

WCA

WORDS



August 2021

Issue 4

We have a great group of WCA writers featured in this issue of WCA WORDS. Will this stimulate you to try your hand at publishing in our literary journal? Read the Guidelines at the end of this issue to get started.

## **WCA WORDS Committee**

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Maureen Schaab (Publication Production)

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We are grateful to WCA members **Wendy Israelite**, for designing our wonderful cover and **Maureen Schaab**, who made WCA WORDS into an online journal. Thank you to WCA President **Patti Boochever**, who was most generous with her time to help make this project a reality.

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\*The opinions expressed in WCA WORDS reflect only the views of the author and not those of WCA.

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# **BLANK**

by Iris Shur

There is nothing like a blank piece of paper. My entire life could go on this piece of paper if I write small enough—like the Bible written on a grain of rice. It is like a door into all the possibilities, and you just have to open it. It truly is amazing, once you stop and think about it.

If I wanted to, I could draw a picture on this piece of paper that might brand me as the new Picasso.

If I wanted to, I could use any color I desired on this piece of paper. I could create new combinations of colors. I could make shapes and squiggles that would entertain you or sadden you or make you question life.

The thought of the infinite possibilities has me mesmerized. If I wanted to, I could write a novel on this piece of paper. My story could span generations or center on an hour of magical time.

I hold this piece of paper tenderly, salivating as I ponder its ultimate use. But knowing that its brother is waiting patiently for my continued thoughts, diminishes the urgency of completion.

If I wanted to, I could write a play on this piece of paper. I could transport you to Africa and have a lion devour you, or fly you to Saturn to contemplate the rings.

If I wanted to, I could try to sway your views and generate votes. This piece of paper is a powerful political tool, wouldn't you say? With the right words I could change the world.

There is almost nothing this piece of paper could not be. My goodness, if folded correctly, it could sail across the room looping up and away, holding messages to you. If folded in a certain origami way, it becomes a symbol of peace for the entire world.

When I was a kid, we folded a piece of paper to make a game, remember?

This piece of paper can be copied an infinite number of times to carry my message to the entire universe. Then I think, what do I know that they would want to know in China or Mexico or Iran? It gets me thinking of the value of my thoughts to others. Kind of humbling, this piece of paper, isn't it?

My words on this piece of paper could be straight and rigid, perhaps on lines drawn by a ruler. Or they could be cursive and flowing with a romantic feel. The way in which the words are written can tell a lot about a person. Or at least they did before typewriters and computers. What can you know about my feelings that are no longer conveyed by penmanship now? Nothing. An entire dimension of writing has been lost.

If I wanted, I could use this piece of paper to play peek-a-boo with a laughing child. I could cut this paper into a mask or a kangaroo.

This piece of paper, 8 ½ inches by 11 inches is truly an odyssey of the mind. I pray I can use it to the best advantage and fill it with worthy thoughts and ideas.

## **FLYING PURPLE PEOPLE EATER**

by Maureen Schaab

Navigating through eighth grade life at H. Frank Carey Junior Senior High School was not always easy. But this new development was just not fair.

A new rule had been enacted by the administration at our school. This rule had strict guidelines to determine if the length of our skirt stopped at the bottom of our knees. I took Rhona's bus home to her house, and we were chatting vigorously during the bus ride home. This was just unfair. How dare they produce a plan that would require us to kneel on our knees at the request of a teacher or administrator to determine if we were complying. The unjust, un-democratic law was making our thirteen-year-old minds and emotions terribly upset.

Purple was a popular color in 1960, or if that was not true, it was a popular color to the eyes of fashion critics, Maureen Griffith, and Rhona Goldner. Rhona carried the plate with the pretzels and potato chips into her room. Good, the food would keep us going long enough to complete our plan. We had been avid readers of the Nancy Drew Mysteries and thus knew how to plan and solve problems. We could not break the rule completely. Rhona and I spent quite a bit of time taking apart this idea



and that idea and then stopped talking momentarily when the beginning of a solution was found.

The plan started to have some valid form when Rhona thought of “the purple pleated skirt.” The “purple pleated skirt” had been purchased by Rhona at Mays Department Store. This was one of the first big box stores. The world did not know the expression, “big box store”, but in Hempstead Long Island stood Mays, a large, very sterile store that had clothes on racks, or clothes piled up on tables

I remember thinking about the purple skirts knowing that I did not have one. But I did have purple tights. I would need to go to Mays and purchase a purple skirt for me and purple tights for Rhona to make our plan viable. Our plan was good. Yes, it would take time to execute, but we were determined.

