

# DISPATCHES

MILITARY  
WRITERS  
SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA

Rescuing History One Story at a Time  
[www.MWSAdispatches.com](http://www.MWSAdispatches.com)



SUMMER 2018



GULLAH BASKET WEAVER ~ CITY MARKET  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
photo by Carolyn Schriber

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Pat McGrath Avery

AS USUAL, SUMMER WEATHER changes from location to location, and from minute to minute. Add natural disasters like wildfires and tornadoes, and it's difficult to make a summer reference that reaches everyone across the country.

However, summer is more than weather. It's a frame of mind, a special relaxing time to add variety to your life. Hopefully, all of us have had the opportunity to create some special memories with family and friends.

The MWSA leadership is busy putting the finishing touches on the November conference in Charleston and looking ahead to an event next spring in Fort Smith. Please plan to attend one or both of these opportunities to improve your craft and your career.

Charleston brings the Civil War to mind, and with it our Civil Rights. I am pleased that this issue focuses on the city's history (Carolyn Schriber's *It Happens Without Warning*) the history of slavery (Joyce Faulkner's article *The Legacy Museum*) and the successes of black military personnel (Farrell Chiles' article *African American Warrant Officers*).

From his writing, I'm not sure Joe Campolo ever had an experience that didn't end in laughter and this issue's *Mel's Shoes* is no exception. Bob Flournoy shares his ponderings on the issue of war stories and the realities of war for combat veterans.

As writers, we constantly focus on craft improvement. Check out Sandi Linhart's third installment on her proofing plus series.

I recently visited several towns along the Erie Canal in New York and Syracuse's Erie Canal Museum. The canal changed New York and American history, and

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## Staff

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## MWSA Leadership

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dwight Jon Zimmerman*

**AH, SUMMER!** Time for backyard barbeques, 4th of July fireworks, vacations, and...home improvement! The Zimmerman household is in the middle of a renovation mess thanks to the long overdue installation of a second bathroom (complete with a high-tech shower that looks really strange in our 150+ year old house), new alcove for the washing machine, and a room renovation. The upshot is this issue's president's message is going to be short and sweet (pardon the plaster dust).

Be sure to check out the latest information about our conference in Charleston, South Carolina. If you haven't already signed up, I urge you to do so. The conferences are a great way to get to know fellow members and share experiences. Everyone who has attended them in the past has enjoyed the fellowship and learning opportunities the conferences provide. And, Charleston's a beautiful city with a rich history.

The crew is starting to arrive, but before I go I'd like to mention we welcome (with open arms) anyone who shares our love and respect for the military and is interested in the craft of writing. If you know of anyone who you think might be interested, please tell them about MWSA and suggest they check out our website to find out more. Our members make MWSA what it is today and the more members we have, the more active and stronger MWSA will be.

See you in Charleston!

*Dwight Jon Zimmerman*

*President*

*MWSA*



## IT HAPPENS WITHOUT WARNING

Carolyn P. Schriber

**YOU'RE WALKING THROUGH THE BUSTLING** shopping district of Charleston, window shopping and admiring the latest designs. Then you turn a corner, and you're back in the 1850s. Instead of asphalt, the street is paved with cobblestones. Instead of automobiles, the new street is full of horse-drawn carriages. The houses all have piazzas to catch the breeze off the harbor. The trees are gnarled from hundreds of years of violent weather. If you step into an old inn for a bite of lunch, the menu includes grits, oysters fresh from local beds, and unfamiliar beans and grains grown locally from heritage seeds.

If I believed (or understood) such things as the space-time continuum and the fourth dimension, I would suggest that Charleston's tourist appeal comes largely from its position in a time warp—one that not only allows, but actually demands, that visitors experience local history by going back to another century through some sort of wormhole. So on the off chance that time travel is possible, let me direct you to a few of my favorite wormholes—the invisible passageways that connect the modern city of Charleston with its historical roots. If you hope to understand the city, here's where you need to start.



*Charles Towne Landing, 1500 Old Towne Road ~ Open daily 9 AM to 5 PM*

**Charles Towne Landing** is the site of the first European settlement in South Carolina. Located near the Ashley River, this state park recreates the sometimes-terrifying experiences of those first settlers. The Animal Forest is a natural habitat for the animals that were native to the land in 1670. The animals wander freely over acres of unrestricted woodland, doing what animals do in the woods, which may include killing and eating one another. Human visitors are in nearly invisible cages, protected from becoming dinner while they try to spot such beasts as bison, wild boars, deer,

black bears, pumas, otters, storks, turtles, and otters.

At the water's edge you'll be able to board a replica of the small 17<sup>th</sup>-century ship that brought the settlers. Watch your head below decks! Nearby, workmen are building a similar ship so that visitors can watch them fastening the boards with wooden pegs instead of nails. Reenactors live in the small village located in the center of the settlement, and each year they add a cabin or two to the layout. The dwellings are safely within the palisade and surround a communal garden, which must supply the settlers with herbal remedies as well as food for the winter.

Next, visit the **Aiken-Rhett House** whose surroundings will force you to confront the realities of slave life in the city. This three-story mansion, built in 1820, has the distinction of being preserved but not restored. The difference is important. Although the house looks rather run-down, historians are pleased that no indoor plumbing or modern appliances mar the authenticity of the house. The walls are still covered in faded silk



## THE WHISPERWOOD BOOKS & BAKERY

by Mary Lee

Genre(s): Picture Book

Format(s): Soft cover

ISBN/ASIN: 9781545276068

rather than wallpaper. One bedroom contains a wooden bathtub. Brass chandeliers could use some polishing. The furniture has been in place for nearly two hundred years, and the library has an unmatched collection of books Governor Aiken might once have read.



But more important, the house is unique in having Charleston's only extant slave yard. Behind the main residence, high walls and padlocked gates prevented the house slaves from wandering into the city or meeting with neighboring slaves. Against the side walls two

long barracks-like buildings further block access to the walls. On the right are the kitchen and laundry, with slave quarters above. If you are careful about where you step, you can climb the stairs to the second story. There you'll find a hallway dotted with windows looking out over the central yard, and off that hall, a series of windowless slave rooms, dark, airless, and still furnished with small fireplaces and hand-made stools and bedframes.

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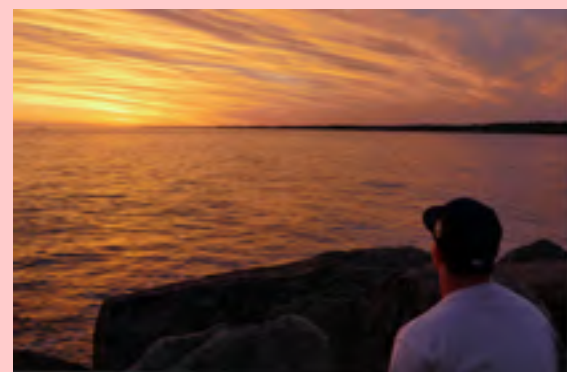
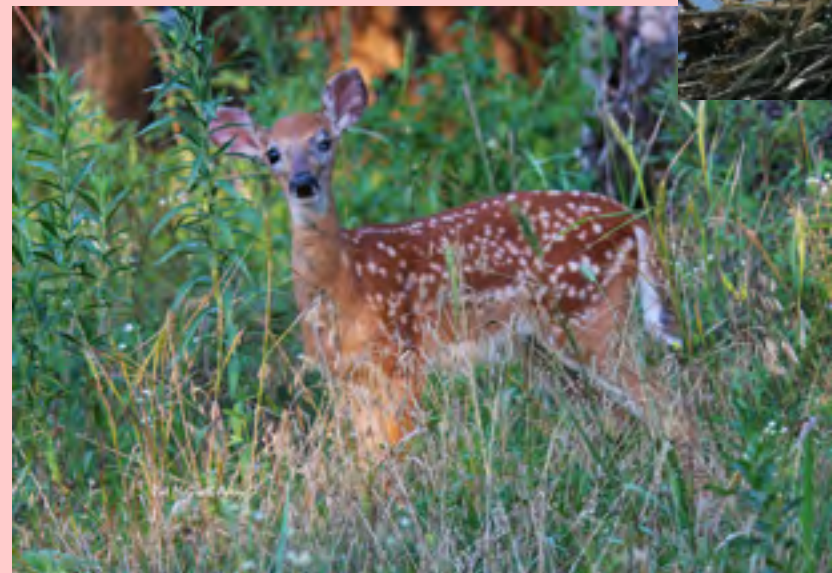
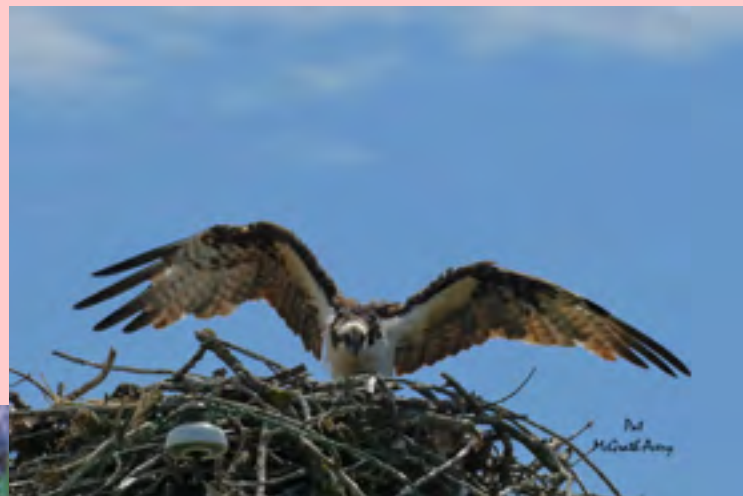
## REVIEW AND AWARDS INFORMATION

*John Cathcart*

**THE 2018 MWSA REVIEW** and awards season submission window closed on June 15th. We ended up having 71 books submitted this season, and quite a few have already been evaluated. These reviews are posted online. Please visit our website to have a look at this season's offerings.

