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HUMOR

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BIOGRAPHIES

RAMONA JAN is the special section editor for **The River Reporter's** quarterly **Our Country Home** magazine. She also currently writes for the Milford, Orange County and Sullivan County journals. She is the published author of "Bon Jovi: The Story of Rock's Runaway Superstars," and a former contributing editor to **RockLine! Magazine**.

MAURA STONE is a resident of Bethel. Her first two novels, "Five-Star FLEECING," and the one written by her evil alter-ego, Cheri Blossum, "Secrets & Seduction," won national book awards and critical acclaim. "eDating the Old School Way," published by HOPress, is lauded by critics as a "zany and fun read." Her new novel, a romantic coming-of-age work, "Amour Anarchy, a Memoir," is due out May 2016.

JUNE DONOHUE writes a column for the **Sullivan County Democrat** and has done some Yarnslingers events. She also did comedy at the North Branch Inn and at some cafés in New Jersey. She kept the house she grew up in at Callicoon Center and has a home in River Edge, NJ.

W Y FELLEBERG has presented his poetry at the Catskill Art Society, The Cooperage (broadcast on WJFF radio), and in the Calling All Poets Series. He is completing his memoir, "East of the Sun and West of the Moon: A Japanese-American Boy Remembers," presented in part at the Yarnslinger's Memoir Series at CAS.

HELENA MOORE worked as a psychotherapist in Manhattan for 20 years, is now semi-retired in Forestburgh, NY.

MARCIA NEHEMIAH is a published author ("Crone Age," 2012) and poet ("Final Story," 2009; "Reclamation," 2005). From 2007 to 2013, she wrote a monthly column on sustainable living for **The River Reporter**. She enjoys hiking and rafting the Delaware, and crafting temari, Japanese thread balls. She is a lay-ordained Zen practitioner at Two Rivers Zen Community in Honesdale, PA.

PATRICIA KETT is a retired nurse for whom writing has been a not-so-secret love for over 60 years. Her poetry has been published in newspapers, journals, magazines and four anthologies, the more recent being "The Rutherford Red Wheelbarrow Poet's Anthology,"

2012 and Caduceus, 2012. She was a member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective in Narrowsburg, NY and has participated in poetry readings in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. She self-published a collection of poems, "No Need to Repeat Old Lies or Old Lives," 2012 and a self-help book, "Happy is Not a Goal!, "2013.

NORMA KETZIS BERNSTOCK'S poems have been widely published in journals and anthologies and have been recognized by the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Awards. Her chapbook, "Don't Write a Poem About Me After I'm Dead," was published in 2011.

SHEILA DUGAN lives in a big yellow house on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware with her two cats and hundreds of books.

LEONARD FRIEDLAND decided against welfare, but is now proudly drawing on his Social Security. Purely by coincidence, the author was fired—that is, laid off—shortly after writing this piece. He teaches tai chi in New York City and Hortonville, NY, in his spare time.

NANCY WELLS lives in Damascus near the Delaware River. She is a member of Blue Stone Poets and Country Voices, and past member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective (UDWC). Her poems have appeared in UDWC Anthology, "Leaving the Empty Room," "PoeTree," "Oh to Be a Dandelion," "One Sassy Blossom" and various tanka chapbooks.

MARC J. SWITKO was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Liberty NY. After dropping out of Cornell, Switko attended community college for a semester under the iron fist of his parents. He then moved to Albany and began publishing reviews as the book critic for a successful literary magazine called **The Albany Review**. Switko left for New York City where he began writing professionally for the Art-Smut publications of Far East. For the sake of brevity, we can say that he was seriously involved in a multitude of creative projects over the years, encompassing the written, visual, and musical arts. His return to Sullivan County, NY led to a flourishing art business as well as the birth of his only child, Emma Irene Switko. Together they live and create in their Victorian storefront building in North Branch, NY.

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From there to here, and here
to there, funny things are
everywhere. Dr. Seuss

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From the editor

The River Reporter publishes the **Literary Gazette** annually. This literary arts journal is filled with essays, stories, poems, and photographs. The theme this year is “humor.” The entries you will read are on any topic, but the overlying subject represents humor, whatever that means to the author. Any kind of humor works here: jokes, satire, dark humor, sarcasm, etc. This theme was open to interpretation, but will probably make the reader laugh, or at least smile. Think of the Shouts and Murmurs section in **The New Yorker** (the only one worth reading—am I right?). Think *The Onion*. Think David Sedaris, or Mark Twain, or Shel Silverstein. The photographs are by talented photographer Lawrence Braun. We talked about how the subject of humor is difficult to capture in a photo. I think Lawrence’s photos evoke an overall feeling of joy and laughter. Of course, everyone’s idea of what’s funny is different, but I think you’ll find humor in these pages.

