MEANDERING WITH MADONNA
MADONNA DRIES CHRISTENSEN

Dorothy’s choice

Within my local writing community I have many close friends and acquaintances. Among the latter was Dorothy Conlon. We were Facebook contacts but not intimate friends.

In an article about volunteers, I included Dorothy’s unique story. Born in Japan to missionary parents, and having shared a Foreign Service career with her husband, Dorothy continued her wanderlust after she retired and was widowed. Her travels were not the usual tourist attractions. Instead, she immersed herself in the culture through a program called voluntouring. She taught English, did construction work in Tanzania, and monitored wolves in India, dolphins in the Mediterranean, echidnas in Australia, and cheetahs in Namibia. She chronicled her adventures in three books: At Home In the World, Born With Wings, and Care, Share, Dare.

Early last year at age 86, Dorothy reported on Facebook that she was bound for South America, and it might be her last overseas trip. Later, she journeyed to Colorado, and then indicated that, indeed, her traveling days were over. I assumed that age and perhaps health problems had caught up with her.

When I learned in August that Dorothy had died, I again assumed an illness. I was unable to attend her memorial service, so that was the last I heard about her.

Until this year, in March, when the Sarasota Herald-Tribune devoted the front page and five more to a story called Dorothy’s Choice: The Traveler’s Final Journey, written by staff member Carrie Seidman, a friend of Dorothy’s. Dorothy had chosen to end her life.

Seidman revealed that Dorothy had no serious medical problems; her mind was sharp, and her only complaint was the fatigue that kept her from her usual active schedule. She’d been disillusioned when a close relationship with her ex-daughter-in-law, a traveling companion, waned due to the younger woman’s current romance. Dorothy had no other family. One son had died in a boating accident years ago; the other had taken his own life, and her husband had died of cancer. There were no grandchildren. Dorothy was, in her words, done with life.

- Story continues on next page
Enlisting the aid of four friends, and over a three month period, Dorothy planned and carried out her itinerary and final trip—over the rainbow (she called her caregivers Team Oz). Seidman opted out of Team Oz because, “I was in active treatment for a recurrence of breast cancer. I was sick from chemo and fighting hard to stay alive and here was someone—with no diagnosed illness or pain—who was fighting to die.”

Seidman did, however, promise to write Dorothy’s story for the paper to shed light on the many aspects of the right to die.

Dorothy did not choose an easy route—depriving her body of nourishment. Meditation and yoga failed her toward the end and she admitted that this journey was more difficult than expected.

The beginning lines of Seidman’s story are:

**Dorothy Conlon’s final journey took sixteen days.**

**Sixteen days without a morsel of food.**

**Sixteen days without a gulp of water.**

**Sixteen days to get what she wanted—her own death.**

The article garnered major attention and a flood of letters to the editor, with both positive and negative reactions. Dorothy was brave; she was cowardly; she was selfish for placing a burden on her friends.

Dorothy expected this controversy and had told Seidman, “I’ve chosen to do what I’ve done not to inspire or enrage people. It’s my decision. To those who’ve commented on how brave I am, frankly, I think it takes more courage to be passive and allow yourself to degenerate.”

As a result of this story, the _Herald-Tribune_ held two public forums at which a panel, including Seidman and professionals from the medical and legal professions, discussed the options regarding the end of life.

Seidman felt honored that Dorothy entrusted her with this remarkable story. If you’d like to read it in full, go to:

[http://finaljourney.heraldtribune.com](http://finaljourney.heraldtribune.com)

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_Extra Innings #56_  
**CAESAR SI VIVERET, AD REMUM DARERIS**  
**Madison, Wisconsin**  
**June, 2014**  

This month’s All-Star Lineup:  
**Rex Owens, Madonna Dries Christensen, Sandra Rafter, Maureen Mitchell, Ed Pahnke, Esther M. Estabrooks, Deadline Den Adler and special guest stars David Krival and Gadi Bossin, with Jan Kent as The Word Whisperer**  
**Poetry from Tom Crawford, Sandy Rafter, and The Writer’s Poet, Craig W. Steele**  
**Light verse from Marcia D. Brown and Norma Sundberg**

Staff two-year-old: Liliana Lenore Cook  
**Staff devotee: Bonny Conway**  
**Web Weaver: Kerrie Louis**

**Internetters: Hilde Adler, Sandy Mickelson, and Norma Sundberg**

**The Masked Man: Brace Beemer**  
**Coach-in-Chief: Marshall J. Cook**

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[mailto:mcook@dcswis.edu](mailto:mcook@dcswis.edu)

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**Next Deadline:**  
**Tuesday, June 24, 2014**
“Tell me a story,” the child begs, and in olden days when many—including grownups—couldn’t read or lacked books, Mother and Father recited nursery rhymes or other yarns from memory. Aside from hearing pop songs, few of us focus on story poems now, though examples needn’t be difficult or complex. I wrote the following 12-liner, which first appeared in *WRITERS’ Journal* three decades ago. In it a murderer addresses his dead wife. Was his crime justified? Would offering more details improve the poem, or does power lie in brevity?

**TALKING TO MARY**

Oh yes, I let you lie; why not?
I murdered when I knew!
The moon rode yellow in your eyes
The night he lay with you.
I caught you coupling in the field
And stabbed you both. New corn
Is slyly parting clasping bones
Plus forks twin tongues foresworn,
Ah Mary, were you living still
No tenderness I’d crave.
You knew my flaws but will not tell
From your side of the grave!

“Lie” has a double meaning. Has the wife lied about lying with her lover? And what flaws of her husband might she spill if still alive? With jealousy for excuse, perhaps his double crime stemmed not only from rage, but also to keep her from telling what she knew. Now he may be locked in jail or fleeing via cross-country freight. Are his words from a conscience truly trying to explain his actions to Mary or to justify himself?