In order to address a review backlog caused by a large number of books submitted just before the window

closed, we've slipped our target date for announcement of award finalists from the middle of August to the middle of September. After that 15 September announcement of finalists, we'll recognize our actual award winners and specific medals won during our general membership conference in Charleston, SC on the 9th of November. See you there!



*WARNING ~ Continued from page 5*

Across the way the matching building houses the family carriage and buggies, with rooms for the stable hands above, and further down the building, stalls for the horses with a hayloft above. Beyond these buildings lie the other necessary structures—a blacksmith's forge, a chicken coop, a pig sty, a kitchen garden, a woodworking shop, and, at the very back corners, two privies.

Why the emphasis on windowless walls? By the beginning of the eighteenth century, slaves outnumbered their white owners, and fears of a slave insurrection began to spread. When Denmark Vesey tried to organize a slave revolt in June 1822, the worst fears of the slave owners seemed imminent. And in residences all across the city, slave yards like the one at the Aiken-Rhett House were added or fortified. For today's visitors, this wormhole leads them straight into the lives of the slaves, rather than the luxurious lives of their owners.

***Aiken-Rhett House, 48 Elizabeth Street ~  
Mon.-Sat, 10 AM to 5 PM; Sun, 2 to 5 PM***



Life on a cotton plantation was quite different from the city experience, but you'll have more trouble locating a hidden passage that can take you into the cotton fields. Oh, there are plantations galore, and not all of them are

tourist traps. Middleton Place is beautiful, even though Sherman's troops burned the plantation house, leaving just one guest wing full of family portraits and china collections. The Drayton lands offer lovely gardens and boating tours, but they share one disturbing characteristic—the "Gone with the Wind" syndrome. If that's the world you seek, you can find it. Sites like Boone Hall have modernized the plantation houses and do their best to direct your attention away from the fields and the little row of slave cabins.

But if you want realism, not a movie set, I can recommend only one—**The McLeod Plantation** on James Island, just across Wappoo Creek on SC 171. This recently opened estate is at the end of a true wormhole. You can tour the first floor of the plantation house, but you'll find it empty of furniture. You'll learn little about the owners, although the last member of the McLeod family lived here until his death in 1990. A tour guide in Charleston says "Old Man McLeod" was a die-hard Confederate. He struggled to keep the plantation running as it had done in "the good old days when cotton was king." He employed black sharecroppers who lived

in the original slave cabins until 1990. The land was eventually purchased by the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission; the historic site opened to the public in 2015.

Now the plantation is dedicated to preserving the African-American heritage of the Gullah/Geechee people who once lived in those cabins. (Mr. McLeod probably would not approve.) The tour guides, who are really trained historians, assume the characters of the enslaved people who worked the cotton fields. They describe the plantation from their characters' point of view. You'll learn about the special quality of sea island cotton, once in

danger of disappearing after the Civil War and now restored from just twenty-five preserved seeds. You'll see a cotton gin in action, and in November you may see

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*WARNING ~ Continued from page 7*

the cotton being picked. You'll stand in the doorways of those cabins and see how little the inhabitants had. And, perhaps most important, you'll come away with a lasting aversion to the word "slave." At the **McLeod Plantation**, the workers are always called "enslaved people," with the emphasis on "people."

**McLeod Plantation, 325 Country Club Dr., Tues-Sun, 9 AM to 4 PM**

If it is true that "you are what you eat," your journey through the hidden passages of Charleston must include a taste of food from two hundred years ago. Charleston boasts of over 4000 restaurants, most of them claiming to be serving local produce and following traditional recipes. But if you want a truly historic experience, you need to visit **Husk**.

The restaurant's founder, Sean Brock, is an award-winning James Beard chef, and he demands authenticity. You enter the slightly remodeled 1860s house through a narrow hallway with a staircase built into the left wall. Under the stairs you'll see piles of seasoned logs and, perhaps, bushels of fresh produce delivered via the front door. The last time I was there, the baskets contained freshly dug potatoes, smelling like the fresh dirt that still clung to them. High on the wall, a chalkboard lists the local source for every item on the menu. If you read it carefully, you'll discover that much of the food being served comes out of the kitchen garden located in what was once a slave yard behind the restaurant.

The kitchen itself, sporting a wood-burning stove and an open-hearth wood-burning fireplace, lies on the back porch. The dining room is one cavernous room, featuring wooden floors and furniture, unadorned windows protected by plantation shutters, and tables holding candles, and small bouquets of dried herbs and other local foliage. Silverware and dishes are plain, and the chef who cooked your dinner will probably serve it himself. Don't be surprised if he stops to pick a couple of bay leaves from your table decoration to flavor someone else's soup.

But it's the menu itself that will let you know you've left the twenty-first century and ended up in a nineteenth-century dining room. Here's a sample of what we ate the night I was there:

First Course:

*Fire Roasted Salt Oysters, Shrimp and Hominy Butter, with Fennel and Lemon*

*Baby Lettuces, Garden Radish, Fried Dilly Beans, Farm Egg, Goat's Milk Feta with Buttermilk Dressing*

Supper:

*House Cured Country Ham Tasting with Acorn Griddle Cakes*

*Rabbit-Pimento Loaf with Husk Mustard, Pickles and Rice Bread.*

Dessert:

*Sorghum Cake with Grapefruit Sorbet, Rosemary Mascarpone, Preserved Blackberry*

*A Selection of Southern Cheeses, with House Jam, Spiced Peanuts, Pickled Vegetables, Fresh Fruit*

No matter what you order, don't fail to ask for a pan of cornbread with Benton's bacon crumble for the table. It will come out of the kitchen still sizzling in its own cast iron skillet. The edges may well be burned, and the aroma will be smoky. That's what happens when you cook directly amid the embers of that wood-burning open-hearth fireplace.

**Husk, 76 Queen Street. Open daily with dinner starting at 5:30. Make reservations through OpenTable at least a month in advance.**

Finally, you'll want to buy some souvenirs, but even shopping can lead you to another wormhole. Right in the middle of the Historic District, you'll find **Market Street**, running between Meeting and Bay, with three long arcades filling the center of the street. The one closest to Meeting Street has recently been modernized with air conditioning and display counters. As you might expect, you'll find modern souvenirs with inflated prices there. But the other two blocks still offer

open-air stalls selling handicrafts of every imaginable variety. My choice? I seek out the Gullah basket weavers. Some rent a stall inside, while others simply camp out on the sidewalk with a blanket and a low stool, their wares spread out around them.



Baskets made of sea grass originated on the rice plantations of the Low Country between Charleston and Savannah in the 1700s. The women needed winnowing baskets to separate the rice from the chaff, so they made them out of materials they had at hand. The simple task developed into a fine art, one in which every weaver has her own distinctive patterns. The artists have passed their designs down from mother to daughter. The men and boys still go out into the marshes in flat-bottomed boats and cut the sea grass according to the colors needed. Then the women take over with their skillful fingers. Nothing has changed but the prices, which can be exorbitant for a large basket or an intricate design. Be sure to turn a piece over and check the price tag before you fall in love.

The weaver who was trying to sell me this basket said it was designed to hold a 9- or 10-inch pie when I needed to take one to a church supper. I protested that I would be afraid to place a pie in it, for fear the fruit juices would drip and stain it. "Never you mind," she said. "Sea grass grows with its feet in the water. It likes to be washed." So, yes. I bought it, and she let me take her picture to prove I had been down that particular worm hole.

**City Market, 188 Meeting Street, Open daily 9:30 AM to 5 PM**

There you have my five favorite venues from which to discover the world of antebellum Charleston. But we've only scratched the surface. There's a wormhole to fit almost any interest.

For a general overview of the Historic District, you can't beat the Old South Carriage Company's one-hour tours. The guides are well-trained, knowledgeable, and full of stories about the neighbors that you won't hear elsewhere.



**14 Anson Street, 9 AM to 5 PM**

For our Navy veterans, you have multiple choices.