Editor
Isabel

“The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.” — e. e. cummings




From the photographer

Lawrence Braun rambled from NJ to CA , then to NE-PA to live on a farm and work to build better local food networks. Now back to doing photo full-time to tell those stories and other adventures of people making things happen on the DIY and local food levels. Sprinkling in some personal stories too. Spare time is spent in the woods watching birds, foraging and hanging with my dog. Available worldwide. Let’s talk. Send notes to lawrencebraun@gmail.com.



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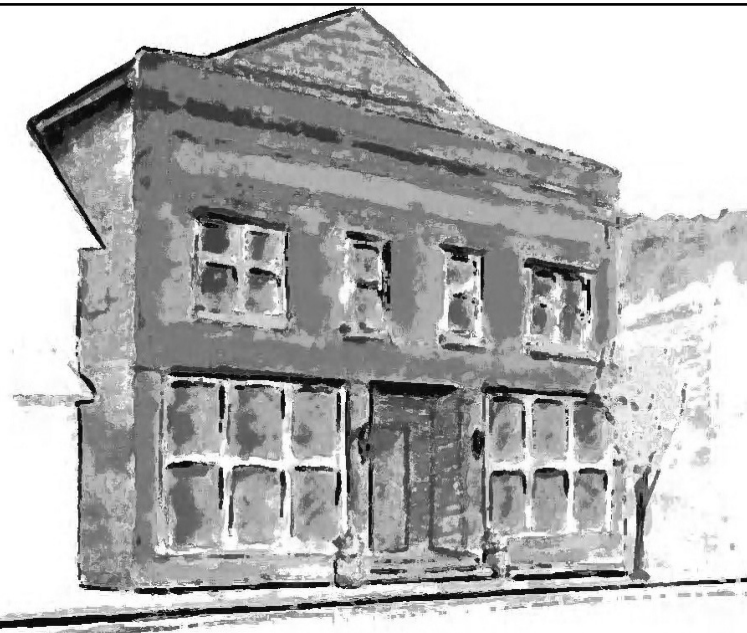
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JULY

By Helena Moore

If we go to enjoy the seashore
On a beautiful summer day,
While the crowd is basking in sunshine,
“It’s kind of buggy,” my hubby will say.

It matters not how great the food
In smorgasbord or buffet supreme,
While everyone else enjoys the feast,
My dearie will spy a speck in the cream.

Guess who, in a glorious garden of bloom
Sees only the one that is dying? He!
All this, and more, provokes me, for
I wonder if that’s how he first noticed me!



Country Wedding

By Nancy Wells

country wedding
the bride dances barefoot
men wait their turn-
a child sticks his finger
in the wedding cake

Cold August

By Mary Greene

The nuts are falling in the woods. Or are we the nuts falling in the woods? Global warming has been declared: manmade/ God made/ made up/ catastrophic/ real/ unreal/ natural/ unnatural/ the end of us/ a leftist conspiracy to bring down the family. And we don't say *global warming* anymore; we say *climate change*: climbing/grinding/swinging temps up and down. An excess of rain/ drought/ wildfires/ hurricanes. The Weather Channel

no longer knows what tone to take: here are our storm hunters at the brink, of the surge but we only bring this news to keep you safe. It's important not to drive through floods as we show you cars careening through deep water. We're all one: we big-breasted girls in our strange dresses and reassuring men with our average builds. Our Chicago-land with its heat; our Texas drought; our Minnesota frost and Colorado fires; our Atlanta rainstorms

and heartland destruction; our Washington DC soaked in with fog; our Philly with its unprecedented tornados; our derechos and sand storms; our New York City looking calm today under an orange sky and white-hot steely skyscrapers. (How long can *they* last?) The birds in Central Park are done making nests. Chickadees fly from branch to branch; the phoebes and robins have already booked. The Hudson River cliffs look down without much interest. The waves

at Coney Island don't make a fuss: average and brooding with a scent of hot dogs. We are the ones we have been waiting for/ hoping for/ dreading. *Now close all the windows and hush all the fields—Hope is the thing with feathers—And pluck til time and times are done—In my end is my beginning—The sword sung on the barren heath—And here is our patient, green and lush—and still so sweet—etherized upon a table.*

(References in order of appearance: June Jordan (maybe), Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, William B. Yeats, TS Eliot, William Blake, TS Eliot.)

