Adults tend to forget what it's like to be a child. Forget what it's like to see Christmas decorations filling the house or a trimmed tree standing tall in front of a window. Always in front of a window.

Not every adult forgets, certainly, but many of us do. I have.

When I was young on the farm, I decorated the Christmas tree in the corner of the living room so it could be seen from two windows. Most of the time I trimmed it myself, but now I wonder if that's because I was so snotty about it no one wanted to be around me to help. That idea hurts.

**Back then I wanted everything just so.**

Spacing perfect, so the ornaments wouldn't clash with one another. Icicles hung as my grandpa Chuck did his, one at a time and dangling straight through the tree branches. Now I don't even put up a tree.

When Dana was small, I had the tree to myself. Walt didn't want to help, and she was too little to care. I've got pictures of every tree in those early years, usually with Dana sitting in front of it so we could see how she grew year to year.

It was the Christmas of 1976 when everything changed. We'd moved into a new home in Greeley, CO, in late fall. Because we hadn't signed final papers yet, Walt wouldn't let me hang anything on the wall, even curtains on the windows. I always felt like a fish in a big bowl because that huge picture window wasn't covered, but I didn't care. The house was wonderful.

That Thanksgiving, we invited the whole family to come for the holiday-- Mom and Dad, Dad's parents, Cindy and Dwight and their three girls, Suzan and John and their two girls. Barbara couldn't make it.

I had to work the day after Thanksgiving, but everyone else got to play. The women and kids went shopping; I have no idea what the guys did. Cindy told the girls if anyone got lost they'd be left, and she spent her day with six little girls stuck to her side.

**It's foggy how the Christmas tree appeared, whether I had one or the guys went out to buy one. But while I was gone, Dwight strung lights on the tree and let the girls decorate it. Six little girls. Dana, at 3, was the youngest; Cindy's daughter, Christy, 7, the oldest. Every ornament stopped about four feet above the floor.**

That's the year I learned to give up control of my Christmas tree. Oh, how I wanted to rearrange those ornaments, to space them well and cover the whole tree with them. But those six little girls were so proud of what they'd done, I couldn't make myself change a thing.

Santa came to see the girls that weekend. He had a toy for each and called each by her name. That Christmas, I learned any Christmas tree is beautiful, even if ornaments hang unevenly.

I need a tree.

So long friends, until the next time we're together.

Sandy Mickelson, retired lifestyle editor of The (Fort Dodge, Iowa) Messenger, may be reached at mcsalt@frontiernet.net. Sandy kindly gave me permission to reprint this, which ran last year in The Messenger.
ON THE AIR
REX OWENS

The Sun shines bright with Writing with Wisconsin
I have discovered that the writing life has lead to many opportunities to engage with others and develop new relationships. In March, 2014 Jeff Robbins became the new Executive Director of the Sun Prairie Media Center. For years the Media Center has operated a local cable TV channel to broadcast local events and government meetings. The TV channel is operated in conjunction with the school district to offer students the opportunity to learn about the world of cable broadcasting.

When Jeff accepted the job he broadened the vision of the mission of the Media Center to include radio broadcasting. The media center is funded by the City of Sun Prairie and is organized as a non-profit organization. Jeff developed a kick-starter campaign to raise $3,000 to pay for the initial licensing of the radio station. I love to support new ventures and sent in a donation. As often happens, the kick-starter project didn’t attract enough donors or come close to raising the target amount, and the funds had to be returned to contributors.

Not to be defeated, Jeff meet with local business leaders to find sponsors. The Bank of Sun Prairie agreed to write the radio station a blank check. The bank will cover all costs not raised from other sponsors, donors, and government funding, demonstrating its commitment to the community and to venture enterprises.

In July, 2015 WLSP-LP The Sun 103.5 FM was born. One producer operates the station, and Jeff fills in when needed. Jeff recruited volunteers to create and broadcast radio programs based on their interest.

I contacted Jeff with a proposal for two programs. The first, called Writing in Wisconsin, is an hour call-in program broadcast once a month where I interview authors, publishers, musicians, composers, playwrights and other artists. The second is a broadcast of the Wednesday Afternoon Book Club, where I am the discussion leader.

I received four hours of training on how to run the show from the producer, Lisa Wolf. I’ve learned that having a show once a month means my technical learning curve is very steep. With Lisa’s help I selected my own lead-in music for the show, and another friend, Joe Vosen, provided both vocal and instrumental music for breaks during the show.

The goal of the radio program is to showcase Wisconsin artists exclusively. As my first guest I invited the famous (infamous?) Marshall Cook. Marshall drove out to Sun Prairie for a live interview, and it was a lot of fun. It helped me a great deal that Marshall has extensive radio experience. Next month I’ll share with you several of my beginner mistakes.

and as a wrap up to Rex’s series on community theater...

Eight things NEVER said in a theater
by the stage manager:
* Take your time getting back from break.
* We’ve been ready for hours.
* No, I called that perfectly the first time – let’s move on.
* The headsets are working perfectly.
* The orchestra has no complaints.
* The whole company is standing by whenever you want them.
* That didn’t take long.
* No thanks, I don’t drink.
MEANDERING WITH MADONNA
MADONNA DRIES CHRISTENSEN

A silent language

In dreams involving my grandson William, we have ordinary conversations. When I mentioned this to my son-in-law, he said, “I wonder what his voice would sound like.”

William is autistic and nonverbal. One day at the school bus stop I watched my daughter chat with a neighborhood boy. It saddened me that she is denied this ordinary pleasure with her son. He communicates with sign language or gestures, by using pictures with corresponding words, by pointing or leading someone to what he wants, or by using a small electronic device with sentences geared to his needs and wants.

He’s in third grade in the public school’s Multi-Intervention Program For Students With Autism. Since babyhood he has devoured books, and I mean that literally. Due to a sensory processing disorder, he needs all five senses to understand something, so as he turns the pages he chews the corners or licks or runs his hand over the pictures. Because of his short attention span, it’s been difficult to determine if he can read or spell.

Now we have a clearer idea. At home, he has been introduced to a system called Rapid Prompt Method. For beginners, the instructor, Shannon, assumes competence—he knows what any child his age knows.

She is not there to teach colors, shapes, ABCs, or what sounds animals make. At this early stage her only tools are stenciled letter boards.

