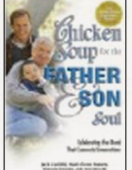


bookmarks & the writer, "Stephen Wayne" (who?)

When I received my contributor copies of **Chicken Soup for the Father & Son Soul**—which included my first ever piece to be published in a book, **The Power of a Son's Kiss**, I wanted to do something extra special for those I'd eventually give a book. After all, I figured that my being published in such an acclaimed and popular series was a once in a lifetime experience. I wanted to make it special. It was my daughter, Tracy, who came up with idea of a commemorative bookmark.


Who knew more books would follow, and with them, some more bookmarks!

By the way, notice the name "**Stephen Wayne**" on the first bookmark (top-left)? Fictitious, of course. This "writer" had a few more pieces published under his bogus name—a name that would cease to exist by the time my second piece was published in a book. (See page #2 for why "**Mr. Wayne**" even existed—if but for a short while)




"He stands before me, not quite a man, but still and for the moment, my little boy..."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Father & Son Soul** and the essay: **"The Power of a Son's Kiss"** by Stephen Wayne




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Changing the World One Story at a Time



"...feeling guilty about her coming for nothing." I told her she shouldn't have bothered. She replied, "I had to." I asked her why and she simply said, "Because you were there."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Thanks Mom** and the essay: **"Because You Were There"** by Stephen Rusiniak




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Changing the World One Story at a Time



"I wanted to be like him, after all, he was more than just my dad he was my hero."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Thanks Dad** and the essay: **"My Dad Is As Nice As A Fish"** by Stephen Rusiniak



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Changing the World One Story at a Time



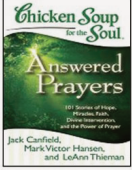
"This Christmas wish is the only gift I'll ever ask for, not for me, but for Karen."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers** and the essay: **"Christmas Wish"** by Stephen Rusiniak




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Changing the World One Story at a Time



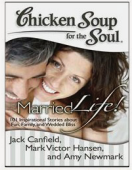
"...he'd been praying for help for a long time... finally, this week, God had answered his prayers... all of a sudden I realized I was part of God's answer!"

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers** and the essay: **"God's Answer"** by Stephen Rusiniak




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Changing the World One Story at a Time



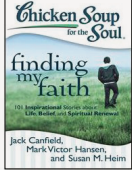
"A brilliant flash crossed the sky and was immediately followed by the sounds of rolling thunder, and then silence... the calm before the storm—another fitting metaphor."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Married Life!** and the essay: **"For Better or Worse"** by Stephen Rusiniak




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Changing the World One Story at a Time



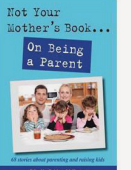
"He had been with me then, and He was with me still... in my own backyard... my very own Appalachian God moment, realized at last..."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Finding My Faith** and the essay: **"My God Moment!"** by Stephen Rusiniak



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Changing the World One Story at a Time



"...Wherever she went, her shoe friends went, too, and not necessarily on her feet..."

from the book anthology: **Not Your Mother's Book: On Being a Parent** and the essay: **"Party Shoes and Longboards"** by Stephen Rusiniak

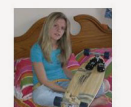




Photo courtesy of Dorcas Rusiniak

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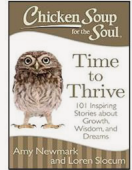


"It was a good place to work. And you know what? It was."

from the book anthology: **Not Your Mother's Book: On Working for a Living** and the essay: **"It was a good place to work"** by Stephen Rusiniak




then and now
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"...as if my previous profession should negate my ability to string together a few sentences into a publication-worthy piece..."

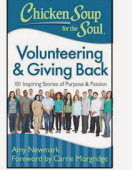
from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Time to Thrive** and the essay: **"But you were just a cop"** by Stephen Rusiniak



So there!


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Changing the World One Story at a Time



"...my previously field silly heroic thoughts quickly disappeared... as I began my one-and-a-half-hour donation procedure..."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: Volunteering & Giving Back** and the essay: **"A Commitment to Life"** by Stephen Rusiniak



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Changing the World One Story at a Time



"Benny continued to be her most faithful friend and supporter. It was as if he knew that she still needed him, and in truth, she did."

from the book anthology: **Chicken Soup for the Soul: My Very Good, Very Bad Dog** and the true story: **"Resting at her feet"** by Stephen Rusiniak



Benny & his two best friends!

