

**Joseph Littell**  
*106th Infantry Division*  
*Unknown Unit*  
*Unknown POW Camp*

December 8, 2004 - Humor has helped author through life's ups and downs

There's Rose, who sees everything through rose-colored glasses; Lois from the All-Nun Christmas Follies; Mitch, who is fond of fried chicken; and Marcel, the millionaire frog. And let's not forget Reggie and Fanny and Inge and Hewitt.

They are just a few of the wacky characters who inhabit Joseph Littell's "The Name Game." The recently published interactive book of stories and rhymes teases and tickles readers into filling in the blanks. For Littell, who lives in Fallbrook, humor has been a way of getting through life's ups and downs. "It's kept me going in this world in times bad and good," he said. "I try to see the funny side."

Finding humor in life came in handy for Littell when he was a soldier in World War II. As a prisoner of war, he was once told by his German captors that he may be shot the next day.

"I spent the night indulging in some dark humor," Littell said. "I was the world's worst correspondent, and I told myself that I wouldn't have to come up with any more excuses for not writing to my parents."

"The Name Game," which is self-published through Littell's New World Publishing Co., has four sections. The first is called "The Name Game" and contains very short stories. The second is "Rhyme Time." The third, titled "Crime Time," is a collection of epitaphs. In "Prime Time," three longer narratives ponder the Loch Ness Monster, a Mexican holiday and a man who wants nine lives.

Littell's other books include "The Comic Spirit," an anthology of works by his favorite American writers. His autobiography, "A Lifetime in Every Moment," was published in 1995 by Houghton Mifflin.

Soon after his freshman year at Trinity College, Littell became a soldier in the 106th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was captured by German forces and sent to a prison camp. After his camp was liberated, he returned home, feeling a little unsure about what to do next.

"I wanted to write but didn't know what to write about," Littell said. "I also thought about teaching."

The two interests coalesced when he found a job in textbook publishing. He went on to work for Macmillan, where he rose to executive editor in the school department. At Harper & Row, now HarperCollins, he served as editor-in-chief of the textbook division. He founded the publishing house of McDougal, Littell & Co. in Evanston, Ill. with his business partner Fred McDougal. The company was later acquired by Houghton Mifflin. (By Triveni Sheshadri, UNION-TRIBUNE COMMUNITY NEWS WRITER)



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