celeste having to bail me out every time I screw up the mailing (which is every time), only this retired old codger mauldering away at the keyboard. That and I shamelessly plug their writing programs, which really are the best, and for details go to www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/writing or email Christine DeSmet at cdesmet@dcs.wisc.edu

As for the question of “staff,” I am a one-person band.

E.I. One-person non-marching band
E.I.’s last word

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. **Throw out nonessential numbers.** This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay 'them'

2. **Keep only cheerful friends.** The grouchess pull you down.

3. **Keep learning.** Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.'

4. **Enjoy the simple things.**

5. **Laugh** often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

6. **The tears happen.** Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person, who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.

7. **Surround yourself with what you love**, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. **Your home is your refuge.**

8. **Cherish your health:** If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. **Don't take guilt trips.** Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.

10. **Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.**

**AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:**
Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, **but** by the moments that take our breath away.

*From the Internet, without attribution, passed along to us by dear friend Yasmin Horton.*

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**Kids today!**

1. You spend the first two years of their life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next sixteen telling them to sit down and shut up.

2. Grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your own children.

3. Mothers of teens now know why some animals eat their young.

4. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.

5. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.

6. We childproofed our homes, but they are still getting in.

7. **IF YOU HAVE A LOT OF TENSION AND YOU GET A HEADACHE, DO WHAT IT SAYS ON THE ASPIRIN BOTTLE: "TAKE TWO ASPIRIN" AND "KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN"!!!!!!**

*Thanks to another dear friend, the Missouri Muse, Perry Stone*