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Creating a Winning Marketing Strategy
An Interview
with Scott Swier

SECOND CHANCES

Eric Gregory Talks about His Heartwarming Story on Organ Donation

MEMOIR AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF HISTORY

Deborah Sweaney on the third book in her Missouri Trilogy

INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING. INDEPENDENT ATTITUDE.

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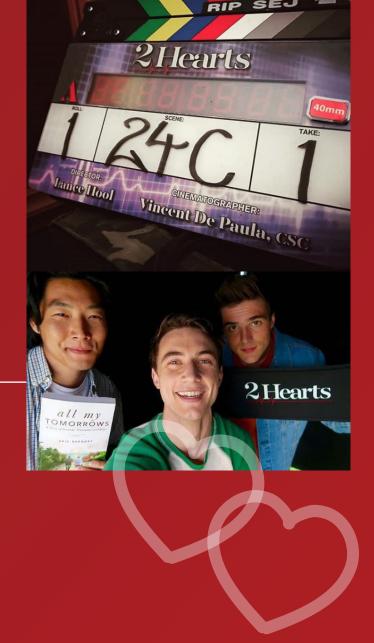
 -Jim Benes with contributions from Andrea Wiley





We are excited and proud to announce Eric Gregory's book with Word Association, *All My Tommorows*, is being adapted into a film called *2 Hearts*. Eric's book was published in August 2017, and filming started and wrapped before his book had been out for an entire year. The film stars Jacob Elordi from Netflix's popular young adult movie, *Kissing Booth* and *Riverdale's* Polly Cooper. Stay tuned to Word Association's Facebook page for updates on the film's release! *Congrats Eric!*

When the price of a second chance is a life



by Eric Gregory

How do you measure the cost

of a second chance? What is it worth? What is the return on investment? Some ROIs are easy: a dividend check every three months, a bond yield, a price to earnings ratio. But what about a human life? How does one measure the value of a second chance at life? In days or years perhaps? Income earned or professional accomplishments?

The cost of an organ transplant can run upward of a million dollars. And usually one human life. In most cases that life is a young one. In the case of my son it was all of 19 precious years. Chris Gregory was a 2007 graduate

of Mount Saint Joseph High School. He died 10 years ago. The night he died, surgeons from around the country descended on an operating room in New Orleans. They removed his heart, his lungs, his liver, his pancreas and both his kidneys and took those organs to hospitals from Shreveport to Jacksonville. Then, they were carefully transplanted into people desperately hoping for a second chance at life.

The next day, as my wife and I boxed up Christopher's belongings and swept out his dorm room, five fortunate souls awoke to another day. Second chances bought and paid for by a perfectly

healthy 19-year-old boy who, but for a mysterious brain aneurysm, would still be alive today. How does anyone balance the financial cost against the human? You can't, so don't try. The math does not work. Some very famous people have benefited from organ transplants. Former Vice President Dick Cheney got a new heart in 2012. United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz got one in 2015, and Baseball Hall of Famer Rod Carew in 2016.

Jorge Bacardi will tell you he is not famous, only his name is. He is my celebrity connection to organ donation. Mr. Bacardi, as in Bacardi rum, received my son's organs. He was dying when he received the call that he was a match for Chris' lungs. Nic was dying too. Not as famous as Mr. Bacardi but every bit as deserving. Nic was literally sent home to die the morning Chris' death certificate was signed.

And Mac was very near death, and so were Xavier and Carolyn. But they all got The Call, all because of a young man whose whole life was supposed to lay before him. Five people each got a second chance at life thanks not only to the generosity of an anonymous college freshman from suburban Maryland but to an entire life-saving enterprise that is the organ donation and transplantation community.

To express his gratitude, Jorge Bacardi funded the Gabriel House of Care on the Jacksonville campus of the Mayo Clinic. It offers an affordable home for transplant patients and their caregivers so that they can have a safe place to wait for their own second chances. But that's not all he did.



Five people each got a second chance at life thanks not only to the generosity of an anonymous college freshman from suburban Maryland but to an entire life-saving enterprise that is the organ donation and transplantation community.

He wrote to us. He didn't have to, but he did. Then he visited us. And we have become close in the years since. He re-paid us in the only currency that matters: his friendship.

Ten years after our son's death we are grateful that Chris chose to register as an organ donor. His generosity set in motion a chain of events that led ultimately to the mending of my own broken heart — my own second chance. Not all donor parents are so fortunate. Not all have a Jorge or a Nic or a Xavier in their life.

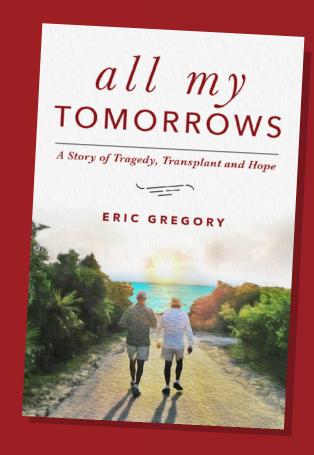
Our healing has been helped by the connections we made with all of Christopher's organ recipients, connections that would not have been possible without the miracle of organ donation. Each in their own way bought me precious time to accept the loss of my child. It would not have happened but for the dedicated professionals who are in the business of second chances. If you are not registered as an organ donor, perhaps it's time to do so. Maybe second chances can be quantified after all.

For a man who, before his transplant, was slowly suffocating, it has added up to about 84 million breaths. For a couple desperately in love, like Nic and his wife Michelle, it has meant over 3,650 chances to wake up and say "I love you." And for me, as painful as they sometimes are, it is 10 Father's Days to reflect on the impact that one generous person can have on the world.

DONATE

The cover of *All My Tomorrows* features a photograph of Eric and Jorge Bacardi on an evening walk.

All My Tomorrows is available now through Word Assoiation Publishers



"Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart."
—William Wordsworth



WALKED INTO WORD ASSOCIATION PUBLISHERS with that delicious mix of excitement and anxiety that comes before the best of times. I was an intern! At a publishing company! My dreams that had been untouchable only weeks before were suddenly so close I could see the cream-colored pages and hear the flopping of freshly printed paperbacks. I walked in on a cool morning with a grin on my face and promptly announced, "Hi, I'm the intern."

I know the position of an intern may not be the most exciting. You probably think I was the dutiful coffee grabber or the copy girl. And truthfully, I didn't know what I would be doing here.

I could have been making copies for six hours a day, but if that were true, I told myself I'd be the best copy maker they had ever seen.

What I experienced was unlike anything I expected. It was real experience. It was working with Francine and Tom and having the chance to write my way into the position of an editor. An internship here gives you the chance to learn what you want to know. And I wanted to know editing.

