

The S.E.M.O.M. Newsletter

Inspiring People to Achieve Success

Creator/Editor: Paula Hines Lonergan

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

The winners of the photo contest in the July 2006 issue of THE S.E.M.O.M Newsletter are Michael Hines and Agatha Coleman.

They were the first two people to email me where the photo was taken. (BTW, the picture was taken in Washington, D.C. , near the monument.)

They each received a copy of the book *Babies Dribble and Drool*.

Congratulations to the both of you!!

And thanks for participating!

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Welcome to Issue Six of The S.E.M.O.M. Newsletter.
(Earlier issues may be viewed on the web.)

Paul "Doc" Hines is the offensive line coach featured in the Disney movie "Remember the Titans." Many of Doc's (my Daddy's) players talk about how he was their favorite coach. He was firm, but showed a deep concern for them. They knew he cared and they appreciated it. He also taught them S.E.M.O.M., aka, **Success Equals Mind Over Matter**. S.E.M.O.M. is not a passive concept. It focuses on recognizing what is important in life and sticking to it. Exercising good leadership in our community means we need to help people feel empowered, able, and capable. How is this done? By providing practical guidance and looking at the positive effort a person may put forth. It is vital to encourage others and correct when needed, however, with kindness and tact. It's all about caring from the heart. That is the bottom line.



Titan News

The **1971 T.C. Williams Titans High School football team** has been very busy in the community. Many of the players and coaches have been visiting schools and venues to share their positive message. To view the pictures of the recent events the Titans

have been involved in, visit the '71 Original Titan website. To contribute to the foundation or for more information, see the website www.71originaltitans.com.

Upcoming Events

The **A-Z Steps to Writing and Publishing Your Book** provides the step-by-step process to writing, publishing, and marketing your book. It gives details on how to pursue a publishing company, exercises to improve your writing skills, and the particulars involved in printing a book. The classes are at the Monrovia Community Adult School located at 920 South Mountain Avenue in Monrovia, CA. The date for the upcoming class is **October 21, 2006**. To register for the class, call 626-471-3035.

Inspirational Thought
from the Editor

Are you a “keeper”? I know I am. I find it hard to part with things, from papers to trinkets, from clothes to books. Sentimentality has its place. However, life and space can reach a point when you just can't bring anything else in.

Every so often it is beneficial to scan your living quarters and discard items you have not used in a while. If you don't want to throw something away, then just put it away for a while and if you continue to not miss it, then discard it. Mind you, discarding doesn't always mean throwing the item in the trash. You can always give it to the thrift store or sell it at a yard sale.

Getting rid of clutter means a less cluttered mind and life. Try it! I find it is an ongoing process, but it can be very rewarding.

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Calendar of Events

Saturday, September 30, 2006, from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m., Paula Lonergan will be signing her book *A Titan of a Man* at the Virginia State University (VSU) Bookstore in **Petersburg, Virginia**. This is VSU's homecoming weekend. If you are coming to town, stop by and get your autographed copy. Also, if you have a question about writing and publishing be sure to ask her.

Sunday, October 1, 2006, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Paula Lonergan will conduct a FREE Writing and Publishing Seminar at the Smoot Library located at 9533 Kings Highway, in **King George, Virginia**, 540-775-7951. This workshop provides a basic review on how to pursue a writing career and become an author.

Monday, October 2, 2006, at 5:30 p.m., once again will be the ABCs of Writing and Publishing Seminar at Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library located at 5005 Duke Street, in **Alexandria, Virginia**, 703-519-5900. Learn how to improve your writing skills and self-publish your book.

A Story Within

By Writer and Storyteller Bernadette Cummings

Growing up if someone called you a storyteller, you would defend your honor by arguing you were not. It was not the thing to be. However, living in Los Angeles, which is full of creativity and performance artists of all types, I could not be happier to be labeled a non-fiction storyteller.

Five years ago, a former co-worker invited me to attend a Wednesday night show in Studio City, California, called *The Story Salon* (www.storysalon.com), so I went. The show was an hour and a half of first person narratives of original, non-fiction material written by writers, actors, comedians, producers, and regular folks like me. The rules are simple: each person must tell a new story each time, stay within the time limit and no subject is off limits. The Salon's founder and producer, Beverly Mickins encouraged the performers to let their creative freak flags fly. And fly high they did.

The show was jammed packed with tale after engrossing tale, each five to seven minutes in length on varying topics. The subjects went from standing in line at the bank trying not to explode at a by-the-book teller, to an over-lactating new mom who was learning how to breastfeed so as to not drown her baby or spray her living room curtains with milk. Also relayed were experiences about dysfunctional families, death of a partner, miscarriages, the love of superheroes, the wild antics of a former drug addict, and my personal favorite topic – relationships, the good, the bad and the ugly. The storytellers come from every walk of life, culture, race, and lifestyle. They speak of ordinary events. What makes it most interesting is each person's perspective even on theme nights when everyone writes about the same topic.