As I wrote, the poem’s words simply came, but few poems flow forth spontaneously. When a poem seems right on first try, it’s a rare gift from God, Muse, or subconscious— but not a factor to depend on. If ideas are everywhere, the trick is in shaping them to be meaningful and relevant.

Thomas Hardy writes about time and death in quatrains also, though without mentioning those two specific words, so we are left to speculate on who the ghosts may be in the next poem, and why they linger, or whether such visitation stems from choice or fate.

**THE GARDEN SEAT**

Its former green is blue and thin,
And its once firm legs sink in and in.
Soon it will break down unaware,
Soon it will break down unaware.
At night when reddest flowers are black
Those who once sat thereon come back;
Quite a row of them sitting there,
Quite a row of them sitting there.
With them the seat does not break down,
Nor winter freeze them, nor floods drown,
For they are as light as upper air,
They are as light as upper air!

Hardy does not say exactly what these figures are, yet a feeling of “creep” comes by the second line; a mood emphasized when red flowers—which would seem full of life—are turned black. Moreover that specters, real or imagined, seem present, implies phantasmal “life after life.” These shades have not left Earth even though they seem “light as upper air.” Who they are and why they linger, we have no clue.

I’ve quoted two dark poems; betrayal and murder in the first; supernatural beings in the second. To change the tone, the next piece is by Margaret Hillert, who for years wrote the column “Random Thoughts About Poetry” for *Once Upon a Time* magazine. Here’s the concluding verse of

**LULLABY**

Far and near, far and near,
My teddy and I are dreaming here.
And over us both my mother is bending,
Crooning a tune without any ending.
Near and far, near and far,
Over the hill there hangs a star.

--Story continues next page
Thus night can hide brutality, be fearsomely mysterious, or prove a magic time when moon and stars peaceably change places with the sun, while if comets roam through a universe which may extend forever, yet Mother stays close, and day follows night in the endless progression God planned.

This haiku is mine:
Horizon back-lit
As dawn arrives in splendor;
Sun arriving soon.

Esther’s News:
Esther was scheduled to present a Poetry Workshop for children April 13th at the Littleton, N.H. Bookstore. Just two weeks prior, and after over 40 years, this venue abruptly closed-- gone out of business.

Jan Kent is
The Word Whisperer

Just don’t use ‘primevil’

Another pair of words that often seem to be used interchangeably – primal and primeval.

Whose memory isn't pleasantly stirred by Longfellow's famous first lines:
“This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks . . . Stand like Druids of old.”

“Primeval” means belonging to the first or earliest age. To my dismay, that's also what “primal” means. In several dictionaries they were listed as synonyms. So my discovery in a recently read book of a line that read “. . . filled me with an almost primeval rage.” was not the sly error I thought it was. Oh rats.

What would Evangeline say?

Photo ID becomes caption writing contest

One of the best captions for last month’s mystery photo came from Annette Van Veen Gippe. Here’s the photo with Annette’s caption:

Aku Aku meets George Washington at Mount Rushmore

The other winner comes from the prolific “anonymous:” “Baby face, you’ve got the cutest little baby face.”

In keeping with a baseball theme you’ll notice from the marginal quotations throughout this issue, I’ve gone to the mound for our first

Cartoon in need of a caption

Enter by emailing your caption to the Coach at mcook@dcs.wisc.edu.
Enter as many times as you like.
Winners get a copy of my fourth Monona Quinn mystery, Obsessions.
FOR WHAT IT’S WORTH

Rex Owens

Don’t be your own worst enemy

My Father was the master of giving life experience advice in single sentences. One of his favorite and one I heard frequently was: “Rex, don’t be your own worst enemy.” Growing up I was perplexed by what he meant and unable to apply his advice to a real life situation.

All that changed Sunday at my book presentation at Arcadia Bookstore in Spring Green. The store is carrying Murphy’s Troubles on consignment and offered the opportunity to make a book presentation, reading and signing. I jumped at the opportunity and didn’t mind that it was Mother’s Day.

I was surprised that the bookstore with a prime location in the center of the village had good traffic on a traditional family holiday. The bookstore includes a restaurant with seating for 16 and a coffee shop. While not a large store, it contains 10,000 volumes.

They set me up in an alcove that was surrounded on three sides by glass, near the front door. Only one person arrived for my presentation. In all my previous engagements I’ve had the opportunity to use my preferred casual, discussion style presentation, allowing questions from the audience anytime. I thought I could do the same on Sunday.

The manager offered me a podium and a hand held mic. I turned both down, preferring to sit at a table across from my audience of one. The manager became busy helping customers and didn’t have the chance to introduce me. I began by thanking the manager for the invitation to speak and dedicating the presentation to my mother, who died 12 years ago.

During my presentation customers milled about the store, and two ladies sat about ten feet away enjoying their lunch and coffee and engaging in a very loud conversation. I learned that I’ve reached the age where background noise is both distracting and annoying. It was difficult enough to hear that after the discussion I asked my one audience member if he wanted to go ahead with the reading. He did.

I began reading, and I swear the more I read, the louder the older ladies talked. I could have been wrong, but it was my perception. My one audience member asked if he could pull his chair closer to hear better so I don’t think the overwhelming noise was just my imagination.

I have the ability to adapt my presentation based on my audience; however, I learned I don’t have the same flexibility adapting to the physical setting. I should have accepted the offer of the podium and hand held mic. Those would have sent the message loud and clear that a formal presentation was underway, and customers could have either joined or left or at least not have competed with me.

I was my own worst enemy Sunday, and I now understand what Dad was trying to say all along.

Coach adds: Rightfully somewhat shaken by his first bad experience with a reading or signing, Rex asked me if I had ever had anything similar happen to me. I emailed him back at length, but I’ll share with you the short version: “Oh, yes!” Humbling, educational, and all part of the deal.