William is easily distracted, so the sessions are 20 minutes to a half hour, beginning with a particular topic, for instance, “the cloak of invisibility.” My daughter informed me that this is a popular theme with kids his age, and he understood the subject. When Shannon offered the word “conceal,” he pointed to the letters and spelled HIDE. Sometimes he gets the first few letters and she prompts the rest (those prompted letters are underlined here). When she talked about “adapting shapes,” he spelled ADJUST SHAPE. For the word stature, he indicated SIZE. When asked about agriculture, he picked FARM. When asked what he would do with an invisibility cloak, he responded: LEARN MATH.

During another session, she explained that injured jelly fish can transdifferentiate (that’s third grade level?), regenerate their bodies, which makes them immortal. When asked what immortal means, William chose FOR ALL TIME.

But the most astonishing response came at the end of the session when Shannon asked, “Would you like the power to transdifferentiate?”

YES

“What would you use it for?”

With no prompting, William spelled: NEW BRAIN.

This left me breathless. He understands that he has a problem and would like a solution. And he wants to learn math.

I’m reminded of one of the most powerful scenes on film. In The Miracle Worker, Annie Sullivan (Anne Bancroft) pumps water onto young Helen Keller’s hands, while at the same time repeatedly signing the symbol for water. Eventually, Helen (Patty Duke) signs the word, and Sullivan yells to the distraught parents watching, “She knows; she knows.”

William knows.

He can read and spell; he’s smart, perhaps above grade level. The overall program will take time and patience; the goal is to gradually move from stencils to a keyboard to a portable electronic device through which he can converse with others.

During the session on jelly fish, his response to a question had been NO EASE ANSWERS. Indeed there are no easy answers. We can’t predict how well this method will work, but given these first sessions, his parents and instructor have high expectations.

If you have a child or an adult family member with a speech handicap, or know someone who does, I suggest seeking more information about RPM. Use any search engine or go to the site for the woman who developed the program: http://www.halo-soma.org/about_soma_tito.php.
FOR THE LOVE OF WORDS
ESTHER M. LEIPER-ESTABROOKS

Yuletide and fireside

Christmas: A baby and a savior, mistletoe and cookies – plus air chill here in northern New Hampshire, including the wizardry of blizzards. Starting in November, snow falls thick and fast whether such weather is wished for or not, Yes, white stuff may come right into April, and despite forecasters, blizzards can sneak in unpredictably.

Of course southerners make fake snow to decorate store windows. In the New Hampshire North Country we count on the real thing – though aware that snowfall causes accidents and ice means tricky walking.

Yet there proves pleasure in watching white stuff netting trees in lace and obscuring roads till plow trucks thunder by. Recall that New England poet John Greenleaf Whittier published Snow-Bound, a verse novel, long before that term was used. His narrative offers a grand tale to enjoy while sipping hot chocolate or eggnog.

If time is limited, enjoy the following current haiku by Jan Allison, with the one after that garnered from a recent Mother Goose book:

(by Jan Allison)
Thick blankets of snow
Snuggling the flowerbeds
In a winter wrap

(by Ma Goose)
Winter icicles
Die in summer, but in cold
Grow roots hanging down

I also enjoy the humor, plus pun, in Mary Ann Hoberman’s whimsical:

ICE CYCLE
I’ve always thought it rather nice
That water freezes into ice.
I’m also pleased that, it is true,
How ice melts back to water, too.
But even so, I find it strange
The way that ice and water change
And how the simple water-drop
Can fathom when it’s time to stop
It’s downward drip, then go ahead
And start an icicle instead!

But snow has a downside, and in a drafty old house, it can blow through cracks and sift past window panes! Describing that unpleasant but rare event, I wrote:

DON’T BE BLASÉ
Since Old Man Winter employs nasty wiles
To ravage us just as often as he wills,
I see harsh gusts blow flakes in drifted piles
While sifting whiteness chills chipped windowsills.

I fear for weary plow-crews out tonight
With roads ice-slick as frigid flakes get blown
Across dark highways, plus, with all its might
Cold drafts leak in and so our house makes moan!

Our dinner will stay cold, nor is there news
Since early on, the power grid went off.
Soon service trucks creep past with weary crews
While my throat’s raw; I hack an itchy cough.
With electric all gone out, wan candle power
Lacks the strength to make dark shadows cower.

Some seasonal poems concern nature alone.
However, the next verse, by Christine Crow, mentions an old Greek water god who could change his shape:

PROTEUS
When I was water you couldn’t catch me,
Though I filled the shape of a glass exactly.
When I was ice, my heart grew chill,
And I cracked the glass I was meant to fill.
Now I lie silent, hard and still,
And you think you can catch me.
No more than a rain cloud, over the hill,
You never will, though. Never will.

ESTHER’S NEWS:
Esther met with the White Mountain Chapter of the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution) to discuss her 2016 presentation on Thomas Leiper; direct ancestor, Revolutionary War hero, and builder of America’s first railroad. Back in those days, rails were wooden!
I was cut out to be a fixer

As I watched and listened, a plethora of fixes that I had made to the garage door over the years flashed past. I am guilty of incrementalism. New doors cost a couple grand, so why not spend a few bucks here and there and keep on fixing?

The ancient mechanism had been converted to add an electric garage door opener, must have been some 50 years ago. One of my proud fixes had been replacing the Sears motor opener that went bad when plastic gears got chewed up after one too many ups and downs. Sears still made the same model motor for a mere hundred bucks, and it plugged right in, a bit of luck.

Worn cables had rubbed on a pulley for decades and split the pulley in half. Wow, never saw that before. Pulleys and cable are cheap though. Cut the cable to length, add connectors, cinch the wire just right with those grabber pliers, push the door up to keep the cable from snapping back and clobbering you, and bolt the new cable in. Fixed.

Another time a rotten corner of the wooden door jammed on its way up. The local welding shop happily cut a steel plate I could use to brace the corner. After hearing my sad story, they didn’t have the heart to charge me anything for the plate. The door’s corner now holds together like new.

Fixers often tell you more about their fixes than you want to know.

Completing the garage door fix was easy this time around. Increasing the motor’s up/down pressure allowed the garage door to keep working, at least a while longer. The life of a fixer is ongoing.

Back home that night Sweetie took me out to the diner for fixing the garage door. She presented me with a Mr. Fixer T-shirt emblazoned with a 20 Volt DeWalt power drill deluxe, the one that says, “This drill is for men who want a tool to fix your every need.” What a deal. I want one of those drills.
SHORT STORIES FROM THE FUNERAL PARLOR REST ROOM
TOM HICKS

Just call me ‘Scooter’

You’ve seen those electric scooters that handicapped people drive around in haven’t you? I’m not talking about those slow cruisers that you see offered to customers at larger food stores. The one I want is the big model. They’re usually painted candy apple red. The best models have a big battery storage box on the back along with a tall, flagged whip antenna.