Aunt Frances visited us at our home, and I decided to ask her for help. “Please Aunt Frances could I have some money?” She was surprised to hear this question because I did not ask people for things. Aunt Frances did not ask why I needed it. She said, “Maureen-chick of course you can,” and Frances, gave me money. When she placed the \$5 bill in my hands, my eyes saw love and a purple skirt.

I waited outside for Rhona to arrive. She was coming to my house with her purple skirt and purple tights, and we would determine what we would wear as a topping.

The morning finally arrived. We had a plan, and it was ready. Rhona and Maureen were wearing the same purple top, different but the same color purple skirts and purple tights. Walking into the school, the other students' reactions caused us to smile with pride, we had made the correct choice. We loved our homeroom and social studies teacher, Mr. Ward, and we could not wait for his reaction. His comments and facial expression upon seeing us enter his classroom did not disappoint us. Mr. Ward wanted to know if we were dressed as the Purple People Eater.

“The Purple People Eater,” about an unidentified flying creature sold three million copies in 1958 and became a No 1 pop hit. We spent a lot of time laughing when we thought we might have looked like the Purple People Eater.

The purple outfits were worn to school twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday because those were the days without Gym class. If we rolled the skirts up and made them shorter it was hard to tell that our skirts were too short because our knees were covered by purple tights.

Thinking of these times I can feel the joy we felt while wearing these clothes. We were doing something that made us feel in control. We were not in control, but we felt like we were. Rhona and I were in the

beginning years of our now sixty-year friendship. And no, they did not change the rule about skirts at our school, but we did not complacently comply. Today April 26, 2020, Maureen Schaab and Rhona Maltz, two seventy-three-year-old women, laughed about purple skirts and forgot about the pandemic.

# **THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING**

(Daydreaming during the Pandemic)

by

Bonnie Michaels

In my mind's eye, I pull up my special, wool ribbed socks, peel back the tongue and slowly push my foot through the familiar insides of my sturdy leather hiking boots. Taking care to lace them tightly, I wind the shoelace twice around the last 2 hooks to ensure stability.

These boots can tell many stories. They represent my freedom and are tied to adventure. I've grown in wisdom...knowing my limits, learning to take risks, solving problems, and achieving goals.

Australia tested all those things, especially fear of the unknown. Nepal trekking provided not only challenges but also insights into a different culture...one that survives under the harshest conditions. It also offered a spiritual experience through the surrounding breathtaking Himalayas. The sound of Tibetan bells ring in my memory.

Boots remind me that getting lost and finding my way back becomes an important part of my journey. In the French Lebrun mountains, I was given a book with walking descriptions for hiking town to town. (before cell phones). Interpretations became questionable. "Turn right at the pile

of cairns with the dead post.” “Huh?” My boots are screaming “what?” I got lost but recovered.

The sturdy footwear has been my best friend around the world. They have brought me to the Andes, Borneo, Israel, English/Scottish countryside, Italy, the Rockies, Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Canada, Arizona, the Argentina, Spain, Germany, India, Appalachian trail, and on and on. Ahhh such memories!

But for now, I will have to be content with those poignant memories, but it doesn't stop me from imagining another hill, forest, or mountain waiting for me...and my boots because they were made for walking.

## WHAT I DID FOR LOVE

By Diane Schwartz

Our hearts are broken when we lose someone special to us. I am the only person in my nuclear family now still alive when my sister, Patti, was born.

We always shared a room growing up – until marriage. That was the way it was back then.

Not that we didn't disagree or fight, we did. At one point, we put the belt from a bathrobe down the middle of the room so we each had our side. Being taller, I got the far side and had quite a leap.

She always borrowed my clothes – how that worked for her since I was 3 years older and a head taller, I am not sure. But she did make it work!

We used to sing together in the back seat as our parents drove many times from the Jersey Shore to Brooklyn (NY) to see our grandparents. We entertained at senior centers with our friends. We sang together with the group and did our standout song, “Sisters” semi-harmonizing “Sisters, Sisters, there were never such devoted sisters.”

We went on to be Maids of Honor for each other in our weddings, babysat each other's children and moved on from there to have a mature and loving adult relationship.

Over the years, we've been there for each other so many times and in so many ways with advice and support or just a loving person to listen. In the last 20 years we helped each other to keep the memory of our parents alive – through stories and laughter.

Now we have to find ways to keep HER memory alive. That is easy to do because she was everywhere in the lives of her husband and three children, and my life, too. We talked frequently even though we lived 15 minutes apart.

For her last 18 months, we talked everyday – about this and that, life, kids, and grandkids. Throughout, my goal was to make her laugh at least once during those conversations. I think I had a 99% success rate.

God gave us all wonderful times with Patti and she and I shared one last special time with each other.

At home, from her hospital bed, both knowing what was around the bend, we sang together. She is trying and we focused on each other.

