

Tell Me Press

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# Long Island WOMAN

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## Book Corner

by Debbi Honorof

### A MEM-WHA??

#### Singer/Songwriter Christine Lavin Shares Her Life's Passions

A few months ago, I attended a book signing that featured musical performances and special guests. The event celebrated the newly-published memoir of the talented singer/songwriter Christine Lavin. Her special guests, the legendary songwriter Ervin Drake ("Good Morning Heartache," "It Was a Very Good Year" and many other hit songs) and Julie Gold, whose song "From a Distance," was recorded by Bette Midler, figured prominently in Christine's memoir. The event was reminiscent of Christine Lavin's concerts: wonderfully entertaining and full of surprises. Attend one of her concerts and you may hear a song she just wrote, see her invite audience members up on the stage or descend into



Photo: Irene Young

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the audience with a miner's light on her head, and witness her performing an amazing baton twirling routine!

In her new memoir, *Cold Pizza for Breakfast: A Mem-Wha??* (Tell Me Press, 2010, \$21.95), Christine Lavin brings her trademark wit, charm and enthusiasm to the printed page by sharing her life story—her unique experiences, her "hunches," her ability to make things happen, and all the fascinating people she has met along the way. The book is honest, compelling, amusing, and a virtual "who's who" of the folk music world, from her great friend and mentor, Dave Van Ronk, to the many younger folksingers she has nurtured over the years. Indeed,

Christine's life seems to have been a long series of fascinating occurrences and remarkable coincidences. Christine has rubbed shoulders with the likes of Joe Namath, Elizabeth Edwards, Jeff Daniels, Julia Roberts, Carole King, and Steve Wozniak, to name just a few.

"Christine is a creature of her passions—particularly music—and over the years, she has enthusiastically championed so many artists," says John Platt, host of WFUV Radio's "Sunday Breakfast." "The first time I ever heard of David Wilcox, Dar Williams and countless others was because Christine mentioned them to me." Once a year, John turns the program over to Christine and she uses the opportunity to play songs and artists she wants to introduce to her audience.

Christine has been called "the kindest woman in show business" by singer and "Cast Party" organizer Jim

Caruso. For the past eight years, *Jim Caruso's Cast Party*, which takes place every Monday night at New York City's Birdland, turns into an impromptu and hilarious cabaret and variety show where superstars perform alongside up-and-comers. Cast Party has become an important part of Christine's life, and she often brings along younger singer/songwriters to perform. Jim Caruso's sentiments about Christine have been echoed by many others. At the Knitty City event, Julie Gold told the audience that much of her musical success can be attributed to Christine Lavin, who was instrumental (no pun intended) in getting Julie's song "From a Distance" to Bette

Midler. "I like to help people—it's in my nature," writes Christine.

Christine is ardent about more than just music. "Christine has this unquenchable enthusiasm," says John Platt. "When she finds something she loves, it seems to lift her up and move her forward. For her, life is one discovery after another. It could be a young singer/songwriter who hands her a CD at a concert in Des Moines, or it could be a Broadway show. Over the years, she has become passionate about Barry Humphries a.k.a. Dame Edna, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *South Pacific*, *Cast Party*, and knitting, just to give a few examples. She is also an avid reader and fervently follows the news. So in the spirit of Tom Paxton and Tom Lehrer, she is inspired to write really timely songs."

"The one constant throughout my life," writes Christine Lavin, "has been the many musicians and performers I have worked with, learned from, collaborated with, been inspired by, been envious of, and at time commiserated with as we've been knocked about by the music business. Songwriting is a solitary process, but it's all the things that came after the songwriting that have shaped my career."

Actor Jeff Daniels writes in the book's foreword, "Whether she's singing songs or merrily spilling her life onto these pages, to be in her audience is to be grabbed by the lapels, expertly led around, and—when it's all said and done—laughed out, genuinely moved, and thinking differently."

For a complete discography, lyrics, tour schedule, and more, visit [christinelavin.com](http://christinelavin.com).

#### Meet Christine Lavin

On January 18 at 7:30 p.m., the Friends of the Port Washington Public Library invite you to meet Christine Lavin, as she discusses *Cold Pizza for Breakfast* and performs some of her clever and witty songs. Special refreshments will be served in honor of the occasion. The library is located at One Library Drive at Main Street in Port Washington. For information, visit [pwpl.org](http://pwpl.org) or call (516) 883-4400.



*Just One Angel* is a holiday compilation of new Christmas/Hanukkah/Solstice/New Year's songs by 22 of America's best contemporary singer/songwriters. Christine Lavin gathered together songs by some of her all-time favorite performers, including Uncle Bonsai, Janis Ian, The Bitchin' Babes, Jeff Daniels, Lori Lieberman, and Kate Taylor. To purchase, visit [yellowtail-records.net](http://yellowtail-records.net).