As I Pledged Allegiance to the Wall

By Sheila Dugan

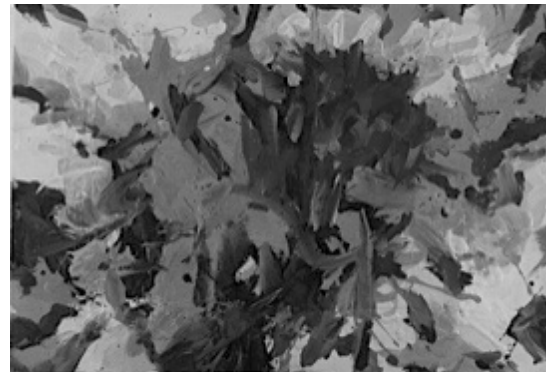
*In my little town
I grew up believ—ing
God keeps his eye on us all
And he used to lean upon me
As I pledged allegiance to the wall
— Simon and Garfunkel*

Did any of us kids know why we pledged allegiance every morning before our wretched studies began? Did we know what we were saying, or did we just sort of mouth what we thought the teacher was saying? Whether it made sense or not, in a sing-song voice I said something like:

I fudge a reason tooth of hag, Anna you knighted steaks of an Erika; and tooth of a pug licks four witches strands, one Asian underdog, with littering and just us four owls.

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Winging Cow Chips

By June Donohue

My friend, Margie Van Ginhoven, had arranged a Community Day in Fremont Center, and I was lucky enough to be in the country that weekend. When I heard what the main event was however, I began to make excuses to her as to why I might not be able to attend.

Someone out West had come up with the unique idea of drying out cow flops and then having a contest to see who could fling the cow manure the farthest. Margie had adopted the idea.

In New Jersey, we use frisbees for that, but I guess that shows a lack of imagination. Margie wasn't about to give up on me. "Don't worry, they no longer smell, and we provide white gloves so your hands don't get dirty—and besides, Debra Winger might be there."

Fremont Center had a year-round population of 42, and Debra Winger was one of them. She might be a Winger, I thought, but I doubted if she'd be winging any cow chips.

Margie started describing the process required to obtain those prize chips. In

August when the rainy season was over, she started collecting the cow flops that were already partly dried out. She got some guys from a lumber mill to help collect them. My respect for Margie's salesmanship was increasing by the minute.

Then she put them on a rack in her yard to dry out further. (The chips, not the men). If it rained she had to move the rack into the barn. Can you imagine being on the phone with someone when it started to rain? What did she say? It's not like, "It's starting to rain so I have to get the wash off the line."

I did wind up going to the Community Day, and I heard that Debra Winger had been there. I don't know whether Debra did or not, but I even hurled a few, but they didn't go far. I was a total flop.



Humor at Work

By June Donohue

Since my husband Jim retired before I did, he would often have dinner ready when I got home from work. A male chauvinist sat in front of me at the office, and one day he said, "There's one thing I insist on, and that is that my wife have dinner on the table when I get home from work." I thought he would drop his teeth when I replied, "Frank, I'm the same way."

I'd often go for a walk on my lunch hour, and one day I said to the head of the shipping department, "I get so annoyed when I'm walking along and a guy will lean out of his car and whistle, but then when he is stopped at a light and I try to get in the car, he pulls away." I wouldn't have traded the look of shock on Dick's face before the dawn, for anything.

When my daughter went to work for my son, who has his own business, she asked if he had a dental plan. He said yes, it was to brush and floss twice a day. They had an office cat who had the run of the place, but when he hired a computer operator who was allergic to cats it created a problem. "We'll have to keep him outside," the secretary said. The office manager thought for a moment and replied, "But how can he operate the computer from out there?"

My husband's friend, Richie, was returning home after working the night shift, when he came upon an accident. A chicken truck had turned over on its side and there were live chickens all over the turnpike. Richie did the logical thing and put one of those chickens in his trunk.

When he arrived home, his wife, Alice, was asleep, so he put the chicken in the stall shower and went to sleep. Later Alice got up to go to the bathroom, and when the chicken started flying around behind the frosted glass, it caused another accident when Alice stood up and wet her pajamas.

She went screaming into the bedroom and told Richie that something had gotten into their shower. Richie said, "Don't worry Alice, it's only a chicken" and he rolled over to go back to sleep.

Autobiography of a Developer

By Leonard Friedland

[Written for the in-house newsletter of a small software development firm, now defunct]

All my life I wanted to be a programmer, even though I was totally unaware of this until I was 37 years old. At that time, having exhausted all other ways of making a living (some of them quite imaginative, and not necessarily legal), I decided that I faced three possible career choices: law school, physical therapy, or welfare. I had pretty much decided upon welfare, as both law school and physical therapy required three years of schooling, when an acquaintance of mine mentioned that he had not worked in over a year, and this by choice. I asked him how he had managed this, and he told me he was a COBOL programmer. Not working sounded pretty good to me, so I asked how I could become a programmer, too. He told me about a three-month course of study at NYU, which I took, and the rest is history.