“Baseball, almost alone among our sports, traffics unashamedly and gloriously in nostalgia, for only baseball understands time and treats it with respect. The history of other sports seems to begin anew with each generation, but baseball, that wondrous myth of twentieth century America, gets passed on like an inheritance.”

Stanley Coehn

This and other baseball quotes used in this edition come from the spring, 2014 issue of Bob Carson’s marvelous Minor Trips, “the first, the finest, the friendliest publication for fans of baseball travel.”
Winning answers from last year’s GED exam
Real answers from real 16-year-olds
thanks to Hilde Adler

Q. Name the four seasons?
A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q. How is dew formed?
A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q. What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?
A. If you are buying a house they will insist that you are well endowed.

Q. What are steroids?
A. Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q. What happens to your body as you age?
A. When you get old, so do your bowels, and you get intercontinental.

Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?
A. He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q. How can you delay milk turning sour?
A. Keep it in the cow. Actually, that one's pretty good!

Q. What is the fibula?
A. A small lie.

Q. What does 'varicose' mean?
A. Nearby.

Q. What is the most common form of birth control?
A. Most people prevent contraception by wearing a condominium.

Q. Give the meaning of the term 'Caesarean section.'
A. The caesarean section is a district in Rome.

Q. What is a seizure?
A. A Roman Emperor.

Q. What is a terminal illness
A. When you are sick at the airport.

Q. What does the word 'benign' mean?
A. Benign is what you will be after you be eight.
LIGHT VERSE

Nature or Not
Marcia D. Brown

Sometimes I like to be outdoors in the sun
But when it gets too hot from the sun I run
I go indoors where the cool air is on
I'll miss out on the outdoor fun
But, if I'm chillin' at an outdoor barbeque
Mother Nature can do what she do
Mosquitoes and flies are some annoying pests
I'll put up with them to enjoy the eat-fest
I admire the beautiful flowers that summer brings
And tune in to the music that the birds sing
In the fall when the leaves change from green to yellow
I think this is awesome, cool, strange, and mellow
The new snow in the winter falling from above
Reminds me of a new, fresh, and innocent love
I'd like to stay inside 'til winter is through
and hibernate like the bears do
When I wake up, spring will be here
It's my favorite season of the year
Now I've put myself on the spot
Do I like nature or not?

Poet’s Lament
Norma J. Sundberg

As the parade passes by
The marchers keeping time
I'm either two steps ahead
Or a step-and-a-half behind.
To keep in time with life's melody
I practice perfect pitch;
Too fast, too slow, too high, too low,
Which melody is which?
Perhaps I fit somewhere between
The perfect or the great
Minds that keep tempo with
Things I can relate.
In summing my predicament
The conclusion that I've made,
If I march to a different drummer
I'll just start my own parade.

8 thoughts to ponder
Thanks to Sandy Mickelson

7) Life is sexually transmitted.
6) Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
5) Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.
4) Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospitals, dying of nothing.
3) All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
2) In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.
1) Life is like a jar of jalapeño peppers—What you do today might burn your ass tomorrow.

The Old Coach Adds the 8th:
"Don't worry about old age.
It doesn't last that long."
Grandma had a Murphy bed
Sandy Rafter

Grandma had a Murphy bed which folded into an alcove in the wall. She hid it with a curtain she hung and stacked her canned goods on each side on the floor. I played with them. I liked bright label tins to stack and sell, and I was my best customer as I paid with my crayoned dollar bills and cut out coins. Grandma read to me when I visited her, and afterward, we'd often open a can of peas to go with our meal. I thought the story princess in her bed with twenty mattresses was spoiled. How could she feel that single squishy bump.

Poem written to pass the Tang Dynasty Civil Service exam
Tom Crawford

No one's been able to improve on the hinge, it takes two, their interlocking. One wing doesn't get it. The hummingbird backs out of the flower and hovers there in the sun, its long tongue licking the residue. Whimsy, gravity, does it matter really, who invented the gold pin that opens the lover’s door?

The Poet’s Poet

Retirement…
Craig W. Steele

What did you whisper? Retirement? What power that word has to taint a well-deserved rest, a time away from time and all its stressful busyness — to relinquish my defining role, suppress my talents (modest though they are) for nothing more than freedom to do whatever, to come to terms with age and rot — a finite holiday from stress: Mai-tai cocktails, surf-kissed Florida beaches: me, pen poised languidly over paper, un-busy, unstressed … and less.
The way the Dodgers are playing these days reminds me of a story from my own, illustrious baseball career. My loony-goony boss decided that he wanted me to cover a regional tournament in Las Vegas in, I dunno, let's call it 1993.

At that time, I was driving a crapped-out 1984 Mazda RX-7, with cobbled-together parts under the hood, some of which were entirely dysfunctional. Since there was no way that RX-7 would make it all the way from Palos Verdes to Las Vegas, not to mention back, I rode along with a jarhead who was playing in the league my boss had organized in north San Diego County: a nice kid, but one who, inexplicably, could not resist tailgating with his little red Jeep all the way from Escondido to Vegas. By the time I checked into the casino, where my motel room was hidden behind the slot machines, I had nearly choked this young Marine to death more than once, holding off only because he had slain a few hundred towelheads in Iraq recently.

My boss, the late, truly lamented Dan Piro, had arranged for me to play with a team from Lehigh Valley, PA. I knew nothing at all about them and they, unbelievably, had not heard that I was just about the best left-handed power hitter on earth. Before the game, looking my new teammates over in the dugout of the fabulous UNLV ballpark out by the airport, I began to suspect that this team was one of those known in the MSBL [Men’s Senior Baseball League”] as a “$%^$%ing joke.” With the exception of one guy, they were all rather short, sort of pudgy, and extremely old: in short, a bunch of fat, little old farts.

