

## *Twenty-Six Cents*

*Thomas Wheeler*

I do not remember the origin of the bet and neither do my brothers. At some time, however, when twenty-six cents was the amount available for such purpose, some brother bet another brother that he could not do some stupid or dangerous thing. The bet was like a dare only with a princely sum riding on the outcome. The challenged brother could decline but it was rare that the opportunity to earn in excess of a quarter was not taken, even by a brother in his 30's or 40's. There were no rules but in the event of success, it was incumbent on the newly-flush to find some equally do-able but dangerous task for the loser to do to get his money back. There were hundreds of such bets over the years. Among the favorites were the following:

1. "I bet you twenty-six cents you can't knock that wasp nest down with your bare hand without getting stung." The bigger the nest and the more numerous the protectors, the more adrenaline-filled the dare. The event required speed, stealth, and a clear get-away path. A wasp is aggressive and quick but can be outrun if you get a step on it, do not trip and are appropriately motivated. To a bunch of pre-teen and teenage boys...and nowadays to a couple of 40-ish types, there are very few things as funny as seeing a swarm of angry wasps hot on the trail of a brother moving with speed that only fear can generate.

2. "I bet you twenty-six cents that you can't put that whole egg in your mouth." This one came up mostly when a double-

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yoked egg was gathered and our grandmother was not around. The trick was generally not in inserting the larger-than-normal egg. The problem was removing it. A guy with an egg causing his cheeks to puff out is a pretty funny sight. Even the egg-filled brother wants to smile or laugh but cannot because of his condition. With a sibling or two laughing their backsides off, it is very difficult to relax the face long enough to get the egg maneuvered out. It was always a scream if the egg happened to break.

3. “I bet you twenty-six cents you cannot catch that (usually huge) bull snake without getting bit.” Bull snakes, at least the big ones, have nasty dispositions. After they are caught and handled for a while, most will settle down enough so that the holder can let go of their heads without getting bitten. For years, it was a Wheeler boy that held the snake and moved through the crowd during the “snake dance” performed at the end of Boy Scout camp by the scouts clad in Indian garb. The initial meeting with a big bull snake is almost never a friendly encounter. A bull snake does not have fangs but the rough edges of its mouth hurt like crazy if it gets you on a bare spot.

4. “I’ll give you twenty-six cents if you put this mouse down Sister’s shirt.” Putting things down a sibling’s shirt is not as easy as it sounds. It was, however, great fun. We Wheeler kids were an untrusting lot. Whether a mouse, a lizard, a harmless snake, a rotten egg or a piece of over-ripe fruit, the great feat was getting close. You also never knew for sure whether the two (bettor and target) were working together and the target was waiting on you to get close so that he or she could whack you with one or more solid or semi-rotten objects. For those of you that do not know, the record is 2.8 seconds to remove a t-shirt and shake out a lizard.

5. “See that fence? Bet you twenty-six cents you can’t jump it.” Three or four-strand barbed wire fencing surrounded most

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of my grandparents' farm. My oldest brother and I were high school gymnasts. My other two brothers fancied themselves athletes. In our younger years, hopping the fence was not that great a feat. Our maturing brains, however, failed to adjust to the loss of "ups" which had afflicted our aged legs. In the big picture, there is very little as funny as some 30-ish guy, trying to relive his glory days, taking a running leap at a fence and hooking a toe on the top strand.

6. "Twenty-six cents says you cannot eat that piece of watermelon." This bet usually came at the end of a monstrous meal where all participants were stuffed to a point of being ill. Sometimes it was watermelon. Sometimes it was pie or chicken or potatoes. The humor generally came twenty or thirty minutes later when the eater was crying from a painful stretching of a stomach that will not hold another gram of material and the dared party still had five bites to go.