On my first day, Francine gave me the daunting task of writing the back-cover copy for a book that was waiting to be printed. Wanting to prove myself, I spent hours on it until I had done it perfectly. Every word had thought behind it. Every sentence linked in a beautiful patchwork that wove my intricate tapestry. So, I handed it to her with confidence.

Within the hour, she called me into the conference room to discuss my work. Needless to say, she found many things wrong with it and my head promptly deflated. *Perfect? How could I have thought this was perfect?* I asked myself. Suddenly, I was disillusioned. I saw every snag and hole that Francine had so rightly pointed out. She made my work a hundred and ten times better, and that was the moment the aspiring editor realized the value of an editor.

With this strengthened conviction in the importance of my job, I set about to do the best work I could. It was long and tedious, I spent hours correcting punctuation and spelling, but it taught me the value of hard work and the rush of completing something to the best of your ability, though it may take two or three tries.

All this hard work happened at a little desk right above an air vent, and the placement of that little desk is one of the things I loved most about working here. Once you venture into the depths of the Word Association Publishers *employees only* area, you will find a small room with five desks. Two of the desks belong to Tom and Francine, the welcoming and passionate owners, two belong to Jason and April, the brilliant and kind designers, and the last one



belonged to me, intern extraordinaire. While my fortunate desk location can probably be attributed to the quaintness of the company, I choose to read into the meaning in true English major fashion. I sat directly across from the owners of the company. Their desks were no bigger than mine, and they treated me with complete respect and trust. That alone speaks volumes about what kind of establishment Tom and Francine run.

If you or someone you know decides to apply for an internship at Word Association Publishers, be warned that it will not be a typical internship. It will not be repetition or pointless tasks or the same routine every day. It will be learning how to communicate with real authors, tasting frustration, and moving past it, reading more legal help books than you ever thought you would, and even sometimes sending a fax three times before you realize you got the number wrong. So thank you, Word Association Publishers, for being part of my story. You have helped me write mine just as you have thousands of authors before me.



JEFFREY MELDON:

Marketing Man

by Tom Costello

"I've always enjoyed marketing,"

Florida attorney Jeffrey Meldon tells me. I called Jeffrey to ask him some questions about how he uses the legal help books that he writes and we publish to market his successful law practice. Word Association has been publishing these legal help books for attorneys who are members of a marketing organization called Great Legal Marketing for the past 11 years. Some of them, like Jeffrey, are adept at marketing their law practices, but many of them are clueless or they simply don't feel comfortable wading into the marketing arena and that's where GLM comes in to help them turn things around.

Jeffrey joined Great Legal Marketing in 2007, when it was still in its infancy. "Even before joining GLM I used to try different things to get attention for my law office," Jeffrey says. "For example, I did a TV commercial giving away disposable cameras that people could keep in their glove box in the event of an accident. I got six or seven thousand responses. When cell phones became popular I advertised cell phone car chargers."

"I started using billboards in Ocala and Gainesville years ago. Billboards definitely work. When the city of Gainesville banned billboards I started advertising on the city busses. People would come up to me and say, 'Oh, Jeffrey, I saw you on the bus.' Now we're on six busses."

Joining GLM allowed Jeffrey to take marketing to whole new levels. "Ben preached the importance of writing and publishing legal help books," Jeffrey explained. "I came to that first Summit conference and Word Association had a booth showing some of the legal books other GLM attorneys had done. I took some copies to the beach with me that first summer, read them, revised them to suit my own practice, and within 90 days I had written three books of my own."

Though most GLM lawyers give their books away at events and encourage the



public to call in to their offices to receive a free book, many also sell their books on Amazon. Each one focuses on a specific area of the law such as work-related injuries, DUI, child custody, or nursing home abuse. The lawyers write their books to be state-specific, and though most are fairly quick reads, they offer the average person more detailed information about their rights, how to find a good attorney, how to preserve evidence, and how to prepare for court. It's hard to imagine how anyone enters into a legal situation without the preparation these books offer.

Jeffrey says he loves going to the GLM conferences. "I'm like a kid in a candy store. I like meeting and talking with the other attorneys. I love going to the sessions and learning what lawyers from around the country are doing to promote their practices." Jeffrey always brings two or three people from his office to the conference "so they too can drink the Kool Aid."

In addition to publishing and updating his legal help books, Jeffrey and his team spend a lot

of time on their monthly newsletter (they now have 12,500 subscribers), as well as his weekly radio show, "Law Talk Live", every Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. "The show is now in its sixteenth year," Jeffrey says. "I always promote our legal help books on air so we get a lot of requests for them. Having a radio show helps to celebritize you and your law firm." And being a published author of numerous legal help books doesn't hurt either.

Starting in 1997 the Meldon Law Firm teamed up with WCJB TV20 to promote the firm's Scholar Athlete Program. Every week of the school year a high school senior in the North Central Florida area is chosen as the Scholar-Athlete of the Week and given a \$100 scholar-ship and a plaque. At the end of the school year they hold a banquet for all of the winners and their families, where one male and one female are chosen as the Scholar Athlete of the Year and presented with a huge glass trophy and an additional \$1000 scholarship.

"At Meldon Law, our success has been based on not only providing excellent legal service, but also giving back to the community through our programs and various consumer guide books. Word Association has enabled us to deliver free quality information to our community and clients and establish ourselves as an authoritative voice in our market. Publishing great books is a cornerstone of our successful marketing program.





Memoir Against the Backdrop of History

An interview with Deborah Sweaney, Author of "Blest Be the Tie"

"Sweaney makes one appreciate the extraordinary lives of 'ordinary' people."

- Cathy Gorn, Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL HISTORY DAY



Author Deborah Sweaney.

about her first book, UNPACKING MEMORIES—a memoir about her family's life in rural Holt County, Missouri where her father was a doctor in the 1950's. I was immediately drawn into the story because I too grew up in that Ozzie and Harriet, optimistic, post war decade. I remember the dedicated doctors who, like the author's selfless, hardworking father, still made house calls—more often than not, at the end of a long day of hospital rounds and endless hours of office visits.

What I first came to admire about Deborah was her skill at drawing the reader into the story as she brings it to life with carefully crafted color and rich detail. I'll never forget the scenes of Sunday afternoons with the author's mother driving along the dusty roads and all four of the Sweaney children in the car, taking her father from one house call to another. This was Iris Sweaney's way of creating quality family time in the only way that was possible for them. Next is this author's

thoroughness at being able to place the people and events within the context of what was happening in the larger world—the history of the times. Her second book, UP IN THE AIR, chronicled the 1960's—Sweaney's teen years—when small town and rural schools were merging with other communities to form large regional high schools. The lens through which the reader views the upheaval of school merger zooms in on the anxiety and turmoil felt by Sweaney as a teenager. Then, it pulls back to reveal the entire nation in the throes of the civil rights, anti war, counter culture and ultimately the women's rights movements.