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum features a tour of the aircraft carrier *USS Yorktown*, along with other vessels and the Medal of Honor Museum.

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**40 Patriots Point Rd., Mt. Pleasant,  
open daily, 9 AM to 6:30 PM.**

Several companies offer boat tours of Charleston Harbor and its fortifications, but the one offered by the National Park Service is the only one to stop at Fort Sumter.

**Fort Sumter Boat Tours, 360 Concord St., Daily  
tours but a varying schedule; call 800.789.3678**

Submariners will want to visit the **Hunley Restoration Project**. In 1864, the Hunley was the first submarine to launch a successful attack on a warship. But shortly after firing her first torpedo, the Hunley herself sank (for the third time) killing the entire eight-man crew. The wreckage was discovered in 1995 and raised in 2000. After four years of careful exploration, the crew remains were extracted and given a proper burial. The

working crew uncovered the outer surface of the submarine in 2014. Work now continues to remove the debris and encrustations from the inside of the crew compartment. Tours are not allowed during working hours because of the technical nature of the restoration. However, tours are available on Saturdays from 10 AM to 5 PM and on Sundays from Noon to 5 PM.

**Hunley Restoration Center, 1250 Supply Street,  
Old Charleston Navy Base, North Charleston**

Book lovers will enjoy **Blue Bicycle Books**, a small shop that specializes in old books, Charleston history, and local authors. It's a wonderful source for tracing the "fine old families" of antebellum Charleston. I did my first ever book signing there, and the owner learned that one of the heroes of my book, *A Scratch with the Rebels*, was from Charleston. A couple of years later, I dropped in to say hello. He led me to a stack of old law books and pulled one out, telling me to look at the flyleaf. It bore the signature of Augustine Thomas



Smythe, dated 1868. "That's your Gus," he said. "I bought the book from his great-great-grandson when the Smythe Law Firm did some remodeling of their law offices. That's the kind of place it is.

Unfortunately, **Y'ALLFest** (Charleston's Young Adult Book Festival), uses the **Blue Bicycle** as the hub of its activities the second weekend in November, so the store will be pretty much inaccessible as young readers take over upper King Street. However, if any of

our members want to try to do two conferences at the same time, I will be happy to put you in touch with Jonathan Sanchez, who runs the **Y'ALLFest** show.

**Blue Bicycle Books,  
420 King Street ~  
Mon. - Sat., 10 AM to 7:30  
PM, Sun 1 to 6 PM.**

Finally, when you've had all the Civil War history you can stand, you can take a break by seeking out the 1950s at **Jack's Cosmic Dogs**. Picture a run-down, old gas station with a touch of space rockets. And inside, fat hot dogs sizzling away on a grill, dressed with such innovations as sweet potato mustard, blue cheese, and southern vinegar slaw. Try one with their freshly hand-cut fries, a real milkshake, or a frosty mug of draft root beer. Don't be surprised if you end up sharing your table with a couple of locals; this is where they go when they want to escape all you tourists.

**Jack's Cosmic Dogs is on the right, headed  
north out of Mt. Pleasant along Rte. 17.**

## NEW MEMBER RESOURCE DIRECTORY

**AS A SERVICE** to its members, MWSA has created new member resource directory page on our website.

*Click on image to go to our new Member Resources Directory page.*



The page is meant to provide information and contact details for organizations offering services to writers and veterans.

We encourage all MWSA members to offer (or recommend) services to other members-whether their own services or those of other private or governmental organizations. The page includes an easy-to-use online form to submit a new organization or company.

In order to list your own services, you must be an MWSA member in good standing.

MWSA is offering this page as a service to our members. We are not specifically endorsing any company or organization listed on that page.

<http://www.mwsadispatches.com/member-resource-directory>

## THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU NEVER KNEW

*...about the MWSA Website.*

We list the types of correspondence members can anticipate receiving from MWSA here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/membership/> (3rd bullet under "New Members" section)

Archived, electronic copy of past email blasts (back to Nov 2017) can be found on our website here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news/>

MWSA Blasts can be found here: <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/mwsa-news?tag=Blast>

If you have any questions about navigating the MWSA website, please reach out to MWSA and we'll answer as best we can. Thank you.

## THOUGHTS

Bob Flourney

I WAS IN A WAITING ROOM at the Nashville V.A. this week, eyeing the clock and wondering if my appointment would be acknowledged on time (it was), and could not help but over hear a conversation between several old guys in the room, each trying to outdo the other with escalating color describing events that they had supposedly participated in while serving in Vietnam fifty years ago.

These men were old, unlike me, and I caught myself wondering if time had eroded their ability to clearly remember, or if, like too many others, they were just exaggerating their wartime experiences. Having been there myself, I knew I was hearing a lot of bull shit. War stories and bull shit are synonymous, almost always told by those whose participation in the nitty gritty of ground fighting was limited.

It has been my own experience men who suffered the horrors of infantry life in a war zone almost never speak of their time spent in that endeavor, having spent the time since trying to forget and dispel themselves of those memories.

To retell them to strangers would not only be an egregious violation of an unspoken code that respects their friends who did not make it home, it would be giving

something away that is held close to the heart and personal.

Maybe, perhaps, if the decorum of the occasion is solemn enough, some thoughtful remembrances might be shared with brothers who were there with them, or with those deemed worthy by their own participation so long ago, but assuming any kind of tragic stature that hinted at their own deeds is anathema, certain to lead to regret and a loss of self-respect.

My own children probably cannot tell you when the Vietnam War was fought — a failure to be sure of our sorry public schools, but also a reflection on my own reticence on that subject during their lifetime. As it should be.

But, as I listened to the men at the V.A., I was strangely unmoved by their exaggerations. In past years I have become very agitated when confronted by similar situations. Several times to the point of angrily challenging the lies that I was hearing, incensed for the sake of so many who actually had stories to tell but never spoke of them.

Maybe I'm getting older, more mellow, and understand the need for non-combatants to embellish their time in



the service. After all, they did show up, and they did wear the uniform.

Still, the telling of such things is a violation of something deep inside, and my friends who ate the dirt over there would agree without even thinking about it. False claims of service by those who never served in the armed forces are rampant and deplorable. False claims by those who did serve are dishonorable. Claims made by those who truly have a story are never heard because they understand what I have tried to say here.

Bruce Canton wrote that the only true war story he had ever heard was told by a Confederate soldier who had survived Gettysburg. When prompted to talk about it he said:

*"A bunch of us found ourselves up the road in Pennsylvania where we were in a big fight. Some of us came home."*

This brought tears to my eyes when I read it many years ago, and it still serves as a reminder that one of the noblest things a combat survivor can say about his experience is nothing at all.

EDITOR ~ *Continued from page 1*

is still important today for business, recreation and tourism.

Several articles cover important information about membership, the conference and our book review and awards programs.

Be sure to check out Dwight Zimmerman's President's Message and Bob Doerr's summer reading list. Also, three of our members have new books out; *The Whisperwood Books & Bakery* by Mary Lee, *The Assassins* by Bob Doerr and *Nazi Saboteurs on the Bayou* by Steven Burgauer.

Enjoy! Don't forget to register for the conference.





NEW BOOK RELEASE ~ THE ASSASSINS

**BOB DOERR**

I'M HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THE RELEASE of my new book, *The Assassins*, the third book in my Clint Smith series. Of all my books, I think this one is the most contemporary with world events. I have been fortunate to have always had several book plots floating around in my head. So, in October 2016, a month before the national elections and as I began my planning for a new Clint Smith book, I realized that I had never seen (or at least recognized) such a politically polarized election.

What if the side that lost the election had a few powerful people who reacted by plotting to have the new president assassinated? For the book to work, it didn't matter who won the election. It seemed to me that more people disliked each candidate than liked them. In fact, for a good part of the book I kept referring to the president as the president rather than he or she. Staying with the contemporary theme, I set my story in Korea.