Their manager, whose cap reached barely to my belt buckle, told me that I would be playing center field. (Are you kidding? The outfields in Vegas are the size of Rhode Island. In Southern California, on much smaller fields, I hadn’t thought myself capable of playing center field since 1989 and even then, my teammates would not have agreed with me.) I would bat 9th in deference to all the tiny, pudgy sluggers on the squad.

Their pitcher threw knucklers, which didn’t wobble much, a big sweeping curve, and something else, either his fastball or his change-up; no one could say for certain. He got through the first two innings somehow, allowing maybe six or seven runs. The other team were friends of mine from SoCal, several ex-pros among them. They didn’t hit this old poot any harder because they had trouble waiting on that junk he threw and, more importantly, because it was 105 in the shade and there wasn’t any shade. They pulled everything he threw down the lines, so I just stood there in centerfield and listened to my brain roast.

The SoCal pitcher had a perfect game going (alert the media!) when I batted with two out in the top of the 3rd. I had hit against Greg Rowe rather often. He had average heat (85 mph?) and a decent slider. He threw me a courtesy first-pitch, fastball strike, which I pulled down the right field line and staggered into second, about ready to have a stroke. Shortstop Terry Kartsch, a great athlete who had made it as far as AA, asked me, "Why didn't you try for three?"

After the Lehigh Valley Old Farts leadoff man struck out, I floated back to the dugout, grabbed my glove and staggered out to center, hoping the SoCal guys would score the 15 runs necessary for a "mercy" rule truncation of the game.

On the first play of the next half inning two of our players bit the dust, one literally. The batter hit a shot between fist and second; our pitcher grabbed his elbow; the second baseman dove after the ball was past him.

The second baseman said, "I think I broke my arm." He was right. The pitcher said, "I gotta sit," so somebody came out and took the ball, while the second baseman called himself an ambulance.

Eleven batters later, there were still no outs, but the second baseman had returned from the ER with a temporary cast on his arm. In centerfield, I was beginning to hallucinate little bunnies and bright red alligators. My skin, no longer crimson, had gone chalk white; I had stopped sweating; I felt cold. "This isn't good," I thought. "Very soon, I will die."
Motivated by the certainty of my impending doom, I walked in from center to the mound and said, "Gimme the goddamn ball."

"Can you pitch?" someone asked me. I hadn't pitched since I was eleven.

"Sure," I said.

We had just one ump, who stood in the middle of the infield, just behind the mound. "Are you gonna use that delivery with men on base?" he inquired helpfully.

"Why not?" I asked him.

"Cuz it's a balk," he informed me, so, thenceforward, I pitched out of the stretch.

Did I mention that it was hot? Well, from my point of view, that was good, momentarily, because every muscle in my body was loosey-goosey. I didn't even bother to take all my warmup pitches.

I hadn't thrown off a mound in living memory, so I walked the first two batters, everything either neck high or in the dirt. But the velocity wasn't bad. At least it seemed that way to me.

I more or less figured out how to throw strikes, so the SoCal players started swinging the bat. Terry Kartsch popped up and walked back to the dugout laughing. I ignored him. The next guy hit a comebacker. I threw to the catcher: two out. Up came Greg Rowe, looking grave. If I got him out, he would never live it down.

I don't know how to throw a curve or any other breaking ball. My brains were baking. I just took the ball from the catcher, got myself centered on the mound, pivoted on my right foot, slid forward, tried to keep my throwing elbow high and aimed for the target, set knee high, dead center. I seriously doubt whether any of my pitches travelled any faster than 80 mph. But, somehow, that was enough. After fouling off a couple, Rowe swung from the heels, grunted mightily and missed. He must have been a week in front of it. Strike three. I walked off the mound, thinking, "That's not so tough. I just wish my arm didn't hurt so much all of a sudden."

Walking by me on his way out to shortstop, Terry Kartsch said, "A change off of a change. Pretty smart."

I said, "I threw as hard as I could every pitch. Now I'm done." Indeed, I was. I never threw another pitch in my cotton-pickin' life.

I'll bet you're wondering, "So what's the point?" Truth be told, I don't remember. We were talking about how lousy the Dodgers are playing. Oh, yeah.

The Dodgers, with some notable exceptions (Uribe, Gordon and all the starting pitchers), look like imposters. Major Leaguers don't throw wild pitches while issuing an intentional walk. That doesn't happen in Little League! Big League catchers don't get called for catcher's interference two or three times per game. Major Leaguers don't take the schneid against mediocre pitching. They don't drop routine fly balls, get picked off, miss the cutoff, balk, God alone knows what else.

So I finally figgered it out, an "aha!" moment. These guys ain't the Dodgers at all. They're those little old putzes from Lehigh Valley, who somehow convinced Magic, Mattingley and Kasten to let them play a few games in between visits to Disneyland and the bus tour of the stars' homes in Beverly Hills. Next stop: Sea World in San Diego. Maybe Shamu can play shortstop for the Dodgers.

That's what I think.

Take 2 an' go ta right,

The Ole Perfesser

“Destiny has become less manageable, and consequently life has become... more difficult. Baseball is almost the only orderly thing in a very un-orderly world. If you get three strikes, even the best lawyer in the world can't get you off.”

Bill Veeck
The truth about angels-- as explained by children

*Thanks to Norma Sundberg*

I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold.  
Gregory, 5

Everybody's got it all wrong. Angels don't wear halos any more. I forget why, but scientists are working on it. -Olive, 9

It's not easy to become an angel! First, you die. Then you go to Heaven, and there's still the flight training to go through. And then you got to agree to wear those angel clothes. -Matthew, 9

Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has something else to do. -Mitchell, 7

My guardian angel helps me with math, but he's not much good for science. -Henry, 8

Angels don't eat, but they do drink milk from Holy Cows. -Jack, 6

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead. -Daniel, 9

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there's a tornado. -Reagan, 10

Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his Son, who's a very good carpenter. -Jared, 8

All angels are girls because they gotta wear dresses and boys didn't go for it. -Antonio, 9

My angel is my grandma who died last year. She got a big headstart on helping me while she was still down here on earth. -Ashley, 9

Some of the angels are in charge of helping heal sick animals and pets. And if they don't make the animals get better, they help the child get over it. -Vicki, 8

What I don't get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them. -Sarah, 7

“*Baseball is the most important thing in life that doesn’t matter.*”

Robert B. Parker
Writers for radio programs during the Golden Age of Radio (1920-1950) struggled for recognition, adequate pay, and creative freedom.