Book three, BLEST BE THE TIE, is the most overarching of Sweaney's memoirs, spanning centuries as she tells the stories of her great grandmother, her grandmother, her mother and herself. It covers the lives of these families living in rural Missouri in the last decade of the nineteenth century and into the late twentieth century, and described how they persevered throughout the course of history that included a Civil War, two world wars, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement and more. From Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural address to Richard Nixon's Watergate downfall, the reader is taken on a journey that gives great insight into the lives of the four women who must deal with poverty, illness, and the loss of loved ones. Yet the story is one of faith and an enduring hope for the next generation.

- Francine Costello



The author's grandmother, Carrie Swartz sketched the iris on the cover before she was married. Her artwork adorns this sweeping family saga.

FC

BLEST BE THE TIE features the lives of your great grandmother, your grandmother, your mother and you. How did you conceive the idea of placing these lives in the context of historical events?

DEBORAH

I am a historian by academic training. Our lives never occur in a vacuum. We are always the product of our times and affected by events outside of our control. It is how we react to those events that determine how our stories will be written.

FC

The cover design of your book features the beautiful irises your grandmother, Carrie Elsie drew when she was a girl and her delicate face and lovely eyes adorn the back cover of the book. But early on in this memoir you confess that as a child you did not love her as you thought a child should love their grandma. You thought her a bother and a burden to your mother in particular. When did you first begin to see Carrie differently?

DEBORAH

It is hard not to look at Carrie Elsie Swartz McCluey's drawings and not be drawn to the young girl who drew the pictures. As I read Grandma Carrie's words that she wrote in her letters, I find a Grandmother I did not have the chance to know. As a child, I just saw her as an old woman. Now, I appreciate the challenges of her life and her incredible talent.

FC

Why do you think that as a married woman Carrie stopped drawing?

DEBORAH

Carrie's life was busy and not easy. We take modern conveniences for granted. Without thinking, I throw a load of laundry into my machine on what seems to be a daily basis. For Grandma Carrie, it was hard work just to clean the clothes by using her scrub board and then she had to hang those wet clothes out on a line to dry.

FC

Your great grandmother, your grandmother and your mother all knew great hardships. But your mother's education and marriage offered promise for a better life. Do you believe she fulfilled that promise even though she lost your father at such a young age?

DEBORAH

My mother moved away from the poverty of the years of the Great Depression through sheer hard work. But it was in her children's life that the promise was really fulfilled. She worked so that we would all have an education and a better life.

FC

When you wrote your first book, *UNPACKING MEMORIES*, chronicling your parents' courtship, marriage and family life in rural Missouri, did you already have a plan in place for two more in the series?

DEBORAH

Together, the three books frame not only my life but also tackle themes related to the three shifts in America in my lifetime: health care, education, and the role of women.

I knew I had not finished the story of my years in Missouri with just *UNPACKING MEMORIES*. I knew I would someday write my mother's story. In the meantime, I was drawn to the story of *UP IN THE AIR* with its focus on changes in school policies during the 1960s after I was elected to the school board in my present hometown. Those high school years during the turbulent 1960's directly impacted my own life choices.

FC

You've received great praise for fulfilling the dream so many people have of telling the stories of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents and what a great gift that is to coming generations. But you've been candid about the fact that reliving childhood memories can be painful. Tell us how it was dealing with that aspect of memoir writing.

DEBORAH

I was so young when my father died. I turned eight just two weeks before he died. His death changed everything for our family and his story took on mythic proportions for me. His life dominated my childhood but I really did not have the chance to know him as a person.



The author's father, Dr. Frank Sweaney, with a patient

In writing *UNPACKING MEMORIES*, I faced his death as an adult. I grieved. I found myself crying at unexpected times that year when I was working on the book. I emerged as a different and stronger person. I think of the Greek philosopher, Aeschylus, who spoke of wisdom coming through the awful grace of God. I understand that phrase now.

FC

All three of the books in your trilogy are meticulously researched and written. Can you describe your writing routine—how do you at first conceive the book?

DEBORAH

It is hard work.

I think it is important to visualize your book. It was one of the first questions that Tom Costello of Word Association asked me when I contacted him about publishing *UNPACKING MEMORIES*. He said, "How do you picture your book?" It is a very important idea for a writer.

I have a broad outline in my head if not always on paper. The organization of my books



The author's mother, Iris McCluey (Sweaney) & Aunt, Avis McCluey (Bullock)

make it easy to do so. In *UNPACKING MEMORIES*, I organized the chapters under an idea that was conveyed by an interesting quote at the beginning of the chapter. *UP IN THE AIR*, which told a story that happened in a relativity short period of time, was organized chronologically. *BLEST BE*

THE TIE is much more sweeping. The flow of history provides this book's organization.

My husband is both my best critic and supporter. He reads everything I write, corrects my sentence structure, and offers his opinion. He is definitely not afraid to criticize me, sometimes with more than a little teasing. (He takes great joy in deleting a needless comma.)

I just know when I have done as much as I can with my book and it is time to turn it over to a professional editor. I come to a point when I am done writing and usually am very tired of the story by that point.

You have to be willing to put your ego aside when you place a book into the hands of your editor. I have learned to value their work. I have worked with two professional editors. They had different styles, but both made my books much stronger.

It is a joy working with a great designer. I do not have the gift of graphic design. I love my book covers that April Urso (of Word Association Publishers) created. She is very talented. All three are just beautiful and catch the eye of someone looking for a good book to buy.

FC

Which of the three books in your trilogy was the most difficult to write and why?

DEBORAH

UNPACKING MEMORIES took special courage to write. It required me to return to the painful years after my father's death. It seemed arrogant to think that I could actually write a book. It was not until UNPACKING MEMORIES

began to roll off the designer's pages that I realized I was really a writer.

I ran into a woman at a grocery store last month that I did not know. It was right before *BLEST BE THE TIE* was released. She stopped me and said, "Deborah I love your books. I have read both of them. Are you going to write more?" It was a very special moment for me.

FC

When I spoke to you about publishing your first book, *UNPACKING MEMORIES*, you were planning to use sales to establish a living memorial to your parents. Can you bring us up to date on that?

DEBORAH

Regarding the Iris and Frank Sweaney Fund, 100 percent of my proceeds from all my books sold in Holt County, Missouri go directly to support scholarships and educational programs for Holt County kids. The motto of the fund is to "Help Holt County Kids Thrive." This year I also used money from *BLEST BE THE TIE* to support grants for teachers in the Carlisle Area School District who wish to try something innovative in their classrooms. I love the fact that when I write about the past, I am able to help young people in the present plan for their future. My parents are not forgotten. I think they would be pleased that their names are remembered in such a way.

Following graduation from college, Deborah Sweaney worked in Washington, D.C. for multiple government agencies, including the White House Office of Records Management, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). She and her husband Jim Baker now make their home in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Sweaney says that her books, which the author calls her MISSOURI TRILOGY, can be read in any order.