I had given her a Josh Groban CD called “Stages” – all beautiful songs from Broadway shows. She loved it as did I. As she was slowly slipping

from us, we had moments of connection and then an extra special moment.

The CD was playing, and one particular song came on. I started to sing, and she joined me. We held hands and looked only at each other – she, steadfast and calm, me holding the gaze through tears streaming down my face. She never faltered. This was my caring, loving and wonderful sister, truthfully, my hero. The words of the song had taken on a special meaning for us. We were “talking” to each other.

Wish me luck the same to you  
But I can't regret what I did for love, What I did for love  
Look my eyes are dry  
The gift was ours to borrow  
It's as if we always knew  
And I won't forget what I did for love  
What I did for love  
Gone  
Love is never gone  
As we travel on  
Love's what we'll remember.  
Kiss today goodbye  
And point me towards tomorrow  
We did what we had to do  
Won't forget, can't regret  
What we did for love

From the hit musical A Chorus Line, “What I did for Love”  
was written with music by Marvin Hamlisch

***Patti Blume died on May 30, 2017***



## **THE GOLDEN FANTASY**

By Michelle Levine-Troupp

At times, it is truly astonishing to discover wishes, of which before, we were unaware of. Fantasy, be it conscious or unconscious, is ever present. Unconscious fantasies can influence the way we experience and live our lives. Fantasies are often elaborated around childhood wishes.

The Golden Fantasy is the wish to have all of one's needs met in a relationship hallowed by perfection. To be cared for so completely that no demand will be made. Implicit in this often-unconscious fantasy, is the belief that this state of bliss was once attained, but is now lost. Like a separation from Paradise, the all-giving mother of infancy. Those who maintain The Golden Fantasy, consciously or unconsciously, spend their whole lives trying to restore this state of bliss. It is the central factor in their lives. They are constantly searching for the right thing, the right one, the right experience, that will make them feel completely loved.

## SOPHIE'S SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

By Barbara Karp

Hot, Hot, Hot. Summer. Fun. Fun.

Because we lived in an apartment in Brooklyn in the days before there was such a thing called air conditioning, our family traditionally went to Jones Beach every weekend in the summer. That is how we escaped the sultry heat, if only for a day. This was something that we always looked forward to. Jumping into the waves in the ocean at Jones Beach to get cooled off sounded heavenly to us.

Going to the beach also meant being able to have the best of treats, my mother's southern fried chicken. Every one of our family members, aunts, uncles and cousins who usually joined us just loved and couldn't get enough of *Sophie's Southern Fried Chicken*. She was not ever allowed to deviate from bringing that dish for all of us to share.

Everyone raved that it was the best tasting chicken any one of us had ever eaten. The skin so crispy and flavored with garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Dipped in flour and then fried and then baked in the oven. I can hear the sizzle now. Then laid out carefully on brown paper grocery bags to drain the grease and not disturb the crust. I would joyfully pick the pieces of crust that had fallen off and pop them into my mouth and

hold them there for a few seconds before swallowing so I could savor the flavor.

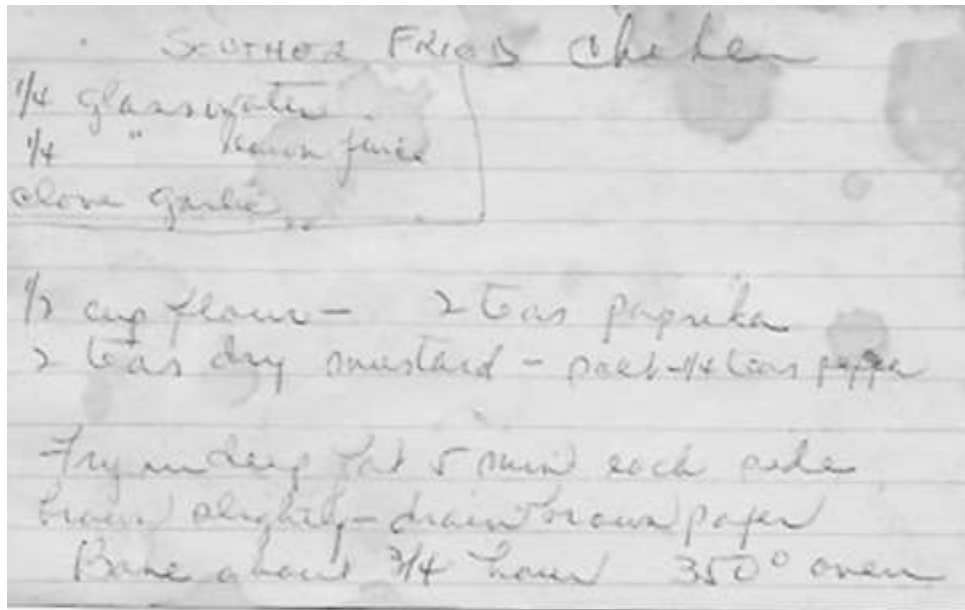
Just getting to the beach and getting out of the car after an hour or more drive brought us great anticipation of the day to come. Yeah! We could hear the roar of the waves breaking on the beach enticing us to go running into the water as soon as we got there. We would jump into the waves and ride them and then lick the salt off our lips.

