

The Write Stuff

Long Island Writers' Guild Newsletter

Number Ten

Winter Issue 2003

Visit us at WWW.LIWritersGuild.org

Word From The Editor

First of all, let me apologize for not publishing a fall issue of The Write Stuff, and to the members who submitted material for that issue.

The year 2002 has come and slipped away, a time to stop and look back at what the LIWG has accomplished.

We published a successful third anthology; a fourth well on the way to an early spring printing. Our workshops are attracting new faces and talents, membership is growing. The LIWG sports its own attractive website that gets more hits than.....(fill the blank). The list of previous guest speakers is growing. Here are those who have entertained and enlightened us: Janice Levy, Wendy Aron, Christina Beamonte, Jack Billelo, Edith Layton, Dan Mahoney, Jan Michael Friedman, we're getting there!

It seems that there is always someone who knows someone who knows someone that can serve as guest speaker. (We have members in our own group that can fill that bill). Ask around.

LIWG members have appeared on Ch. 21 in their fund-raising campaigns, we've read our stories at coffeehouses, Jones beach and east-end wineries. I defy any Long Island workshop to match our accomplishments. 2003 looks like a banner year for the LIWG, we will become a not-for-profit organization, we then can file for grants, seek and accept donations from willing organizations. We will be able to pay for upcoming events and prominent guest speakers.

I see our fifth or sixth anthology to be an Island wide competition with submission fees and cash prizes. It can happen, believe me.

It's a little late, I know, but this editor wishes everyone a Happy Holiday and a productive New Year.

JP

Heard on the Charlie Rose Show:

"If it sounds like writing...rewrite it" Elmor Lenord

THE WRITE STUFF

WINTER

Winter brings shivery warnings of
ice, sleet and snow, it will mean slow going
motorists will meander at five miles per hour,
pedestrians walking on icy pavements will
slide around on slippery walks,
heavy hanging icicles
will make tinkling sounds when the wind blows
and tree branches will thud
when they come crashing to the ground.

But how heavenly it will appear
powdery, soft white, falling gently
covering
turning old into new, garish into charming
and lights will reflect off the falling and fallen snow.

Children will go sledding, build snowmen
have snowball fights
they'll play until their gloves get wet,
the snow slides into their boots
and they hear their mother's call.

It only lasts three months
but after just four weeks
adults will feel the frost will go on forever
that sniffing sneezing will become a way of life
they will crave the sunny days of spring

Then , as always, the season will change.

Joan Marge-LaGrassa

THE POET'S PAGE

TRANSFORMATION

I drove under a bower of glorious gold.

The leaves, once mint, forest and loden green
Are now crimson, sepia, burgundy
The once lush landscapes
Soon will be stark, ataid, simplistic.

The mosaics of colors and hues will
Change with the coming of winter as
Ice forms and a pristine blanket of
Snow will cover the land.

Fall is nature's grand finale
The countryside explodes with a
Profusion of patterns and shades
It is a sense-ational season.

Marge McDowell

WINTER

Icicles hang from eaves and windows
The weather is frigid, numbing
But as I look up at the spectacular
Profusion of an evening sunset
I know we are compensated for the cold
By the warm rosy glow.
In winter much is taken away
But we are given more than we know.

Marge McDowell

JESSE'S and SETH'S HAIKU

Dirty clothes on the floor
Toilet seats always upright
Sons home from college.

Stephen Loomis

Submissions are being accepted for the SPRING Issue. They should have a seasonal theme, but this Editor will use any good poem, essay, bio or cartoon.

THE WRITE STUFF

MORE STUFF

THE TRAVELER

Walking along life's highways with a sack of hopes and dreams,
The traveler comes to a crossroad.
Over a smooth lane flies a rainbow of changes,
The other has gravel that sparkles with a kaleidoscope of possibilities.
Neither road has a sign, maps do not work here.
The head says rainbows are a safe bet, there's treasure at its end.
The heart says the gravel may hide gold.
The feet like the idea of an easy walk,
The hands want to play with the gravel.
It's the soul that speaks the wisest, happiness comes from beating the odds,
So with a sack full of hopes and dreams the traveler sets out upon the gravel road.

Frances Avnet

RENEWAL

The afternoon is gray and dismal as
Winter attempts to take over the unusually
warm December. In the stillness of the hour I
can almost hear the quiver of the last few
leaves as they are blown from the branches of
our once bountiful maple; no longer the verdant
bouquet that shaded our lawn all summer long.

As I am embraced by a late afternoon
winter chill, exhaustion takes permanent
residence in my bones. Oh, to endure the
Winter and await the warmth and renewal of
Spring. A very fulfilling experience...if you are
free!