A BRIEF SAMPLING OF "Blest Be the Tie"

The author's mother, Iris, is a young girl during the depths of the Depression. She lives with her parents, Carrie and Finn McCluey, and her sisters in their small house covered with tarpaper on the modest farm Finn's father had given him. In this chapter, Sweaney takes readers from the hard times to a fateful meeting that sparked a romance.

"I could hear the thirsty cows bleating. They wanted water. But no one had any water that summer."

Iris McCluey was sixteen the summer of 1934. Those sounds haunted her for the rest of her life. It was not just the lack of water that caused farmers west of the Mississippi to shake their fists at the heavens that year. The drought



Sweaney has plans to write a children's book next. For now, she's enjoying the fun of reading them.

came with blistering heat. (And the heat continued summer after summer.)

There were reports in St. Louis that the heat was "blazing enough to melt tar rooftops." Crowded with heatstroke victims, hospitals set up beds in the hallways. Patients had to wait to be doused with ice-filled buckets, and infants were cooled by fans blowing across stacks of ice. The high temperatures in the summer of 1936 remain the most extreme in North American history.

McCluey land also suffered with this heat and drought. When Finn tried to pick up a handful of dirt, it just blew away. In the house, Carrie turned all the glasses upside down in the cabinet and covered the plates with a dishtowel to keep the dust out. The heavens did not send rain, but insects and grasshoppers swarmed.

Finn, Carrie, and their daughters did not flee. They stayed. The land was his destiny.

In Finn and Carrie's home, there was no money for anything but the bare essentials. So their oldest daughter, Gwen, left home early, dropping out of school to take odd jobs. However, Iris and Avis McCluey were determined to go to high school. It was not easy.

During their grade school years, the two girls walked together to the one-room Stone School, (But later) walking for Iris and Avis was out of the question since the high school was eleven miles away in Lockwood. Few options were available...because the school district did not provide a bus. A girl who lived in the general vicinity had a car and picked up a group of girls each day. She rather condescendingly offered a place in her backseat to Iris, who had no choice but to accept the ride. Iris was poorer than the other girls, and her clothes were not stylish. They made fun of her. Their teasing left deep scars that she carried with her for the rest of her

Iris was well-versed on the American dream. She knew education was her way of achieving it.

The next year, the school district provided a bus to transport the rural kids to school, but it was not free. It cost each family \$1.50 per month. It sounds trivial today, but during the Great Depression, it was a significant amount.

Somehow, their father, Finn, found the money so Iris and Avis could ride the bus. Every day, the bus passed a boy walking to school because his family could not pay the \$1.50. The bus driver honked the horn and the boy smiled, laughed, and waved at the kids on the bus. One of the kids said, "That's Frank Sweaney!"

By his senior year in 1938, the school district paid for Frank to ride the bus. He sat beside Iris. Frank loved to discuss the issues of the day, and Iris was a willing listener. They not only talked about their high school classes, but about politics and world affairs...One of the younger kids remarked, "If Iris McCluey and Frank Sweaney ever get married, their children will be second Galileos."

Frank and Iris did get their high school education, but their future together would have to wait. Life does not always follow a direct path. There are curves on the road and bumps along the way. There are detours that take us away from our intended destination. It was so for my parents.



Other books in Deborah Sweaney's Missouri Trilogy are:

Unpacking Memories
Up in the Air

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SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL LAW FIRM MARKETING:

An Interview with Scott Swier

by Jason Price

You know there's something special about this firm when you get to see them celebrate a victory for being **marketing superstars!**

s we prepare to embark on our annual trip to Arlington, Virginia for Ben Glass' Great Legal Marketing Summit, I'm reminded of the excitement at the 2017 event when Swier Law won the Marketer of the Year award. Word Association is proud to work with Swier Law on their magazines and legal help books, which were important elements of their winning strategy. As I celebrated their win and got to see them market the firm firsthand, I decided I had to interview Scott Swier for our magazine.



I choose to keep the interview format for this article but Scott needs no assistance or prompts to talk about his team and the hard work they do to assure the firm's continuing success.

JP:

First off, congratulations on winning Marketer of the Year. It's rewarding to be able to see our clients grow.

SS:

Thank you. It was especially exciting being a firm from South Dakota competing with firms from all over the world. For us to get that recognition was an incredible experience.

JP:

When did this journey of development with Great Legal Marketing begin?

SS:

In 2012, about a year after the firm's start, I decided that I wanted to build a nationally recognized law firm in the state of South Dakota, starting in my little town of Avon. We spent hours and hours trying to determine a game plan for how we were going to build this type of law firm. Through a lot of research and analysis, GLM was the strategy that we thought would be the most effective. We also believed that GLM provided us with the clearest path to success if we actually implemented the strategies. implementation is really the key:

Everyone has great ideas for their law firm, but it's the distinct minority who actually take time to implement the plan and follow through consistently every single day.

JP:

A lot of people, especially lawyers, think they don't have the time or resources to pull off these marketing ideas. As someone who has made that work, what do you say to the people who are thinking that right now?

SS:

We do two things. Number one - we work really hard. If you don't work hard, you aren't going to get the results. Number two - we make the commitment to hiring the best people who share our values and vision. For instance, we hired Sara. [Referring to Sara Travis, Executive Director of Swier Law firm] I can have 15 great ideas in my head, but as busy as I am managing the law firm and my practice, 14 of those ideas



would just sit on the shelf because I didn't have anyone to implement them. With Sara I get to say, "Here are my ideas. You pick the 8 or 10 you like the best, and then run with it."

Another example is working with you at Word Association. We can say, "Here's the concept - you take the concept and make it a great final product." We gave Word Association the concept and they worked their magic. For a busy law firm, we couldn't ask for anything better!

So those are the two keys to our success - we work with good people and we work hard.

JP:

What is your best marketing tool at the moment, *Prairie Planning Magazine*? Is the firm doing any other marketing projects?

SS:

I would say our best tool is our entire development structure. I can't point to one specific item. I just think it is the entire structure we've set up. It just builds upon itself.

JP:

I'm currently working with Sara on your next issue of *Prairie Planning*. How do the magazines fit in this marketing structure? How are you distributing them?

SS:

We provide the magazine to a very targeted group of clients, financial advisors, trust officers, bankers, accountants, and other attorneys. We get *Prairie Planning* in the hands of this targeted audience or get them to view the magazine electronically through our website. Our entire herd of fans has multiple opportunities to get a hard copy or digital copy, but

we are extremely targeted in the way we distribute *Prairie Planning*.

JP:

Would you say you've been seeing a successful conversion rate on these magazines?

SS:

Everyone has

great ideas

for their law

firm, but it's

the distinct

minority

who actually

take time to

implement

the plan and

follow through

consistently

every single

day.

