

# CALAMITY'S CORNER

FOR READERS, WRITERS & MOVIE BUFFS IN LEISURE

September 2008 Volume 1, Issue 5



**WELCOME!** Calamity's Corner is a cozy or chaotic place- you supply the mood and the beverage- to share interests in books, films, places and leisure pursuits.

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## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Sara L, Jenny G, Michelle M, Belinda T, Pamela T, Valmai D, Franček J, Joan.

And to all you Virgos and Librans!

Have a wonderful day and a rewarding year!

## WELCOME

Welcome to our new members.

I hope you enjoy your time here, and that you will send me your comments and recommendations to share with the world. Then I can promote your websites, if you have any, ☺ which I really want to do.

Last month I said I'd cut back on photos. However, for most of us the download time wasn't a problem. I might have overdone the pictures again! ☺ Please tell me if there are too many.

This month Calamity's Corner is proud to showcase self-published author, Maria Savva's second book,

## A Time To Tell




It is available now from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk), ask your Bookshop to order it or go to <http://www.mariasavva.com/>

**Would Maria recommend self-publishing to new writers?**

**Definitely!** But I warn them, new authors will probably not sell enough books to cover the costs of self-publishing. It does depend on how much work you are prepared to put in to publicity.

Nevertheless, some self-published novelists have gone on to receive contracts with mainstream publishers.

<p><b>MARIA SAVVA'S tips on self publishing</b></p> <p>Self publishing is a way of getting your writing noticed as you can sell the books at Amazon &amp; in stores alongside the bestsellers.</p> <p>The pro-active writer who publicises her book through the various online showcase sites, and gets as many reviews as possible, is more likely to succeed.</p> <p>One thing no one tells you is that most magazines and newspapers will only review books that are due to be published in the next few months. Or, they will only review the book if it's less than 3 months old. So your marketing plan needs to be in place well before you actually publish your book. Have a press release prepared, and send that out to as many newspapers and magazines and booksellers as possible. And, have a website showing your work</p> <p>Meet Maria Savva, &amp; read the chilling prologue of <i>A Time to Tell</i> at: <a href="http://www.mariasavva.com">http://www.mariasavva.com</a></p> <p><b>NATALIE A. JARVIS</b> says, "Savva's <i>A Time to Tell</i> is a gripping family drama. The characters each have their own problems and keep secret from the rest of the family. As disturbing events take over her granddaughter's life, Cara realizes her own actions and secrets might have affected others in her family and might even impact on this situation.</p> <p>I thought the novel was a good depiction of today's complicated families and the common English trait of not talking to loved ones for fear of upset or shame." <b>4 stars</b> #</p>	<p><b>GERRI BOWEN</b> - historical romance, author <a href="http://gerribowen.com">gerribowen.com</a> gave <i>A Time To Tell</i> <b>4 stars</b>.</p> <p>"This is a wonderful story, a contemporary work of fiction, beginning in 1952, with the majority of the story taking place in the present. There are flashbacks to explain what has happened and why. The story has a delightful, special romance, and although Cara's love is what spins the story, this is not a conventional romance. In 1952, at age nineteen, Cara falls deeply in love with Frederick and believes he loves her as much as she does him. She suspects she may be pregnant, but isn't sure. Then Frederick tells her he is married with children. Cara is devastated . . .</p> <p>Forward fifty years to present time and she's a widow living with her granddaughter. She never told anyone, not her three children or even her deceased husband, about her suspicions concerning her first-born son's paternity. However, secrets, not just Cara's, but from all the family members propel this story. Each secret is a story in itself, and they all interweave with the other. Confined to a wheelchair because of her Multiple Sclerosis, Cara can't walk away when unpleasantness arises. She ignores and pretends until forced to face facts. Even until the end, she doesn't want to face her own feelings, afraid she might again be left as devastated as she was fifty years ago.</p> <p>The writer portrays Cara's voice well, her quarrelsome speech and thought rings true. <i>A Time To Tell</i> was a delight, and I recommend it highly." #</p>	<p><b>LINDA BULGER</b> -A 'Top Book Reviewer with Amazon</p> <p>The tightly tangled strands of this family's past are teased apart in response to the turmoil of the present. As long-hidden truths are revealed, denial and confrontation explode and redemption is by no means assured. But even when the story is at its darkest, the family holds its course to find the truth at the origin.</p> <p>Savva's narrative style is simple and low-key with much of the complex back-story revealed in dialogue. There is a great deal of high-drama action, and though the events of the story create their own dramatic tension, the tone does not vary with the emotional content quite as much as I would have preferred. Yet this makes for a fast, story-centered read that I could not put down.</p> <p>In real life we may or may not get a second grab at the brass ring, but <i>A Time To Tell</i> had me believing in the possibility.</p> <p><b>ERIKA BORSOS</b> -A 'Top Book Reviewer with Amazon <a href="http://bakonyvilla.20m.com/">http://bakonyvilla.20m.com/</a> <b>5 stars</b>.</p> <p>Maria Savva writes beautifully. What is most outstanding in <i>A Time to Tell</i>, is how the author so compassionately and sensitively weaves dark secrets into the plot about family and human relationships. With depth and complexity, she tells the life story of Cara from her teenage years, into adulthood and old age.</p> <p>The story brings together two elderly sisters estranged for 50 years and helps them understand the problems they grappled with emotionally, and which they did not share at the time. The story captures the reader's attention from the first page.</p> <p>This is a most highly recommended book. #</p>
<p><b>BOOKS</b></p>	<p><b>BOOKS</b></p>	<p><b>BOOKS</b></p>