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www.Facebook.com/StephenPRusiniak

and a few more, just because...

 <p><i>"This tiny, black-and-brindle bundle of trembling puppy arrived at a time in our lives when we surely needed him as much as he needed us."</i></p> <p>from the book anthology: Chicken Soup for the Soul The Dog Really Did That?</p> <p>and the essay: "Harry, My First Born" by Stephen Rusiniak</p>  <p>Harry</p> <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com and please visit: On Facebook and at: www.stephenrusiniak.com</p>	 <p><i>"The simple thank-yous we'd received in the beginning soon morphed into longer, more heartfelt expressions of gratitude."</i></p> <p>from the book anthology: Chicken Soup for the Soul My Kind of America</p> <p>and the essay: "Serving dinner to friends" by Stephen Rusiniak</p>  <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com and please visit: On Facebook and at: www.stephenrusiniak.com</p>	 <p><i>"Now almost in tears, I surrendered to the impulse that I'd suppressed only moments before—I bent down and hugged her"</i></p> <p>from the book anthology: Chicken Soup for the Soul My Kind of America</p> <p>and the essay: "Please don't leave" by Tracy Rusiniak</p>  <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com and please visit: On Facebook and at: www.stephenrusiniak.com</p>	 <p><i>"If there was any one person who'd earned kudos for my birth—it was my mom."</i></p> <p>from the book anthology: Chicken Soup for the Soul Mom Knows Best</p> <p>and my remembrance: "Happy Birthday to Us" by Stephen Rusiniak</p>  <p>My birthday cake, me & Mom!</p> <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com and please visit: "LIKE" on Facebook and visit: stephenrusiniak.com</p>	 <p><i>"The alleged food appeared to be nothing more than a couple of handfuls of oatmeal flakes and colored glitter. I soon learned, however, this mix was magical."</i></p> <p>from the book: Chicken Soup for the Soul The Blessings of Christmas</p> <p>Reindeer Food by Stephen Rusiniak</p>  <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com Facebook: StephenRusiniak Twitter: @StephenRusiniak</p>	 <p>A children's story about how inclusion champions exclusion; about a special goose who just wanted to fit in, and how, in the end Gary the goose belonged.</p> <p>By Stephen & Karen Rusiniak</p> <p>Illustrated By Donna Rusiniak</p>  <p>Contact: stephenrusiniak@yahoo.com Facebook: StephenRusiniak Twitter: @StephenRusiniak</p>
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a last word on bookmarks:

Anyone who received a book from me would additionally received several bookmarks to give away. The idea was, like Karen and me, to bring along a few bookmarks when traveling and then to leave a few behind when visiting bookstores—usually in the appropriate book or close by! It's always a thrill when I hear from someone who found one of these specially placed bookmarks who then read the piece—whether in the book, on Facebook, here or elsewhere. Very cool!

To this day, Karen and I still carry assorted bookmarks whenever traveling.

and a little bit more on this "Stephen Wayne" character:

I once wrote a book with a friend of mine—Wayne, and together, we each became one half of the fictitious writer, **Stephen Wayne**. (For a little more info on this, please read *But you were just a cop* on my "in books" page).



Wayne and me, in my old pop up camper, in Maine, working on the book—and drinking a little beer. Look closely and you can see the old portable typewriter on the table in front of me. Today, of course, that would be my trusty laptop, but this was more years ago than I care to mention!

(next page, a "Stephen Wayne" look back & update)

so what became of this bogus writer...

Years later and when we were talking about writing together again, Wayne wrote a piece about the approaching summer season entitled: **The Coming Storm**. I tweaked what he'd written—now specifically for Delaware-Maryland-Virginia readers. (Karen and I had recently bought a second home in West Ocean City, MD). I submitted the piece to a regional Delmarva magazine under our combined names, and not long afterwards, we discovered that our fictitious contributor had suddenly become a paid and published freelance writer.

Around this same time I was already writing on my own, and for a while, I submitted my work as Mr. Wayne—not ready to do so under my own name. After a couple of these pieces appeared in a local parenting publication, the editor suggested that it was time for me to start publishing my work under my own name, (bless you, Mary). I did so in every piece published from that day forward.



A recent photo of me & Wayne, taken at a my **"Book Barbecue, Read & Giveaway,"** celebrating my 15th piece published in a book (and my daughter, Tracy's first!)

a few early "Stephen Wayne" pieces:

