

# *Just Write*

**Gloucester County Library System**

**Logan Township Branch**

**Writers Group**

**Selections**

**Volume 3, Issue 2**

**April 2014**

Freeholder Director, **Robert M. Damminger** | Freeholder Library Liaison, **Lyman Barnes**



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## **Child of Six**

By Marian M. Fay

Innocent, tender child of six  
How did you learn to be so sassy?  
One might even call your behavior  
Somewhat bold and very brassy!  
You have many lessons yet to learn  
So curb your tongue lest you get burned!  
Close your lips and open your mind  
Take on behavior honest and kind  
Be as eager to learn as you are to talk  
Or be very ready to walk the walk!

## **If Poems . . .**

By Marian M. Fay

If poems are drawn from the life within  
As abstract comment on the life without  
It would seem to me that my outer self  
Had better reconnect with my inner self  
Thereby becoming my better self!

**The Bitterer The Better, The Betterer The Bitter**

By Marian M. Fay

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Love in its intensity is a bittersweet pill  
Love as a bittersweet pill is intensely savored

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
The tongue of love is a two edged sword  
The lion is laying in wait with the lamb

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Innocent as a dove and shrewd as a serpent  
Hold your cards of trust close to your vest

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Quick shards of intimate revelation  
Hot emotions freeze into cold laughter

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
The heart needs to trust someone completely  
The bittersweet wisdom is in using restraint

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Once you open the door to your soul to someone  
The footprints from their visit will remain forever

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Choose carefully and choose wisely  
Think twice before you open up then think again

The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter  
Bittersweet chocolate is better for the body  
Bittersweet love is better for the soul  
The bitterer the better  
The betterer the bitter

## INNER EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

A. Muhammad Ma`ruf

Historians of Islam and Sufism have written of the idea of experience and experiential knowledge which was adopted and developed by the Sufis from the earliest stages of Sufism as a school of thought.

Data on this history is available from the 9th century. Personal experience which could be related orally or written up as a basis for knowing more about, questioning, and validating religious beliefs and teachings had emerged as a significant genre in the dialogue and debates that Sufis engaged in with the orthodox. This was sometimes in Qur`an exegetical works, sometimes in defense of Sufi beliefs and practices as a separate category from the beliefs and practices of the orthodox, sometimes as part of attempts to find ways of bridging the distances that had come about between Sufism and orthodoxy, and sometimes as expressive poetry.

By the 9th century Sufi writers had begun classifying “stages” of Sufi spiritual development aimed toward creating a system for the standardizing and objectifying of Sufi experiences of other worlds and realities. Junayd of Baghdad (d. 911) a well-known Sufi was a critic of this experientialism and subjected the Sufi claims to criticism both in terms of their inner experiences and their practices. He disallowed any objective validity to the Sufi ‘states’.

In spite of such rejections, however, during the 9th and 10th centuries Sufism developed a doctrine of inner experiential knowledge which was a means of opposing the intellectual knowledge of religious matters. This Sufi experientialism is prominent in the writings of Abu Haamid al-Ghazaalii (d. 1111) after his conversion to Sufism. Because of al-Ghazaalii’s philosophical language of remarkable clarity, incisiveness, and irresistible persuasiveness his works became very important in laying the future course of religious discussion in Islam. His autobiography became an example of testing religious beliefs through the Sufi experientialist method for Sufis and Muslims of

other schools of thought. It is now known that Ghazaalii's work had become well known in European religions even before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The well-known poet and author Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) has noted that he "...saw on the walls of a church in Florence, Italy, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a picture of al-Ghazaalii among the pictures of other philosophers, saints, and theologians whom the leaders of the Church in the middle ages considered as the pillars and columns in the temple of the Absolute Spirit..."

Some of al-Ghazaalii's writings relevant to the understanding of the Sufi theory of inner experiential knowing were translated by Walter J. Skellie in 1938. This work has now been published as a book: *Marvels of the Heart, Fons Vitae*, 2010. There is a lot in this book for those who wish to know more about the mysteries and wonders of the inner worlds of Man.

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## DO YOU HAVE A GROUND HOG IN YOUR YARD?

Jane Harre

Every family has its secrets, its insider jokes, its idiosyncrasies. My title question calls attention to a unique tradition of our family. For over 25 years, we have been celebrating, in varying degree of festivities, Ground Hog Day.