**THE ASSASSINS**

by *Bob Doerr*

Genre(s): *Mystery, Thriller, Suspense*

Format(s): *Soft cover, eBook, Kindle*

ISBN/ASIN: *978-1590951965*

I'd like to share a short summary of the book, *The Assassins*:

*"A disputed election has divided the nation, and a handful of senior, government officials have conspired to have the North Koreans assassinate the President of the United States. Believing the assassination attempt to be only days away, Theresa Deer, Director of the Special Section, a small unit whose existence is known by only a few in the U.S. government, sets out to interdict the man intent on providing the North Koreans vital information about the president's itinerary for his visit to South Korea. While Deer succeeds in her mission, she is severely injured and finds herself being hunted by the North Korean assassins who still intend to assassinate the president. Clint Smith is sent to Korea to help Deer get back to the U.S. and finds himself caught in a deadly game of cat and mouse with the North Koreans. With no one in the U.S. government to turn to for help, and the South Koreans now also hunting them, getting out of South Korea alive is looking unlikely."*

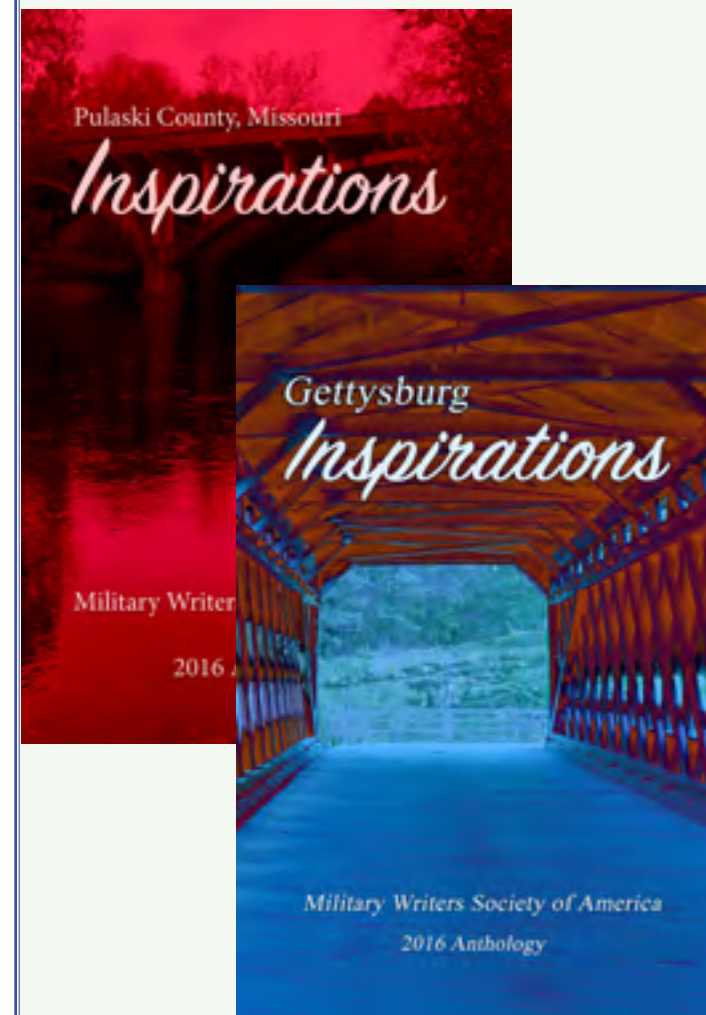
I hope you get a chance to read and enjoy this book.

\* \* \* \*

**Bob Doerr, an Air Force veteran, has thirteen published books. His past books have won a variety of awards, and Bob was selected as the Author of the Year by the Military Writers Society of America in 2013.**



**2016 MWSA ANTHOLOGIES**



*Pulaski County, Missouri Inspirations  
2016 Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/194326743X](https://www.amazon.com/dp/194326743X)

*Gettysburg Inspirations 2016 Anthology*

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/DP/1943267340](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1943267340)

Two volumes of collections of short fiction, historical pieces, poetry, and songs written by members of the Military Writers Society of America. Be sure to get your copies before they're gone.

# 2018 MWSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Joe Epley*

**MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY** Writers Society of America (MWSA) are urged to attend the annual meeting in Charleston November 8-11. It will be chockfull of tips and ideas to make you a better writer. You'll find the program professionally stimulating, informative, and entertaining. It's geared around the critique you gave of last year's session in San Antonio. But you have to register to attend.

We're keeping the cost the same as last year—\$215. To register, go to [www.mwsadispatches.com](http://www.mwsadispatches.com), click EVENTS and then 2018 Conference.



Located just over the Ravenel Bridge from Charleston, the Hilton Garden Inn Mount Pleasant offers fantastic rates of \$125 a night good for two nights before and after the conference so you can take in the many sites of Charleston and surrounding communities. To make a reservation, just call the hotel at 843-606-4600 and be sure to tell them you're with the Military Writers of America.

The three-day conference starts with a workshop at the Charleston VA hospital



where members share their knowledge with patients. That evening will be a cocktail reception where old friendships are renewed and new friendships are gained on the evening of November 8.



A patriotic opening by a Citadel colorguard will be followed by the commander of Joint Base Charleston welcoming everyone to South Carolina's low-country. Following will be a fast-paced program that is challenging for the novice as well as the seasoned author. A panel discussion by public affairs officers of the various branches will tell you about the resources they offer at no or little cost. You will hear about the pros and

cons of self-publishing versus going with a traditional publisher.

Saturday features the annual meeting and an introduction to the new officers and directors who will lead the society in the future. Authors will talk about researching, editing and marketing your book. The Awards committee will feature the good, bad, and the ugly in presenting a manuscript for review and an award from MWSA. The day will conclude with the annual Awards Banquet, where the member authors will be honored for excellence in 2018.



The conference will end Sunday morning with voluntary informal discussions, networking, and one more chance to talk to the Board.

Enjoy a visit to one of the nation's oldest and historic cities. Hone your writing skills at the MWSA annual conference.

Lunch is included Friday and Saturday with your registration fee. Friday night will be free to sample the great restaurants of Charleston.

We invite you to spend three days with kindred spirits.





## NAZI SABOTEURS ON THE BAYOU

by *Steven Burgauer*

*Genre(s): Historical Fiction, Mystery/Thriller*

*Format(s): Soft cover, ePub, Kindle*

*ISBN/ASIN: 978-0692808122*

*Watch the short video book trailer, then enjoy the book.*

## WELCOME TO THE MWSA ~ WHO WE ARE

*John Cathcart*

**WE ARE A NATION-WIDE ASSOCIATION** of authors, poets, and artists, drawn together by the common bond of military service. Most of our members are active duty military, retirees, or military veterans. A few are lifelong civilians who have chosen to honor our military through their writings or their art. Others have only a tangential relationship to the military. Our only core principle is a love of the men and women who defend this nation, and a deeply personal understanding of their sacrifice and dedication.

Our skills are varied. Some of us are world class writers, with many successful books. Others write only for the eyes of their friends and families. But each of us has a tale to tell. Each of us is a part of the fabric of Freedom. These are our stories...

For more details, [click here](#) to read more about us on our website. Feel free to browse our site and get to know our organization, our members and their works.

Thanks very much for being a part of the MWSA organization.

## SAVING HISTORY ONE STORY AT A TIME

## MWSA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP CONFERENCE ~ NOVEMBER 8-11, 2018

### *Charleston, S. Carolina*

**ALL MEMBERS OF MWSA** are reminded that this year's membership meeting and conference will be held in Charleston, South Carolina, November 8-10. It's a great opportunity to network, learn from others, and be involved with the future of the Society.

The Awards Banquet will be held the evening of November 10. Your conference fee will cover your attendance at the Banquet. Guests are welcome, but please note if you bring a guest there will be an additional charge.

We plan on putting on a free, one day writing course at the VA clinic in Charleston on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Any members in the area on the 8<sup>th</sup> are invited to attend. Additional specifics will be made available in the future.

Please annotate your calendars to save the date. The registration form is available on our website <http://www.mwsadispatches.com/events/2018/11/8/2018-mwsa-general-membership-conference>.

As a reminder, we will honor cancellation refund requests until the last minute possible, however, once we have to lock in meals, etc. with the hotel, refunds will not be possible. This usually happens around a week before the start of the conference.



If you have a topic you'd like to see discussed, want to participate in a panel, or would like to make a presentation, please let Bob Doerr know. He can be contacted at [rddoerr@cs.com](mailto:rddoerr@cs.com).



# 2019 MWSA HISTORICAL VOICES RETREAT

*Joyce K. Faulkner*

**WATCH FOR MWSA/HISTORICAL** Voices Retreat Spring 2019 in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

This event will be fun, informative, and intriguing. It will also be different from any previous MWSA program in that we will have lots of interesting partners sharing resources, expertise, and information about Fort Smith's extraordinary history. Working with us will be the Fort Smith Historical Society, the Fort Smith Museum of History, the Fort Smith National Historic Site, the Fort Smith Visitor's Center at Miss Laura's, and the University of Arkansas Fort Smith. The Indian Territory Pistoliers will perform for us as well.



dossier to get you started. You will have to do more research on your character on your own though. You will also be assigned one of three roles—juror, reporter, or witness. Your character will be very different from yourself.



As the weekend progresses, you will learn techniques to grow your character-developing skills. You will learn about the history of Fort Smith in general and in particular the era we will be using. You may experience



*Fort Smith National Historic Site Commissary*

The event will focus on point of view. As you register, you will be assigned a historic figure and be given a

a crime. You will definitely participate in a mock trial in Judge Parker's courtroom. Heck, you will even get to ride an antique trolley car from your hotel to the program locations on your personal schedule.



At the end of the event, you will have six months to write a 2500-word piece for the anthology. You can write straight history, historical fiction or a poem. You can also include photographs or artwork if that's your field. The only catch is, you will have to write from the point of view of your assigned character!



