

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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*Lahre, Shawn, Ken and
Dahlynn in Mexico!*

Hodgepodge

When we ran our first “hodgepodge” newsletter in January of this year (www.PublishingSyndicate.com, under “Back Issues” on the newsletter link), it was greeted with much approval by our readers. So we thought we’d do one every year, but move it to December instead. It’s a look back at some of our doings and travels for 2007.

We invite you to enjoy our little snippets of the past year, and challenge you to some trivia, too! And we also invite you to reflect on your life as a writer in 2007, and to plan your writing resolutions for the coming year!

Trivia Time!

Test your knowledge!

*Answers on page four.
For more fun trivia, visit
www.factmonster.com.*

- 1) Where and when was the first public library in America opened?
- 2) Name the most valuable book in the world.
- 3) Name the author who’s lead character in this famed story was originally called “Puny



New to our newsletter!

We’re going to run a Chicken Soup story in every edition, many of them written by us. Why? Because we feel these stories will bring a smile to your face, but more importantly, so you can learn the style.

Continue on page 2...

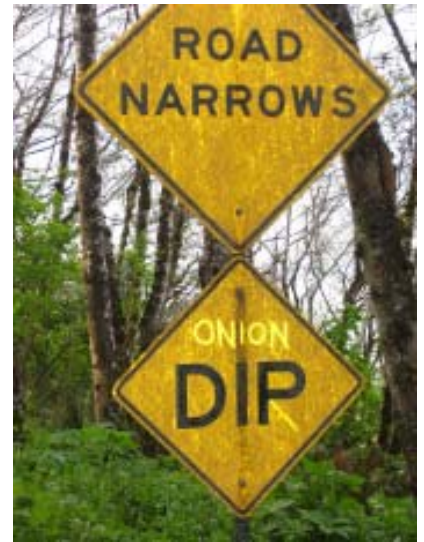
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Zelda of Zelda Wisdom invited Shawn to her home in Portland for a photo-op. Zelda, one of the nation's top celebrity dogs, and her "mom" Carol Gardner are featured in "Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneur's Soul." To learn more about Zelda and Carol, and to sign up for Zelda's very funny weekly advice column (Zelda is a great writer!), go to www.Zeldawisdom.com. Be sure to tell Zelda that Shawn sent you! Woof!



DOING DALLAS:

Dahlynn moderated a panel of top-notch female entrepreneurs from "Entrepreneur's Soul" at the Int'l. eWomenNetwork conference in Dallas.



Starting from the left: Judi Sheppard Missett, Jazzercise; Carol Gardner, Zelda Wisdom (Zelda's mom!); Shelly Hartmann, True Blue Farms; Sandra Yancey, eWomenNetwork; and Dahlynn.

Ken loves taking photos of bizarre signs, and here's our favorite for 2007. He found this sign on a little backroad that trails along California's northcoast. Enjoy!



A Cup of Comfort: Share your inspiring story of breast cancer survival and you could win \$5,000, plus a \$5,000 donation in your name to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation. See page five!

Our 2008 Writing Resolutions

Ken: Get a novel published

Dahlynn: Finish my romantic screenplay

WHAT'S YOUR 2008 WRITING RESOLUTION?



The following is from “A Chicken Soup for the Soul Christmas.”

Oh, Christmas Tree

I grew up on the grounds of Folsom Prison, where my father worked for nearly two decades. During my childhood, trustees—inmates who were not a threat—were a constant; it was their responsibility to keep the grounds looking nice.

One January, I was sick and lying on the living room couch, barely able to keep food down. In an adjacent room, our forlorn and very dried out Christmas tree stood, awaiting removal. Mom had taken off the ornaments weeks ago, but Dad had been too busy to drag the big tree out of the house.

Sitting on the couch and comforting me, Mom stared at the tree with disgust. She then stood up and went to the hallway, pulling several large sheets from the linen closet. She placed the sheets end-to-end, starting from the front door all the way to the huge tree. In total awe, I watched my mother wrestle and drag the very dead tree across the sheets to the front door; the tree shed nearly every needle onto the sheets during its journey. She then heaved the tree out the front door with great aplomb, throwing it onto the walkway.

By this time, I was up off the couch watching Mom and offering any moral support I could in my sickly state. She asked me to fetch a hammer; Dad never used a water stand for our Christmas tree, but had “invented” his own stand, using two heavy wooden slats nailed to each other in an X-like fashioned, with the middle then nailed to the base of the tree. Mom knew she had to remove the wooden stand for next year’s tree.