7. "I bet you twenty-six cents that you can't catch that seven-lined race runner (a lizard) by yourself." Again, the particular type of lizard or animal was not important. Any reptile, mammal, insect or amphibian would do so long as the chances of the thing being caught were reasonably small. Believe me, it is worth the money on the line to see a kid or a grown man hopping around the tank or the pasture, matching wits with something which, at that instant, probably had just as many brain cells working as the chaser.

8. "Let's toss this egg back and forth and whoever drops it owes the other twenty-six cents." The egg generally was a presumably rotten one that was found in some nest which one of the hens had hidden for a few days or weeks. The eggs could not be used because it was difficult to tell which were fresh and which stunk really, really badly. The object of the contest was to move one step farther away after each toss. The trajectory of the toss was intended to be such that, if the egg broke, the

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contents would splash all over the stone-handed catcher. Over-ripe fruit could be substituted for rotten eggs.

9. “I bet twenty-six cents you cannot skip a rock eight times or more.” If curling remains an Olympic sport, rock skipping must soon become one. Skipping requires the selection of the proper stone, a testing of the wind, a solid throwing stance and just the right angle. It requires a ton more skill than pushing a rock object down the ice. I also strongly suspect that more folks rock skip around the world than do that thing on ice. Lots of money, sometimes upwards of two dollars, can be won or lost on a still afternoon.

The twenty-six-cent thing is rooted in a basic manly need to show who is the toughest, smartest or most talented among the gathering. The question of who is alpha male among the Wheeler boys is still undecided despite decades of overeating, fence jumping, rock throwing and monitored expulsions from bodies. It’s a question that needs to be answered before one of my brothers starts using his advanced age as an excuse. A backcountry camping trip offers far too many opportunities to continue the quest for superiority... and for potentially bad things to happen.

Every mid-July, a couple of brothers (the related kind) and I head to the Pecos National Wilderness in New Mexico and lose ourselves in the backcountry for a few days. The trips are sometimes a bit challenging since we leave behind a number of items my first wife would consider “essentials.” Two notable events took place during the most recent of these back-to-nature treks. I hesitate to give many details regarding the first event since my wife might bring it up during the commitment proceedings she periodically threatens. Let’s just say that it involved the bet and a large rock being thrown in an attempt to break a good-sized log into fire pit-sized pieces. The log did not break but, instead, trampolined the stone into the nearest soft

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object – my head. I am now able to state without reservation that laughter is not the best medicine, at least not when it comes from a couple of unsympathetic brothers. I am overjoyed to report that the next event did not directly involve me.

My brother Chuck has classic “dude” characteristics: tough (or acts so), self-sufficient (unless you ask his wife) and self-reliant (“I don’t need no doctor for this. I have nine other fingers.”) Turns out, however, he is not so tough. In fact, he is

quite a weenie. His claim to alpha status, already weak in my opinion, took quite a beating on this trip and pretty well eliminated him from any serious future consideration.

The revelation came to light during the second day of the trip. His evening meal was a packet of freeze dried spaghetti. That meal selection is not, by itself, of great significance unless you consider the hog trough sounds he was making while the rest of us were choking down ramen noodles and tuna. The significance came to light an hour or so later during a card game. A loud “glurg” sound came from the general direction of my brother.

“Glurg” is not a word you will find in your standard Webster’s. Glurging is not a condition described in the Physician’s Desk Reference. It is, however, an appropriately descriptive gathering of letters in some circumstances. A glurg is a sign...a warning. A glurg is a precursor to a duck into the bushes or a sprint to a bathroom. A glurg is pretty funny when it is “voiced” by a friend or brother. It’s not so funny when heard coming from the direction of a wife or child in a car. It’s anything but humorous when it is one’s own chili or jalapeño consumption that is speaking.

There is a special, unique look in the eye of one afflicted by a serious glurg: fear, surprise, determination, resignation, urgency...generally a combination thereof. It’s not the look exhibited by a man in charge. My brother’s were not the actions

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of a tough guy. It was a little sad to see a grown man walk funny to his backpack, hear him whimper a little while he looked for tissue and walk/waddled with an awkward gait toward his pre-selected special place. The abandoned card players knew the score. Still, that walk to the bushes was pretty funny.