During a two decade period starting in the 1930s, Frank and Anne Hummert (Air Features) were a formidable production team accounting for half the revenue from radio with their numerous programs of music, mystery, drama, and soap operas. These included "Just Plain Bill," "Front Page Farrell," "Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons," "Chandu the Magician," "Little Orphan Annie," "Helen Trent," "Young Widder Brown," "John's Other Wife," "Ma Perkins," "Stella Dallas," and "Waltz Time."

The Hummerts developed a writing system often referred to as a "Radio Factory." Anne Hummert wrote the plot twists and character development in outline form for each program and then handed them over to "dialoguers" who completed the scripts. These writers couldn't deviate from Hummert's framework with their own ideas, nor were their efforts considered valuable enough to be paid at market scale. Writers signed with the Hummerts for a steady income but worked other jobs to make ends meet.

Producers and advertisers also hindered writer creativity. George W. Trendle, a Detroit lawyer and businessman, hired Fran Striker to write a series for his broadcast station, WXYZ. Striker created the character of the Lone Ranger but had to work around the suggestions of Trendle and his staff concerning the Ranger's personality.

Striker envisioned the Lone Ranger as a Robin Hood type character, but Trendle vetoed the concept as too swashbuckling. The Lone Ranger was to be portrayed as a model of morality for the children Trendle thought would be the main audience. Next up for committee vote was whether the Ranger should speak rough Western or the more formal Eastern style Stryker favored and whether he should be more of a detective.

One of the sponsors, the Gingham Bread Company, insisted that the Lone Ranger's horse, Silver, have his name changed to Gingham. "Hi-Yo, Gingham! A-way." Striker put his foot down.

Although Striker created the Lone Ranger, he was pressured by Trendle to sign over his rights; subsequently, Trendle took credit as the creator of the series. In 1939, his income was over a million dollars while Striker was paid $200 a week. The overworked writer (156 "Lone Ranger" scripts a year) also was responsible for two Lone Ranger novels, two movie serials, and a comic strip.

Producers demanded similar output from most successful serial writers. More insidious meddling came from producers and sponsors who insisted that writers not deviate from set characterization formulae, some of which were written into the scripts. The Lone Ranger adhered to a Council of Honor. He never killed anyone, didn't smoke, drink, swear, or mistreat women or animals.

Similarly, Gene Autry on "Melody Ranch" lived by the Cowboy Code of Honor. The Tom Mix program was listed as the "Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters." Listeners were reminded by The Shadow: "The weed of crime bears bitter fruit. Crime does not pay."

The Federal Radio Commission had a say about crime, too. The Commission prohibited writers from developing stories which were too graphic and provided listeners with actual methods to commit murders.

On the soap operas, though plots were often twisted and illogical, writers weren't free to change the way main characters behaved. If there were any insights from their adventures for such as Ma Perkins, the characters still were to remain the same. Listeners and sponsors wanted familiar personalities week after week, and common perceptions of females and males were the rule. The latter didn't matter much since the shows were for women who sponsors knew bought the household cleaning products.

--Story continues on next page
Jim Harmon, a radio historian, commented that the soaps basically were similar because producers believed that "worry for women, is entertainment."

Many programs needed writers only for adaptation since producers often stole from classics such as Edgar Allan Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart," Louisa May Alcott's Little Women, and Charles Dickens' David Copperfield. It was also common for writers to borrow ideas from other shows and their pulp fiction and comic strips. The Lone Ranger eventually became The Green Hornet with a car instead of a horse.

Some radio programs reduced the writer's role as much as possible. For the "Dr. Christian" show (Jean Hersholt, Rosemary DeCamp) producers held annual scriptwriting contests with prizes of $2,000 and $500 and a trip to NYC. Two eager winners were Rod Serling and Earl Hamner, Jr. By the mid-1940s, listeners were writing the majority of the scripts for writers to "polish."

"The Breakfast Club with Don McNeill" aired from the early thirties to 1968. The show was a hodgepodge of guest interviews, ad-libbing, conversations with the audience, jokes, music, and mailed-in contributions. Listeners sent favorite poems and stories, which were read and collected into pamphlets listeners could purchase. Writers were present but not making a lot of money with the format.

With the rise of television programming and more sets in homes, radio listening dwindled, as had long been forecast by critics. They blamed the strict demands of sponsors as an impediment to creativity. The programs were viewed as too much alike and lacking innovation. The formulae that had worked for years seemed old and too familiar. Many commentators said that radio pandered to low tastes and that the serials were for ten year olds, not adults.

Perhaps most galling to writers was the complaint that there was no new talent in radio. Rod Serling's view was that producers chose second best and that the decision spiraled radio into trashiness. Radio writers could have answered many of the criticisms, but they were seldom heard nor asked. They moved on to television.

**Hahnke Pahnke**
**Ed Pahnke**

**Oh, Fudge**

Busy in the kitchen, Mom mixed the fudge recipe while eight-year-old Bridget and nine-year-old Marvin, her two rascally children, played on the sunny porch in back of the kitchen.

Marvin and Bridget bumped and thumped, apparently oblivious of Mom working in the kitchen. However, their noses picked up the aroma of the fudge, and they peeked through the doorway every so often while Mom worked. Each longed to be first to feast on fudge, while the other watched and drooled. When the waiting got to be too much, they marched into the kitchen and asked, in unison, "When will the fudge be ready?"