They were the first electric cars, I think. I’ve seen an ad on TV for a company that sells these babies. They claim that the Government will pay for it, and they’ll handle all the paperwork that could become necessary for them to get their money. “We’ll take care of the Medicaid requirements,” they say. Beat that.

There are some unfair stereotypical attributes associated with Scooter Riders. Sure. A lot of them are overweight. Well, I say: You would be too if you could hardly animate your own mass and had to just sit in a chair most of the time.

It’s true that we’ve all probably seen a lot of the scooter owners smoking cigarettes, but why not when they’re outdoors most of the day? I guess a person could complain about secondhand smoke, but the scooters ride low inside the exhaust fumes of cars, buses, and trucks. No wonder you see so many of those scooters equipped with oxygen tanks.

I say give them a break. It may look easy, fun even, to drive single-handed from one fast food restaurant to the next, but it takes time. It can be very boring for the Scooterist, even in the higher-powered models. Let ‘em smoke if they want to. The chairs turn-over more frequently, and that keeps the price for used, bargain machines attractive—although trade-in costs are lower too.

I’m overt 70 and have leukemia. Surely I should qualify for a scooter. I’m hoping to locate that manufacturer who runs the TV ad. The one who gets Medicare to pay. Maybe I can add a few dollars to the sale price and either up the horsepower or add some special features and extras. Yes.

JAN KENT IS THE WORD WHISPER

Say what?

“Silent. The infant’s ossature, the thin and brindled bones along whose sulcate facets clove old shreds of flesh and cerements of tattered swaddle. Bones that would no more than fill a shoebox, a bulbous skull.” Cormac McCarthy's Suttree, page 14. It's going to be a long read.

Or, maybe not.
(See John Swift’s review of a Cormac McCarthy novel, p 16 this issue.)

Sayeth it right

If you're going to be Biblical at Christmas, you have to get the grammar right. Eth at the end of a verb is only for the singular. Cometh, giveth, burneth, turneth, eateth, giveth, killeth. (Tongue-twisters all in a row.)
Recovering with the TV

I’ve watched television shows lately I never knew existed as I recuperate from an operation.

I’m fascinated by the programs about small houses and the people who want to buy them. I mean really tiny structures ranging from 180 to 300 feet. The storage space available dumbfounds me, because, as far as I can see, the cupboard would accommodate only my spice rack, a blanket, and a stack of sheet music.

There isn’t much room to hide away an artificial Christmas tree, ornaments, and strings of lights; my grandmother’s scrapbooks and my shoeboxes of postcards; my accumulation of boots and sneakers and slippers; hundreds of books and old notes from college courses; a box of bank statements from the 80s; 45 records of Rick Nelson and Elvis; or even an extra bag of kitty food and a jug of cat litter. These are the items currently in just one of my closets.

I noted one house with a bathtub the size of a large litter box. The bather was a contortionist.

I see no way anyone like me with an arthritic body could climb up to the sleep loft every night. I know, too, if I ever were up there, I’d always be worried someone would move the ladder and I’d have no way to get down short of jumping and breaking a leg.

I’ve also tuned in to “survival” programs. I never realized sane people want to spend days in a storm in the forest or desert or swamp just to see if they can do it.

They seemed brave even though I think they were yearning for a soft bed and a Snickers bar to munch on. Instead, they had to build a shelter and find food and learn to cook bugs and worms and teeny animals.

The rescue programs inspired me after I realized that, basically, a good portion of the shows was a guy in the cab of a rescue vehicle talking about an overturned or off-the-road truck or car on a snowy and icy night. A few pictures of the road and the wreck would follow. That started me figuring how I could produce a similar show with a minimum of effort and make some money.

I’ve come up with a guy in front of a snowbank or a dark sky talking about rain, snow, sleet, tornadoes and the like. I hope it hasn’t been done.

Shopping channels were fun. I felt when I was watching them like a little kid shopping with my mommy and pointing at everything when asked what I wanted for my birthday.

The goods and gab were becoming addictive. Every item on the show was going to bring me happiness. I was almost in a trance.

It’s a good thing I remembered that I always have to return clothes that don’t fit because I haven’t tried them on, and I hate taping the package together and going to the post office.

I liked real estate shows. I saw the inside of some pretty fancy homes. That satisfied my nosiness, and I could gloat that I was a better decorator. Of course, that was mostly when the houses were empty except for a table and two chairs placed strategically in front of a window. Those properties made me feel happy, too — such nice neighbors Mr. Rogers would like and all that comfort and style for only $425,000.

With a nod to Charles Dickens, political programs were the best of times and the worst of times with wisdom, foolishness, and incredulity.

My doctor told me I needed to get more exercise, and I did. I shook my fists at presidential candidates, mimed spitting at some of them, shouted and swore and paced in front of my TV. I laughed often — belly laughs, shaking all over laughs, scornful laughs, and superior laughs.

Some days I wondered how they had the gall to lie to a sick person, and other days I wondered why a sick person had become crazy enough to leave the channel on and listen to them.

In the end, I decided that when I felt like watching television, I’d turn to reruns of Law & Order. I’ve seen each episode at least five times, but there is a certainty for me that doesn’t occur with shows depicting odds and ends. It’s comforting when one’s world seems upset and unpredictable to think and see that there is, well, law and order.
Inspirational football quotes to get you ready for the bowl games

“Gentlemen, it is better to have died a small boy than to fumble the football”
John Heisman

"It isn't necessary to see a good tackle, you can hear it!
Knute Rockne / Notre Dame

"The man who complains about the way the ball bounces is likely to be the one who dropped it."
Lou Holtz / Arkansas - Norte Dame

"A school without football is in danger of deteriorating into a medieval study hall."
Frank Leahy / Notre Dame

"There's nothing that cleanses your soul like getting the hell kicked out of you."
Woody Hayes / Ohio State

"I don't expect to win enough games to be put on NCAA probation. I just want to win enough to warrant an investigation."
Bob Devaney / Nebraska

"I never graduated from Iowa. But I was only there for two terms - Truman's and Eisenhower's."
Alex Karras / Iowa

"My advice to defensive players is to take the shortest route to the ball and arrive in a bad humor."
Bowden Wyatt / Tennessee

"I could have been a Rhodes Scholar except for my grades."
Duffy Daugherty / Michigan State

"Always remember Goliath was a 40 point favorite over David."
Shug Jordan / Auburn

"They whipped us like a tied up goat."
Spike Dykes / Texas Tech
Extra Innings

Poets

Just let’s stop it
Tom Crawford

We’re dying here.
Every day’s margin call,
everything for sale.
We’re digging around
between our back molars
to get out a piece of Egg McMuffin
while snow geese
float lifeless
in toxic waste dumps.