<p><b>MARY</b>  <b>Mama Mia</b>  We loved it! It was such a delightful, happy experience! Meryl Streep just looked like she was having the time of her life! We didn't even mind Pierce Brosnans singing! The whole thing was such utter fun!</p> <p>At the end I said to John that I was very disappointed they hadn't put my favourite Abba song in the movie. In fact I couldn't believe that they could miss it. But we stayed for the credits (as we always do in movies). We were the only ones left, and then they played it - <i>Thank You For the Music!!!</i></p> <p>We felt like getting up and dancing....actually we could have, as we were the only ones there!  Opportunity lost!!!! #</p> <p><b>TEOBALD</b>  <b>Mongol</b>  I LOVED this great movie! The accuracy of the story has been questioned, but that is not important. <i>Mongol</i>, gives us a close up look at tribal life &amp; death in the 12<sup>th</sup> C. The photography was stunning, and we became part of the beautiful scenery. As strong, stubborn men claimed power over the weak, I had a sense of how lucky we are that our predecessors survived it all and came so far that we are here today and alive. Temdgim &amp; Borte were brilliantly portrayed. I can't wait for the next 2 movies about Genghis Khan. I loved the music and must buy the soundtrack by Tuomas Kantelinen. #</p>	<p><b>SHEB</b>  <b>The Bank Job.</b>  Very good movie that just happens to be true.</p> <p>The story involves a prominent member of the royal family, M15 or MI6 (doesn't matter 'cause they all went to the same school), a gang of amateur bank robbers and some really nasty criminals working in London some thirty plus years ago.</p> <p>The robbers are seconded by a friend to rob the bank with a promise of an easy job and lots of cash with no complications.</p> <p>Of course that's not how it goes at all. This is sitting-on-the-edge-of-your-seat kind of stuff waiting to see what will happen next, with a few twists and turns thrown in for good measure. There is a bit of violence and bad language but all in all a very enjoyable movie.  An eye opener! #</p> 	<p><b>CALAMITY</b>  <b>The Dark Knight</b> was well written and well directed, but too dark and too violent for my taste. The acting was first rate and the characters well drawn. I always like to watch Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman and Eric Roberts on the screen in whatever role they play.</p> <p>Heath Ledger was unrecognisable as the Joker. In fact I kept thinking I was watching a brilliant, Oscar-winning performance by Jack Nicholson.</p> <p>The movie raised a lot of moral and ethical issues, designed to cause viewers to question their own values and how they would react in similar circumstances. Some of this was pushed too much, and in a couple of instances the outcome was not really credible.</p> <p>For me the 2 hours 32 minutes was too long. It should have ended half an hour earlier. For my husband, make that 45 minutes earlier. However my daughter and granddaughter insisted that the time flew.</p> <p>I must admit, the movie was quite spectacular and needs to be seen on a big, cinema screen. DVD wouldn't do it justice. #</p>
<p><b>MOVIES</b></p>	<p><b>MOVIES</b></p>	<p><b>MOVIES</b></p>