We carefully watch the return on investment for everything that we do in our law firm.

We've been really pleased with the rate of return from *Prairie Planning*.

JP:

We sometimes deal with authors and lawyers alike that don't see the potential of the long-term strategy. I'm estimating an average profit of \$10,000 per case for a lawyer, does that sound about right?

SS:

Yes. In our firm, I think that's a solid number for our estate planning and business planning practice groups.

JP:

So if you spend a couple grand on 100 books or magazines to distribute and only 5% of those people reach out with a case that's \$50,000 and the books have paid for themselves plenty of times over.

SS:

Exactly. We see *Prairie Planning* as a valuable investment. The other thing is, when people initially receive the magazine they may not immediately start to work with our firm. But as they receive a new edition every few months, their awareness of our firm builds, and they see that we are doing something unique which sets us apart from other law

16

firms. So we expect to see the gains from the magazine grow and grow.

JP:

Having people know who you are even before they need you is the recognition everyone wants.

SS:

It is. We also have a very sophisticated follow-up program with our target audience. They get plenty of other information from us between the magazine publications.

JP:

Were you always a believer in marketing this way? What was the catalyst in getting this magazine as part of your marketing solution?

SS:

Once we were able to successfully implement the GLM principles, we got to the point where we had a very solid foundation, and we decided to take our development to the next level. We could then implement more sophisticated strategies like *Prairie Planning*. Once that foundation was built, we just kept building and became more sophisticated.

JP:

With laws always in flux, using a quarterly magazine allows you to be as current and up to date as you want while putting it in a personal and approachable package.

SS:

The nice thing is that if something changes between publications of the magazine, our online presence allows us to provide our audience with the most updated legal information. When you combine the magazine with our website and social media platforms, we can literally be up-to-the-minute with legal changes or other information.

We try to make all of our content readable by anyone. Our target audience wants to be able to read it, understand it, and learn something without having to drudge through technical terms and legalese. I tell our lawyers to keep their (non-lawyer) parents in mind when they



create content. At the end of the piece, you want your parents to be able to understand and find the content interesting. If you can

keep that in mind, our content should be fresh and engaging.

JP:

There is a nice balance here between running the firm and creating these marketing strategies. You seem to have a good team that you have surrounded yourself with.

SS:

Yes. We think we really have a great team, and everyone who works in our office is top notch at their job. That makes things run incredibly well... as long as the boss doesn't screw any-

thing up too badly! At this point, our systems are established and almost run themselves, allowing our team to implement even more exciting ideas.

JP:

Being so busy with this successful firm, how do you ever find time to unwind at the end of the day?

SS:

Obviously, our office tries to following GLM's principle that we want to have everyone home by 5 o'clock for dinner with their families. When everyone is at work, we work really hard, but we also recognize that people need to have time with their families. They need to be able to coach their kids' soccer or softball teams. They need to make sure that they are attending every single event their kids are in. We make that a priority in our firm and we provide that flexibility. This not only makes our law firm an enjoyable place to work, but it also makes it a very efficient place to work

where people enjoy their work and are actually getting it done with great results. It comes down to our key principles and what is import-

ant. When we hire new team members, these values and priorities are non-negotiable. We don't want someone working until 10 at night; we want them to have that balance.

Our charitable work also aides in our culture and productivity. Everyone in our firm is required to lead at least one charitable campaign each year. If you look at our Facebook and social media pages [facebook.com/swierlawfirm] we are always sharing our community campaigns. We have campaigns that go on all year round. This has been

important to our growth because it is something we really take seriously. We ask potential hires to provide us with a community campaign that, if they are hired, they will be in charge of. This helps to create a variety of programs to support our communities.

JP:

I tell our lawyers

to keep their

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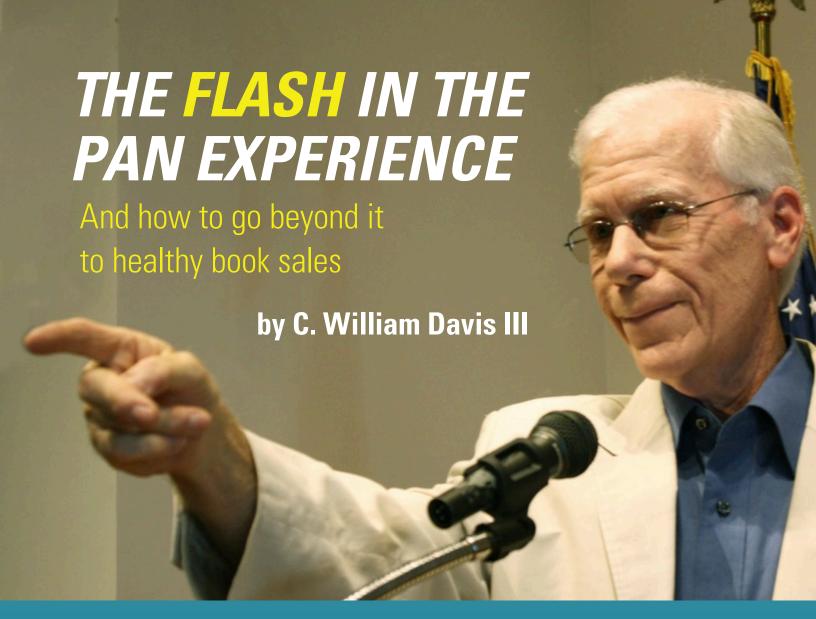
interesting.

So Marketer of the Year, what's next?

SS:

First, we want to continue to grow the law firm and provide a great experience for our clients. Second, we have had the incredible opportunity to join Ben Glass' Mastermind Group and learn from our colleagues. Third, we have actually started to help other law firms throughout the country with their development. 2018 should be our best year yet!





o, you've been accepted by a publisher and your book has been released. You have made it through the fear of speaking in public and are beginning to feel quite comfortable promoting your book.

This is what you have dreamed of for a long time but there seems to be something missing. You had expected that with all the initial fanfare and attention you received, you and your book would be in great demand. At first your family, your friends, co-workers and friends of friends, friends of family, neighbors—were all clamoring to get the book. They wanted to talk to you about how you did this, how you created the plot, the tension, the mystery. It was exhilarating until it all sort of stopped and you are now becoming acquainted with what I call the *flash in the pan experience*.

So now what?

First, you need to come up with a plan and actually do it. *Do what?* Promote you and your book. There are many ways to get you and your book out there and you need to investigate all of them. Remember, you created the product and at least at the beginning, you are the only one who can really get the ball rolling. Oh, you can bring in the pros to do it for you, if you can afford it. Either way, it's no mistake to begin this way.