Miriam Davidson

BEWARE of the FLESH EATERS

So you think this is where I wanted to end up?
Do you know what it is like to be lying here,
freezing and naked as a jailbird and
having people oohing and ahing at me?
I feel like a piece of meat that's being
passed around from one person to another.
And then there's the one with the clicking dentures
kneading and massaging my neck and back.
I bet they expect me to just lie here and look good.
Now all eyes are on me, but I'm too stuffed
to move away.
That guy, who is standing in the corner,
with that ridiculous tie on, is right on the mark
when he turns to me and says,
"What a turkey!"

Elizabeth Cassidy

Mary Higgins Clark sold her first short story
after it went to forty magazines over a period of
six years.

That's persistence and indefatigability, man!

THE WRITE STUFF

HERE and THERE

You've read elsewhere in this issue that Mary Higgins Clark floated her short story around for six years until someone realized it was worth publishing.

The point here is:

Writer's Digest Magazine's 72nd Writing Competition. We have the talent in the LIWG to blow away the competition. We should make this a workshop assignment; have special meetings for those submitting to the contest to critique in depth, get additional help editing and fine-tuning the manuscript. Those meetings would be separate from our regular meetings and be held at member's homes or some corner of Borders or other bookstores if allowed.

Deadline is May 15, 2003 (plenty of time).

How do you feel about this?

Don't forget our *NEW* schedule. We meet on the first Thursday at the Levittown Library and the second or third Thursday at the Bethpage Library. Please check our web site, call the library or check with another member. See you there!

MEETING SCHEDULE

JAN. 16	Bethpage Library	7:00-9:30
FEB. 6	Levittown Library	7:00-10:30
FEB. 20	Bethpage Library	7:00-9:30
MAR. 6	Levittown Library	7:00-10:30
MAR. ?	Bethpage Library	7:00-9:30
MAY 1	Levittown Library	7:00-10:30
JUNE 5	Levittown Library	7:00-10:30

AIN'T WE GOT FUN....

Let's face it, for a group of writers we do more than write. Case in point:

Our members read their stuff at coffee houses. Some get a chance to exhibit their talent at bookstores of note.

We have Halloween costume parties, year-end get-togethers, Jones Beach workshops, annual Awards Dinners and the Duck Walk winery experience (hic).

Since all these activities are well attended, I expect that 2003 will contain new and better ventures.

We are open to suggestions, bring them up at our regular meetings.

FYI

Nobel Prize winners who wrote Mysteries:

John Steinbeck	Ernest Hemingway
Rudyard Kipling	William Faulkner
Pearl S. Buck	T.S. Eliot
Sinclair Lewis	There were others

Pulitzer Prize winners who wrote Mysteries:

Arthur Miller	Elmer Rice
Edna Ferber	Robert Sherwood
Sinclair Lewis	Stephen Vincent Benet
J.P. Marquand	Edna St. Vincent Millay

Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner and Buck
There were others.

Note: All these authors had stories published in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine.

THR WRITE STUFF

Editor: Joe Pantatello

THE WRITE STUFF

BIOGRAPHY PROFILES—Dennis Thomas Kotch

Dennis is interested in all genres of writing with fictionalized history a favorite. A native Long Islander, he holds degrees from New York City Community College (AAS), and Adelphi University (BA), (MBA). One day their rightful owner is going to ask for them back.

Born and raised in South Jamaica, Dennis has a different outlook than most people that is deeply rooted in Myopia. Forcibly educated by Dominican nuns, he has the scars to prove it—some of which he can show in public. His grammar school education prepared him for what he became next, a high school dropout. He did well as a *stupidio*, moving from one meaningless job to another several times. He once tried to send his brother a Christmas ham by attaching food stamps as postage

Knowing that his life needed a new direction, he then enlisted in the Marine Corps. Eventually assigned to a unit on the now famous Navajo Indians' *Windwalkers*, he found his niche. His outfit was comprised entirely of descendants of Polish Coalminers. Their assignment was to inspect the enemy's tunnels in Vietnam. They would prepare for this odious duty by eating Kielbasa with hard-boiled eggs and drinking beer all day. They then would crawl into the tunnels and pollute them to the point that they were unusable by both man and beast. Known throughout Vietnam as the *Windbreakers*, they never got the recognition that they richly deserved. Though they are now a bunch of old farts, veterans of the unit meet once a year in Chicago. Dennis is also proud of the fact that when he was on active duty not one Viet-cong was ever spotted east of the Pecos.

Dennis started to develop his literary skills by writing out confessions to crimes he did not commit. His confessing to the abduction of Amelia Earhart, considered a highly skillful work of art in some quarters, was discovered to be false when a crack detective concluded Ms. Earhart disappeared before Dennis was born. He continues to hone his talents by composing thousands of ransom notes, all of which remain undelivered.