This was initiated by our first son-in-law, writer of unusually entertaining letters. (Note to young readers: Letter, used in this way, means a hand-written communication which was put in an envelope, a postage stamp costing twenty-two cents added, and trusted to the then trustworthy US Postal Service to be delivered in two to four days to the party whose name and address appeared on the envelope. At that time, no one of my acquaintance had even one computer in his home, and email was still years in the future.) One letter, addressed to my husband and me, with the supposed return address of a non-existent card company, bemoaned the traditional holidays, such as the upcoming Valentine's Day, and mentioned the need for some variety, suggesting cards and gifts related to Ground Hog Day.

Daughter Number Two took this to heart and prepared a celebration for all. Others in the household got on board. What menu suits this occasion? Well, of course there would have to be sausage (ground hog), in some form, a "shadow salad" had to include green olives and their "shadows," black olives, and *pomme de terre*, which translates "apples of the ground," usually known to us as "potatoes." Gifts at each place were easily wrapped by filling "ground"-colored paper bags. One year my husband had t-shirts printed with a ground hog figure and proclamation of the day for each family member (fewer in number way back then).

Before long, others got involved. A good friend created wooden ground hog figures to place in our yard, which are far less trouble than the real thing. The local paper sent a photographer, and we made headlines.

New Jersey in February needs all the help it can get to overcome gloominess. Join our family in celebrating, or create a new tradition of your own, in our "shadow."



## Searching For The Kill: Reflections On My Trip To Africa

By Nancie Merritt

OK. I don't like the idea of those elegant zebras or my favorite little Thomson Gazelles, called 'flowers of the Serengeti' by the Masai, being slaughtered by lions, cheetahs or leopards. How, then, do I balance my admiration and love of those magnificent predators with my love of prey animals. Yes, yes, I know predation helps to keep the herds healthy by culling out the weak and the sick. And, without the predators, the herds would become so overpopulated that the environment could not sustain their existence. But, all that death and destruction in the wild! On the other hand, without all that killing and predation, the predators themselves would not/could not survive. The forces of nature must prevail.

So, here we are on safari. We all admit, without apology, we are searching for the kill. When we see the lions lounging high on a pile of rocks, we know they are there waiting for the thirsty who must eventually seek what is left of the river, now in the dry season. We peer at them through our camera lenses or binoculars watching and waiting for them to arise from their lethargy and begin the stalk. We know very well what it looks like because we have all seen our own house cat or our neighbor's house cat stalk some unwary prey—a bird, a fly, or maybe a cricket. They will slink along the floor or ground as though hiding in the tall grass. We are charmed by their stealth and cunning. We do hope the bird escapes and mostly they do. Not always, but mostly. No matter. We simply open another can of Fancy Feast and think nothing of it.

But, we are on the Serengeti, and successful hunting is the only option for the big cats. And, I admit that I am thrilled to see the stalk and long to see a kill. Does that sound too bloodthirsty for my armchair readers? Maybe so. Well, one morning while out in the Land Cruiser with other safari travelers, we watch a lone female lion watching a cape buffalo. The lion is downwind from the buffalo, lazily grazing near some bushes. The buffalo is slowly meandering closer to the lion. The lion's interest is becoming aroused. Her gaze toward the buffalo is intense. We are sure something is going to happen. The lioness slinks lower in the grass and ever so slowly starts to creep closer to the buffalo. All is quiet. The air is charged, but there are no alarm calls from monkeys or birds. She gets closer and closer.

Suddenly, as the buffalo wanders a little nearer still, the lion leaps forward toward the now aware prey. All the power and might the buffalo possesses cranks into action. It surges into a run with the lion pouncing toward the rear left flank. She misses her mark. We are divided in our observation as to whether she actually reached the animal or not. The buffalo easily got away. But, our disagreement centered on whether she actually was able to draw blood or not. Some thought she did. Others thought she did not. We will wait for a closer look at the video later.

Our driver thought she was a very brave lion because it is impossible for a single lion to pull down an enormous animal such as a cape buffalo. She would need several

companion hunters to join in the chase and combine their attack strategy so that each would aim for a different part of the buffalo. They are just too strong and their horns are too dangerous for a single cat to withstand, even for the largest member of the cat family, the lion. My guess is that she was very hungry. Or, was it merely the stalking instinct combined with an opportunity leading to a 'why not give it a try?'