My previous work experience prepared me well for the logic and attention to detail that programming requires. From cab driving, I learned

to tolerate frustration, albeit with a great deal of cursing and yelling. From my years as an Long Island Railroad conductor, I learned how to ignore people and sleep on the job. From my time as a preparator (look it up), I learned to handle highly neurotic people while working under intense pressure. The only job I had that did not help with my programming work was when I delivered baked goods on a Westchester/Connecticut route. But I ate a lot of cake and gained 10 pounds, so it wasn't wasted time.

My first job was with Columbia University. I worked on the Human Resources system, and had a lot of fun looking up everybody's salary, especially those of my co-workers. (If anyone knows how much Peter makes, please let me know!) I spent two years working on a database system that nobody except Tom knows about. I decided that the future of computing was in PCs, so I taught myself C and was lucky enough to make the move from Non-Profit Mainframe Programmer to Corporate PC Hotshot. A few years in the corporate arena left me convinced that the best place to work was a software firm. Having been here for almost four years now, I am once again considering one of my earlier career choices—welfare.

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By Norma Ketzis Bernstock

I stand in **Produce** deciding between Romaine or Boston when suddenly the air comes alive with Meatloaf, belting out Seger's *Old Time Rock and Roll*. A man in **Cheese** grabs a woman from **Deli** who swings her hips past **Seafood** where someone with a clam in each hand keeps time.

At **Customer Service** clerks beat on boxes with basters and cashiers atop the conveyor clap hands leaving shoppers to bag their own. I grab a long zucchini and twirling it like a baton, step rhythmically out the door, the parade behind me.

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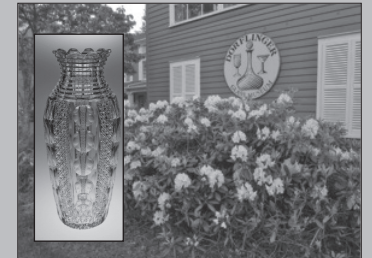
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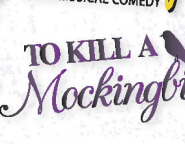
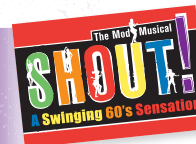
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Brains, Heart

By Marcia Nehemiah

Technically, my husband and I are not vegetarians. We're vegetarians with a dash of hypocrisy. Pat will wolf down a turkey sandwich, but he recoils at the sight of the lifeless, roasted Thanksgiving bird on the table sans head and feathers, retaining the shape of the live animal that saunters through the woods around our house. It can once have had bones, but he doesn't want to see them or touch them. He brooks no reminder of an animal's erstwhile animalness.

Sushi is allowed—no bones, no face, no eyes. I vowed, for a few hours, to cross sushi off the menu when it occurred to me that the tender, orange slice of salmon perched on perfect mounds of the whitest rice was once a creature trapped in a net, flopping and gasping for breath on the deck of a ship and speared between the eyes just before its entrails slithered between the fisherman's gloved hands into a refuse barrel.

How did I, who grew up eating organ meat and whose first memory involves animal slaughter, develop scruples against ingesting flesh foods? The year, 1956. The place, North Bergen, NJ. Two things fascinated me at the kosher butcher: the designs I made by scuffing through the sawdust-covered floor and the way the beheaded chicken ran in a circle before toppling onto its side, after which I lost interest as the bird became less and less bird-like. The butcher de-feathered it, cut off its feet, gutted it, and handed my mother a round bundle wrapped in brown paper and tied with a string. At four years old, I did not understand that the thing doing its death dance on the wooden butcher block was connected to the juicy drumstick I ate with my fingers later that evening.

I watched my mother scrape scales off the chicken feet before she immersed them in water with the rest of the chicken, including gizzards, hearts, and the neck, to make a hearty base for matzo ball chicken soup.

A real treat was stuffed derma, or *kishke*, a combination of onion, flour, salt and pepper stuffed into beef intestines, sliced and fried.

Cow's tongue simmered in a pot for hours. Once cooked, a thick membrane was peeled back to reveal a pink replica of my own tongue, but Jack-in-

the-beanstalk-Giant. I stroked my finger along the sandpaper bumps. Fascinating for a child of eight. Mother never liked my friend Susan because Susan was rich, which we were not, and not Jewish, which we were. I liked Susan because she wore overalls when girls were just beginning to wear blue jeans. I liked her wild side, which my mother found troublesome. One afternoon Susan walked into our kitchen where a plate of uncooked calves brains rested on the counter.