What are we waiting for,
the next great extinction?
A football field size chunk of rock
to slam into the earth?

You just can’t ask it, “Now,
what do you have to say for yourself?”

It’s not like the pelican
back up from its amazing dive
into the sea,
scoop-bill sagging
with a load of anchovies,
seagulls right there
to grab what fish
it can’t gulp down.

Nature throws her net
and even violence softens
to beauty.

My mother’s voice
through the back screen door,
“Tommy, come in, it’s late.”

But those were the years
when I felt safest
alone at night with the stars.

From Caging the Robin: Poems by Tom Crawford, Cedar House Books, 2014
Truth Making
We sip lemon rum
under the apple tree
and talk of theology
Apple blossoms
fall in our hair
You raise and arm and make
an important conclusion
I excitedly nod in agreement
Above us in the branches
the honey bees announce the event
from blossom to blossom.

Wolf reads Call of the Wild
Jack London knew wolves
and when I read his book
I knew he had it in for us--
He made us the enemy
as almost everyone does.
But Jack your characters asked for it.
They were in the wild--in our world
where they had to play by our laws.
And even though I didn’t like the way
you described us wolves in your story,
I still liked reading the good parts.

gbusha@wi.rr.com
Along Came Perseus
John Manesis
Mother liked to talk and bragged that I was prettier than the sea nymphs and that’s why Poseidon got mad and his buddies chained me to a rock near shore, bare as a new born baby. Along came Perseus, this good looking guy with winged sandals who gave me the big eye, killed the sea monster sent to do me in, then set me free and off we went to begin the most unbelievable honeymoon--to tell this story always makes me swoon. I know just who to thank for all of this--if not for Mother, I might still be a Miss. She used to say, “I know that you’ll go far, Andromeda, some day you’ll be a star.

THE WRITER’S POET
Craig W. Steele

Tanka #48:
pack after pack of old fashioned pencils—the office supplies aisle puts me in the mood to write something

Tanka #49:
insisting on a sharp-tipped Ticonderoga for writing…growing mountain of wood chips

Ghost quilts
Bonny Conway
They come at night lean from hunger silent as December snowflakes raccoon, opossum, white-tailed deer pawing for food beneath cold snow tracks stretch back and forth across yards forming geometric patterns inspiration for modern quilts might stem from wildlife observers
All school mass
Marshall J. Cook

for Ellen

At the time of the sharing of peace, most of the elderly shake hands,
and a few manage a nod, perhaps even a smile,
the best part of them peeking out shyly.
But the children! They go at it body and soul,
roiling the air like fish in the hatchery
roil the water at feeding time.
When they pray, kneelers shock the ground like thunder.
A boy in carefully knotted tie and untucked shirt
leads us in song, his piping, confident voice innocent of tone.

On St. Thomas Island, a church, innocent of walls,
fills with the faithful on a Sabbath day years ago.
We sing joy, thanks, and praise,
hands clapping, steel drums thundering,
daring to join the heavenly chorus.
2,224 miles from Madison, I cry as if coming home.
Two hours pass in minutes.
It has begun to rain outside,
thunder rolling over us.
We walk out to where the open bus will pick us up,
and someone stops to offer to drive us.
The children sing “God Bless America,”
for it is Veterans Day.
Kate Smith smiles down on them
and Woody Guthrie has a tear in his eye.
“The mass is over,” the white-haired monsignor tells us,
“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”
More inspirational football quotes to get you ready for the bowl games

"I asked Darrell Royal, the coach of the Texas Longhorns, why he didn't recruit me. He said, 'Well, Walt, we took a look at you, and you weren't any good.'"
Walt Garrison / Oklahoma State

"Son, you've got a good engine, but your hands aren't on the steering wheel."
Bobby Bowden / Florida State

"Football is NOT a contact sport. It’s a collision sport. Dancing IS a contact sport."
Duffy Daugherty / Michigan State

After USC lost 51-0 to Notre Dame, their coach’s post-game message to his team was, "All those who need showers, take them."
John McKay / USC

"If lessons are learned in defeat, our team is getting a great education."
Murray Warmath / Minnesota

"The only qualifications for a lineman are to be big and dumb. To be a back, you only have to be dumb."
Knute Rockne / Notre Dame

"Oh, we played about like three tons of buzzard puke this afternoon."
Spike Dykes / Texas Tech

"We live one day at a time and scratch where it itches."
Darrell Royal / Texas

"We didn't tackle well today, but we made up for it by not blocking."
John McKay / USC

"Three things can happen when you throw the ball, and two of them are bad."
Darrell Royal / University of Texas
Also attributed to Woody Hayes/ Ohio State

I've found that prayers work best when you have big players."
Knute Rockne / Notre Dame
Extra Innings

Humorologists

IT IS TO LAUGH
LARRY TOBIN

Just Hair

“You know, Stanley, I’ve finally figgered it out.”
“Well, that’s a start, I guess. Now, if I can just figure out what you figgered out.”
“Hair.”
“Hair?”
“Yup, hair.”
“Hare, as it rabbits, Norman, or hair, as in what used to be on the top of your head?”
“Head hair. It’s the key to life. Think on it, Stanley. Babes start out ‘thout much an they cain’t think overly well yet. They git older an they git more hair. They git smarter until they’re all grewed up. That’s cause all that hair grows out and unclogs their brains, ya see.

“But when they gits to be our age people think we lose our hair. They think it all falls out. Well, I’ve decided that just ain’t so. It just grows back in! It stuffs up our brains an we don’t think as good as we used to. Folks our age git forgetful. Hair starts comin’ out our ears an we don’t hear too well no more. Kinda like stuffin’ a feather duster in ‘em. An it even starts growin’ out our nose. Makes you sneeze for no reason. Makes you snore a lot, too.”
“How long did it take you to figure all this out, Norman?”
“Oh, I been thinkin’ on it a spell.”
“Well, I think you ought to stop thinking so much. I’m starting to smell wood burning. Now, will you just throw a couple of cards in the crib before my next Social Security check comes in the mail?”
“What’s the big hurry? You seein’ your proctologist again? Six.”
“Nine for fifteen-two. Nope. I’d just rather play cribbage than sit here listening to your non-scientific nonsense.”