The only hammer I could find in the junk drawer was a small one, which I took to her. With one foot atop the tree’s trunk, Mom hit the wooden stand with the small hammer to no avail. I stood in the doorway watching and cheering her on. It was then we heard a man’s voice; out in the street stood a trustee.

“Um, ‘cuse me, Mrs. Johnson. Would you be needin’ some help?” he asked. In his fifties or so, the trustee had a deep Southern accent.

Mom said yes, explaining that she was having trouble getting the wooden stand off and that Mr. Johnson very much needed the stand for next year’s Christmas tree.

Continue on page 4...



Oh, Christmas Tree

Continued from page 3...

“Why, I can fetch a bigger hammer from the shed and take that right off for ya,” he responded. Mom thanked him and asked that he leave the stand on the front porch. I opened the screen door for her and she started to come into the house.

“That’s right fine, Mrs. Johnson,” he said, then asked with some concern, “but when I get the stand off, where do you reckon Mr. Johnson wants me to plant the tree?”

At that point, Mom was facing me. She stared at me and told me with her “Mom eyes” to not even think about laughing. With all the grace she could muster, she turned around and said, “Why, that’s okay. I don’t think we’ll use this tree next year for Christmas. If you could throw it in the trash, I would appreciate it.”

“I’ve never heard of someone throwing away a Christmas tree,” the trustee said, shaking his head in disbelief. Then he asked, “Why, if it’s okay with you and Mr. Johnson, can I have the tree?”

“Yes, you’re welcome to it,” Mom graciously replied.


With a huge smile on his face, and many “thank yous” in between, the trustee hoisted the brown and almost needle-less tree over his shoulder and happily headed toward the prison’s tool shed, promising to return the wooden stand in a few minutes.

When Mom came back into the house, we burst out with laughter as soon as she could close the front door. We laughed even harder picturing Dad’s reaction had he come home to the tree expertly “planted” in his front yard. But most importantly, our lifeless Christmas tree had brought joy to another and had created a hilarious family Christmas story for generations to come.

Dahlynn McKowen



Trivia Time Answers!

- 1) The first public library in America was opened in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1698.
- 2) J.J. Audubon’s *The Birds of America*, published in 1840, is the most valuable book in the world. It sold for \$8,802,500 in March 2000—the highest price ever paid for a book.
- 3) Charles Dickens called the sickly character in *A Christmas Carol* “Small Sam” and “Puny Pete” before settling on “Tiny Tim.” 

HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

The A Cup of Comfort series needs stories!

Our friends at the *A Cup of Comfort* series have posted several new “Call for Submissions” entries. To learn more, go to www.cupofcomfort.com, click on “Share Your Story” in the left-hand margin and you’ll find detailed information for each of the books below. If you submit a story for consideration, please let them know that you learned of their story call-out from **PUBLISHING SYNDICATE**. Thanks!

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A Cup of Comfort for Breast Cancer Survivors: Deadline: Dec. 31, 2007
IMPORTANT: Search through the newsletter to read about a special contest offered by *A Cup of Comfort* having to do with the title above! You could become rich!
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A Cup of Comfort for Military Families: Deadline: March 1, 2008

A Cup of Comfort for New Mothers: Deadline: April 1, 2008

A Cup of Comfort for Adoptive Families: Deadline June 15, 2008



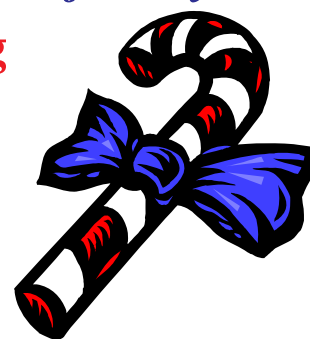
The following Chicken Soup books need stories from you!

IMPORTANT: Submit stories for the following books to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Christmas Pet Book: Share your special holiday pet stories!
Deadline: March 31, 2008

Basketball Lover’s Soul: Stories of inspiration and resilience from basketball players and from the fans who love basketball. Deadline: March 31, 2008

Catholic Soul: An affirming collection of powerful and heartwarming stories and poems full of faith and inspiration. Deadline: May 30, 2008



Go for it! Get published! 