"What's that?" she asked.

It never occurred to me that there were families in the world who did not savor fried offal, so I answered, "Brains," as I opened the refrigerator for some Kool-Aid to accompany our Hostess



Twinkies, the door squeaking on its hinge like one in a haunted house, perfect orchestration to Susan's accompanying scream. She ran from the kitchen, shrieking, "Brains? Brains? You're joking, right? Brains?"

I helped Mother make a delicacy called calves foot jelly, succinctly known in our house as "Foot." This dish required hooves, boiled for three or four hours. Unimaginable amounts of garlic, paprika and black pepper was added to the resulting grey liquid into which was scraped any meat from the bones. Mother slid the bowl into the refrigerator and waited for it to gel. At dinnertime we savored giggling wedges with horseradish and matzo, crunching on the occasional morsel of gristle. Another favorite, both to make and to eat, was heart and lung stew. My job: mince the mass of

raw, bloody organs mounded on the kitchen table. My tool: a scissors. I snipped the lung, heart and milt (a.k.a cow's spleen) into bite-sized morsels, ruminating over the alveoli of the spongy lungs, the density of the heart—slippery, dripping innards which my mother combined with other magical ingredients that a few hours later yielded a stew with very brown gravy.

I did not eat brains, but I ate heart, lung, spleen, foot and tongue. (Cannibalism anyone?)

I can see you gagging and laying aside your liverwurst sandwich. But really, what's the difference between eating the meat that surrounds the organs and eating the organs themselves?

What's the difference between lamb and dog, or horse for that matter, commonly eaten throughout Europe and Asia?

The suburban supermarket where I took my mother shopping in the last years of her life catered to a wide range of ethnicities. I spotted chunked goat wrapped in plastic, looking quite like beef, and jokingly suggested she buy some. But of course, this devout carnivore, this gourmand of foot, brains, heart, spleen and stuffed beef intestines, demurred. What is the difference between eating the bearded billy goat or the uddered cow, I wondered, almost tempted to try the goat myself—does it cross the nebulous line I've drawn when it comes to flesh meat? The chicken and fish thing O.K., but the cow and lamb thing not O.K.? Where would goat fit into the complex scheme? I demurred as well. Too red.

My hypocrisies and epicurean ambivalences nuzzle at me. Why

chicken and not veal? Why salmon steak but not steak *au poivre*, which at one time I indeed savored? I don't know why I turn my back on beef. Perhaps it is their deep eyes, their patience. Perhaps I'm put off when I see them standing knee deep in mud and manure.

I have long pondered: Are dogs sentient? Absolutely. Chicken? Totally. Shrimp? Yes? Snails? Ants? The Jainists of India won't eat carrots because lifting them from the soil might kill the larvae around them. Yes, yes, yes.

I suppose I don't need to explain myself. I'll just be an ovo-lacto-sometimes-pesco-fowl vegetarian.

That's what I am.

No explanations.

No excuses.

The Soup Kitchen of Love

By WY Fellenberg

Trust me.
When i talk about love
Please don't listen
I know nothing.

You want free advice, stop in the soup kitchen of love
Look for that sad queue slouched out in the rain
The moist-eyed and slack-jawed lost in their
Crying, muttering, ranting; all suffering from love or its lack
Broken hearts, migraines, IBS, anger issues, herpes, and worse.

Keep your distance from the tight-lipped stoics
Who pretend they're toughing it out
Never mind when they say I don't want to talk about it
They'll suck you in with blubbery pouts 'til you gag
From the sour whine of welt schmerz on their breath.

Once inside, shuffle up to the counter and sidle up
To the big-hearted volunteers with hurt smiles and cheerful caps
That tell you "I ♥ love" as steam rises from the pans
Gird yourself for peculiar odors from tired casseroles soggy with
Overcooked tropes, clichés, and greeting-card homilies.

They'll slop these on your greasy plate:
Love is like two hearts are beating as one
If you have a fight, make up before you go to bed
Don't sweat the small stuff
It's a marathon, not a sprint.

When the volunteers scrape the bottom of the pot
they'll dish up wisdom that's too hard to swallow
Remember, love misspelled inside out is 'oval'
Better to love than to be in love, and vice versa
And for dessert, a scoop of always wear protection.

When you stumble out of the soup kitchen of love
Don't come complaining to me
I know nothing and i told you so;
You got what you paid for
Next time, see a professional.



