

Will Write For Food, Vol. 3 No. 1 Quarterly Newsletter

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THE WRITING LIFE: OF MISTAKES AND FOOLISHNESS

Recently I read this quote by Niels Bohr: "An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field."

Well, I thought. That's me. I have made hundreds of mistakes in this field. Here's just one, for your amusement:

Early in my career, I pitched a story to the new editor of an international food magazine. She loved it and asked that I include four recipes. I said sure, then hung up and panicked. I had written about food for years, but I had never developed a recipe for publication. I immediately hired a chef and turned in his ghostwritten recipes with my article.

A week later I got a phone call from the head of the test kitchen. In a chicken salad recipe, I had written that it took 5 minutes to sauté the chicken breast strips. It took her 20 minutes and she wanted to know why. Since I had never tested the recipes, I didn't know the answer.

From then on, I developed and tested my own recipes.

Like all mistakes, it was a learning experience. I learned that I had to rely on myself, and if I didn't want to write my own recipes, I had to test them before turning them in. I also learned that it was okay to take a risk instead of saying "Oh no, I can't do that," even if I screwed up a bit.

I read somewhere that foolishness is a good attribute. If you feel foolish regularly, it means you are taking risks. And that's what growth is all about.

Best,  
Dianne

p.s. Niels Bohr, the man I quoted, won the Nobel Prize in 1922.

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ALUMNI NEWS

**Melissa Guerra**, one of my first cookbook clients and now a dear friend, celebrates the release of *Dishes from the Wild Horse Desert: Norteno Cooking of South Texas*. It's a gorgeous book, and a long labor of love and dedication:

[http://www.ecookbooks.com/products.html?ref=286386562&sid=46413920060522133113&action=det\\_34837&searchvalues=Melissa%20%3DAND%3BGuerra&searchlogic=simplesearch](http://www.ecookbooks.com/products.html?ref=286386562&sid=46413920060522133113&action=det_34837&searchvalues=Melissa%20%3DAND%3BGuerra&searchlogic=simplesearch)

**Debbie Chang** won first prize in the San Francisco Writers Conference writing contest, creative non-fiction category, and was recently published in the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Home & Garden section. She wrote a sensuous piece about a kitchen garden: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/04/29/HOG3IIFQGP1.DTL>

By the way, if you want to write the about the garden and tie it to food, **Paula Panich**, an award-winning garden writer I met when giving a talk in New York, has written a great companion book to *Will Write for Food*. It's called *Cultivating Words: The Guide to Writing about the Plants and Gardens You Love*. For details go to <http://www.cultivatingwords.com/>

**Andrea Blum**, a journalist and extensive traveler who took a food writing class from me, has a new blog: <http://www.sloefood.blogspot.com/>

If you are a student or writer with news, please send an email to [dj@diannej.com](mailto:dj@diannej.com) and I will post it in my next newsletter.

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#### *WILL WRITE FOR FOOD: SMALL PLUG*

My book is now in its third printing. I continue to get emails from people who are just discovering it. Here's a particularly rewarding one from a writing student in cooking school:

"Thank you so much for writing *Will Write For Food*. I have been looking for a guide that would help me fulfill my ambitions in food writing, and your book did exactly what it promised. All at once engaging, encouraging and still realistic, it showed me that while food writing is a difficult field with many different twists and nuances, it is possible to succeed.

I am a part-time Masters in Creative Writing student at Northwestern U and a culinary student at Le Cordon Bleu here in Chicago. Your book not only encouraged me to seek out the food-writing opportunities around me, but also to branch out and immerse myself in conferences, books, and classes that will help me in my career.

I loved how exhaustive (but not exhausting in the least!) the book was - including reviewing, cookbook writing, recipe writing and fiction - as well as non-fiction memoir. It was so relevant! I also loved the exercises at the end of the book - one of my favorite features in any writing guide.

Anyway, thanks again. Your book provided a much-needed jumpstart in my culinary writing knowledge."