Aside from learning history and growing your writing skills, this event will serve as a membership drive for MWSA as well as some of the other groups. We will be inviting all kinds of folks to the event...military and veterans from the three-state area of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. We will invite students from the local colleges and universities, from the historical

societies, from writers' groups and acting groups. For some, this will be the first opportunity to be published. Others will be famous...or infamous...authors, journalists, photographers, teachers, reenactors, or storytellers. Expect excitement. Expect to be challenged. Bring your books to either sell or horse trade. Bring an open mind and an urge to find new perspectives, mysteries, and historical stories—and maybe a few lies and/or misdirection.

Details will be coming soon...first in MWSA blasts and in a special Facebook page and in the Fall Dispatches.



*The Fort Smith Historical Museum as seen from the Fort Smith National Historic Site*



## THE LEGACY MUSEUM & THE MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Joyce K. Faulkner

WHILE RESEARCHING A LYNCHING that took place in Fort Smith, Arkansas in 1912, I found an article about the Equal Justice Institute (EJI). Their goal ...to create a museum and memorial dedicated to the history of black Americans from slavery through Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and the unjust incarcerations of the present... was stunning. I found their website (<https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/museum>) and discovered that the museum in Montgomery, Alabama, opened on April 26, 2018. It was the motherlode of information on my topic at the exact right time for my project...and from the black point of view. Together with my coauthor (Dr. Micki Voelkel) and my business partner (Pat McGrath Avery) and a member of my research team (Karen Daggs), I scheduled a trip to Montgomery for May 22 through 25. It was an experience that none of us will ever forget.

serves as the Executive Director of the group. You can hear him on Oprah's Super Soul Conversations June 6, 2018 podcast, *Bryan Stevenson: the Power of Mercy and Forgiveness*. The museum is in downtown Montgomery on land that once housed a slave warehouse. It is blocks away from the auction block where people were sold. We



looked at each other in uncomfortable silence as we

entered the dark, cool museum. We were the minority group here. Yet, this was our history too. Flipped.

I often talk about point of view which is an important concept of our writer's art. It requires not only knowledge of the character but empathy—the ability to slip into another place and time and person...to see what he sees, feel what

he feels, think what he thinks. I worked hard on that after my visit to Auschwitz, but the Legacy Museum showed me I had more work to do.

We were not allowed to take pictures. At first, I was



The Legacy Museum is the brainchild of Bryan Stevenson, a clinical professor at the New York University of Law, and a civil rights attorney. He founded the EJI to provide legal services for those who have been convicted in the American criminal justice system. He also



annoyed. The place had dozens of quotations printed in white on the black walls. The snippets of lives long past were short, impactful whispers. I didn't want to forget them. But we were politely told "no" so we put our phones away. However, despite our frustration, that act enhanced the experience. Without the urge to record, we focused on what the designers wanted us to see and feel. As a result, that day still echoes in my head.

There were pictures and videos and digital displays. Holograms put visitors in the shoes of traumatized people who had no control of their lives. As we moved from exhibit to exhibit, reading the personal stories of the folks who had been brought there, selected for strength and ability to work...or for perceived fertility so that farmers could increase their "stock" of human muscle and bone, we were moved to tears. We thought of our own parents and children used this way, of our lovers and friends lost forever. We marveled at our good fortune to live unmolested anywhere and anyway we choose.



There were benches so that we could take breaks—emotional and physical. As we rested, we pondered the reality of things we already knew had happened, but that we had pushed into the darkest corners of our minds and ignored. We spoke in hushed tones. Karen talked about how the images and stories made her heart hurt. Pat didn't say much. Her troubled eyes reflected her sorrow. I usually dealt with these uncomfortable historic events by telling myself it had nothing to do with me or there was nothing I could do about it. After all, I seldom considered the lives of my English ancestors—and it was *their* cruelty or desperation or de-ranked thought processes that embraced slavery. Not me. Most definitely not me.

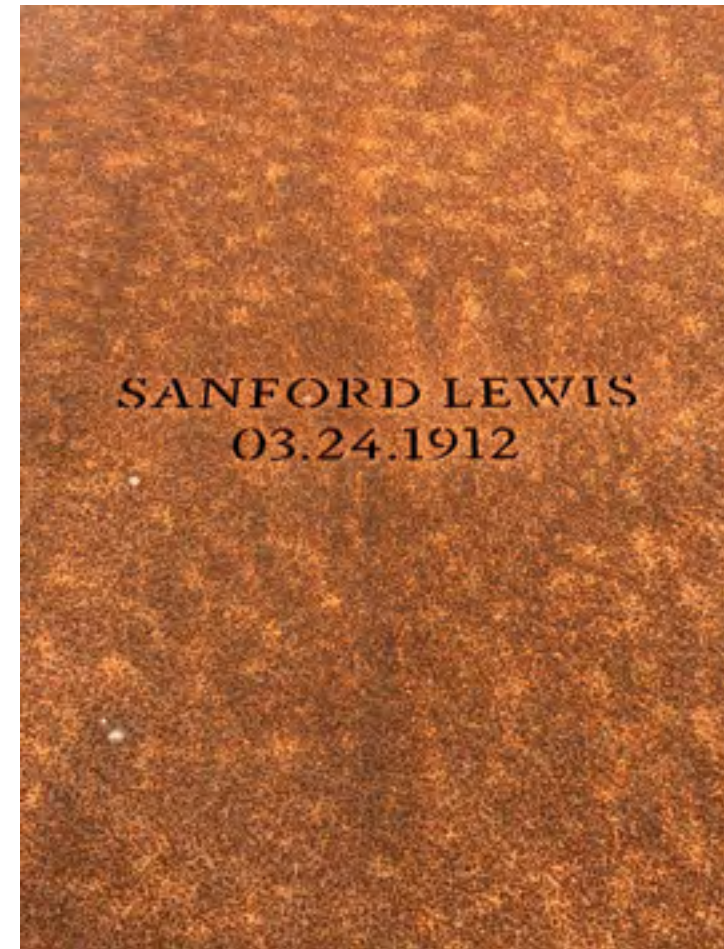
The next phase of the museum focused on Jim Crow, the era when black people were systematically excluded from American society. Laws were passed dictating every element of public and political life. Negroes couldn't marry or have sex with Caucasians. They couldn't go to white schools or libraries or eat in the same restaurants or use the same bathrooms. Breaking one of these rigid, inexplicable and insulting rules elicited quick and harsh punishment. The pictures were ugly. Crowds of people who looked just like us posed under the hanging corpses of their victims. Americans burning other Americans alive, cutting them up, and

LEGACY ~ Continued on page 24

*LEGACY ~ Continued from page 23*

taking the scorched flesh home as souvenirs.

Micki, my sister and coauthor, turned away in horror. I wanted to as well, but I had to look. Like at Auschwitz, one kind of person died for no reason other than another kind of person wanted them dead.



During Jim Crow (1877 - 1950), forty-four hundred black people were executed extra-legally. Lynched. In Arkansas alone, the state where my story took place, there were four hundred and ninety-two. I had to look so I could understand. I had to bear it to tell it. So I looked at the mutilated bodies of the victims. And I looked at the white faces filled with mirth or excitement or anger or hatred. There *must* be an explanation, I thought. Am I too blind to see it?

The last part of the museum focused on those people who have been imprisoned for abnormally long times for the crimes they committed—or whose incarcerations were completely undeserved. They included

many of the stories Bryan Stevenson discussed with Oprah in the podcast mentioned above or in his book, *Just Mercy: a Story of Justice and Redemption*.

We had become separated as each of us lingered at one exhibit or another. I was emotionally spent and sat near the door to compose myself. A tall handsome man paused near me, tears running down his cheeks. I was too caught up in my own spasm of empathetic grief and guilt. So, when it counted, I looked away from him.

Karen had different instincts. She reached out to him. "It's so awful," she murmured.

"Four hundred years," he said. "Four hundred damn years."



**Fort Smith Historical Society  
Journal - Award-winning Publication  
Documenting Fort Smith History**

## MWSA Recommended Reading List – Summer 2018

*By Bob Doerr*

THE MILITARY WRITERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA (MWSA) is an organization of hundreds of writers, poets, and artists drawn together by a common bond of military service. One purpose of our Society is to review the written works of our members. From a compilation of books by our members, we've selected the following as our 2018 Summer Recommended Reading List:

Racing Back to Vietnam by John Pendergrass

Sins of the Fathers by Joseph Badal

The Shadow Tiger by William C McDonald

Tested by Connie Cockrell

My Daddy Sleeps Everywhere by Jesse Franklin

Sebastian's Tale by Dylan Weiss

The Solomons Campaigns, 1942-1943 by William L. McGee

Blades of Thunder by W. Larry Dandridge

Through Smoke-Teared Eyes by Johnny F. Pugh

Wonderful Flying Machines by Barrett Beard

Rescue from Innocence by Joseph Flint

Jungle in Black by Steve Maguire

CIA Super Pilot Spills the Beans by Captain Bill Collier

Medallion by Richard Barnes

The Fires of Babylon by Mike Guardia

These books reflect the works of those reviewed in the last few months. While it does not guarantee any will get an award, it does mean they are good to read! I know half of you are trying to survive the rains and the rest simply want to stay out of the heat. Either way, you're staying indoors. How better to spend your indoor time than by reading? Whether you prefer a good mystery, historical fiction or fact, or someone telling their story about their experiences in conflict, you can find it in the above list. More info about the books and authors in MWSA can be found at [www.mwsadispatches.com](http://www.mwsadispatches.com).