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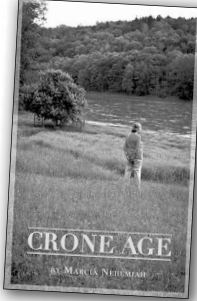


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Bear Tracks in Nassau County

Based on a true story about my mother

By Ramona Jan

In '63, a German family (the Schmelings) moved into my Long Island neighborhood—the father, Rudi, his petite and beautiful wife Lisle, and their big-boned daughter Greta.

Before coming to America, on busy Hamburg streets, Rudi led a bear named King Tut around by a leash. The leash was attached to a ring—a ring that was embedded in the poor creature's nose. On command, King Tut would do spins and dance for money. As a sideline, Rudi juggled bowling balls. And yet, in Nassau County, none of these antics were impressive enough to draw the kind of audience that would secure the Schmeling family's future.

Rudi then built a 20-foot high oval-shaped motorcycle track in his backyard. Lisle and King Tut danced and then ascended metal ladders on opposite sides of the track, where they mounted separate motorcycles and circled around, King Tut chasing Lisle who was provocatively dressed in a swim suit. However, even this marvel failed to draw enough spectators. When Greta began selling homemade sausages on the side, however, the masses came!

Rudi kept King Tut in the barn. In between shows, he led Tut (without a leash) from the barn to the track. Everyone backed away except for me, a mere 16-year-old. I was a regular at the show, and the first few times I saw it, Lisle appeared happy; but soon she stopped smiling and waving at the crowd. One day Rudi asked me if I'd be interested in replacing her in the act. Shocked by his request I asked, "What about Greta?" but I already knew the answer. Greta was too hefty and I, like Lisle, was a petite blonde. To save face, Rudi simply stated, "Greta's going to college." And she did. I was on the verge of dropping out of high school (just like my older sister had) to work in the family bakery.

When Rudi requested that I join the act, I don't think he realized who he was dealing with—me, the local Dairy Queen and daredevil, often up to all sorts of mischief! Like piercing my own ears with a sewing needle, shooting guns, stealing a car, kissing boys in the woods, and secretly converting from Protestantism to Judaism without the permission of my parents. Naturally, it never crossed my mind to ask my father if I could perform with the bear.

Rudi told me he would give me a piece of the "take"—a few dollars a day. So without telling my parents, the next morning I forced myself into the stretchy, sparkly skating costume my mother had sewn a year prior. I did my hair in a French twist and lined my eyes in real charcoal. As soon as the music started, I danced the twist with Tut and then climbed the metal stairs where I fearlessly mounted the motorcycle. Rudi strapped King Tut onto the bear's bike and the two of us took off zooming around the track. Smiling and waving to the crowd, I spotted my father looking up from the audience. Damn, I thought. I sure hope he doesn't know it's me. Though it took only a few minutes, circling the track seemed like an eternity. When the show ended and I was back on solid ground, I burst into tears.

"What's the matter?" Rudi asked, "Is it your father?"

"No," I answered shaking uncontrollably.

"Is it King Tut? Are you afraid of the bear?"

"No," I answered balling and choking on my words, "I forgot to tell you that I'm afraid of heights!"

My father shot a disparaging look at me and told me to go home. As I left, I saw him grab Rudi's elbow and lead him toward the barn. I thought it was all over. Instead dad came home with my take of the cash, which he promptly put in a jar. "That's going toward your college education," he said. A year later, The Schmeling Family Circus (as we came to be known) was asked to perform at the 1964 World's Fair. And sure enough, I got over my fear of heights.



The Days I Left My Husband

By Patricia Kett

Day 1: My husband burned the house down. I put the cats in the car, waited for the children to get home from school. He took off in the other car before the firemen finished.

Day 2: The kids and I stayed with various friends, until we were offered an apartment.

Day 3: I moved myself, kids and cats into the apartment with donations from strangers. I signed the lease, not allowed at that time, only a husband's signature was valid. The manager told me to make sure he signed it when he returned.

Day 4: He returned. He claimed there were plenty of women who wanted him. I told him to find one. I did not mention the lease. I drove him to the bus stop, bought his ticket, waved good-bye and exhaled.

Obituary Project

By Marc Switko

Obituary # 1

James “Jimmy” Ortega was a very quiet man who lived in a cabin in the woods. He lived alone and caressed his one cat, “Kitten Verde,” “Da caat wit one green ojo,” he would say, while cuddled up next to the fire in his single large room off the entrance foyer, lined with taxidermy buck heads. A lifelong resident of Lava, NY, Jimmy worked around the yard, picking up sticks for kindling, living an independently wealthy life, having inherited what was, at the time, considered to be a substantial sum of money: 50,000 dollores.

