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☆☆ **Hollywood Remembered** ☆☆

It was called "a marriage from hell" by the press, and its tumultuous years were played out in headlines before the voyeuristic eyes of the world of the 1950s.

That famous coupling breathed its last sigh on September 17, 2005 when the Associated Press ran a small obituary announcing the death in Santa Monica of the gruff-talking, hard-drinking producer, Sid Luft. He was dead at the age of 89.

In 1952 he'd married Judy Garland—her third marriage and his second. Riddled with frequent separations, the stormy relationship would last for 13 years and produce two children, the singer, Lorna Luft, in 1952 and a son, Joey, in 1955.

The most famous of Judy's offspring, Liza Minnelli, had been born in 1946, when Judy was married to director Vincente Minnelli. Of that marriage Judy later said, "He was more in love with Gene Kelly than with me."

At the time of her marriage to Luft, Judy was on a "slippery slope to fade-out," having been fired by MGM during her attempt to film *Annie Get Your Gun*, the role eventually going to the equally troubled Betty Hutton.

An amateur boxer, Luft was a bar-room brawler and left a trail of broken noses on both coasts. Judy called him "my self-made monster."

Studio boss Jack L. Warner said, "Luft's one of those original guys who promised his parents he'd never work a day in his life—and made good on that promise. He saw Judy Garland as a meal ticket."

That was a cruel, but accurate appraisal, but Luft did resurrect Judy's fading career. He not only produced one of Judy's all-time great musicals, *A Star Is Born* in 1954, but he launched her into concerts all over the globe, beginning at the Palace in London where she broke attendance records.

During her divorce proceedings, she testified to having suffered beatings by Luft. But she brought trouble to the marriage as well. On more than

one occasion, Luft had to break down a bathroom door to discover Judy bleeding profusely. She'd slit the throat from which emerged one of the



Sid Luft and Judy Garland

great voices of popular music of the 20th century.

Judy herself died at the age of 47 in London. Although her death was ruled "an accidental overdose of sleeping pills," much of the world saw it as suicide.

Luft survived to take two more brides and faded from the headlines until 1993 when he attempted to auction off the 1939 Oscar Judy had won for best juvenile actress in *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences sued him and won, claiming it had the first option to buy back the Oscar at the price of \$10. When he attempted to sell the Oscar again in 2002, the Academy sued him once more, and the court ordered him to pay \$60,000 in damages.

Delivering a final comment on his famous spouse, Luft said "She had the most kissable lips of any gal in Hollywood, and I should know, having sampled all the others."

After his death, the most sarcastic appraisal came from a producer in Hollywood who didn't want to be named. "So Sid Luft is what a girl finds over the rainbow."



Darwin Porter, formerly a bureau chief for *The Miami Herald*, is an acclaimed entertainment writer. His recent biography: *Katharine the Great: Hepburn—*

Secrets of a Life Revealed was recently selected by *Foreward Magazine* as one of the ten best biographies of 2004. Porter's most recent work is *Howard Hughes: Hell's Angel*, defined by *BoomerTimes and Senior Life* as its "Book of the Year," 2005. Watch for his upcoming book, *Brando Unzipped*.



Darwin Porter

There Are Four No's, Not Just Three—DO No Evil!

By Dan O'Connell

In Japan, you see the famous three monkeys—one with his hands over his eyes (*see no evil*), one over his ears (*hear no evil*), and the third with hands over his mouth (*speak no evil*). Most representations include only these three appropriately placed hands.



However, I saw in the old market in Huangshan City, China, a set of four monkeys, the fourth at the end of the line had his hand on his "private parts." The most logical interpretation was "also, DO no evil."

This also reminded me of the penance given by Father Farrell from the

confessional at Saint Ann's Catholic Church: "Don't monkey with your monkey or it will make a monkey out of you."

Another thought comes from the following question: Five frogs are sitting on a log. Four decide to jump off. How many are left? The answer is *five*. Why?

Because there's a difference between deciding and doing.

Finally, don't forget Batman's advice: **Do good, avoid evil.**

Dan O'Connell is an independent scholar; retired political science professor/urban planner/lawyer.

New Surgery For Treatment of Colon Cancer



Ted Small, M.D.

When the Safety Harbor resident Victoria Behm was told she had colon cancer, she expected the worst. But, thanks to early screening and a new minimally invasive option, Victoria Behm had less pain, a shorter hospital stay, quicker recovery, and less scarring.

"Thanks to Dr. Small and the minimally invasive procedure he performed, I was home from the hospital and recovering much more quickly than I ever dreamed," Behm said.

More than 150,000 people in the United States will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer this year, usually after age 50. Colon cancer is the third most common cancer found in men and women in the United States.

Traditional open surgery has been the most common treatment option for many patients. With the minimally invasive procedure, patients may undergo laparoscopic colon surgery with several benefits over traditional surgery including:

- **Quicker recovery time**
- **Less time in the hospital** (five days in the hospital if the procedure is done laparoscopically versus six days with traditional surgery)
- **Less pain and fewer days intravenous pain medication** is needed (three days laparoscopic versus four days open)
- **Less scarring**

Victoria Behm has experienced these benefits firsthand. An attorney, mother of two teenagers,

part-time professor, and exercise enthusiast, Victoria Behm is a busy woman—too busy to follow her doctor's orders and schedule a colonoscopy.

"My doctor had to work very hard to get me to schedule the colonoscopy. I just didn't see the need," Victoria remarked.

Fully expecting the healthy diagnosis to which she was accustomed, Victoria was shocked to learn that her colonoscopy revealed she had cancer. Victoria's physician informed her she needed immediate surgery and recommended she undergo laparoscopic colon surgery to remove the cancer.

Victoria was back to work about a week after undergoing her laparoscopic surgery. She is thankful she experienced less pain and less scarring than she would have with the traditional open procedure but, most importantly, she is excited to celebrate her one-year anniversary of being cancer-free. Now, with her cancer behind her, Victoria is back in full-gear, working and taking care of her family, teaching, and exercising.

"For patients like Victoria, whose cancer is operable, the availability of this alternative procedure for colon cancer surgery is a great step forward," said surgeon, **Ted Small, M.D., of Surgical Associates of West Florida and Mease Countryside Hospital.** "This is a real victory for patients who can have a smaller reminder of their battle with colon cancer, with a quicker recovery time and less pain."

Consult Your Doctor

Patients should discuss surgical options with their doctors. For more information, patients should visit www.colonsurgeryinfo.com.

Give thanks for the great artists, musicians, scientists, and so on, whose work and vision uplift us all. Whether expressing yourself or appreciating the expression of others, you are part of this magnificent circle of self-expression. — Christine Northrup, M.D.

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