Mom sighed. "When it's ready. Now go play, the two of you, and no fighting."

Grumbling they stomped off, but not so far that they couldn't smell the fudge calling to them.

"When Mom leaves, I'm goin' to get me a piece of her fudge," Marvin declared.

"Me first, after all, I'm a girl." Bridget stuck her tongue out at her brother.

"We'll see who's first. Look, Mom's out the door now."

Marvin dashed to the kitchen table, where the tray of fudge sat cooling. "Try something, Bridget, and I'll whack you with a piece of fudge," he threatened.

Bridget skirted around him and whisked a piece of fudge off the tray. She raised the fudge to throw at Marvin.

Returning at that moment, Mom yelled, "Whoa, young lady! Stop this minute! What are you doing?"

"I was going to throw it at Marvin before he threw a piece at me."

Mom shook her finger at Bridget. "Fudge not," she intoned, "lest ye be fudged."
I've had the privilege and honor of being the first to publish a novel on Ourboox. Readers can access it for free. Google Annie's Prophecy – Ourboox and voila, there it is! Read the novel on your PC.

Professor Mel Rosenberg, a Renaissance man with a vision, created Ourboox, which he calls “the world’s simplest planform for creating books, sharing them with the world, and reaching out to an ever-increasing audience.” Along with text, books can include illustrations and even embedded videos.

Every novel posted on Ourboox will have its own URL, which you can share with all your friends and potential readers.

Ourboox will leave your novel posted for as long as you like, and you can un-publish at any time.

“We are a community of writers and illustrators who want to share our creative juices with the world,” Rosenberg says. In the future, he says, they hope to be able to reward contributors financially and enable them to create print copies on demand.

“We are self-funded,” Rosenberg notes. “We believe in what we’re doing, and we hope you’ll join our community where talented people help one another make our books come true!”

Meanwhile, I've begun publishing my novel in serial form to enable readers to read it on their smartphones or tablets while riding the bus or the train or while waiting for a table at a restaurant or in the waiting room at the dentist’s office. Just Google Annie's Prophecy Byte-by-Byte 1 - Ourboox to get started.

To learn more about Ourboox and how it can serve you as a writer, Google Ourboox Tutorial and view a four-minute video that will teach you how to create a book on Ourboox at no cost. Also Google Ourboox Promo and meet Mel Rosenberg, the founder of Ourboox.

Write to me at gadi.bossin@gmail.com, and I will answer any queries you might have or, if necessary, refer your questions to the Ourboox staffers.

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Lia gets batting tips from Gadi, her Saba (Hebrew for Grandpa)

An excerpt from Annie’s Prophecy, by Gadi Bossin

Geddy and Annie meet and fall in love in 1970 on an Indiana campus. His plans to move to Israel after graduation and her commitment to her Iranian heritage lead to their inevitable parting. In 2006, after 35 years of no contact between the two, Geddy, now a longtime Israeli, seeks out Annie, who now lives in Tehran.

Yom Kippur was the day before Annie's birthday. Geddy fasted the full 25 hours, abstaining from food and drink, but he didn't attend synagogue.

He spent the day in the courtyard apartment, reading and thinking, imagining his life after graduation and aliyah to Israel, weighing his options, visualizing various scenarios, imagining himself—despite his gut-knowledge that it wasn't going to happen—with Annie, finding it painful and impossible to imagine himself without her.

Geddy was determined to do something special for Annie's birthday. Midi-skirts and over-the-calf-high boots were “in” in the autumn of 1970. They were on display in all the store windows. They cost more than Geddy could afford comfortably, but he didn't care. He wanted to buy these and maybe a blouse as well for Annie's birthday.

--Story continues on next page
"Annie, I want to give you a new outfit for your birthday. And I want us to shop for it together. Will you come to the mall with me tomorrow?"

She smiled and kissed him. 
"I take that as a 'yes,'" he said.
"But of course, it is a 'yes,' chéri. I love new clothe-uz."

"Clothes," he said and laughed. "Clothes.
"Clothe-uz. Clothe-uz," she said. ...

When Annie said "clothes," it came out in two syllables. The first syllable sounded like "clothe" in the infinitive "to clothe." The second rhymed with "does" and "was" and "fuzz." So when Annie said "clothes," it came out clothe-uz and Geddy couldn't keep himself from smiling. When she said clothe-uz, for him it was the same as one of their love words. He told himself he'd never forget the sound of the word clothe-uz on her lips.

*******

It took them a few hours before they found what they both knew they were looking for. The midi-skirt they chose was classic black and so were the leather boots. The blouse Geddy purchased for Annie was a sexy scarlet red with a wide collar.

When they arrived back at the courtyard apartment, Annie said, "I will put on my new clothe-uz now. Wait in the living room. Sit down. I have a surprise for you." She went into the bedroom and closed the door behind her.

Geddy sat fidgeting on the sofa as she put on the skirt and the blouse and the boots and the black hose the saleslady had thrown in as a bonus. Annie called from the bedroom, "Geddy, put on some music."

"What do you want to hear?"

"James Taylor," she said. "Put on 'Something in the Way She Moves.'"

"James Taylor it is." He put the tape in the cassette player and found the song.

"Are you sitting down, Geddy?" she called again from the bedroom.

"I'm sitting down."

Annie came out of the bedroom, moving like a runway model, strutting, rotating her hips, crossing one foot in front of the other, her hands spread seductively on her thighs.

She pouted her lips. Her eyes sparkled. She winked at Geddy as James Taylor crooned, accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. ...

Annie turned away from Geddy, strutted one-two-three steps across the room and then turned again and stepped right back in his direction. She opened the top button of the scarlet blouse, did it up again, ran her open hands down the front of the blouse, over her breasts and belly and down along her thighs once more. Then she turned her palms to him and held her arms out like a performer inviting applause.