Son of the late Pasquel and Silvi Ortega, Jimmy enjoyed the simple things in life, never marrying. Years passed, and it was found that James had a relationship with a woman from Venezuela, Rene Marie Burgerluf. They had an illegitimate son, who grew up separate and apart from his father as the mother kept him hidden and felt it best not to divulge the identity of James “Jimmy” Ortega. That illegitimate son is me, and I feel it’s time my father was honored with an obituary he’d be proud to read in his one-room cabin in the woods. There will be no funeral, no visitation, no viewing. James “Jimmy” Ortega, born in Puerto Rico on December 6th, 1939, died on October 3rd, 1977. I found out only this year and, even though I never knew him, he will be greatly missed.

Obituary #2

K. Byron Campbell, a writer of many children’s self-help cartoons, unpublished from the 1960s to the present, died, unknown to all in the field of illustration and cartooning, on October 1st, 2008, in peaceful repose, surrounded only by a close relative, Timothy Henny Berle. Mr. Berle, highly successful in the field of marine biology, studied the plankton migration and red-tide infestation of Asian coral reefs, receiving the prestigious Jacques Cousteau bronze medal award for valiant effort in a technical area. Born in 1953, Mr. Berle has remained dedicated to solving the problems of oceanic disintegration, prevention of over-fishing in mid-Atlantic waters, protection of the Alaskan deep ocean Salmon community, and numerous other environmental concerns. He claims his love affair with the world’s water creatures started when his parents bought for him a simple fish bowl and a goldfish named Swooshy, who he kept alive far beyond the normal lifespan of a goldfish, feeding it a self-formulated organic fish food created in his childhood bedroom laboratory. He is truly a maverick. His work will continue to affect the views of all scientists and laypersons long after he is gone. He will be sorely missed, but for now the work continues and we must honor him while he lives. He is the only remaining relative of the deceased.

Obituary #3

It’s a sad story, but one that must be told in this brief obituary. Donald D. Montrose died in his home on Saturday, October 11th, 2008. He was accidentally overdosed on heart medication by his wife of 48 years, Selma Harriet Montrose. Donald had been suffering from dizzy spells after a tennis tournament with the neighbors many years back. He built a court on his front lawn, and even though the surface was uneven, he enjoyed any type of play. It was discovered that Donald had heart trouble. Years of dizziness ensued. He spent most of his time in the home, watching TV and playing with his digital camera and computer, forwarding dirty jokes to family and friends. Selma was responsible for administering the meds. No one realized she was suffering with Alzheimer’s, and as she slowly disintegrated, mentally, her ability to give proper doses of meds also disintegrated. Donald’s health continued to deteriorate and eventually all he could do was yell out the window at Selma with instructions on how to mow the lawn and shovel snow. He got monthly check-ups at the veteran’s hospital, and eventually they decided to do quadruple by-pass surgery.

Three weeks after the successful procedure, Donald was dead. Selma said “It’s better this way,” with no sign of tears. She will be living with her sister down the street, and the house will be put up for sale. A memorial mass will be held on Monday, at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Zion, MN, for close friends and relatives. Donald leaves behind two daughters and a son, three cats, two dogs, and a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, his closest companion in the final days. May he rest in peace, and may we find a cure for either Alzheimer’s or heart disease or both.



“Du Coté de Chez Stone”

By Maura Stone

Marcel Proust, in his self-published masterpiece, “Remembrance of Things Past,” bit into a madeleine and created an awareness about the power of smell and taste as triggers for memories. My version consists of tasting chocolate babka crumbs picked off the topping, which evokes memories from my childhood.

Dad was a mad scientist—he worked for the U. S. government in military defense—and Mom was his enabler, a perfect partner in crime.

One day I caught Mom on the porch unwinding dental floss. She attached the string to tree branch sticks every six inches and then shoved each stick into the ground abutting the lake.

“What’re you doing?” I asked, girding myself for her response. With Mom, you never know what you’ll hear.

“Making a fence to keep the geese off the property.”

“Of dental floss?” It looked awfully flimsy.

“Yes, so they won’t hurt their little feet.”

This is the same woman who placed a live 14” small-mouth bass, a gift from a neighbor who caught it in front of our house on the lake, in the freezer because she didn’t want it to suffer by chopping off its head.

“Don’t open the freezer,” she shrieked daily as I reached for the handle. “The fish may flop out.”

“But I want ice cubes for my soda.”

“You’ll have to do without.”

Weeks later, I pulled out a bass shaped in a perfect U formation. It also killed my appetite for ice cubes.