DTK

The **Write Stuff** can use short antidotes of one's life, it doesn't have to be serious, keep it light, in fact it doesn't even have to be true!!!

THE WRITE STUFF

ESSAY PAGE

CHRISTMAS WAS EARLY THIS YEAR

I remember, years ago, Santa's Sleigh was the last float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Santa waved to us, and like magic it was Christmas. Kids wrote lists, and adults went shopping.

This year in October I saw Christmas decorations in stores. "Gee," I thought, "we haven't even celebrated Halloween yet." Then early in November, Toys-R-Us sent their toy catalogue. "Well it's closer, but still we haven't done Thanksgiving yet."

Thoughtfully though, they provided red, blue and green stickers for the children. My grandson sat happily plastering those little circles onto pictures of toys then he came to me, "Here Grandma, this is what I want Santa to bring me." He didn't even have to make a list. Laughing, I noted he had used all sixty of the stickers. My son would have had to add a room onto the house.

Well, you have to go with the flow, so I started shopping. First stop, KB Toy Store I like it in there, it's small, not so overwhelming. My sister by my side, list in hand, we picked out gifts for fifteen children. Shopping is definitely a serious item on my to-do list. Toys are fun gifts, they lift my spirits and Christmas seems doable and cheerful. Nevertheless, I have just picked out fifteen Christmas gifts, and they were only for children. Next was Macy's.

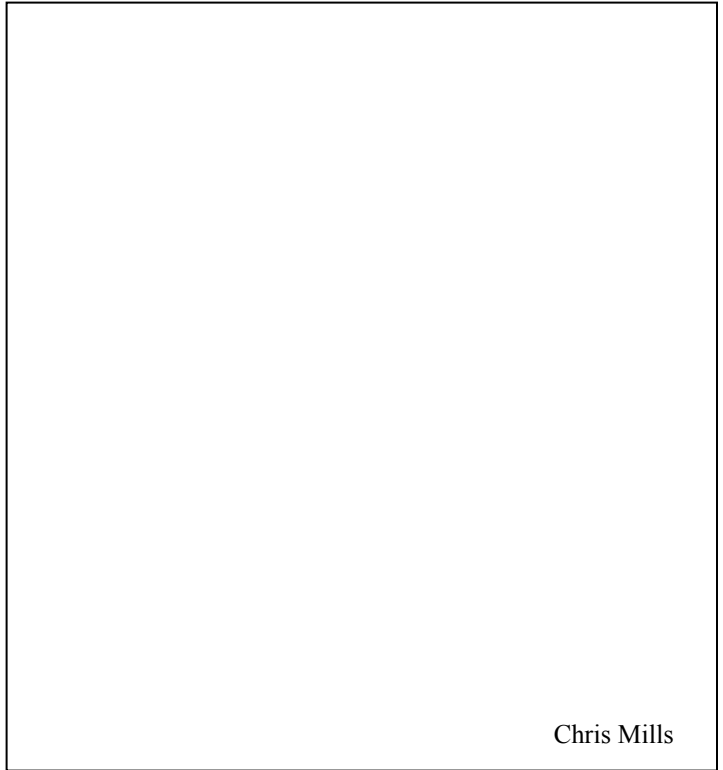
By the time I got home, I was exhausted. When my husband asked, "What's for dinner?" I smiled. "It's Christmas time. I could call for Chinese, or how about eating out tonight?" "All right," he answered, "but when do we start eating home again?" "December 24th," I laughed, "I promise."

Joan Marge-LaGrassa

Editor's note: See how easy it is? How about some submissions from you folks for the Spring Issue. Keep it down to 250 words, and I promise I do not edit or spell-check. No porn please.

THE WRITE STUFF

SOLVING WRITER'S BLOCK



Chris Mills

HOW THEY HANDLE WRITER'S BLOCK

John Steinbeck	Go out and gather grapes.
Lewis Carroll	It's late, it's late, don't have time to write.
Harper Lee	Go find another bird.
O. Henry	Over two hundred stories, enough already!
Bram Stoker	Wait until the moon is full.
Margaret Mitchell	One book was enough.
Stephen King	Who, me? You're kidding, right?
Hugh Hefner	Who has time for writing.
Ernest Hemingway	Find another war.
Wm. Shakespeare	Let Bacon do it.
Nelson DeMille	Take a ride to the East End.
Charles Dickens	Find the best and the worst of the NY Times.
Ray Bradbury	Plan another trip to Mars.
Ian Fleming	004, 005, 006, oh hell one more.
Mark Twain	Another ride with Huck on the Mississippi.
Jack London	Florida looks good.
Wm. Shatner	Go where no man has gone before.