Geddy clapped his hands and shouted, "Bravo, bravo."

Then Annie knelt down in front of him. She put her hands and forearms and cheek on his knees and looked up into his eyes. He cupped her face in his hands, leaned down to kiss her. 

"Geddy, mon amour, thank you for the birthday presents," Annie breathed softly and kissed him again. "Thank you for the beautiful new clothe-uz."

He smiled and said, "Annie amour, ani ohev otach."

Her eyes filled with tears.


“If I close my eyes against the sun, all at once I am back at Ebbets Field, a young girl in the presence of my father, watching the players of my youth on the grassy field below. There is magic in this moment, for when I open my eyes and see my sons in the place where my father once sat, I feel an invisible bond between our three generations, an anchor of loyalty linking my sons to their grandfather whose face they never saw but whose person they have already come to know through this most timeless of all sports, the game of baseball.”

Doris Kearns Goodwin
I made a pilgrimage recently: On my way to a conference in Chicago, I detoured via Milwaukee to the site of St. Francis Seminary where, from 1957 to 1963, I trained to become a priest during high school and junior college.

*Pilgrimage*, my dictionary says, implies a visit to a sacred place, and the Catholic Church has considered this property sacred since 1855, when it built its seminary a few hundred yards up a hill from Lake Michigan at what was then called Nojoshing. The dome of that building, named Henni Hall for Milwaukee’s first bishop, appears at the far left in this photograph. In 1962-63, during my second year of college, I lived on its fourth floor.

The main building in this image was called Salzmann Hall during the five years—high school and first-year college—that I lived in it. It’s now part of St. Thomas More High School. When my classmates and I entered the seminary as freshman in 1957, the 12 years it took to reach the priesthood seemed an eternity: It was, of course, almost as long as we’d been alive. Many of us who left the seminary short of the priesthood—and some of us who left the Church itself—acknowledge the emotional importance, the “sacredness” to us, of our school as we pursued a shared goal. It probably seems odd to many people—it does to me—that a secular humanist remains drawn to this place after 51 years, but I am not alone in this, though some of our classmates prefer never to see it again.

That weekend of my pilgrimage marked the fifth anniversary of my dad’s death on May 18, 2009. I was missing him a lot, and as I walked the seminary grounds I became more aware of the quick passage of time.

I want to do more. I thought, ... I still have a chance. And I noted that Anne said “written,” not “published.”

Five decades after I left, priest/professors and some classmates have died, and I felt as if I too were running out of what once seemed—especially during the seminary years—a near eternity to make my life one of significance to myself and to people around me.

My classmate Raymond Hedin, now a professor of American literature at Indiana University, said in his book about our class, *Married to the Church*, that many of us felt a “specialness” that has not completely left us. I agree with Ray, and I still tend to feel that I should be doing something more—a sort of ministry, I suppose, to help others make it through this unpredictable and difficult life on Earth.

Shortly after my “pilgrimage,” and while I was still thinking of it and my dad, *Extra Innings* editor Marshall Cook posted on Facebook a quote from California writer Anne LaMotte, part of which said, “Oh my God, what if you wake up some day, and you’re 65, or 75, and you never got your memoirs or novel written…. It’s going to break your heart. Don’t let this happen.” I self-published my novel *To Become a Priest—a Love Story* in 2007, but I want to do more. I thought, I’m right in between those ages: I still have a chance. And I noted that Anne said “written,” not “published.”

Later that day I received an email from author Jacqueline Dougan Jackson, retired English professor at the University of Illinois-Springfield, saying she has completed the third volume of her long-planned trilogy, *The Round Barn* [www.jacqueline-jackson.com and www.roundbarnstories.com].

--Story continues on next page
When she was 15, Jackie promised her grandfather, who built the round barn (now torn down) on Colley Road near Beloit in 1911, that she was going to write a book called The Round Barn, with its stories. Now she’s 86, and she’s finally finishing her almost life-long project. She has always written, she said in an interview on her website. “My parents were readers and read to us, and from my earliest days I knew books and words were special. It only followed that to write down words, to write books, was as special a thing as one could do….My barn books are my magnum opus ... my love letters to the world.”

I’m finding that these events during the past week fit neatly together as reminders of what I want to do with my writing in the time I have left. I’m between the ages of 65 and 75 that Anne LaMotte cited in her warning, and I’m still more than a decade short of Jackie Dougan’s age as she admirably finishes her stories of the round barn after decades of work. I can write memoirs and a novel as LaMotte said, or perhaps more essays and some short stories. Then again, maybe I too can finish the non-fiction books I’ve started … my own love letters to the world.

“Baseball holds so much of the past, pulls me back to it each year, to the soothing unclocked unrolling of the innings, to the sound of an announcer through an open car, the sweet attenuations of late summer afternoons. The sound of cleats on an asphalt drive, a bat cracking a ball, delirious cheers call out to surprise me in easy conversations with strangers in spring.”

Gail Mazur

60’6” FROM HOME
MARSHALL J. COOK, COACH-IN-CHIEF
Paradoxes

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth

‘THE CHILD is father to the man.’
How can he be? The words are wild.
Suck any sense from that who can:
‘The child is father to the man.’
No; what the poet did write ran,
‘The man is father to the child.’
‘The child is father to the man!’
How can he be? The words are wild.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

If someone told you that her political beliefs, or her taste in music, or her personal relationships were the same at age 40 as they had been at age 16, you would be less likely to praise her consistency than to question her development. If life is a process of growth, then it is also a process of outgrowth-- which does not mean that we should be contemptuous of the things we once loved, any more than we should despise our first friends or first ideals.