Start by compiling a list of individuals in your area who are in charge of scheduling guest speakers at libraries, Rotary clubs and other organizations, independent bookstores, book clubs, high schools and colleges. Once your list is complete with names, addresses, and phone numbers, you should have what is called a *one-sheet* written, designed and printed. The front side should have an attractive headline



When it comes to promotion, more is more and book buyers love it.

announcing that you are available for speaking followed by your contact engagements, information. It should also include a brief author bio, your book cover, and a professionallyshot photo. The other side should present a compelling, well-written synopsis of your book. Send your one-sheet out to everyone on your list of people who schedule speakers. Then in a few days, follow that up with a phone call to ask if they received your information. Ask if they'll schedule you to speak about your book and allow you to sell your book at your speaking event. And don't forget to mention that if you're permitted sell your book in the back of the room, you'll waive the speaking fee.

Once you get booked to speak you must begin to prepare a fabulous twenty-five to thirty minute talk. Make it engaging, entertaining and most of all, filled with just enough titillating detail to have them lining up to buy your book. You can read a short excerpt from the book, if you wish but your speech should be delivered from memory. Please practice, practice, practice your speech. Have someone time it, video tape it and ask for and accept criticism on your delivery. At the end, invite questions from the audience and be prepared to answer them. As a closing, remind the audience that your books are being sold in the back of the room. Most of the time my wife handles book sales, which

allows me to sign books and talk with people without holding up the line.

When giving a talk, always have someone taking photos of you speaking and signing books. Those pictures will be of great use on your web site, your Facebook page and on your printed promotional pieces. And yes, you should definitely have a web site, a Facebook page and any other social medium platform you prefer and be sure to post on all of them on a regular basis. It's a great way to promote your future speaking and signing appearances and do a healthy business selling your books.

In addition to your speaking flyer, you should have post cards made promoting your speaking event and send them to everyone

Bill Davis enjoying a lovely breakfast provided by the venue organizers well BEFORE show time.



you can think of. You'll also need to ask the people in charge of the speaking venue if you can provide posters and flyers promoting your talk. Some organizations and businesses will promote your talk in their newsletter but you'll do better if you add to their promotion with some of your own materials.

Once you've mastered the art of speaking, you should search out summer festivals, book fairs, home shows, and other such events in your region. Many have participation fees and a few are even juried. Some fees are minimal, others can be significant. If the fee seems high, it is likely these events attract large crowds and that can mean healthy sales. Sometimes it's possible to partner with another author to share the cost of the booth or table. This can work beautifully but only if the venue permits it.

If you're going to do the book fairs and other shows in your region, look into ordering colorful, smart-looking signs, banners, flyers and business cards highlighting you and your book. The banners and signs are to be displayed on your booth to identify you and your book. Cards and flyers should be available on the table. Your table or booth should look interesting and inviting. An ample stack of your books should be nicely displayed. Always bring your own chairs to outdoor venues but when shoppers are around, please stand, look at them, smile and engage them in conversation. Never ever let potential book buyers see you sitting and reading or staring at your phone. If you're selling your book at outdoor venues, do invest in a free-standing canopy. It doesn't have to be expensive but you will need it for shade and to protect your books in the event of rain. It's worth every penny. And speaking of pennies, it has become essential to have a credit card reader—talk to your banker about these. Fewer and fewer people carry cash so being able to accept credit cards can boost sales significantly.

In future articles, I'll be writing about promoting your book on TV, radio, newspaper and in magazines. But for now, it's important to begin to promote you and your book in the most cost-effective ways. You simply can't sit back and wait for the world to come to you.

Dreams do come true—look, you wrote and published that book of yours. Now take the helm and go get 'em author!

C. William Davis III is the author of:

-THE FOREVER MAN
-TAIL OF THE SCORPION
-THE TICKET MASTER
-WHISPERS, ECHOES, &
WISPS OF THE WIND
-LADY LETHAL (COMING
SOON!)







SHOOTING MY AGE

BY GERALD GRAFF

WHAT MAKES GOLF SO FASCINATING AND FRUSTRATING to fanatics like me is that it's the sport among sports that puts maximum control in the hands of the player. When I stand in front of a golf shot, I don't need to fear that anyone will block it, make a spectacular catch on it, sack me before I can get it off, or intercept it and return it for a pick-six. It's all up to me with just the ball at my feet, the club in my hand, the hole I'm playing, and my own mind and body. If I've selected the right

club and judged the shot correctly, taking factors into account like the how the ball is lying on the turf, the direction and strength of the wind, and where the worst trouble to avoid is, all I need do is coordinate my movements in the right way during the mere second it takes to execute the swing and the shot will come off very much as I intend it to.

For me at least, the minimal interference between intended cause and resulting effect is what makes golf feel purer than other sports and even other experiences. This point is eloquently made by Timothy O'Grady in his excellent book, On Golf: The Game, the Players, and a Personal History of Obsession: "The player instigates each action in his own time and, when he has done it, finds himself in a place where only he has put himself. It is . . . a game of solitary accountability in which there is nowhere to hide. This gives it a cleanness, a transparency, not present in most of the other things we do." The quality O'Grady nails here is for me far more important source of golf's attraction than more commonly cited benefits like exercise, Nature, nice surroundings, good companionship, and all that.

But of course this it's-all-up-to-you feature is also what makes golf so goddam frustrating, that and the "coordinate my movements in the right way" part. Here you are, having thought out the shot carefully, drawing on the wisdom gleaned from your sixty-five years on the links. Your Titlest AP1 five-iron is as good as money can buy, as is the ProV1 ball at your FootJoy-clad feet. You've taken hundreds of lessons from excellent PGA certified professionals and have studied—studied, not just read—all the best golf instruction books, from Ben Hogan's canonical Five Fundamentals of Modern Golf to specialized



ones like The Stack-and-Tilt Swing and Phil Mickelson's Secrets of the Short Game. You focus your mind on your most proven swing thoughts: on the backswing make a good full turn with your left hip (I'm a left-handed golfer) and get your right shoulder under your chin; as your weight shifts back to the right on the downswing clear your right hip and be sure your belt buckle faces the target on the follow through, and. . . . Arghh! You've half-skulled the shot into the big sand trap left of the green, and into the back part of the trap from where, past experience tells you, it's an almost certain double or triple bogey that will ruin the fairly decent score you have going. In short, you're reminded again that, despite all the time and expense and worry you've put into this game and your belief that you had finally figured it out, you suck!

Okay, what I've written so far conforms to one of the oldest cliches of golf writing, the «Isn't my ineptitude hilarious?" genre, one that's been milked dry by masterful writers like John Updike (Golf Dreams) and Carl Hiaasen (Downhill Lie: A Hacker's Return to a Ruinous Sport). And what follows is also a variation on another golf cliché, the observation that "it's that one great shot we hit in an otherwise atrocious round that keeps us coming back." Which brings me to the dream that's become my own big incentive to keep coming back—not a great shot or two, but the possibility of shooting my age.