On another game drive we saw a leopard sleeping in a tree in that classic pose with all four legs and the tail dangling from a branch. Closer inspection of the tree revealed the partially eaten antelope stored on another branch nearby. We were too late to observe the action. (Leopards are the only cats that can drag their kills up into a tree for safe keeping. All other cats have to fend off hyenas, vultures or competitor cats on the ground.)

Our first sighting of a cheetah was from quite a distance in the Tarangeri Park where it was sitting atop a termite mound surveying the flat, treeless grassland. If it had spotted some game, we were too far away to have been able to see anything that might have happened.

One of the days when we were on the Serengeti, we woke up very early and left camp by 6:15. Early morning is time of most action, just after daylight about 6:30. We came upon some lions studying a small herd of Impala. Even though they were downwind, none of them made any attempt to give chase. Maybe they were too far away to reach one of these fleet-footed antelopes. Maybe they had already eaten in the last day or so. We saw several prides, but none seemed to be interested in hunting.

Near the end of our Serengeti game drives we came upon a very large pride of some 26 to 28 lions feeding on a freshly killed Wildebeest. The pride was too large for a clan of hyenas to be able to attempt to steal away any of the kill. Our driver must have heard from one of the other drivers that a Wildebeest had been taken down. As we were observing from the road, a herd of elephants began approaching. We assumed they would pass by on their way to feeding grounds or the river for water. However, an amazing thing occurred. Several of the younger, half grown or partially grown youngsters started to approach the lions. They were trumpeting, stomping their feet, and blowing dust around with their trunks. As they charged forward a few steps, the lions would back off from their meal. When the elephants stopped inching forward, the lions would one by one slink back to the carcass. This charge and feint went on for some time.

Eventually, as though lifted from a West Point military strategy textbook, two of the elephants broke off from the line of their compatriots facing off the lions, and in single file began to move around to approach the lions from the rear. Seeing that they would soon be surrounded, the lions had no choice but to abandon the kill.

Recall that elephants eat grass and trees, not meat. And, lions are not able to bring down an elephant even if a whole pride of more than 20 lions combined their efforts to do so. They might be able to take down a very young baby elephant, but elephant herds are adept at keeping the youngest members surrounded and safe from harm. So, why were these elephants harassing the lions? Who can tell? They were the equivalent of teenagers, and maybe they were just showing off, like all teenagers around the globe. Our drivers had never seen anything like it. I cannot help but wonder if the lions simply

waited for the elephants to move on, then resumed their feast. The matriarch of the herd was not involved in the skirmish and may have just had them move on to where the herd was headed before the adventure took place.

After four days on the Serengeti, we returned to Tloma Lodge to wind down our trip. While we were getting ready for lunch, I ran into some people from another group that had just come from a game drive in one of the other national parks before moving on to the Serengeti. Their group saw a double kill—lions bringing down both a zebra and a wildebeest. Not only that, they saw an impala being born right in front of their eyes. I can't blame them for bragging a bit (well, a lot) since we would do the same had we had a similar experience. Of course, I could not help being somewhat jealous.

As I told them, though, we did see a kill, but nothing so dramatic. Near the end of our final day on the Serengeti, we saw a serval walking along the road. There must have been 20 or so vehicles lined up for the show. Our cat casually walked along the road and crossed back and forth in front of the Land Cruisers more than once. And picture this. The drivers were all jockeying for the best viewing position. This involved scooting out from behind one van, passing quickly to get to the head of the line, and without wasting time, cut off any competitors trying to do the same thing. We were lucky that our driver was very aggressive that day because we made it to the best viewing spot of all. We saw the object of all our attention begin to stalk, slowly, step by step. Then, the pounce! We wanted to see a kill, and finally we did! The serval, just a tad larger than a domestic house cat, caught and quickly devoured a mouse!

# John Hatton, “King of the Tories”

By Ben Carlton

The following article is the script this author used to give a first-person presentation, “John Hatton, ‘King of the Tories,’” to the Swedesboro-Woolwich Historical Society on February 19, 2014. This program was prepared based on factual information garnered from *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey*, Volume 10, and other sources.

