

FOREWORD

Baldassare Castiglione took more than 20 years to write *Il Cortegiano*. Why did it take over 20 years? Because he wanted to get it right. *Il Cortegiano* was written during the Renaissance. It was a guidebook of sorts, explaining how to be the perfect courtier – a multi-talented individual with an excellent voice, an excellent mind, an excellent sense of humor, and knowledge in all things pertaining to the arts. Thus the phrase “Renaissance man.”

Roger Deitz is a true Renaissance man – the perfect courtier. I have envied his many talents and excellent mind for longer than it took Castiglione to write *Il Cortegiano*.

We met in New York in the early 1980s and became instant friends. By my calculations, we have logged over 11,000 hours in phone conversations over the last three decades – and many of those 11,000-plus hours I have spent nearly doubled over in laughter.

Among Roger’s many talents that I envy are his warm singing voice, his ability to play any number of musical instruments, his vast knowledge of both the arts and sciences, and his remarkable gift of writing both songs and prose.

I’ve been a fan of Roger’s RagTag columns since the first one appeared in *Sing Out!* back in 1995. I’ve read and enjoyed them all. In fact, thanks to those thousands of hours of phone conversations, I’ve frequently had the opportunity to have them read to me by the author himself before they’ve gone to press.

This is a collection of more than 15 years worth of RagTags. Every column is an entertaining glimpse into the excellent mind of Roger Deitz – the Castiglione of folk euphony. And why did it take over 15 years? Because he wanted to get it right.

— **Randy Poe**

President, Leiber Stoller Songs, Inc.
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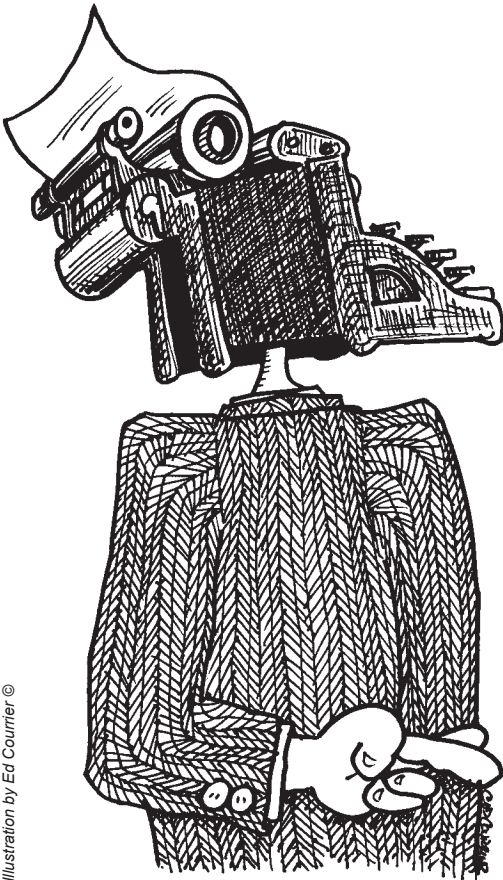


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