The selected spot being pretty far away, we were spared most of the sound effects. We did, however, hear some words appropriate for a church or seminary. There was a definite beseeching of God and a promise of significant reduction in a variety of sins including excessive beer consumption. I swear there was a “Thank you, Jesus” a couple of minutes later, right before my brother strolled from the bushes with a sweaty but relieved look on his face.

From my perspective, my brother’s inability to handle a little old camp meal is a sign of a weak constitution. It’s telling. It speaks of what he is made of. I’m embarrassed to publically admit to being his relative. Definitely not alpha male material. But I’ll bet you twenty-six cents he never packs spaghetti in his camp rations again.

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*...and we plan  
future paths.*

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## *Untitled*

*Jordan Reyes, age 10*

I stood beside the small, clear, and remarkable pond, I stared deep into the six-inch pond, until a soft breeze blew through the strands of my hair.

I still was focused on the sight of the pond until . . . . . the breeze got stronger and stronger, than it began to sprinkle, then lightning and the sound of thunder began to burst into different places in the sky.

I started to walk trying to act brave during all the commotion, and I walked upon the dead dried leaves listening to the crunching sounds of them, then I began to walk faster, then I began to run.

I was so frightened I tears began to pour out of my eye uncontrollably, and every step I took made my feet numb, and then I was so focused I obviously tripped over a large tree stump, and plus even though I was determined getting home I got back up then I was so out of breath I stopped and bend down, and just a few seconds later I turned around to see what I was running from, then right the second I looked at it, I started running again.

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## *Carlsbad Caverns*

*Riley McCone at age 10*

The Carlsbad Caverns were the best caves I have been in so far. The rocks were amazing; one of them looked like three scoops of ice cream on a cone, and I thought “rock flavored ice cream, Yum!”

I could feel the moist air and its horrid smell. The air smelled like rotten eggs; it was nauseating.

The pools were so clear I didn't see them at first and I thought they were ditches because of the reflection. Sometimes water from the stalactites dripped on my sister and me. My sister freaked out.

There were some stalagmites that looked like popcorn. I could just taste that buttery popcorn. Mmm!

We also got to be the last people to go in a special part of the tour with the bottomless pit; it was marked off. We got to because it was our first trip to Carlsbad Caverns, so we also did not plan very well.

At the end of the tour, we got to go on an elevator to the top. We also got to see the bats fly up from the caves.

I had to give up the West Texas Fair and Rodeo for the Carlsbad Caverns, but I would not trade it for anything. All and all I had a great time.

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## *Untitled*

*Annalynn Miller, age --*

I am from Pink Converse and rainbow barrettes.  
From the spring day that is the photo-booth photo.  
The two laughing girls that are attacking each other.  
I am from the notes hidden away in sheet music.  
The chords of fragments of broken songs.  
The lost voice of the singing bird.  
I am from the chocolate mess on the stove.  
It's still oozing from many sunny days ago.  
From the snap shotted moments.  
The too big smiles and sparkling eyes,  
And fights in the kitchen about who is doing the dishes.  
All captured in the Kodak.  
From the pearl earrings I had wanted to show off.  
I am from the mirror with paintings prisoner inside.  
From the strands of multi-colored rainbow yarn hair of the  
dish towel doll.  
And from the plastic of the glow-in-the-dark bracelet —  
“Candy”.  
I am from the strawberry patch that made me sick.  
From the huge trampoline that felt like a cage.  
The glass ballerina that never fit on the Christmas tree.  
Smoke that fills your lungs even when Marianne is outside.  
I am from the worries that fill my friend, my sister's mind.  
The worries and memories that dance through her during the

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night.

She is counting the ways she will fail.

I am from out of the dark, begging her to pick roses with me.