Shooting one's age in golf is a uniquely intriguing sports milestone, not matched by anything in any other sport. No matter how great a player you are or were, your chances of shooting in the 60s, 70s, 80s or 90s or of breaking 100 diminish with mathematical exactitude as you approach those very numbers in age. This is not easy to see until you're in the territory. Tell younger golf partners, as I do, that I'm hoping to shoot my age, and they'll say, encouragingly, "Well, it gets easier as you get older." Yes, you might think so, and it does get easier for a few lucky golfers. A 2013 article in the *New York Times* reported on 84-year old Bob Harris, a former dentist,

who "expects to shoot his age, or below, every time he tees it up" and "has actually "done it 893 times" ("Bettering His Age, Now 84, Routinely") https://nyti.ms/1813EKz). But of course Harris' feats would never have merited a news story were he not a special case, and we learn that Harris has daily "put himself through a rigorous workout routine that would make Tiger Woods proud. Or sore."

I started thinking about shooting my age when I reached my mid-seventies, having played maybe three dozen rounds in the seventies between the ages of thirty to fifty, with my average round being between 82 and 86. My game went into the tank in the 1970s when metal drivers came in, with their steam-iron size heads that lengthened tee shots and forced courses to be lengthened in turn, rendering useless my lovely MacGregor Tourney persimmon driver. But in 2013, at the age of 76, I joined a club, and when I retired a few years later I was able to play or practice almost every day. With these opportunities and being in relatively healthy shape, I saw no reason why I shouldn't shoot my age.

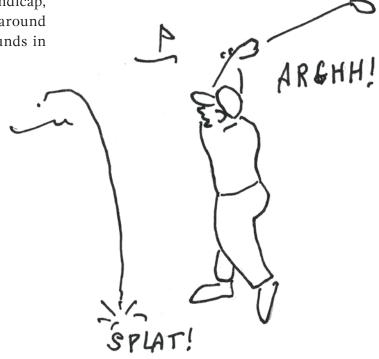
Didn't happen. I established a 14 handicap, which means my average score was around 86 or worse. Even so, I had enough rounds in

the low-to-mid 80s (and learned well enough to hit metal drivers) to feel that the high seventies weren't totally unreachable. I posted several 39s and 40s on the front nine and had the holy grail in sight, only to blow up on the holes coming in. Then came the summer of 2016. Most of it was more mediocre play-good stretches here and there but no really good full 18s. November 17 seemed too late in the season to expect anything special, but it was an unseasonably warm day for the Chicago area, with little wind. My low expectations probably helped me relax, but for whatever reason I started making pars and played the

first nine in 39, which would've been 38 but for a 4 foot par putt on the 9th that did an evil U-turn around the rim of the hole.

I was doing two things unusually well for me—hitting the greens with my iron approaches and making 2-4 foot putts. I had made no birdies or long putts, but no double bogeys either, and when I reached the 17th hole my card showed I if I played the final two in one over par I would shoot 79 at age 79. The par 4 17th is one of the longest and hardest at my course, with a confusingly undulating large green that's a prescription for three- and four-putts. A good drive and a decent 4-iron leave me in front of the green, and my chip comes up 12 feet short, giving me a putt for par that I never make—except this time I do!

Now all I need is a bogey six on our not-too-demanding par-5 finishing hole. "Just don't do anything stupid," I tell myself, and then stupidly hit my drive thin into a near fairway trap, one of the few ways I can screw up on this hole. Somehow, however, after a hack out of the trap and an okay 3-metal, I'm far enough down



the fairway to reach the green with my fourth shot, but a full 6-iron is more than you want when thoughts of choking are crowding into your head. True to my good iron play all day, though, the 6 iron gets me home, and my 25 foot approach putt leaves me 2 ½ feet for my 79.

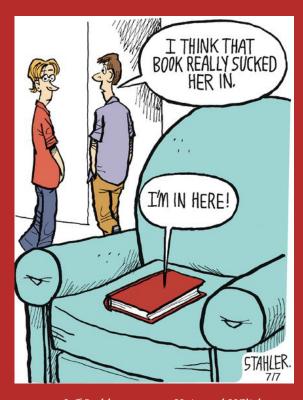
"It figures," I think as I stand over the putt.
"The golf gods have let me come this far just to
tease me." I visualize myself telling the story
of how I missed a damn tap-in for my age. But
never underrate the power of negative thinking:
it goes right in!

That was two summers ago, and at the time I thought it would be the first of numerous times shooting my age. As it's turned out, I've played many rounds since the magic day and haven't come close. But then, who knows? The bar lowers a little further when I turn 81 in June, so don't give up on me yet!

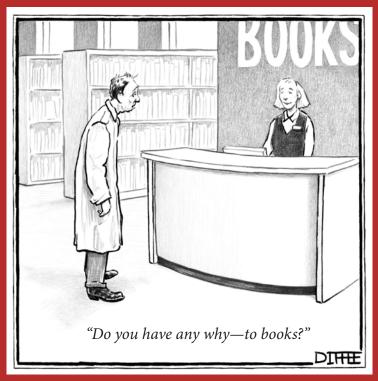
GERALD GRAFF was a professor of English and Education for over fifty years at Northwestern, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois.

He wrote "They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing" with his wife Cathy Birkenstein. He retired in 2016 to devote full time to perfecting his golf swing.









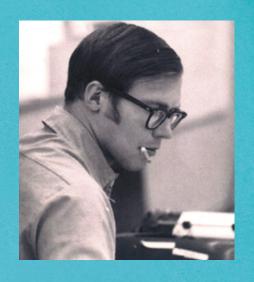
Matthew Diffee, courtesy The New Yorker







By Jim Benes with contributions by Andrea Wiley



JIM BENES is a retired journalist. He spent more than forty years as a writer-producer-editor for CBS Newsradio in Chicago. He is the author of *Season of Joy; Chicago Celebrates the Holidays*, which is based on a December feature he has been doing for WBBM Chicago since 1980. He is one of Word Association Publishers' newest editors and makes his home, with wife and journalist Andrea Wiley, in Chicago.

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"It was a dark and stormy night..." has been called the worst opening line of a novel, but also the best. It has been used by writers from Edward Bulwer-Lytton in his 1830 novel *Paul Clifford*, to Madeleine L'Engle in her 1962 work *A Wrinkle in Time*, to Charles Schultz whenever he drew Snoopy writing the world's greatest novel.

What is the purpose of this first line? Whenever I asked my college writing students, they were befuddled. I had to give them the simple answer: to get the reader to go on to the second sentence.

F. Scott Fitzgerald opens *The Great Gatsby* with a reflection by Jay Gatsby's friend, Nick Carraway: "In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since."