So, which is it? Biologically, of course, the man sires the baby, the woman bears and delivers it. They are the parents of the child. They are his/her first and best teachers. Yet that child seems to come with so much already in place, so many preferences and desires, so much personality, so many characteristics.

Sometimes, looking back at my childhood, I see in my younger, truer self the best, the most genuine and authentic of what has developed in me over all the years.

So the answer to this either/or question? Both.

Life is full of such paradoxes, first among them, the words of the Christ telling us, “You must lose your life in order to gain your life.”
Smart answers to stupid questions
Thanks to Norma Sundberg

Q. In which battle did Napoleon die?
A. His last one.

Q. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
A. At the bottom of the page.

Q. The River Ravi flows in which state?
A. Liquid.

Q. What is the primary reason for divorce?
A. Marriage

Q. What is the main reason for failure?
A. Exams.

Q. What looks like half an apple?
A. The other half.

Q. If you throw a red stone into the blue sea what it will become?
A. Wet.

Q. How can a man go eight days without sleeping?
A. Sleep at night.

Q. If you had three apples and four oranges in one hand and four apples and three oranges in the other hand, what would you have?
A. Huge hands.

Q. If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it?
A. No time. Those other eight guys already built it.

Q. How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it?
A. Any way you want. No matter how hard you throw the egg, that concrete floor ain’t gonna crack.
Hey, I loved reading about poetry that makes sense being well received and remembered by many! I write poetry that makes sense, because I hate reading any other kind. But just because we write it doesn't mean it's any good. ... We have to remember the passion in it, as we do in all our writing. Thanks to Esther for this nice write! Great poems in this issue, too, that demonstrate what I'm talking about.

Monette Bebow Reinhard
I'm with you. I don't mind being stretched out some (Ferlinghetti, cummings), but Eliot and Pound can go talk to themselves.

I just read Rex Owens’ article in Extra Innings. Liked it. A lot. ... People who are not people watchers don't understand who we are. I will read more of it, but want to start my evening oblations. Or is that ablutions?

Pat Goetz
Depends on whether you’re washing your soul or your face.

Our son and his wife had their first daughter on the farm, and they moved when she was two. I wrote a poem for her graduation this month, and I rolled it up and stuck it in that bottle tied with ribbons in the school colors. Here is the poem...

BELIEVE
On the farm where you were born
I found this antique bottle
on the farm you learned to crawl
and then you learned to toddle
life is filled with baby steps
breathe them in one at a time
on your Graduation Day
you see mountains left to climb
set goals for what you desire
attempt all your hopes and schemes
chant the mantras you believe
journey through your charted dreams.

Very Sincerely, Bonny Conway
I was really touched by your poem “On the Bravery of Two-Year-Olds.” At first, I thought it was for Lily, until I got near the end. You poignantly capture the angst of working parents everywhere.
All the best,
Craig Steele

Worth a trip to Madison from wherever you are
Murphy’s Troubles, the debut novel by our very own Rex Owens, will be the subject of the Tuesday morning Book Talk, led by your very own Coach. The event, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Continuing Studies, takes place October 28, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the main branch of the Madison public library. The regulars in this group create some of the best discussions ever. It’s best to pre-enroll, as these deals draw a good crowd. For details, email me.

A star is born
Frequent contributor Vic Johnson co-stars with Theresa Dupuis in the Simple Simon Production of “Never Too Late for Love,” an original story inspired by the wonderful old radio soap, Our Gal Sunday, written by Anne and Frank Hummert. The movie asks the same basic question the radio show did five days a week for years: Can a young farm girl find love and happiness with England’s richest, most handsome Lord, Henry Brinthorpe? “Filmed in economy black and white in exotic Kankakee, the city on the T-aukiki,” the fabulous river of two thousand bends.”

Overuse kills another phrase
Newest term to have been rendered useless through promiscuous use: “New York Times bestselling author...”
LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA
MAUREEN MITCHELL

Perth worth a look

A clean city-- and the Swan River makes it. There are beautiful beaches and lots of marina to view from sumptuous restaurants.

It’s said to be the second-fastest growing city in Australia, Brisbane being the first. Every time I come to visit family here, I get to see new suburbs, such as Spearwood, Phoenix and Hilton; housing estate development is booming.

In the city and environs, you’ll find some fantastic old heritage buildings, particularly in Fremantle, where hotels and theatres have been listed as protected from being demolished.

If you are looking for a warmer climate this is the place to come, where it is always just a few degrees hotter than the East.

Perth has plenty of touristy places to see, such as The Marine Aquarium at Hilary’s Point, the Zoo, Fremantle Jail, the Bell Tower, Kings Park and Wave Rock. Take in Subiaco Oval, where the West Coast Eagles show their fans their stuff.

The upper-crust live in suburbs like Nedlands, Apple Cross, and Dalkeith. The gangs hang out in suburbs like Northbridge.

In the summer time on a hot evening along the beach roads, the hotels and discos are bursting with young people who spill out on the streets, enjoying themselves or not, dancing or not.

If you’re looking for a change in a holiday, why not try the West of Australia? You won’t be disappointed.

“Baseball is fathers and sons playing catch, lazy and murderous, wild and controlled, the profound archaic song of birth, growth, age and death. The diamond encloses what we are.

--Donald Hall

The best advice new grads-- or anybody else-- will get

“Find out what makes you kinder, what opens you up and brings out the most loving, generous and unafraid version of you-- and go after those things as if nothing else matters.”

George Saunders
Syracuse University, 2013

“Within the ballpark, time moves differently, marked by no clock, the unique, unchangeable feature of baseball-- why this sport, for all the enormous changes it has undergone remains somehow rustic. This is why the game was played in our youth and in our father’s youth. Since baseball time is measured only in outs, all you have to do is keep hitting, keep the rally alive, and you have defeated time. You remain young forever.”

--Roger Angell

And now, so that our joy may be complete...
Lily loves Sammy

and Lambie