“Too afraid of thorns. Too afraid of pain.”

She is more afraid of the tears she has yet to shed.

I am from that fear, those worries, and those tears.

From the glossy picture with bright neon pink hair.

I am from the real world, the one with big problems.

From the spray paint, blue smoke, and broken hearts.

The sad stories that aren't mine, but I'm in them.

I write them. I illustrate them.

I breathe life into them.

## *Aerials*

*Cody Holloway, age 16*

The stifling humidity in the evening air is surpassed only by the sheer number of mosquitoes which swim through it, obsessively seeking an unsupervised child or small dog to carry away into the night. The lake is serene, and the same can be said of the lakeside. Essence of stale beer and cigarette smoke and droning conversation lingers over the contented laziness of the lake's surface. There is a simple stage with an amp and a stool, lit faintly by strings of glowing bulbs that surround its perimeter. A relatively small group of mends and family sits directly in front of the stage, rambling on about how good the dinner of home cooked barbecue was, and how nothing has changed and

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never will change in their familiar little town. I sit in their midst, absentmindedly immersed in the tranquility and simply existing, when the first note is plucked. My uncle Brent has materialized on stage, cradling on his knee a worn acoustic guitar. The first tone is but a whisper, a mystery that pleads infinitesimal questions of life. But, it is followed by another of its brethren, then another and another, until the floodgate has been fully opened and a seamless torrent of euphony pours forth. Serpentine melody entwines itself about the last rays of the retreating summer sun; this crescendos to the zenith of deep chords that resonate beautifully amongst dark crowned mesquite thorns and red dust. His fire roars through his closed eyes, reverberating within the nature around him, fervor enveloping his every stroke of metallic string...

As the final harmony faded into nothing, I was drawn out of my mesmerized stupor and back to the lake that had seemingly drifted into the distant past. The idea of ten fingers and a guitar pick (much less a solitary person) blazing with so much energy, so much life, would have been labeled completely absurd to me had I not just witnessed the epitome of human emotion. This is the vividly painted image that I will always idolize and remember. Not only did Brent aid in nurturing my love affair with music (I took up guitar shortly after), but he also left an imprint that has grown to be more significant than anyone will know. My uncle's passion is something I long to experience, to feel, to call my very own; thus, I have emulated how I live my life by his standard: finding something you love to do and expressing it with no bars to hold you back.

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## Meet the Authors

**Lee Ardell** is a native Texan, currently living in Houston and Galveston with her husband, Bob. She graduated from Austin College with a degree in history and serves on the College's Board of Trustees. She took up writing after a career in banking. Her work has been published in *New Texas*, *Bayou Review* and *400 Words*.

**Betty Wilson Beamguard** writes full-time, specializing in magazine features, short fiction, and humorous essays. She has received over 30 honors for her writing, and her work has appeared in *Women in the Outdoors*, *South Carolina*, *Sasee*, *ByLine*, *The Writer* and more. In her humorous novel, *Weej and Johnnie Hit Florida*, two middle-age woman spend a week in Florida trying to lose the jerk who is following them. Her most recent book is the biography of a woman who drives a draft horse with her feet – *How Many Angels Does It Take: The Remarkable Life of Heather Rose Brooks*. [www.home.earthlink.net/~bbeamguard](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~bbeamguard)

**Janis Hughen Bell** is a native Houstonian. She graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, where her writing vocation began as editor of the *Cactus* yearbook. After a 30-year career as a commercial interior designer, she retired to pursue writing and art projects. She lives in Houston, Texas and Georgetown, Colorado with husband Richard Bell.

**Stewart Caffey**, a copyeditor, and his wife, Donajean, moved to Abilene when he retired from teaching in 1996. He publishes *The Sidney Eagle*, a quarterly nostalgic newsmagazine about the Sidney school and community (Comanche County, Texas) and serves

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as newsletter editor for the Abilene Retired Teachers Association. Caffey also remains active in his church, Abilene Writers Guild (past president and lifetime member), and the Texas Oral History Association. His books include *My 20-Year Love Affair*, *A Gallon of White Lightning*, and *Patchwork of Memories*.