“It’s not nonsense, Stanley. ‘Sides, have you got any better notions? Six for twenty-one.”
“You ought to pay more attention to cards instead of yakkin’, Norman. Ten for thirty-one. So how do you explain women? They don’t generally go bald like men do?”
“I done thought about that one, too. You see, women’r a different branch of the species. Men and women ain’t quite the same breed. Kinda like the difference between chimpanzees and orangutans. Nine.”
“Six for fifteen-two. That still doesn’t explain why hair affects men and not women.”

“Sure does so. Chimpanzees is differnt than orangutans. Women is differnt than men. Chimpanzees is smarter’n orangutans. Women is smarter’n men. Women’s hair just doesn’t get in the way of brains when they get older like men’s does. Nine for twenty-five.”
“Six for thirty-one. One thing for sure, women will definitely like that idea. You’ve sure got some hair-brained ideas. But Esther can’t be that much smarter than you. Otherwise she wouldn’t have put up with you for 53 years.”
“How come you have to be so contrary all the time, you grouchy ol’ geezer. Fact is, Esther is brilliant. An’ she knows a real bargain when she sees one.”
“You’re right, there. She definitely got you at a bargain basement sale. A pair for two gives me just enough pegs to win…again!”
“Yeah, yeah, I know. Stop gloatin’ an’ deal a new round.”
“Maybe your card playing would do better if you’d quit thinking about hair so much, Norman. Personally, I suspect all that butch wax you’ve pasted on your crew cut over the years has more likely jellied your thought processes.”
The manager of the Fair Store summoned Cindy. “I called you into my office to try a stunt to attract more Christmas business.” She paused and looked Cindy over. “I’d like you to play a mannequin in the front window. You’ll be kind of a slow motion actress. You move a little every so often to maybe perk up customers’ interest in selecting clothes. Are you willing to give it a try?”

Cindy nodded and smiled and said, “Yes.”

Entering the Fair Store, Jim was drawn to the inside display of pretty mannequins on the platform in the front window, especially one stood out amid red and silver tinsel and tiny glittering lights.

Attired in a long, fluffy green gown, Cindy winked an eye.

This can’t be, he thought. It has to be my imagination. Jim stood, staring at the bevy of mannequins in the window display, unmindful of what went on around him.

His reason for entering the store before the Christmas holidays vanished from his thoughts. He stared at her. Did her lips go up in a smile? Her hand seemed higher than when he first looked at her. Enthralled by her good looks, Jim didn’t notice a scruffy man until he jostled into him, slapping Jim’s sides with his hands and rocking him backward.

Adding to the commotion, the lovely mannequin and a cluster of tinsel fell on top of them. She said, “He’s a pickpocket.”

The scruffy man scrambled to his feet and scurried away, empty handed, through the doorway and outside.

Jim helped Cindy to her feet and said, “You’re a real girl, and a pretty one, too.”

She brushed her gown down and smiled. “And you’re a real pick me up.”

Jim returned her smile and replied, “You made my Christmas one to remember. I’m sure glad that you fell for me.”

What golfer would not want the “play and lay” package? Members who live close make their final trip a short one.

Loved ones will come to understand that, unless memorials are held in dark of night or on rainy days, they must be vigilant. Fore. And please, no more jokes and tipping of hats as the hearse drives by.

Surely golfers in the Far East are working on this idea.
Extra Innings

Reviewers

SWIFT TAKE ON BOOKS
JOHN SWIFT

A book for the ardent-hearted

All the Pretty Horses, by Cormac McCarthy
Living in the pitiful end of Western Civilization, one sixteen-year-old boy attempts to recapture some of what it once was by saddling up his horse in 1950 and riding into the mountains of Mexico with his buddy to live as vaqueros.

There’s nothing this intentional in the book. Everything appears to come out of nowhere. Only later, if at all, do we figure out the causality. He had been brought up on his Grandfather’s ranch near San Angelo, Texas, raised by their Mexican cook and her husband, until the Grandfather died and the ranch was foreclosed or something similar. The boy, aged 16, loved ardent hearts and found them more readily in horses:

“What he loved in horses was what he loved in men, the blood and the heat of the blood that ran them. All his reverence and all his fondness and all the leanings of his life were for the ardent-hearted and they would always be so and never be otherwise.”

Notice the archaic language here. The boy (and his narrator) are time-traveling Elizabethans. Like Shakespeare, he finds his love, but his love is in breaking wild horses for Don Hector, the hacendado of the Hacienda de la Purisima, a quarter horse breeder in Coahuila…well, breaking the horses and Don Hector’s beautiful daughter, Alejandra. A couple of ironies here. Purisima means pure, but the Quarter Horse comes from breeding a Spanish thoroughbred to a mustang, a wild horse somewhat domesticated by the Indian tribes. Hardly pure. Therefore, I take it to apply to the daughter. Her blood was probably not intended to be mixed with a gringo vaquero from San Angelo, Texas, no matter how great a broncobuster he turns out to be. That, I think, we can take as a working supposition for the rest of what happens.

Think sweet, beautiful agony. Think Cormac McCarthy. Think dread and horrific senseless violence. Scenes of poetry and pulsing beauty. Think All the Pretty Horses. There you have it.

When it comes to wild horses though, the boy knows how to break them and then they’ll follow him for the rest of their lives:

“[The boy] was holding the horse by the muzzle with the long bony head pressed against his chest and the hot sweet breath of it flooding up from the dark wells of its nostrils over his face and neck like news from another world…He held the horse’s face against his chest, and he could feel along his inner thighs the blood pumping through the arteries and he could smell the fear and he cupped his hand over the horse’s eyes and stroked them…speaking in a low steady voice and telling it all he intended to do and cupping the horse’s eyes and stroking the terror out.”

This technique works well with horses, and the boy should have left it at that, although, of course, had he done so, you wouldn’t be reading about it here. It’s an unproven technique with high-strung women. There is a sweet, seductive, beautiful agony to this writing, and thus to the book, that reels the reader in and steels him or her for the injustice and violence so often visited upon the unsuspecting Elizabethan.