## AFRICAN AMERICAN WARRANT OFFICERS HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

*Farrell J. Chiles, Cultural Historian*

IN CONJUNCTION WITH the 100th Anniversary of the Army Warrant Officer Corps (July 9, 1918 – July 9, 2018), I decided to write a book recognizing African American Army Warrant Officers for their contributions and achievements to our Country. I did so, because I didn't want them left out in the celebration. I reached out to African American Army Warrant Officers and received a tremendous response. Thus, my latest book, "African American Warrant Officers – Their Remarkable History" was published in May 2018. There is an African Proverb that says "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

I have included two of the profiles from the book in this article. There are many stories in the book.



**Chief Warrant Officer Five (Retired)  
Rufus N. Montgomery Sr.**

Rufus N. Montgomery, Sr. was born on 6 October 1945 in Pensacola, Florida to Rufus and Mary Montgomery (both deceased). He had three sisters – Stella Reynolds, Nellie Lewis (deceased), and Lillie McReynolds (deceased). Montgomery began his military career as an enlisted soldier in 1965, serving his first tour of duty as a combat Infantryman and later as a cook with Company C, 1st Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), Bien Hoa, Vietnam. He rose to the rank of Sergeant First Class before his appointment as a warrant officer in 1977.

CW5 Montgomery performed to the highest levels of food services and was widely recognized as one of the foremost food service advisors in the Army. His assignments included the 36th Engineer Group (Combat Heavy), Fort Benning, Georgia and Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia; 1st Armored Division, Ansbach, Germany; US Army Natick Research and Development Laboratories, Natick, Massachusetts; 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Nuremberg, Germany; 1st Battalion, 15th Field Artillery, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Stanley, Korea; 2nd, 325th Airborne Infantry Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Mr. Montgomery's last assignment was as the Combined Arms Support Command Senior Personnel Propensity Officer, where he played an important role in the Army Training Leadership Development Panel Study on Army Transformation challenges and its effect on warrant officers in all grades. He is a member of the Quartermaster Hall of Fame, Class of 2007; a Distinguished Member of the Quartermaster Regiment; and was inducted as an Honorary Alumnus-Office of the Quartermaster General by the 44th Quartermaster General in June 1998. Montgomery served as a voting

(CASCOM) member of the original Warrant Officer Leader Development Council, officially established on January 4, 1999.

His military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal (w/ Five Oak Leaf Clusters); the Army Achievement Medal (w/ four Oak Leaf Clusters); the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm; the Southwest Asia Service Medal; as well as the Saudi Arabia and Kuwait Liberation Medals. He also earned the Combat Infantryman Badge and Parachutist Badge.

Other significant accomplishments in CW5 Montgomery's military career include the first African American Chief Warrant Officer in the food service field to be selected to CW5 (selected below the zone in 1994); and the first African American Chief Warrant Officer to serve as the Senior Warrant Officer Advisor to the Commander, Combined Arms Support Command, Fort Lee, Virginia.

Mr. Montgomery's military career spanned nearly four decades, over 37 years. Since his retirement in 2003, he has continued to be active and productive in the military and Quartermaster communities, serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Army Warrant Officer Association Scholarship Foundation (2003-2012) and as a current member of the Board of Advisors for the Quartermasters Foundation.

In July 2015, a corridor located within the Warrant Officer Technical College, Army Logistics University, was dedicated in his honor. On 14 April 2016, Mr. Montgomery was the recipient of the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by Mrs. Dorothy McAuliffe, First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia and MG Darrell Williams, Commander, Combined Arms Support Command.

CW5 (Retired) Montgomery is currently serving as the 6th Honorary Chief Warrant Officer of the Quartermaster Regiment. He is the first African American to hold this position.

Rufus Montgomery and his wife Patricia have a daughter – Natalie Patrice Crawford (Kevin); two grandchildren, Patricia Iris, Kevin, Jr.; and son – Rufus N. Montgomery, Jr., a veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm; a Combat Engineer who served with the 1st Armored Division, Saudi Arabia, based out of Ansbach, Germany.

CW5 (Ret) Montgomery serves as a deacon at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Prince George, Virginia. He is an active participant in the NAACP, Prince George Virginia Branch, and a volunteer with the Association of Wounded Veterans in Petersburg, Virginia. Mr. Montgomery is enjoying life with his wife of 48 years and his family.

On June 6, 2017, Mr. Montgomery was inducted into the Order of the Eagle Rising Society becoming the 20th member and the first African American in the Society.

### **Chief Warrant Officer Three (Retired) Julius Green**



Mr. Julius Green has an impressive past and present. One of the most significant is his service to our nation during some challenging times historically. Mr. Green was the United States Army's first African American Diver. A job that required remarkable physical and mental strength beyond the limits of what most deems to be extraordinary. His ability to ensure these difficulties culminated in him obtaining the prestige of Master Diver. It also was the catapult to other successes forthcoming.

*WARRANT OFFICERS ~ Continued on page 28*

*WARRANT OFFICERS ~ Continued from page 27*

Julius Green started his journey having completed only a tenth-grade education. He joined the United States Army in 1951. After he completed Basic Combat Training he was stationed in Germany for three years. Following his tour in Germany, he was stationed in Fort Jackson, South Carolina where he applied and was accepted to train to become a U.S. Army Diver. The irony is at the time he did not know how to swim.

In 1956, upon completing the training at the U.S. Army's Diving school in Fort Eustis, Virginia, Julius Green became only the second African American diver in the U.S. military and the first in the U.S. Army having obtained the Noncommissioned Officer's (NCO) rank of Sergeant First Class (E-7), Sergeant Green applied and was accepted to the US Army Marine Engineering Warrant Officer's Basic Course. Upon graduation Mr. Julius Green became the Army's first African-American Diving Officer.

Mr. Green served as an instructor in the Army Diving Training Program at Fort Eustis until his retirement as a Chief Warrant Officer 3 in 1973. His Army service also included two combat tours in Vietnam from 1967-68 and 1970-1971. After 22 years of service in the U.S. military, Mr. Green retired from the U.S. Army on October 31, 1973.

He has earned an Associate's Degree and a Bachelor's Degree from Saint Leo University. His post Army retirement took him to the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia where he was employed for 23 years. He retired from that career as the Director of Operations for the College in 1996.

Julius Green has been an extremely active person in his community. He is a life member of the Sigma Delta Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. He has been a Freemason since 1956, is a Past Master of Pioneer Lodge No 315, Free & Accepted Masons, Prince Hall Affiliation and has held other local, state, and national offices. He has also served as President of the U.S. Army Diver's Association. He is a Deacon at his church in Newport News Virginia where he lives with his wife Rosalyn and they share two children, two grandchildren and their great grandchildren.

Mr. Julius Green lives a victorious and courageous life. His contributions will last for years to come and show all no matter the circumstances; one can achieve great successes even during hardships.

In April 2018, the 100 Black Men, Virginia Peninsula Chapter, honored Mr. Green with the group's Trailblazer Award.



## Attention Members of MWSA:

We are offering another benefit to members of Military Writers Society of America. If you are launching a new book, send us the good news and we will introduce it to our MWSA audience. The first three submissions each quarter will receive a 1/3 page ad (\$100 value for non-members) in Dispatches. On submission, you will be told if your book will appear in the magazine. If you miss the magazine, you can request an announcement in the monthly email blast.

In addition, each issue of Dispatches will feature one two-page spread MWSA author interview which will include cover art, author headshot and bio. The interview will be limited to the first request each quarter.

Here are the rules:

- ✓ You must be a member in good standing of MWSA.
- ✓ Your book must be published, complete with an ISBN. We will not accept ARCs or manuscripts.
- ✓ Your date of publication must be no more than twelve months before requested date of ad in.
- ✓ Your book must comply with the rules specified by the Awards Program, i.e., no pornography, must be respectful of the government of the United States of America and the United States Military.

Here's how to submit:

- ✓ Submit your cover art (jpg), genre and subcategory, a summary, and where your book can be purchased.
- ✓ The quarter you would like your ad to appear in.
- ✓ If you would like a staff member to interview you for a full article about your book, please indicate that in your submission. Only one interview per issue, so first come first serve.
- ✓ Send to [sandstar62@gmail.com](mailto:sandstar62@gmail.com)

### Become an MWSA Reviewer

If you'd like to help out and become one of our MWSA reviewers, we'd love to have you join us!