*Judy Callarman* lives in Cisco, Texas. She teaches creative writing and English at Cisco Junior College and is chair of the Fine Arts Division. She enjoys writing mostly nonfiction and has recently discovered she loves writing unrhymed poetry. Several of her works have won contests and been published in newspapers and journals. Two of her long nonfiction narratives were competition finalists in the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference of the Southwest in 2006 and 2007; a short nonfiction work was published in. She is working on a collection of World War II memoirs based on letters from her father.

## MARY CARTER BIO

*Brianna Cedez* recently started writing, after twenty years of teaching science on the primary and secondary levels in public schools in Oregon. Her favorite part of her work was encouraging young girls to think about having careers in the sciences. She has four grandchildren, and occasionally does messy science experiments in the kitchen with them.

*Becky Chakov* lived in Minneapolis, Minnetonka and Mound, Minnesota; Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia before moving to Bemidji, Minnesota. She began writing years ago and had poems published in *Poetry Parade*, *Christian Century* magazine, the *Chicago Tribune's* column, "A Line 0' Type or Two," and the Bemidji State University's women's anthology, *Dust & Fire 2007*. She is 82.

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**SuzAnne C. Cole** writes from a studio in the woods in the Texas Hill Country. More than 350 of her poems, essays, short stories and articles have appeared in commercial and literary magazines, anthologies, and newspapers. She was a juried poet at the Houston Poetry Fest in 2003 and 2005, a featured poet in 2004, and once won a haiku festival in Japan. She was pleased to be included in the anthology *Silver Boomers*.

**Carlos Colon**, a reference librarian in Shreveport, Louisiana, is the author of 11 chapbooks including *Mountain Climbing* and *Clocking Out*, two collections of haiku and concrete poetry, and *Circling Bats* and *Wall Street Park*, two books of concrete renku written with Raffael de Gruttola. Colon's work has appeared in *Modern Haiku*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, *Writer's Digest*, *Byline*, and other publications. In addition, he is editor of Shreve Memorial Library's *Electronic Poetry Network*.

**Carol Bryan Cook** has hundreds of works of poetry and short stories published. Traveling and living in seven countries and thirty-nine of the fifty states for over twenty-five years allowed her to gather glimpses of people and life along the way. Her travels, unique and myriad experiences, friendships, and losses encountered, provided never-ending material. Stories of heartache, love, life, and entanglements endured and touched her heart. An artist and author retired from the business world, she and her artist husband live beside a tranquil lake in Texas.

**Carole Creekmore**, a Baby Boomer who grew up in rural Eastern North Carolina, is a widow with two adult children, two lovely granddaughters, and an English Bulldog, Okie. With degrees in English from Wake Forest University, she teaches composition, literature, creative writing, and Humanities at an Atlanta-area college, writes prose and poetry whenever inspired, and enjoys traveling, genealogy, and photography. She has had several articles and poems published over the years, as well as the essay "Holiday Expectations – Then and Now" recently published in *Silver Boomers*.

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*Barbara Darnall* the daughter of a high school English teacher and a West Texas lawyer and rancher, has been surrounded by words all her life and grew up telling stories and writing scripts for her playmates to perform. She graduated from Baylor University with B.A. and M.A. degrees in drama, and taught at the college level for several years. She writes poetry, articles, and personal narratives, and has written and directed numerous short dramas for her church. She has copyedited one book and several manuscripts, and, as a tax consultant for more than thirty years, she particularly enjoys the letter-writing contests she occasionally gets into with the IRS!

*David Davis* is a humorist, cartoonist, writer, and speaker. He is the author of ten published books so far. He grew up in San Antonio, Texas, and currently lives in Fort Worth. Most of his stories draw on his Texas roots, and his "baby-boomer" love of music. Davis is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. His *Jazz Cats* and *Ten Redneck Babies* were both named to the Children's Choice Top 100. *Jazz Cats* was a finalist for the Texas Golden Spur Award. His satirical *Night Before Christmas* books are perennial comedy best-sellers. His picture books, *Texas Mother Goose* and *Texas Aesop's Fables* will delight Texans of all ages. His website is [www.DavidRDavis.com](http://www.DavidRDavis.com).

*June Rose Dowis* reads, writes and resides in Shreveport, Louisiana. As a church librarian, she is in constant contact with the world of words. Her essays have been published in *Birds and Blooms*, *Byline* and *Appleseeds* magazines. After a year-long stint as a freelance writer for a local publication, she is currently plunging into the world of poetry.

*Sharon Ellison*

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**Errid Farland** lives in Southern California and writes at a cluttered table where a candle burns to create an aura of serenity. Sometimes she accidentally catches things on fire which turns the aura into angry yellows and reds and sort of wrecks the whole serenity thing. Her stories have appeared in *Barrelhouse*, *Word Riot*, *storySouth*, *Pindledyboz*, *GUD*, and other places. One of her stories received an editor nomination for *storySouth*'s Million Writers Awards.

**Peter D. Goodwin**, born in New Jersey, lived (mostly) in England until the age of eighteen. After college in Virginia, he travelled and taught in Europe, Asia and the United States; moved to New York, worked as a playwright; moved to Maryland, bought a boat, and writes poetry while providing succulent treats for wildlife. His poems have been published in *September eleven*, *Maryland Voices*, *Listening to the Water*, *The Susquehanna Water Anthology*, *Rattle*, *Scribble*, *Dreamstreets*, *Lucidity*, *LunchLines*, and *Prints*.

**Judith Groudine Finkel** left the practice of law to complete her legal thriller *Texas Justice* and her memoir *The Three Stooges Gene*. Excerpts from the latter, including "My Cousins, the Three Stooges" and "Betty Crocker and Me," appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*. Her short stories have been published in the *Birmingham Arts Journal*, *The Cuivre River Anthology* Volume III, *The Heartland Review* and *Sin Fronteras Journal*. She is the recipient of a Summer Fishtrap 2008 Fellowship.

**Sarah Getty**'s second book of poems, *Bring Me Her Heart* (2006, Higganum Hill Books) received Pulitzer and NBA nominations. Her first collection, *The Land of Milk and Honey*, was published in 1996 by the University of South Carolina Press, as part of the James Dickey Contemporary Poetry Series. Her poems have

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appeared in *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, and *Calyx* and in anthologies including *Birds in the Hand* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004). Sarah has published fiction in *The Iowa Review* and has recently completed a novel about growing up in the Midwest in the Fifties.

**Ginny Greene** likely arrived on Planet Earth with a blue pencil clutched in her fist. Past president of Abilene Writers Guild, her writing life includes years of newspaper lifestyle features, a newspaper column, and a handful of newsletters, including seven years editing the Guild's newsletter. For fun, Ginny writes poems and works crossword puzzles. She edits everything, even street signage, especially yard sale signs, even in her sleep. She's happiest seeing her love of words spilled over to her children and grandchildren, including daughter, Karen, also a Silver Boomer Books editor. While still loving her Northwest hometown, Ginny is at home with Larry near Abilene, Texas, and her grown family. Ginny's book *Song of County Roads* is scheduled for publication in 2009.

**Phil Gruis** is a former newspaper editor who took up poetry in 2002 – challenging the old dog/new trick theory. His poems have since appeared in dozens of journals, and his photos in a few. He's the author of two chapbooks, *Outside the House of Normal* (2006) and *Bullets and Lies* (2007), both published by Finishing Line Press. He lives on Kootenay Lake in British Columbia, and in North Idaho.