I haven’t read much of McCarthy except The Road, a dystopian piece that I hated, which had a country, people, landscape, and future more vastly bleak than anything in this book, despite the impending collapse of Western Civilization. This has the hot blood of ardent-hearted thoroughbreds pumping through every page. Could get your own blood pumping. Got mine pumping. I have never read anything quite like it.
In one week, two films came out that I highly enjoyed and would recommend: the latest James Bond outing, *Spectre*, and the love letter to Charles Schultz's characters, *The Peanuts Movie.*

I noticed a similarity between these films; both rely somewhat on nostalgia, something I've noticed with many recent sequels and reboots. Sure, you have the usual tropes of both Bond and Peanuts, but each movie is more focused on telling its own story and not just a tread into familiar territory.

*Spectre* is most likely Daniel Craig's final film as James Bond, and the movie provides a good send off for his Bond. Although Sam Mendes and company do make it more like a traditional Bond movie, I think they've earned the choice to do that. With *Casino Royale* and *Skyfall*, Craig's Bond has had a great character arc, and *Spectre* still focuses on it, but not as much as the former two films. The movie does have Bond asking for his usual martini, Christoph Waltz's villain wants to control the world, David Bautista is a physically intimidating henchman, and Bond has a nice car and a few gadgets.

*We're OK with this as long as the movie provides a satisfying experience. The James Bond franchise has been around for 53 years, so when one of the movies does rely a bit on the formula, we hope it's a success like Spectre, where it's an exciting and engaging movie experience.*

In *The Peanuts Movie*, the characters also have their usual tropes, and there are references to the early specials, but like *Spectre*, it doesn't let these elements get in the way of telling its story. It's a simple story, appropriate for a Peanuts movie. The movie pays tribute to Charles Schultz's beloved characters without breaking any new ground with them. There's not a cell phone or laptop in sight. It's a genuinely sweet movie that I think anyone who grew up with these characters will enjoy. It's also a good movie to introduce these characters to a new generation of fans.

When we get a new James Bond movie or a long-awaited sequel like the upcoming Star Wars film, we're happy to be getting another movie in our favorite franchise. But what if we get a movie like one of the Star Wars prequels, massively disappointing and just plain awful? We take to the internet and complain about everything that was wrong with the movie and what they should have done differently.

I will admit, I love the Red Letter Media prequel reviews, and I really enjoyed the documentary, *The People vs. George Lucas*, but I also like to look on the bright side. While I despise the Star Wars prequels, there is one good thing about them, the fact that they make me appreciate the original trilogy even more.

*When there's a bad sequel, it's a disappointment, but at least you can still go on loving and appreciating the movie that made you fall in love with the franchise in the first place.*

Then there are movies like *Mad Max: Fury Road*, which may be a sequel but overall is its own entity. You don't have to have seen the other Mad Max movies to enjoy it. *Fury Road* doesn't rely on references to the other movies to be good, and it's still my favorite movie of this year. I think George Miller made a wise decision not to rely on continuity with this series.

The first film is Max's origin story, when the world hasn't fully transformed into the post apocalyptic world of the sequels. Each sequel tells a new story in Max's life. He is the Road Warrior, trying to survive in a hellish world, and he is the only recurring character in each movie. That way the series stays fresh while still staying true to the character of Max.

So nostalgia can go both ways. We can be happy with the familiar settings and characters, because we're so used to the world that has been established, or we may get too much of it. A movie like *Mad Max: Fury Road* is a breath of fresh air.
Coach’s note: I offer this now to help us all get through the winter.

As I arrive I look around, searching for my favorite spot. I sit right where the hot beach meets with the moist sand that is kissed throughout the day by the waters of the ocean. I reach out for a handful of the thin grained sand and feel it so softly, so delicately between my fingers.

Such a bright white reflects underneath the clear light blue waters, showing off its precious collection of shells with colors as light as the sand itself, and others with more of an orangey brown color looking similar to rust. As I look out into the vibrant deep blue waters, watching how the waves roll one over the other, I can taste the salt of the water within the air. Freedom is what I am feeling as I walk towards the deep ocean.

Then I feel something soft quickly touch my leg, and to my surprise there is a big group of fish swimming around me. Their skins are so full of such vibrant colors. It’s like seeing half the rainbow colors meshed to become one beautiful shade. They swim around me without a worry; it’s as if we were friends.

The sun’s rays are so strong, I can feel the intense heat piercing through my skin. It doesn’t feel as a sense of burning, more of a kiss from the sun itself, making its presence felt.

There aren’t enough hours in the day for me to enjoy my day at the beach; nonetheless, I witness the most precious natural mural right in front of me. The sun says its goodbye as it paints the sky with a tad of yellow and splash of purple and pink.

In her own words
My name is Marisela, I was born and raised in the state of the cheese heads. I fluently speak English and Spanish. However English is my first language even though I grew up in a household which spoke primarily Spanish. I am currently in the Odyssey Project at UW Madison and looking to fulfill a career as a registered nurse. When I am not working or in class I love to spend time with my lovable toddler and family.

For information on Odyssey, see www.Odyssey.wisc.edu.

Son, there never was a time
Everybody hated everybody.
Never so.
Always good white folk,
Always good black folk.
Remember, son.
Don’t let hate fill your heart.
Always more good people
Than bad
In this world.

--Buck O’Neil
quoted in The Soul of Baseball:
A Road Trip Through Buck O’Neil’s America,
by Joe Posnanski
COACH’S BULLPEN BLURBS AND BRIEFS

Krival to become a *Rosebud* regular

Last month we noted that old friend **David Krival** was to have a short story published in **Rod Clark**’s *Rosebud* literary magazine, one of the finest in the country.

Now we get word that he’ll have three more published there!

“When I am hailed and adored by one and all as the next great American whatchamacallit, you can tell your surviving friends and colleagues straight-faced that I never would have made the Big Time without your guidance,” David generously notes.

The three stories to appear in *Rosebud* are “Second Shift,” “Indio,” and “Fearless Fred.”

David offers this advice for writers:

“The third person, when you get right down to it, is the eternal well-spring of the Great Big Allegory, or, if you prefer, Lie. It's quite magical, really. Turn this little key and step right out of the prison of self. A useful test: if something you've written in the first person singular sounds really stupid in the third person, it's probably bullshit.”

**Tom’s still painting**

and I think one of the new creations from the imagination and vision of **Tom Hicks** just might be his best yet.

---

**ANIMATION AGITATION**

**There’s gold in them thar cells**

The highest grossing animated films of all time:

1) *Frozen*: $1.27 billion
2) *Minions*: $1.08 billion*
3) *Toy Story 3*: $1.06 billion

* There are 850 toy licenses world wide for *Minions*. 500 million Chiquita bananas carry *Minions* stickers to promote the film.