**Bonjour Paris!**

**6 days! Wendy loved it!**

This is the famous chandelier in the **Garnier Opera House**, (home of the legendary

Phantom of the Opera) I think this Opera House must be the most beautiful in all the world. The foyer and the theatre are breathtaking with hundreds of candle lights, the marble staircases and plush red velvet. I felt quite regal just being there.

But the idea of going to the top of the **Eiffel Tower** terrified me. I had passed up 2 other opportunities, and knowing this would probably be my last, I really wanted to do it. I remembered my grandson had told me it wasn't too bad and that I could have easily coped last time. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> level, I met Alma, from Ohio, who was also very nervous. We were two strangers who gave each other courage as we stepped into the lift that took us up the centre of the Eiffel Tower, right to the top! Alma crossed herself and prayed to all the saints she knew, so I figured I was safe. ☺

*Et Voilà!* it was safe, and I'd encourage anyone, of any age, to give themselves this treat. I was happy to stay at the top for a long time with my new friend and then to wander around the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> levels and drink hot chocolate.



This is one view of the **symmetrical layout of Paris** from the top of the **Eiffel Tower!** I took the photo thru

the wire mess! ☺ My knees feel funny now, just thinking about it, but they didn't at the time. The cars looked tiny.



On the Av. des Champs Elysées, beneath the **Arc de Triomphe**, is the **tomb of the unknown soldier** and the eternal flame. To reach the monument, you must use the underpass. You can't brave the busiest

roundabout in Paris – the 12 roads *Etoile* (star). Inside the Arc, it's worth the tiring climb up the

never- ending spiral staircase to view the prestigious avenues of Paris. On top you have the entire flat roof of the **Arc de Triomphe** to walk around on.

For those who have read *The Da Vinci*

*Code*, this is the **inverted pyramid** in the **Louvre** and the protected **Mona Lisa**.

You can get an idea of the portrait's size. One time I couldn't take photos but this time the guards



didn't mind. But there's too much reflection off the glass when you stand front on. No matter how crowded the room was, I had a sense of awe.



**Les Invalides** is the hospital and retirement home, founded in 1670 by Louis XIV, for war veterans. It is now also a military museum. Here, under the golden domed



church, visible from most aspects in Paris, is **Napoleon's tomb**. This giant red sarcophagus stands high in the white marble rotunda.



See these steps? I looked for them in particular because I'm convinced I've seen motor bikes race down them in old movies. But, Paris is hilly; there are many places with steep steps. At the top of these, you'll see the beautiful **Sacré-Cœur Basilica** on the right hand side, and the fabulous view all over Paris on the left.

Whatever the season, *Paris est toujours magnifique !*

Whatever the season, *Paris est toujours magnifique !*



Anyone for *escargots*?

Sorry we ate them – all.

#

**UNUSUAL PURSUITS** --- Have you an unusual or outrageous pursuit you'd recommend? A picture would be great!



**NATALIE AND GABRIELA** took the **Illawarra Fly, Tree Tops Walk**, located ten minutes down the Jamberoo road from the famous Robertson Pie Shop in the Southern Highlands, NSW, Australia.

