

Living Here

Book takes readers on tour of MGM's legendary studios **Share**

By Allen Pierleoni

apierleoni@sacbee.com The Sacramento Bee

Published: Monday, Mar. 28, 2011 - 12:00 am | Page 3D

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/03/28/3507773/book-takes-readers-on-tour-of.html#>

As last week's death of Elizabeth Taylor reminded us, the Golden Age of Hollywood can never be repeated. But an informed, nostalgic visit is possible in the pages of "**M-G-M: Hollywood's Greatest Backlot**" by Steven Bingen, Stephen X. Sylvester and Michael Troyan (Santa Monica Press, \$34.95, 312 pages).

"It was a 10-year project – longer when you consider I've been an MGM buff since childhood," said Troyan, who is the community relations manager for the Barnes & Noble bookstore in Citrus Heights.

This is the definitive take on what was once the world's premier movie studio. It was torn down during the 1970s, and most of the memorabilia – props, signs, costumes – was auctioned, taken as souvenirs or thoughtlessly thrown away.

The book overflows with rare black-and-white photos that transport readers behind the scenes. Especially fascinating is the acre-by-acre tour of the MGM sets and soundstages that were legendary in their day.

McGuane appearance set

First, novelist Thomas McGuane was on. Then he was off. Now he's back on.

Because of a family emergency, McGuane postponed his Nov. 3 appearance at the Crest Theatre until April 6. The screenwriter, director and outdoorsman will appear at 7:30 p.m. in conversation with author Pam Houston. A discussion of McGuane and his works will be at 6:30 p.m., presented by Steve Cook, a lecturer at California State University, Sacramento.

McGuane's new book is "**Driving on the Rim**" (Knopf, \$26.95, 320 pages), set in Montana and described as "the story of a small-town doctor whose ill-advised decision to try to cover up an old friend's suicide attempt leads to dire consequences."

The event is part of the California Lectures series. Tickets are \$30 general, \$15 students. Purchase tickets at (800) 225-2277, www.tickets.com or at the Crest box office, 1013 K St., Sacramento. Information: (916) 737-1300, www.californialectures.org.

Listen up

Audiobooks are a big part of the nation's morning commute. Helping listeners find the next good "read" is the Audio Publishers Association, "the voice of the audiobook industry." It has announced the finalists in 30 categories for its 2011 Audies awards, which honor spoken-word entertainment.

Winners will be announced May 25. For the complete list: www.audiopub.org.

Get started writing

As the author of 50 books, including "**The Complete Idiot's Guide to Publishing**," Jennifer Basye Sander knows something about the subject, and she's willing to share.

The Write by the Lake retreat for female writers is a personalized workshop led by Sander and is limited to three participants per weekend. It's held in a private home in South Lake Tahoe and includes meals, beverages, goal- setting guidance and lots of writing. Space is available May 20-22, June 3-5 and June 17-19. Cost is \$345, or \$295 if you reserve a spot by April 15.

"This is a chance to get away from distractions and start on a new project, finish an old one or just sit quietly and let your creativity surprise you," Sander said.

To register: (916) 847-9090, e-mail basyesander@yahoo.com, www.writebythelake.com.

On a larger scale will be this summer's 43rd annual Community of Writers at Squaw Valley, at which poets, prose writers and screenwriters gather for workshops, lectures, panels and the like. If you're accepted as an attendee – and the admissions procedure is "competitive" – the cost is \$800, plus housing.

However, there will be a number of free events open to the public; that list is being developed and will appear on the website in coming weeks. Details are at www.squawvalleywriters.org.

New on shelves

Here's an eclectic sampling of new titles:

- "Defining Moments" by Bradley V. DeHaven (CreateSpace, \$11.99, 108 pages): When it came out that DeHaven's oldest teen son was addicted to the painkiller OxyContin, the Granite Bay financial planner did everything he could to save the boy. Visit www.rxdrugaddict.com.

- "Saving Levi" by Lisa Misraje Bentley (Tyndale, \$13.99, 176 pages): Lisa and John Bentley were building an orphanage in China when they rescued a baby boy who had burns over most of his body. Miraculously, he survived and has thrived. Visit www.savinglevi.com.
- "S Is for Stupid" by Leland Gregory (Andrews McMeel, \$14.99, 416 pages): This compilation of not-so-bright items will bring a laugh. The anecdotes are arranged by subject, with chapters on newspaper headlines ("British ducks have regional accents, researchers say") and local ordinances ("Cab drivers may not knowingly carry a person of questionable character to his or her destination" – Magnolia, Ark.).
- "A New Beginning for Stars and Stripes" by David C. Rothage (CreateSpace, \$21.76, 168 pages): The cat-lover is selling the self-published cat-centric book (with 76 color photos) as a fundraiser to benefit homeless cats. Visit www.starsandstripescats.com.

© Copyright The Sacramento Bee. All rights reserved.

[Share](#)

Call The Bee's Allen Pierleoni, (916) 321-1128.

If you have information on author appearances, book sales, writing seminars, writers club meetings or other book-related special events, e-mail it to

bookmarks@sacbee.com

at least two weeks before the event. To read the online calendar, go to www.sacbee.com/books. Questions? Call The Bee's Allen Pierleoni, (916) 321-1128.