**Becky Haigler** is retired after 24 years of teaching Spanish and reading in Texas public secondary schools. Her poetry has appeared in national and regional periodicals. Her short stories for adolescents have been published by several denominational publishing houses. Two of her magic realism stories are included in the anthology *Able to...* (NeoNuma Arts Press, 2006.) Becky currently resides in Shreveport, Louisiana, with her husband Dave Haigler. She is the mother of two daughters and grandmother of three granddaughters. Becky is currently working on a collection of magic

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realism stories. More of her poetry appears on her family blog, [www.xanga.com/anchorpoet](http://www.xanga.com/anchorpoet).

*Janet Hartman*, a software developer who chose early retirement and spent six years cruising on a sailboat, now lives on land in Beaufort, North Carolina. Her writing has appeared in *SAIL*, *Latitudes & Attitudes*, *Living Aboard*, and the anthology *Making Notes: Music of the Carolinas*. She currently serves as president of Carteret Writers.

*Joy Harold Helsing* is an ex-salesclerk, ex-secretary, ex-textbook editor, ex-psychologist, ex-college instructor, ex-New Englander, ex-San Franciscan who now lives in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Northern California. Her work has appeared in *Bellowing Ark*, *Brevities*, *Byline*, *California Quarterly*, *Centrifugal Eye*, *Leading Edge*, *The Mid-America Poetry Review*, *Möbius*, *Poetalk*, *Poetry Depth Quarterly*, *The Raintown Review*, *Rattlesnake Review*, *Writers' Journal*, and elsewhere. She has published three chapbooks and one book, *Confessions of the Hare* (PWJ Publishing).

*Frances Hern* divides her time between Calgary, Alberta and Golden, British Columbia. She loves Calgary's sunny skies and puts up with cold, snowy winters because she enjoys downhill skiing. She's had numerous poems published for both adults and children, along with two books of non-fiction and a children's picture book. She is currently writing an historical novel for young adults.

*Cody Holloway*

*Jeanne Holtzman* is an aging hippie, writer and women's health care practitioner, not necessarily in that order. Born in

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the Bronx, she prolonged her adolescence as long as possible in Vermont, and currently lives with her husband and daughter in Massachusetts. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in such publications as *The Providence Journal*, *Writer's Digest*, *The First Line*, *Twilight Times*, *Flashquake*, *Salome*, *Hobart online*, *Hip Mama*, *Every Day Fiction* and *The Iconoclast*. You may reach Jeanne at [J.holtzman@comcast.net](mailto:J.holtzman@comcast.net).

**Michael Lee Johnson** is a poet, and freelance writer. He is self-employed in advertising and selling custom promotional products. He is the author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom*. He has published two chapbooks of poetry. He is also nominated for the James B. Baker Award in poetry, Sam's Dot Publishing. He is a contributor in the *Silver Boomers* anthology about aging baby boomers, by Silver Boomer Books. Michael Lee Johnson presently resides in Itasca, Illinois. He lived in Canada during the Vietnam era and will be published as a contributor poet in the anthology *Crossing Lines: Poets Who Came to Canada in the Vietnam War Era*, publication scheduled for early 2008. He has been published in USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Turkey, Fuji, Nigeria, Algeria, Africa, India, United Kingdom, Republic of Sierra Leone, Thailand, Kuala Lumpur, and Malaysia. Visit his website at: <http://poetryman.mysite.com>.

**Madelyn D. Kamen** is a free-lance writer who has published short stories, poems, and essays in local and national magazines and online. Prior to establishing a document development company, she was an associate dean and professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She was a graduate of the Leadership Texas Class of 1992, and was listed in Marquis' *Who's Who in the Southwest*, *Who's Who in American Education*, and *Who's Who in America*. She is currently working on an anthology of short stories about everyday life.

**Terrence Kandzor** lives on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound where he writes part time. His non-fiction entry, "My

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