In **Monsters, Inc.**, there are 2,320,413 individually animated hairs on Sully. It took 11-12 hours to create each frame of the film. (An hour of the movie required at least 100,000 frames.)

The 108 films in which Frank Welker performed as a voice actor (he was *Curious George*, Abu in *Aladdin*, and Charles the Dog in *Space Jam*) have grossed $6,724,902,777.

Tom Hanks received $15 million for his work in *Toy Story 3*.

The most expensive animated movie ever made was 2010’s *Tangled*, which cost $260,000,000. That beat out *Avatar* by $23 million.

It took five years to make *Inside Out*. For contrast, last year’s winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture, *Birdman*, was shot in 30 days.

Walt Disney and Salvador Dali once collaborated on a project, the 2003 film *Destino*, for 57 years! Running time for the movie: six minutes and 30 seconds.


**THIS IS NEWS?**

**Men are pigs around women**

Research shows that when dining out with a woman, men eat more than they usually would.

How much more? Answer at end of the briefs.

---

*Coach’s Bullpen Blurbs and Briefs*
SIGN OF THE COMING APOCALYPSE
Dateline: Boston
Pastafarian given OK
to wear strainer on head
A Massachusetts agency is letting a woman who
belongs to the Church of the Flying Spaghetti
Monster wear a colander on her head in her
driver’s license photo after she cited her religious
beliefs.
Lowell resident Lindsay Miller said Friday that
she “absolutely loves the history and the story” of
Pastafarians, whose website says has existed in
secrecy for hundreds of years and entered the
mainstream in 2005.
Miller says wearing the spaghetti strainer
allows her to express her beliefs, like other
religions are allowed to do....
Lawyer Patty Dejuneas calls Pastafarianism a
“secular religion that uses parody to make its
point.”
I have only one objection to this article from the
Associated Press: since when has parody ever
been “mainstream.” That’s an insult to parody.

Okay, maybe not quite yet...

Still on the Eve of Destruction
The Eastern world it is explodin’,
Violence flarin’, bullets loadiin’,
You’re old enough to kill but not for votin’,
You don’t believe in war, what’s that gun you’re
totin’;
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin’...
The song sounds as if it could have been written
yesterday, doesn’t it?
If you’re singing right along with this old hymn
of the 60’s, hearing Barry McGuire growling out
the words, you’re my kind of people, and if
you’re still around to read this, then you know
that it’s been a looooong Eve of Destruction, at
least by human measuring of time.
I bring this up because the man who wrote that
song, P.F. Sloan, died recently, at age 70.
And because there’s a local angle to the story
for me.
Fifty years after launching this iconic keening,
Sloan and McGuire got together last January to
perform the song one last time, and they did it at a
coffee house in my hometown, Altadena, CA.

KINKY WISDOM
Friedman favors term limits
Kinky Friedman-- musician and song writer, lead
singer for Kinky and the Texas Jew Boys, mystery
author, and former candidate for Governor of
Texas-- says he favors a limit of two terms for any
politician-- one in office and one in jail.

PERSONAL FOUL
NFL commits unnecessary
obfuscation
A recent Thursday Night football game (not to be
confused with Sunday early morning football
from England) matched up two tough AFC East
rivals, the Buffalo Bills and the New York/New
Jersey Jets. The Jets were resplendent in solid
green uniforms, while the Bills rocked their all
red mufti.
We in the differently color-sighted community
were not amused.

COACH’S PICK TO CLICK
Last Bus to Wisdom, Ivan Doig
It seems that Ivan Doig has always written young
adult novels for adults. He handles big,
challenging themes, but always with hope and a
deep-down innocence.
His last novel (he died in April at age 75), Last
Bus to Wisdom, does nothing to dispel this
impression. It’s a wonderful coming-of-age story
about the odyssey of an 11-year-old boy/man,
Donal (no final ‘d’) and his “uncle,” Who is
Herman the German, Fritz, one-eye... folks aren’t
quite sure who he is) on the “dog bus” across
America. They are usually, in one-eye’s
reckoning, “somewhere south of the moon and
north of hell.”
They end up, yes, in Wisdom, Montana.
Highly recommended.
My copy goes, not to the Little Library, as is
my custom, but to Bill and Linda out in Spokane.
We’re been friends for just a tad short of forever.

THE NEXT TO LAST WORD
“If you fail at something long enough, you
become a legend.”
Kinky Friedman

Answer to Men Are Pigs research
93%!
COACH’S MAILBAG

Strange object next to Lily revealed—and other matters of great importance

So happy to see E.I. at the TOP of my email list.
Thanks for the "Midwest Circulation Director" listing. Love it, the listing as well as being able to send them out.... And for adding "SASSY" ... A great conversation item (?) Peter, Esther's husband, asked about it....
Question: What is the little item next to Lily? A book, or an I-Pad, or some such? Looks like a picture of a child on the front...
Love, Hugs,
SASSY [Norma J. Sundberg]
Coach replies: You are a sharp-eyed reader, Sassy! The object next to Lily in the last issue is a picture of her taken when she was only a tiny- and in the exact same pose!
Marsh, a delight reading the new issue. Love the one about the woman who discovers Writing. So tender, accurate, and she nails down the heart of writing: risk, vulnerability. If they ain’t there, who cares?

Tom Crawford
I sure enjoyed your Extra Innings. I especially liked the “Sixteen Things That it Took Me Over 50 Years to Learn,” by Dave Barry; “Finding The Perfect Job,” thanks to Larry Tobin; “The Wisdom of Buck O'Neil”; your “Tag You're It” poem; “the Male-Female Dictionary,” thanks to Steven Born; “The Second Golden Age of Euphemisms,” by you; “A Few Words about Words”; and of course, Lily. I needed humor and you gave me a good dose of it.
Before I forget again, Doris Martin would like to join your newsletter list. She is my friend here at the apartment building.