After attending my first show I turned to my friend and said, “You know I think I could do this.” Her response was, “Of course you can, everyone has a story to tell. You just have to find your voice.” I have been entertaining my friends with personal stories for years but thought perhaps my friends were just acting like they were entertained, out of kindness. Could I really do this? Sure I had stories to tell, but what on earth did it mean to “find” my voice? (continue on page 3)

Editor Notes

Coming to the Los Angeles Convention Center on October 26 and 27, 2006, is the 5th **Annual Cash for College Convention.**

The event is FREE and open to the public.

The Cash for College Convention includes professional financial aid presentations, college life workshops, and over 100 college exhibitors. The Convention is a comprehensive college resource for students and their families.

I will be conducting a workshop on "**How to Prepare a Personal Statement.**" For more information, visit www.lacashforcollege.org

I went to **Prague** in July/August for 10 days. It was a wonderful trip. My husband and I went to attend an international convention. We were able to meet friends from all over the world. If you want to see some of the pictures from my trip, email me and I'll be happy to share with you.

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A Story Within by B.F.Cummings continued...

I attended *The Story Salon* each Wednesday taking note of each performer's style and topic. I had read if you want to write well, write about what you know. All I know is what I feel and I feel things deeply. I experience life the way Fred Savage's character from the TV show *The Wonder Years* did. There is a constant commentary going on inside my head in response to what's happening to and around me. The things we all think but never say. I have learned to say them now, if only on paper. My writing encompasses my warped sense of humor and dry New York wit, peppered with cynicism, sarcasm and my love of sappy movies and cheesy songs. Armed with this knowledge of self, it took about five weeks before I felt comfortable enough to book and perform my first story (newbies are limited to three to five minutes).

I don't remember what I talked about that night, but it was well received. Every story at the *Story Salon* is well received. Newbies are welcomed with opened and congratulatory arms. It's not a place for critiques or judgment; it's a place for free expression.

After five or so years of telling stories, I feel my writing has developed in depth and maturity. I started out with stories about searching for the perfect Brazilian bikini waxer, my love of office supplies, and Puerto Rican men because they treated me like a princess at a time, when I was clearly a ugly duckling. Now I tackle topics about my need for human connection, the struggle of being lonely at times but not eager to give up my happy single life, relationships that did not feed my mind and soul, my functional alcoholic dad who has long passed away, forgiveness, acceptance, love and my refusal to live in denial. This all translates into being free and that is priceless.

Not every story goes over well. I've had situations where I looked into the audience and noticed I was losing them. So I cut it short and get off the stage. Disappointing but one bad night will not break me.

Finally, I have found my voice! Mine speaks to the heart of matters. Matters people are too afraid or ashamed to admit they think or feel. My voice speaks to what I feel and if for some strange reason I don't know what I feel, you'll hear about that too. I sprinkle my stories with humor even when they are of a serious nature, like when I laughed out loud during my dad's funeral because my crazy (literally) niece threw herself across my dad's chest while he laid in the casket. I had a vision of the funeral director closing up the casket with my niece inside. It would have killed two birds with one stone. At times that humor is self-deprecating which makes me think I have one of the elements it takes to be a comedian...but that's whole other story.

Being a member of *The Story Salon* has changed my life. In addition to performing regularly at the Coffee Fix, I have performed at the No Ho Arts Festival, Jennifer's Coffee Connection, and Café Europe. One of my short stories, **He Saw Me**, is published in the book *The Story Salon Big Book of Stories: The Best from the Writer/Performers of L.A.'s Longest Running Storytelling Venue*, published in July 2006 (available on www.Amazon.com.)

Bernadette F. Cummings originally from Brooklyn, New York, is a writer and storyteller living in the Los Angeles area (www.myspace.com/bedivagirl).

Preparations for the **Young African American Women's Conference** sponsored by Women at Work are moving forward.

The next conference will be on Saturday, February 10, 2007. The committees are meeting regularly to get the program together.

To volunteer or participate in some way, contact Women at Work at 626-796-0403 or visit www.yaawc.org.

Thanks to all of the attendees to the A-Z Steps of Writing and Publishing a Book held at Monrovia Adult School in September. The class was very engaging. Remember keep practicing your craft and write down your goals.

The next issue of The S.E.M.O.M. Newsletter will be January 2007.

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Felines Shed Fur & Purr

ISBN: 0-9743957-2-2 Price \$4.95

Babies Dribble & Drool

ISBN: 0-9743957-1-4 Price \$4.95

Mind Over Matter Leadership Workbook

Price: \$4.95

The ABCs of Writing and Publishing Workbook

Price: \$5.95

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