**Natalie** said: This was a magical walk, 25 metres above the canopy of temperate rainforest. Walking on a wire mesh, it was a thrill without being scary. Almost like being in a cage, we felt secure so far above the forest floor. We had plenty of places to stop and look and take photos. It is well worth overcoming your fear to look down through the mess, but **Gabriela's** shoe slipped off and it almost fell through the

side gap. It's a long drop!

At the top of the tower, 45 metres above the ground, we saw two birds of prey at our level and really understood what it meant to have 'a bird's eye view'. We were seeing magnificent views of Lake Illawarra, the Jamberoo Valley and the Pacific Coast from the same vantage point as the birds.



Natalie highly recommends this experience for young and old. It's an easy low-grade walk with wonderful views, even if you don't climb the tower.

## **PET OF THE MONTH**

**Elsie the Emu - An embarrassing companion!**



Laurel Lamperd vows she won't take Elsie on holidays with the family again. ☺ This unruly pet raided garbage bins in a Caravan Park and made a thorough nuisance of herself.

Meet Laurel at <http://laurel6346.tripod.com>  
Her Regency novel *Substitute Bride* is available from:

<http://www.wingsepress.com/Bookstore/Substitute%20Bride.htm> and <http://fictionwise.com>



## FROM THE GROPER'S SHELF



**The Groper's spitting chips. 'I'm on the wrong end of the food chain. Not happy, John West!'**

## CONCERNING *THE UNHEWN STONE*

~~ Just to recap, the novel opens in modern day Switzerland, but our 18 yr old hero, Stefan, is soon transported back to 1307 AD by means of an alchemist's golden orb to try to prevent the legend of Wilhelm Tell. ~~



This is beautiful Bürglen, birthplace of Wilhelm Tell, a winter wonderland - the setting for the Unhewn Stone in the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.



For Stefan, everywhere he turns, sharp, jagged peaks constantly remind him of the ugly, jagged scar on his face. The mountains feel like grotesque hands pressing him down. He hates it here. Yet, ironically, he envies the tourists who visit his village and his family's *Gasthaus* and wants to travel to exotic places, too.

Some people just don't know when they are on a good wicket, do they? But Stefan will find out. hehehe. 😊😊



I imagined the fictional Stefan, on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, dressed as St Nicholas, leading the long line of torch-bearing, horn-blowing revellers from his parents' guesthouse, through the church yard, down this path to his uncle's timber yard where his party celebrates his birthday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, which, according to the Celtic Tree Calendar is 'The Day Known as the Secret of the Unhewn Stone'.

## QUICK QUIZ

### The Eiffel Tower at night.



1. The Eiffel Tower was built to commemorate what?
2. Gustav Eiffel's design was one of how many submissions?
- 3a When was the tower opened?
- 3b and by whom?
4. How high is the tower, including the 79 ft (24m) antenna?
5. How much does the iron structure weigh?
5. The tower was designed to be dismantled after ten years and it would have been. What saved it?
6. In a small room at the top of the tower there are wax-works figures of two men in conversation. Who are they?



Do these pictures of the wax figures help? ☺

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### Answers to August Quiz.

- 1 The ruins of Pompeii
2. Mount Vesuvius is seen in the background..
3. 24<sup>th</sup> August 79 AD. The volcanic eruption lasted 2 days.
4. 20,000 people were believed to live here at that time.
5. The famous writer/naturalist, Pliny the Elder died here. Gaius Plinius Secundas was a naval commander at the Bay of Naples. While attempting to get closer to the volcano and possibly affect a rescue, he was overcome with fumes and died. He wrote as a naturalist, biographer and historian. He is most known for his only extant work, a 37-volume *Natural History* that served as the basis for scientific knowledge for centuries.
6. By coincidence the tragedy occurred on the day after Vulcanalia, the annual festival, held on August 23, to worship the Roman god of fire, Vulcan. He is the god beneficial in hindering fire, including the fire of volcanoes.

A human being set in a moment in time in a most undignified position. (24.08.79 AD.)



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Until next month, I hope you find the leisure time you need to spend in those pursuits that make you happiest.

Calamity.