I am John Hatton, Esq., a loyal citizen of British America, and the so-called King of the Tories. I am not ashamed of that moniker, although, I confess, the title was bestowed upon me with malice by my erstwhile enemies – the smugglers and Patriots of this Province. First of all, we who were considered friends of government and loyal subjects to the crown prefer the term, Loyalists. Secondly, if I have made myself odious in the eyes of my disaffected countrymen who fomented violence, anarchy and rebellion under the most benign, pacific and beneficent government ever to grace God’s green earth simply for carrying out the duties of my appointed office, then so be it: I am John Hatton, King of the Tories, a most humble and loyal subject of His Majesty, King George, III.

I came to New Jersey from Canterbury, England, when I was a mere lad of 16. In 1762 I built a solid brick house near Raccoon Creek in the County of Gloucester along the Great Road that ran from Burlington to Salem. [The house still stands today at 1940 Kings Highway in south Swedesboro.] This was my main domicile before I became a Refugee and the state government confiscated my property. (More on that later.) With the aid of a legacy bequeathed to me by my late uncle, I then purchased a small plantation at Cold Spring on the Cape May peninsula to supplement my farm at Raccoon – today the town is known as Swedesboro.

In 1764 I became His Majesty’s Collector of the Customs for the Port of Salem and Cohansey and the adjoining region. I quickly established a satisfactory working arrangement

with the local traders. However, my troubles, indeed, the colony's troubles soon began in 1765 with Parliament's passage of the Stamp Act. After Mr. Daniel Coxe of Gloucester had become so affrighted as to resign his office as Distributor of Stamps, it was prevailed upon me to assume the role of the next Distributor of Stamps for Salem County. Despite reassurances from His Excellency, Governor William Franklin, that I should have all the Protection which the Powers of Government could afford, when a number of inhabitants of the county were informed of my appointment, a mob assembled and deputed four of their number to call upon me with an ultimatum. I was coerced into signing a declaration that I would not attempt to distribute the detested stamps without the consent of the citizens of this Province. Because I did not want to end up tarred and feathered (a uniquely American form of torture and intimidation) or, worse, swinging at the end of a noose, I signed their declaration, but under extreme duress. Fortunately for all concerned, the Stamp Act was repealed. But from that moment on, I resolved not to let the ruffians intimidate me or prevent me from performing my duties in His Majesty's service, namely, to collect revenues, and put a stop to illicit trading and smuggling then rampant in the lower part of the Jerseys.

Therefore, in 1768, I filed complaints with Governor Franklin, and the Board of Customs Commissioners against one William Pike and several others for obstructing me in the execution of my office, for cursing the King, and for abuses I received in attempting to carry out the laws. I also lodged a complaint against the Salem County Justices of the Peace for their neglect of duty for not coming to my aid in the enforcement of the King's customs.

Much to my surprise and mortification, Governor Franklin blamed *me* for all the difficulties stating that I was, and I quote, "of such an unhappy Temper that he [Hatton] could not live long in any place without involving himself in squabbles with his neighbors." The

Governor also intimated that I was consorting with certain Philadelphia smugglers for profit, a charge that I most vehemently denied. Governor Franklin went so far as to recommend my dismissal from office.

(At this juncture, it should be remembered that William Franklin was the illegitimate son of a man who became one of the most ardent Rebels in the colonies, a Mr. Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia. Through Benjamin Franklin's influence, William Franklin become the last royal governor of New Jersey. My avowed enemy in 1768, Governor Franklin and I would find ourselves allied in our support of the crown forces when war finally did come to America. [A betrayal for which his famous father would never forgive him.]

I appealed to the Board of Customs Commissioners for a vigorous investigation. Clearly, the Governor had ignored my allegations out of sympathy with the Province's smugglers, not wishing to stir up a proverbial hornets' nest, as it were. The Board subsequently exonerated Governor Franklin of any wrong, but also ruled in my favor, allowing me to retain my position. Frustrated, and perhaps embarrassed at his failure to enforce the customs legislation, Governor Franklin next attacked my character, calling me "a man of very unhappy, violent Temper, sometimes bordering on madness." He even exclaimed, rather hysterically, after certain events occurred in 1770 that I shall forthwith describe, "I have more trouble with him than with all the other people in New Jersey." Indeed! With all the rouses and scoundrels running about the Province flouting the edicts of Parliament, he had more trouble with me? Nonsense!

(To be continued in the next issue of *Just Write*)

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