Jan Kaat
Coach replies: Thanks, Jan. Welcome, Doris!
Dear Marsh, It is so nice to have my computer running. It was not working for a month. Aww, I loved "Tag, You're It." You are a very lovely poet. Want to wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving. The "Napping Lily" was so funny!
By the way, how kind to print "Pink Catawba Evenings." I keep wanting to ask if you know the story of the Xmas Tree Ship, the one that sank in the storm a long time ago. They have a book The Xmas Tree Ship for kids, If you want I can send the site so you can read about the ship.
Also years ago we were in Wilmot Wis, and ate at this place called Twin Oaks Country Inn. Did you ever go there? I think it once was a convent and grade school. Well I had some fancy martinis there. They were samples the bartender made for us when Chocolate and lemon meringue. Martinis were becoming popular. I had too many sips and almost was crazy enough to order EMU for dinner. Gag me with a maggot! Well take care, Love,

Bonny [Conway]
Coach replies: So good to hear from you, and thanks for the kind words about the poem. I've never written much poetry until this year, and now EVERYTHING comes out a poem. I guess it's what's next for me. I'm enjoying it very much.
I have not been to Wilmot but probably should go. I do know the story of the Christmas Tree Ship, a part of Wisconsin lore.
I ate an emu burger in Davis, California one time. Not bad at all. Even though I'm Belgian, I draw the line well short of eating eel or "calamari" (why don't they just come out and ADMIT what it is!)
Marshall,
One contribution is a short short called Golfetery, a shortened version of a story from 2002. In Writing.com Golfetery got more comments than anything I ever wrote there. Kinda fun and not that hard to shorten the old stories.
“I was cut out to be a fixer” is for all the guys out there fixing our too many accumulations. Women may be interested too - I understand there is a shortage of men who fix stuff.
Out in Madison recently, I noticed much of the old town remains, but I was surprised that University Avenue from the UW on out has taken on the big city suburbia look.
Cheers,

Ron [Hevey]
Coach replies: I’m saddened every time I go downtown these days.
**ASK THE COACH**

**What’s the best book for tension?**

As I may have implied, I’ve been half-heartedly working on another mystery novel that has stalled out halfway through the book. Why I haven’t been able to push through that into something that I’m pleased with was itself a mystery—until I went back to the basics this afternoon of how successful writers create and maintain tension and from then on, it was obvious. I hadn’t been using any of these basic techniques, and I needed to set the work aside for a few months and then look at it with a fresh set of eyes before that could hit me between the eyes. Now that I’ve done that (it took about five minutes to decide exactly what was wrong with the mss.) I wonder if there is a work you might know about on the xteen ways to create and maintain tension in a mystery novel.

I leafed through 10 books on writing on my shelf, some from famous authors. Some do not even mention tension or the tension they discuss is mostly the “building tension through dialogue” type tips as opposed to tension that stems from the plot. Sol Stein in his book *Stein on Writing*, the winner in this regard, has many generic and helpful tips. And Google turns up several more. Do you have a favorite reference on this subject? 

Coach replies: *How to Write a Breakout Novel*, by Donald Maas is the best book on “creating tension on every page” I know of.

My favorite writing books tend not to be novel specific, stuff like Strunk and White, *Writing: Craft and Art (in which Bill Rivers advocates for the Plain Style)*, Zinsser’s *On Writing*, Richard Lederer’s essay on the power of simple words... To learn how to write novels, I write novels and read novels I really like.

**How to pitch a memoir**

Hello Marshall.

As is said among the Swedes, "Thanks for the last time." I appreciate your blessing on the chapters that I will send out with a query whenever the publisher of my dreams opens up.

Meanwhile, I am preparing to submit the manuscript to the Graywolf nonfiction competition in January.

They also request a project overview, two to 10 pages, including what is already complete and what remains to be finished.

Since this is a new experience for me, writing such an overview, I have a question for you. I'm assuming that this is like an expanded query, where I get to describe what the manuscript is all about. I imagine that part of this is to explain why this writing is important. Is there anything else that should be included in such an overview?

I send you warm wishes on a cold, blustery, bright day.

**Catherine [Young]**

Coach replies: So good to hear from you.

It mostly sounds like the sort of proposal you'd make to any publisher for a non-fiction project, a brief statement of theme/significance (what agents callously call the "elevator pitch" and writers know as the "log line") followed by a not-as-brief but surely not verbose rendering of the scope of the book.

For most "commercial" publishers, you then pitch yourself—primarily in terms of terms I hate, like "platform" and "brand," what you'll do to gung-ho promote your book, how many twitter followers you have, and all that [fill in your own expletive here if desired]. Fortunately, I don't think Graywolf wants that sort of [second expletive if you've been holding back.] For them, I think a paragraph or two about where this book comes from, what prompted you to write it, what effect you hope it might have on a reader.

I'll be happy to take a look at something when you get it drafted if you'd like, of course.

As for the chill, blustery day, I've been warmed by the presence of my granddaughter. Ellen and I managed to exhaust her this morning with church, having our pictures taken at Penney's, and going to the kids' paradise on the eastside, Ella's Deli, for lunch. We were going to the zoo this afternoon, but she's taken such a long nap, we'll have to settle for getting her an ice cream and a birthday card for her mother's birthday on Sunday.

Let's just say I've had worse days.

And speaking of that granddaughter of mine...

*(but first, the mighty masthead, our cast of characters)*...
Extra Innings

“Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto”

Number 74 Decembe, 2015

Special by-invitation writers
Sandy Mickelson
Marisela Tellez Giron

All-Star Columnists
Madonna Dries Christensen,
Rex Owens,
Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks,
Ron Hevey,
Tom Hicks,
Sandy Rafter,
and Jan Kent as THE WORD WHISPERER.

Reviewers
Books: John Swift
Movies: Jacob McLaughlin

Humorologists
Larry Tobin
Ed Pahnke
Ron Hevey

Poets
Sandy Rafter,
Tom Crawford,
John Manesis,
Gary Busha,
Marshall J. Cook

and THE WRITER’S POET, Craig W. Steele

Wisdom by:
Buck O’Neil

Internet Gleaners
Mary Callahan, Steve Born,
Larry Tobin

Web Weaver
Kerrie Jean-Louis Osborne

S. Dardanelles
Assistant circulation director, midwest division
Norma “Sassy” Sundberg
Assistant circulation director, New Hampshire
Esther M. Leiper-Estabrooks

Coach-in-Chief:
Marshall J. Cook

...who distributes Extra Innings monthly to an open enrollment mailing list. Coach welcomes your submissions. All copyrights remain with the author after publication. For Writer’s Guidelines or to get on the mailing list, email Coach at: marshall.cook@wisc.edu

Extra Innings comes to you through the good graces of the writing program at the Division of Continuing Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, led by Christine DeSmet. Find out about workshops, courses, conferences, and critiques at: www.continuingstudies.wisc.edu/writing

Extra Innings is a proud supporter of
Write by the Lake,
The Writer’s Institute,
Weekend with your Novel,
the Odyssey Project,
and The Little Free Library

Back issues available at: www.continuingstudies.wisc.edu/writing/extra-innings

And NOW, it’s Lily time!
GramEllie, Grandpa Coach, and Lily