Then finally coming out of the water and smearing suntan lotion all over our skin getting ready to soak in the sun to get that perfect color tan. And then of course our delicious lunch. I am sure there were lots of other things that were packed to eat, but it is only that chicken that stays in my memory.

The sun starting to go down, melting the sky from a hot yellow to a golden magical glow ended the idyllic time. This is still the part of the day on the beach that I enjoy the most. And then, finally, it was time to get ready for the ride home. It was the end of a fulfilling day on the beach, thinking about going back the next weekend for some more swimming, sunning and Sophie's southern fried chicken.

(View the recipe on the next page)

That recipe had to be handed down, mother to daughter. Now it is yours in her own handwriting.



### **Sophie's Southern Fried Chicken**

1/4 glass water

1/4 glass of lemon juice

Clove of garlic

1/2 cup flour

2 teaspoons paprika

2 teaspoons of dry mustard and pinch to 1/4 teaspoon of pepper

Fry in deep fat for 5 minutes on each side

Brown slightly, drain on brown paper

Bake about 3/4 hour in a 350 degrees oven

## WHAT IS IN YOUR WALLET?

By Barbara Lafer

Listening to that Capital One commercial made me stop and think: what WAS in my wallet? And what did that say about me? I decided to take a look.

The first thing I saw when I opened my wallet was a cascade of plastic cards. One by one I pulled them out: a driver's license; two credit cards; AAA; Medicare and AARP memberships; CVS; Costco and Staples store cards and member cards for the Naples Botanical Gardens, the Collier County Public Library, the Naples Council on World Affairs, and the Bonita Springs Art Center. I didn't really have to look further. Just these cards represented my values, my interests, my concerns, my identity. Much of my free time is spent reading, painting, gardening, and engaging in discussions about world affairs. Each has absorbed my whole being, giving me a respite from the worries of the day.

One of those worries surfaces as I look at my driver's license. I have become anxious driving at night. Street signs are often not lit, and I strain to see the right path. My insurance cards remind me that I am 90, which is both comforting and frightening: comforting to know that I am quite healthy, frightening to think that any day now, I could be struck

down with illness unforeseen. How much longer will I live freely and independently is the question that haunts me.

Also in my wallet are pictures of my late husband and some of my grandchildren, people I have loved and grown with over many years. My husband and I were married 59 years when he died eight years ago. All those years I felt a part of a unit. We celebrated the joys and commiserated over the sorrows together. Being a widow is a very separate life, and the tears come when the feeling of loss is acute.

I smile at the two identity cards in my wallet. One gives relevant information for my half-year residence in Naples, the other for my half-year in the Berkshires. How lucky I am to live amidst beauty in both. Last in my wallet is money. I am grateful to my husband for leaving me enough money to live this life comfortably in both places.

So, there it is. My wallet says who I am. What's in your wallet?

## **GUIDELINES for WCA WORDS**

### **What is WCA WORDS?**

Our goal is to provide a publishing platform for members who like to write. WCA WORDS is a literary journal open to any WCA member and will be published approximately once a month.

### **How do I submit a piece for publication?**

- Your submission must be your original work. It can be poetry, fiction, or non-fiction of 750 words or less. A submission should not be an announcement of events or book or movie reviews.
- A submission should have a title and be typed in a format (not PDF) that can be edited for spelling, punctuation, and typos. We will contact you if any substantive corrections need to be made.
- Submissions are sent to Iris Shur ([irisjimshur@aol.com](mailto:irisjimshur@aol.com)).

### **What are the Publication Policies?**

- Proofreading and determination of appropriateness for publication will be done by a committee chaired by Iris Shur. Publication is subject to review by the WCA Board.
- Per Jewish Federation of Greater Naples (JFGN) guidelines, “Items of controversial opinions and points of view about political issues will not be accepted for publication.” Please keep your language and subject matter appropriate for the WCA audience.
- It will be clearly stated that the opinions and viewpoints of the author do not reflect the opinions of WCA or JFGN.

- Work that you have previously published elsewhere will be accepted, so long as you have permission to do so.
- Writers will need to agree to a release form before the work can be published. The form will be emailed to you after receipt of your submission.
- Although writers may submit multiple items, only one submission per member will be selected for publication in any given issue.