Sunday mornings were dedicated to the fine art of dining at the Stone household. Dad woke up at dawn due to the dog, a large black Lab. Since the day he took that mutt home from the shelter, he never needed an alarm clock. Instead, the dog placed his nose in my sleeping father’s ear and whined.

Dad never heard him, nor did my mother. But I did. From the other side of the house.

Mom slept underneath five blankets next to Dad, who was comfortable with only a sheet. He kept the air conditioner on no matter the season; the bedroom was always cold. Colder than the freezer. It’s surprising he didn’t freeze into a U formation. “It’s healthier to sleep this way,” he informed me. I wondered how he defined “healthier,” because he had colds fifty-one weeks a year. He went for only one week without sniffing—that was the week he

had his annual flu shot—and right back to being ill. “Dad, why do you even bother getting a flu shot when you come down with the flu afterwards?”

“Imagine how sick I would’ve been if I didn’t get the shot,” he responded.

Getting back to the dog alarm, that high-pitched keening drilled through my brain and woke me up. I put on my overcoat, hat and gloves and then opened the door to my parents’ bedroom.

A blast of frigid air hit my face and my eyes frosted over. I forgot my scarf.



“Hey Lachy,” I said to the dog, “Wanna go out?” Faster than greased lightning, he bolted from my father’s side and ran out of the room. To ensure Dad didn’t succumb to subzero temperatures, I gently placed a mirror under his nose to see it fog up. Sadly, I couldn’t find a way to dig through the mound to reach my mother without waking her. But, if I put my ear on top, I could hear muffled noises that didn’t resemble a death rattle.

Reassured of their well-being, I closed the bedroom door and then addressed the dog prancing in the kitchen, his toenails clicking on the tiles.

“Quiet, you’ll wake up Mom.”

That statement induced him to chase his tail and bark.

“You want to get me in trouble? Get outta here, you mutt,” I said, opening the door for him. He peeled out.

After I shrugged off my outerwear, I set up the dog’s breakfast. Mom spent hours cooking him a tasty concoction, although he was just as happy eating from the garbage pail.

Dad emerged from the bedroom.

“What’s with all this noise?” roared the man who slept through his dog alarm. He could sleep through a Boeing 747 flying directly overhead. Yet, if a butterfly flapped its wings five miles away, he’d awaken in a snap.

“Whatever you do, don’t wake your mother!” Looking around, he asked, “Where’s the dog?” “Outside.”

“Good. Now that I’m up, let me go to the store to pick up a few items.”

An hour later, Dad returned with shopping bags filled with bagels, danish and chocolate babka from Katz’s Bakery. He also purchased an intact smoked white fish, nova scotia and pickled herring in sour cream.

Thus began the familial ritual. Dad cooked eggs with onions and lox. From under the mound, Mom’s amazing sense of snout woke her. She followed the aroma like the walking dead, staggering into the kitchen. The dog, with his sense of smell, whined from outside. “Will someone let the dog in?” complained my mother. “I can’t stand his whining.”

My father worked on **The New York Times** crossword puzzle in ink, Mom did the one in the **Times-Herald Record** and I fed the dog underneath the table. He then curled up and laid down on my father’s feet.

While my parents were immersed in intellectual pursuits like, “What’s a five-letter word meaning thesaurus?” I picked the top off the babka and ate the disintegrating crumbs of chocolate, brown sugar and cinnamon.

Halfway through the babka, my father caught me.

“Hey! There are other people here who may want to eat it.” The dog sat up and stared at me.

Those elusive memories along with a deep feeling of enveloped and coddled love come to surface the relatively few times when I eat the crumbs off a babka. But, only the kind that Dad used to bring home from Katz’s.

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\$2,500^{*/}**

**on the purchase of a new Kubota L3301/L3901/L4701
compact tractor equipped with a Kubota front loader
and one additional qualifying implement.**

Offers end 6/30/16.



MARSHALL MACHINERY INC.

Route 652 • 348 Bethel School Road, Honesdale PA 18431

570-729-7117 • www.marshall-machinery.com



*Customer instant rebates of \$1,500 are available on cash or standard rate finance purchases of new Kubota L3301/L3901/L4701 and Grand L60 Series-All equipment from participating dealers' stock. Rebate not available with 0% A.P.R., or low-rate financing offers or after completed sale. Dealer subtracts rebate from dealer's pre-rebate selling price on qualifying purchases. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 6/30/2016. **Customer instant rebates of \$1,000 are available on purchases of new Kubota L3301/L3901/L4701 with qualifying new Kubota front loader and one additional qualifying implement from participating dealers' stock. Dealer subtracts rebate from dealer's pre-rebate selling price on qualifying purchases. Rebate not available after completed sale. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 6/30/2016. Optional equipment may be shown.

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