All it takes is about 45 minutes to an hour of training via video conference—or over the phone.

You'll get to read a wide variety of books

Books are assigned on a volunteer basis—you pick what you read.

After submitting your review, the books are yours to keep

Reviewers evaluating a minimum number of books (exact number varies) will receive a small Amazon gift certificate acknowledging their contribution. The more books you review, the larger the certificate.

Most importantly, you can "pay it forward" by helping out a fellow MWSA author!

If you'd like to get more details or volunteer to help out, please use our [Contact Form](#)



# INGENUITY & NEED: THE INGREDIENTS OF CHANGE

Pat McGrath-Avery

LOW BRIDGE, EVERYBODY DOWN  
 LOW BRIDGE, WE'RE COMING TO A TOWN  
 YOU'LL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR  
 AND YOU'LL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR PAL  
 IF YOU EVER NAVIGATED ON THE ERIE CANAL

*(Low Bridge, Everybody Down by Thomas S. Allen, 1905)*

IF YOU'RE OF A CERTAIN AGE or if you're a Bruce Springsteen fan, you've probably heard these words. It's the kind of song that paints a picture in your mind and makes you want to be there.

On a recent trip to New York with "I've got a mule and her name is Sal, fifteen miles on the Erie Canal" playing nonstop in my head, I realized that long ago dream of seeing the Erie Canal and picturing it back in Sal's day. Where mules once pulled barges along the canal,

today people meander, walk their dogs, feed the ducks and enjoy the many restaurants and shops that dot those same shores.

However, the canal is more than just a place to while away an afternoon. It's an engineering marvel that brought out the best in the untrained minds of a group of surveyors. Picture the early 1800s. West Point offered the country's only formal engineering training. Yet the state recognized a need that would change transportation throughout the Great Lakes states. The brightest surveyors and designers planned the canal, which employed thousands of unskilled immigrant laborers. Not only did they have to dig a four-foot deep and forty-foot wide canal through mountains and wilderness; they also had to accommodate the 500-foot-plus elevation difference. Many problems had to be



solved on the spot, utilizing the collective brainpower of the educated and uneducated.



The construction project has been called the "Erie School of Engineers." The surveyors who learned on the job would soon be recognized as the foremost hydraulic engineers in the country.

Irish immigrants were the backbone of the labor force. Pay ranged up to eighty cents a day. There were no unions or benefits, other than some whiskey waiting at the end of the day. Disease and accidents caused more than 1,000 deaths (out of 50,000 construction workers). The men carried pick axes and shovels and devised new tools to solve problems they encountered.



The Erie Canal changed America. It gave the northern states access to the Atlantic Ocean without moving goods all the way down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. The 363-mile-long canal, from Albany to Buffalo, is credited with making New York the empire state. It enabled westward expansion and cut travel time to Buffalo from two weeks by stagecoach to five days.

If you travel to New York, take time to explore the Erie Canal. Visit the towns along the route and check out the museums. I visited the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse. I loved the exhibits that explained the challenges and the solutions of building the canal. It would take days for a non-engineering type like me to develop any understanding of the lock system, but only minutes to marvel at the creative genius involved at all levels.

The museum is located in downtown Syracuse at 318 Erie Boulevard East. Check it out online at [www.eriecanalmuseum.org](http://www.eriecanalmuseum.org).



## MEL'S SHOES

Joe Campolo Jr.

### INTRODUCTION



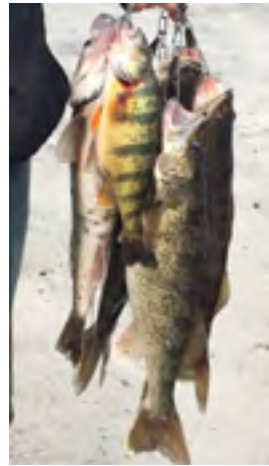
My lifelong best friend, Jim, passed away a few years ago. All of us who knew him still miss him very much. In addition to being a good-hearted person, Jim was also a constant source of humor for us all. He had a way of turning a mundane activity into a hilarious adventure. (Reference my earlier blog, *Jim and the Hat*) Jim also enjoyed hearing about the adventures he created and laughed as hard as the rest of us whenever they were told and retold. One of Jim's most frequent "victims" over the years was his dad, Mel. This is another story in which Jim provided a hilarious adventure, at poor Mel's expense.

### MEL'S SHOES



My best friend Jim and his family had a cottage on a small lake near Wautoma, Wisconsin. The lake had a nice population of panfish, as well as some nice bass and a

few northern pike as well. There were many other lakes and rivers in the area along with a few other attractions, which lured us up there over the years. Jim and I went up there quite a bit in our youth, where we had many fishing and hunting adventures...and a few misadventures as well.



At one time, some years ago, Jim and I along with his brother Don and his parents Mel and Isla were all up at the cottage at the same time. After an extended rainy period, the yard had become a mud wallow and Mel's boat and trailer sank into the heavy muck. Mel recruited Jim, Don and me to help him get his boat and trailer dislodged from the mud and moved to higher ground.



I looked forward to the task, as any affair involving Jim and his dad usually turned into a slapstick adventure filled with hilarity.



From an early age, Jim had gotten into the habit of "borrowing" things from his dad, with little or no notice. Jim continued this practice into adulthood.

Mel was a big fellow, quiet but with a wry sense of humor and a keen wit. Over time, Mel, being rather shrewd, implemented a plan to keep track of his possessions and the flow of them. He accomplished this by spray-painting all of his tools and equipment iridescent orange.

Now having done this, any time Mel needed an inventory of his possessions, which he suspected Jim of appropriating, he merely paid Jim a visit and anything with the telltale iridescent orange paint was promptly repossessed.

The plan worked fairly well, however not all of Mel's possessions lent themselves to the garish paint job, and those items that were not suitable for the orange treatment were, unfortunately for Mel, still vulnerable to Jim's predation. A contributing factor in all of this was that as a young adult, Jim was about the same size as Mel.

Now, back to our story regarding the boat and trailer mired in muck. On this particular day, the four of us headed out to rescue Mel's rig, and sure enough, there sat the boat and trailer, buried in about two feet of mud. From where it was located, all we could do was try to push it out by hand, as there was no room for a vehicle on either side.

While Mel and Jim positioned themselves on one side of the boat, Don and I took the other. We were giving it all we had, struggling and pushing it through the muck, while at the same time trying to maintain our balance so as not to end up lying in the wallow alongside the boat. Things were progressing fairly well, and it looked like we would soon get the boat and trailer onto dry ground until Mel suddenly dropped his load and started yelling at the top of his voice

"What the hell are you doing with my new shoes on?" Mel roared.



Don, Jim and I all looked down, and sure enough, caked in mud though they were, you could clearly see the fine crafted leather of Mel's formerly impeccable new leather dress shoes... on Jim's feet.

Now Jim knew he was in trouble (been there before), and he was soon back peddling as fast as he could, while all the while professing ignorance.

"Dad, I thought they were mine, no kidding...I didn't realize I put your shoes on!"

Red with rage, Mel wasn't buying it, as he went after Jim like a pit bull after a ham bone, yelling and snorting in the process.

Soon Jim was running around the trailer full speed, with a game old Mel hot on his heels. Don and I, now holding up the entire load, and of course laughing like hyenas, finally dropped our load as well.

This hilarious scene went on for a minute or two more until Jim danced far enough away and out of reach, after which Mel just stood and glared at him.

Eventually Mel calmed down and Jim, maintaining his proclamations of innocence, promised to clean the shoes up as good as new; placating Mel just enough. Jim went in the house changed into his own shoes, and returned to position himself at the boat again, making sure to stay out of Mel's reach.



Soon with the boat on dry ground, we all retreated to the cabin, where Jim spent the better part of an hour cleaning Mel's new shoes...under the watchful eye of Mel of course.

NOTE: Although Jim borrowed some of my "stuff" over the years, as I borrowed some of his, I never had to worry about him borrowing my clothing or foot wear. Jim was 6'2" tall and had enormous hands and feet. He

*SHOES ~ Continued on page 34*

SHOES ~ Continued from page 33

wore a size fourteen shoe, compared to my size eight.

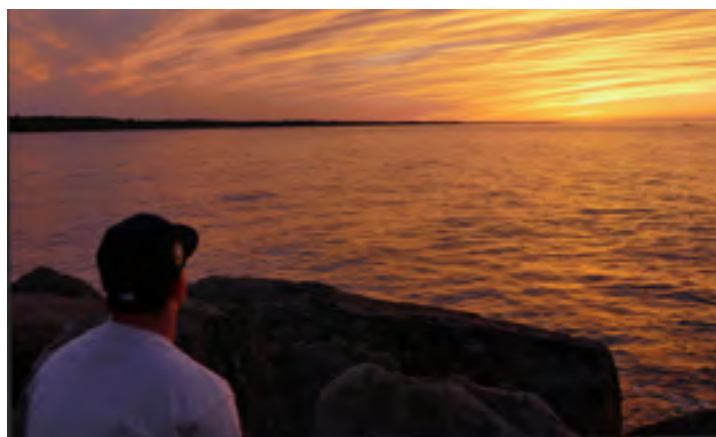
On more than one occasion I complained about having to pay the same amount for my shoes as he did for his, despite the difference in size. “Yours take half a cow” I would say.