Sincerely,  
Holly Kapherr

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## WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

The **James Beard Foundation** will launch a magazine this fall, targeted to "people who love good food and the people who make it." Aimed at food and wine enthusiasts, the editors are looking for "clever, substantive and witty articles that offer an insider's perspective into the food industry." This includes a behind-the-scenes look at restaurants, food travel destinations, the lives of chefs, the changing world of food media and recipes from award-winning cookbook writers and top chefs. Contact Anya Hoffman, managing editor, [ahoffman@jamesbeard.org](mailto:ahoffman@jamesbeard.org).

Travelers' Tales seeks submissions for **The Best Travel Writing 2007**. "We're looking for the full range of experience: adventurous, mystical, funny, poignant, food-related, cross-cultural, transformational." Deadline for submission is September 1, 2006. Estimated release date is February 2007  
<http://www.travelerstales.com/guidelines/>

**Relish**, a new national magazine on cooking, dining and entertaining, distributed in Sunday newspapers, relies on freelance writers for most of its pieces. Stories range from 200 to 1200 words without recipes. Extensive writers' guidelines appear at <http://www.relishmag.com/aboutus/>

**Organic Producer & Consumer** is looking for freelance writers. Sadly, this new publication pays \$.10 per word. The target audience is organic producers and consumers. See the most recent magazine at <http://www.organicproducermag.com/levelOne.cfm?catID=198&parentcatID=6>

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## JUST FOR FUN

One of the top 20 games you can play online is Diner Dash. Flo, a former stockbroker, must help save her friends' restaurant and waits tables so the restaurant can flourish. The restaurant is patterned loosely after Darla's in San Francisco's Inner Sunset neighborhood. Go to [http://www.download-free-games.com/arcade\\_game\\_download/diner\\_dash2.htm](http://www.download-free-games.com/arcade_game_download/diner_dash2.htm)

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## UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS

Free: Download my interview on food writing with talk show hosts Alana Morales and Paula Schmitt on Mom Writers Talk Radio  
<http://www.MomWritersTalkRadio.com>

July 20- August 20, 2006

### **How to Write An Irresistible Book Proposal**

The Writing Salon, Berkeley, CA  
5 Thursdays, 7 – 9 p.m. Price TBA

If you live in the Bay Area and you've been waiting for a reason to finally write your book proposal, this is it. Email me for details, [dj@diannej.com](mailto:dj@diannej.com)

September 30, 2006

**1-day Class on Writing a Cookbook**

Salud! Cooking School @ Whole Foods

Sacramento, CA

Email me for details, [dj@diannej.com](mailto:dj@diannej.com)

Winter 2007 Upcoming

**Writing a Cookbook and Recipes, 6-week class**

Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA

June 9-16, 2007

**A Week of Food Writing in France**

At Latitude, a non-profit cultural center

The Lot Valley, Southern France

\$1250 and up, depending on accommodation

Summertime in Southwest France. We'll lounge by the pool, visit local farmer's markets, cheesemakers, wineries, linger over long meals that start at 9 p.m. like Coq Au Vin and Cassoulet and...oh yes, we'll write about food for hours each day.

Latitude Cultural Center takes up to 12 students per class to ensure lots of individual attention. For details, see <http://www.latitude.org/>

- Note from the owner: She's looking for a cook for that week. Email me if you're interested. [dj@diannej.com](mailto:dj@diannej.com)

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OTHER CLASSES AND EVENTS

**News University**

<http://www.newsu.org/>

I just discovered a source of free e-learning classes for writers and journalists. Called News University, it's a project of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, aimed at newspaper reporters.

Take free online classes such as "Lousy Listeners: How to Avoid Being One" to sharpen your interviewing skills, or "The Writer's Workbench: 50 Tools You can Use." Designed to take 1-2 hours to complete, you'll probably enjoy them a lot more with high-speed and broadband connections and Flash plug-ins.

**Tastes of the World, Healthy Food and Flavor**

12th Annual Chef Culinary Conference

June 5-9, 2006

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

\$650 full registration

This is a partnership with Johnson & Wales University. Deborah Madison and John Ash are two of many presenters. For details see

<http://www.umass.edu/chefconference/index.php>

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I will not rent, trade, give, or sell my email list to anyone for any reason whatsoever.

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