The character Holger Palmgren asks, "Why is that dragon tattoo so important

to you?" to begin *The Girl Who*Takes an Eye for an Eye by

David Lagercrantz.

Then there's Ernest Hemingway's beginning of *To Have and Have Not*: "You know it is there early in the

morning in Havana with the bums still asleep against the walls of the buildings; before even the ice wagons come with ice for the bars..."

One of my favorite authors is Carl Hiaasen, who writes wickedly funny novels and grabs the reader's attention in *Bad* Monkey in a most ungenteel way: "On the hottest day of July, trolling in dead-calm waters near Key West, a tourist named James Mayberry reeled up a human arm."

All of these openings leave questions in the reader's mind that beg for answers.

What sets good writing apart is not just the opening line, it is the entire use of language. We all know the words. The fascinating part is how the author takes these everyday words and makes complicated ideas clearer, summons emotions that connect us to a common experience, or transports us to unknown times and places. The writing can make the mundane seem extraordinary. It is the difference between the Kraft macaroni-and-cheese of our every day conversation and the delicious macaroni-and-cheese mousse my wife Andrea can prepare. You too can make the mousse if you know how to manipulate the pasta, cheese and eggs.

I believe that any writing, whether fiction, or journalism, or even for academia, ought to be



interesting for the reader. If it's boring, you're not likely to get your point, or your story, across.

This idea isn't new, of course. About a hundred years ago Walter Howey, then the city editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, "insisted that news stories be written in a colorful, dramatic or humorous fashion; they had to be readable and entertaining first. Their strict news value was unimportant."

As a long-time radio news writer/editor/ producer, I would note that Howey's principles still apply. In the plethora of news stories that air over a 24-hour period, the news value of some of them may not be very high, but all of them should be interesting to the listener.

It was the late *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, Harry Golden, who once was credited with saying that there are no bad (or boring) news stories, just bad writers.

Television journalism depends on pictures to take the place of the proverbial thousand words (although some TV reports certainly don't merit anywhere near that many). Radio journalism and story-telling, as you might hear on National Public Radio, depend on writing that is concise, yet compelling. It grabs the ear and the imagination.

¹ The Colonel of Chicago; a Biography of the Chicago Tribune's legendary publisher, Colonel Robert McCormick, by Joseph Gies, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1979, p. 45.

Writing is the purposeful use of language. It is not like idle conversation or chit-chat. It is something we feel strongly enough about to commit words to paper or screen. It is the creative story we must get out with artistic fervor. It is our argument to persuade the reader about an issue about which we feel strongly. It may be a funny story we wish to share. It may even be a simple Thank You note in response to a kindness.

We employ all those grammar things we learned about in school. There are similes and metaphors, clauses and phrases, adjectives and adverbs.

Sometimes we should just cast all that to the wind and write with abandon. Then go back and re-read and re-write. It is true that the art of good writing is in the re-writing.

In the journalism courses I have taught, I have advised students to be very wary of adjectives and adverbs. Unless the modifier is unquestionably descriptive, the reader may perceive a political slant where none is intended.

Non-descriptive modifiers ought to be avoided in journalism, if for nothing else than economy. It adds nothing to describe the 9/11 attacks, for instance, as "evil," or "tragic," or "disastrous." Everyone who knows about what happened that day doesn't need the extra adjectival burden.

I also tell my journalism students that they shouldn't "bury the lead." It is important to get to the main point of a news story quickly.

All that being said, similes and metaphors can add immensely to the telling of a story, whether news or otherwise.

One of the best writers I have known wrote about the ring of snowplows and salt trucks around Chicago's O'Hare International Airport one wintry day. He described them as "like the salt on the rim of a Margarita glass."

An astronomy professor described a new complicated piece of equipment by saying, "Looking at the universe before was like trying to view it through a door's keyhole. This equipment opens the door and let's us take in the whole room."

In writing a story once about a narrow vote in the state legislature to approve funding for a

new baseball stadium, I opened with: "It was a squeeze play."

There are several ways to make writing stronger and more interesting:

- keep sentences short;
- avoid subordinate clauses when you can;
- re-read what you've written and eliminate unnecessary words.
- If you know the rules for good writing, you know when you can disregard them.

There are several books I can recommend to you that I have found helpful:

- E. B. White & William Strunk Jr.'s Elements of Style.
- Evan Jenkins's That or Which, and Why.
- Lynne Truss's Eats, Shoots & Leaves.

Good luck to you!

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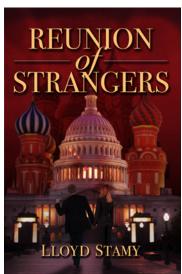


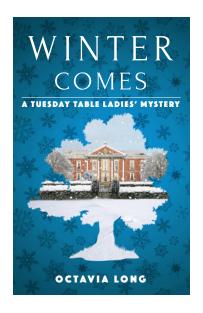


Jamison Farm's Butterflied Leg of Lamb Photo by Christopher Hirshheimer



K9 Merlin





Coyotes in the Pasture & Wolves at the Door: Stories and Recipes by John and Sukey Jamison

Don't Try This at Home by Ben Glass

Good Question by 90.5 WESA (Pittsburgh's NPR Affiliate)

Reunion of Stangers by Lloyd Stamy

K9 Merlin — *Police Dog Extraordinaire* by Dr. Jennifer Callene Naviglia

Winter Comes: A Tuesday Table Lady Mystery by Octavia Long

How the Cat Got Its Sound by james Turner

Deal Killers: What to Avoid When Selling Your Business by Michael Meyer

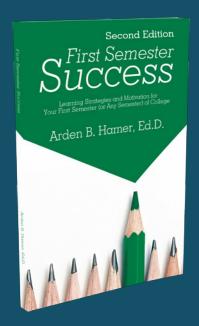
Stone Mother: A Brooklyn Life by Barry Menikoff

Fight Girl by Tony Clark



3

IS IT TIME TO DO A NEW EDITION OF YOUR BOOK?



AT WORD ASSOCIATION PUBLISHERS the only thing we like better than when authors send us a new book is when they send us the 2nd edition of their book. Or even better, the 3rd edition.

There are many good reasons for doing new editions. The very words 2nd EDITION stamped on the cover of a book are marketing words. They speak success. They suggest that a book has "legs", that the first edition attracted enough attention and had good enough sales to justify doing an update. New editions of a book almost always boost interest—because people like reading, and reading about, books that other people are reading. So, a new edition attracts not only new readers, but even readers who read the first edition may wonder what new pearls you have to offer.

There are no hard and fast rules as to what constitutes a new edition. If you're only making a few changes or corrections, that's just a reprint. With a new edition you, have a responsibility to offer enough new and/or additional information to justify re-publishing it. A new edition even requires a new ISBN, and is listed as a new publication in Books In Print.

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- An Afterword
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