



Apples from the Tree

No. 1 February and March, 2007



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Oops! We're learning
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Congratulations Chris!

Right off we want to congratulate Chris Judd, author of *Bearable Moments*. He entered his book in the Children's Picture Book category of the prestigious Writer's Digest International Self-Published Book Awards and won an honorable mention. Check out the book at <http://www.arcadianhouse.com/catalog1.shtml> or go directly to Chris' site at <http://www.bearablemoments.com/index.php>



When You Write — Give Yourself Permission

Students in many of my writing classes hesitate to put their thoughts on paper. They're afraid, I think - it might not be good enough, they don't know how to word what they want to say, grammar may not be correct. In a 6-week class, we often spend the first 3 convincing students that it's really OK to write.

Relax! The really cool thing about writing is that you can always change it before someone reads it. Computers make that especially easy. Spoken words are out there. They can't be changed, no matter how hard you wish they might. Said and done applies. Not so with the written word. You can add things you forgot, cut out the stuff, correct the grammar, or rewrite those sentences that really don't say what you intended. You can polish and revise as much as you want. No one knows.

Now. Here's another tip. It's true that written language is not the same as spoken. But when you start to write, don't worry about it. Say aloud what you want to say and write that down. Then revise so that the words speak as you want from the paper. You can throw away what you don't like.

Sometimes when I write, I find myself trying to wear my writer's hat and my editor's hat all at the same time. Both don't fit, and it doesn't work. I have to take off the editor's hat until I've put down all the words. Editing is another task and comes later.

Give it a try. Sit down and write whatever comes to mind with no judgment. Then read it. You'll find it's much better than you thought. It's OK.



The Great Balloon Hoax

The first crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by balloon didn't happen until 1978. Nevertheless, the *The New York Sun* of April 13, 1844 put out a broadside extra headlined: "Astounding News by Express. VIA Norfolk! - The Atlantic Crossed in Three Days [by] Flying Machine."

The author of the story was Edgar Allan Poe of *Tell Tale Heart* and *Murders in the Rue Morgue* fame. He had returned to New York from Philadelphia with his sick wife and mother - and \$4.50 in his pocket. Desperately needing money, Poe wrote a hoax centered on the first crossing of the Atlantic in a balloon and sold it to the *Sun*.

To summarize the story, Monck Mason had applied the principle of the Archimedes screw to the propulsion of a dirigible balloon. The gas bag was an ellipsoid thirteen feet long with a car suspended from it. The screw propeller, which was attached to the car, was operated by a spring. A rudder shaped like a battledore kept the airship on its course.

The voyagers, according to the story, started from North Wales, intending to sail across the English Channel.



Featured Author

Cathy Jo Smith *Adventures of Seamus McSeamus, an Irish Rover*

Cathy Jo is a teller of Celtic tales. She's also known as Caitlín na Sí, Seanachai - Katie of the Fairies, Storyteller. We've chosen her as our featured author in honor of St. Patrick's Day coming up on March 17. Besides that, we love her collection of Seamus stories, original tales built around Irish folk themes.



Seamus, it seems, must wander that misty world where giants and dwarves still dwell and fairies may appear at any moment. He's in search of a bride, but along the way, his encounters with the Fair Folk of Ireland will keep you turning pages until the end. Visit <http://arcadianhouse.com/catalog.shtml> to get a better look.

Cathy Jo began telling stories just before Halloween. She dressed up as a little old Irish lady to tell her daughter's first grade class the true origins of the holiday and to read them a story about overcoming fear. The daughter is grown up now, but Cathy Jo is still telling stories.

Even so, her professional career nearly ended the day it began. She was telling on an outdoor stage at the Dublin Irish Festival and the wind was blowing. Unfortunately, so was the set behind her. It slammed into her shoulders, nearly knocking her over. (Some people will do anything for attention.)

Cathy Jo is an at-home mother of four, ranging from a high school freshman to a junior at Ohio State. She's active in the National Storytelling Network, Storytellers of Central Ohio, the Ohio Order for the Preservation of Storytelling and the Irish-language Gaelic League.

Here's a link to her Website at <http://irishteller.com>.



Harris' Newspaper Bust

The first American newspaper, *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick*, was published in Boston on Sept. 25, 1690, by Benjamin Harris. It vowed to publish "once a [month] (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener)." But once was enough for the Colonial governor, who banned the paper and jailed Harris for printing it "Without the least ... Countenance for Authority." The governor was miffed by a gossipy story about the flirtations of the king of France and an article criticizing the "barbarous" ways in which the Indian allies of the English treated their French prisoners during the first of the four French and Indian Wars. So, the first newspaper in America became the nation's first officially suppressed newspaper.

In 1791, the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, went into effect. The First Amendment protects, among other rights, the freedom of the press. This amendment allows journalists to publish or broadcast information without government interference, with a few exceptions settled in the courts.



The mechanism of the propeller broke, and the balloon, caught in a strong northeast wind, was carried across the Atlantic at a speed of sixty or more miles an hour and landed safely on the coast of South Carolina near Fort Moultrie.

The balloon hoax lasted for only a day. The *Sun* itself said on April 15, 1844: "... the mails from the south ... not having brought confirmation of the balloon from England ... we are inclined to believe that the intelligence is erroneous."