Bald at an early age, Jim would respond by pointing out that he and I paid the same amount for a haircut. Case closed!

*Originally posted in Joe's Blog on 4 May, 2018*



MWSA DISPATCHES IS LOOKING for member submissions. We have many opportunities available for you as a member in good standing, from [Author Interviews](#) to Poetry submissions, to [Book Profiles](#) (three books—first come-first served) will be showcased in the Dispatches every quarter. If you'd like to write a feature article, or have further questions, please email me at [sandstar62@msn.com](mailto:sandstar62@msn.com). Thanks.



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*John Cathcart*

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## PP PART III: WAIT. WHAT? ~ CONTINUITY ERRORS

Sandra Miller Linhart

**WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE.** We're reading one of our favorite authors (mine is Stephen King) and stop in mid-sentence with a "Wait. What?" because one moment our villain was comfortably seated at a bar. But in the next, Stephen has her sitting down at the bar.

We go back to the aforementioned installment and reread. And then, we have *that* internal dialogue:



"Yes. Here she is. Sitting down next to her probable future victim... then she chats with the barmaid... Yes, yes. That's what I remember I read. Then she orders her drink. Right. I remember reading that. Then she turns in her seat to face Mr. Soon-to-be-dead-guy... Um-hmmm."

"There!! There it is! Stephen now has her sitting down at the table. Let me read it again. Did she ever get up and I missed it? Nope. She's seated and then she sits. *Voila!* I. Am. Vindicated."

And then you sit back in your glorified superiority and

wonder how such an esteemed and celebrated author could have made such a rookie mistake.

And here's the answer—because we don't write our book in one sitting. We add, subtract, rearrange, and revise so much during the creation of our masterpieces we lose track. Then, we read knowing what we wrote and we see what we think we wrote. And that's how we all miss the blunders. Yes, even the Stephen Kings of the world.

Our editors—if they're any good—send back our manuscripts for us add or change different passages, as well. So after we think we're done and that our book can't get any better, we get put on notice that we're wrong and here's how.

We make the editorial changes but fail to do a complete reread of the tome because, quite frankly, we're sick to death of the story by now. Besides, who's got the time for that? We're busy working on our next bestseller. We've already "finished" *that* POS book.

Our editor, publisher, first-readers have (more than likely) already read our book a gazillion times, as well. And they're probably *way* over it, too. And that, my dear friends, is how bloopers get missed. Unlike movies, these bloopers aren't easily edited out.

So, how do we keep from making these mistakes? Are you kidding? If Stephen can't, what makes you think we can? The reality is, we can't. But we can do our best to keep them at a minimum.

I offer you the top five ways to ensure our manuscripts are free-ish from blunders:

5. Put your finished—edited and read to print—manuscript aside for one to two weeks and then come back to it.

Do a complete and total reread with as new of eyes as you can muster. You might catch an inconsistency or two.

4. Offer a preview of your upcoming novel to your compiled list of first-readers.

You should've already reached out to fans on Facebook, contact lists, Instagram, or Twitter. Ask for a few volunteers to read your ARC for consistency and other errors. The more eyes on your project, the more mistakes will emerge.

Careful on this one to not employ any trolls. People love to hate. Don't give trolls a platform to abuse your talents. Most writers are thin-skinned—we merely project confidence. No worries, though—your first-readers list will grow and weed itself out over time.

3. Ask a fellow writer to read your work.

Ensure they can write well first, though. They don't have to be a literary scholar but they should know how to put a cohesive sentence together (without the magic of an editor). [Editors are our friends. Employ them.]

2. Get a timeline app and use it.

This is the number one inconsistency I've found in most books—your timeline. Nothing is more annoying (to me) than having a scene (movie, TV show or book) where it's nine at night, the character goes outside, and it's apparently as bright as daylight out. Dude. The sun sets. Your character wouldn't be able to see the color of that car driving away or read the expression in the mysterious woman's eyes. Wearing a hat. In the alleyway. (Either character.)

Or it's the middle of winter, a storm is brewing, and your character tells his estranged wife to "drive over Togwotee Pass" on her way to Jackson, Wyoming. (The movie: *Wind River*.) Dude. There's no way you can "drive over Togwotee Pass" in the dead of winter during a snowstorm – unless you're on a snowmobile...

but that's more of a "know-your-setting" error than a timeline one.



Although, driving over Togwotee Pass in the summer is definitely an option.

Wait... maybe he wanted her to die? At any rate, know of what you write.

And the number one way to keep pesky errors and inconsistencies out of your otherwise perfect manuscript —after you've done numbers two through five—is:

1. List your book and let it go.

Because there is no number one way to achieve this. No doubt, somewhere down the line someone will let you know an error got in. At that point you'll need to decide whether or not it's worth it to pull your book off the shelves and fix the error or let it ride.

As they said in the sixties— Stay groovy and write on, my friends.

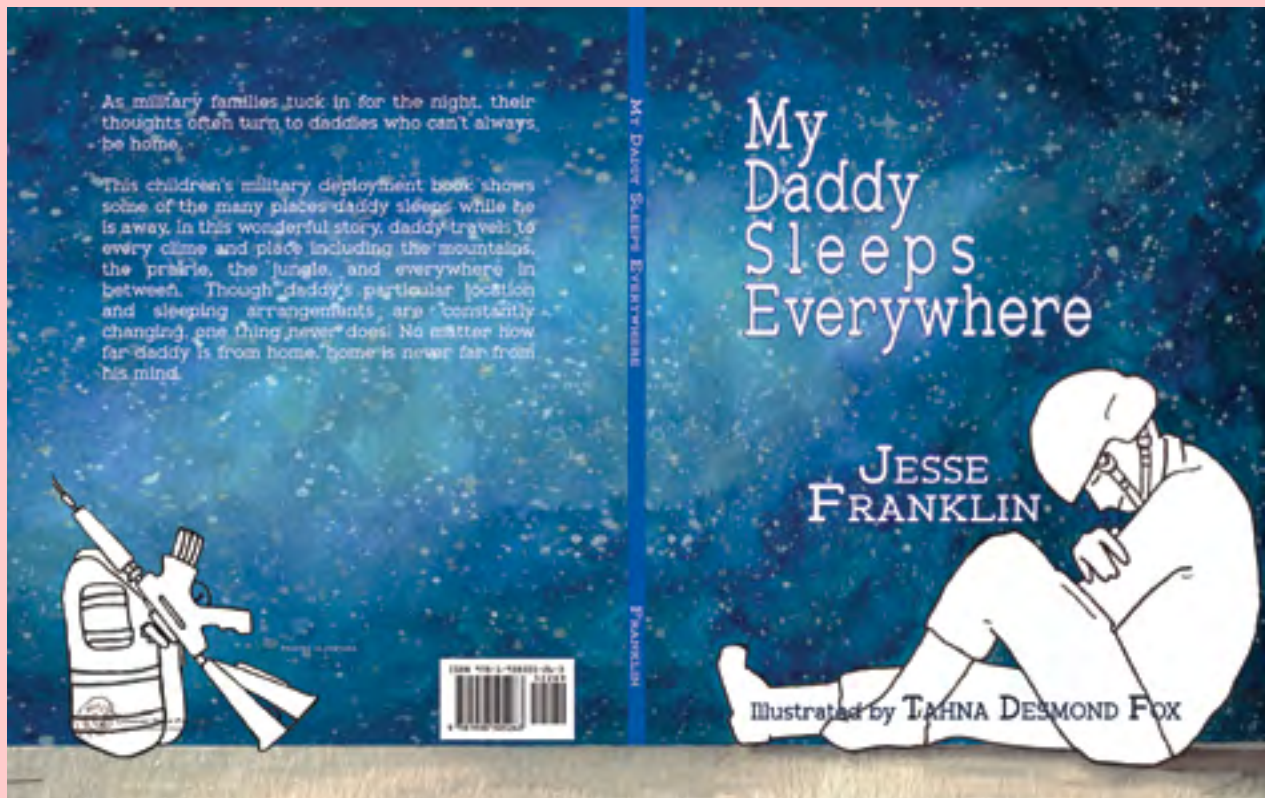
In Joy & Enjoy.

Article from Sandra's blog *Diary of an Unkempt Woman*. You can purchase her book (edited by a pro) of the same name [here](#).



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**We also offer an Author Interview to be posted on our website—which will be included in *Dispatches*. More information can be found on our website at [www.mwsadispatches.com/author-interviews](http://www.mwsadispatches.com/author-interviews). Please ensure to add [sandstar62@gmail.com](mailto:sandstar62@gmail.com) to your request email to ensure your interview is placed within these pages.**

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