CLICHÉS AVOID THEM LIKE THE PLAGUE

from Laura Hayden's "Left-Brain- Right Brain/Creativity Program"

suspense@suspense.net

http://suspense.net

They make for great book titles,

but lousy writing...

---A---

ace in the hole

ace up your sleeve

acid test

airing dirty laundry

all in a day's work

all talk, no action

all booster, no payload

all hat, no cattle

all foam, no beer

all hammer, no nail

all icing, no cake

all lime and salt, no tequila.

all missile, no warhead

all shot, no powder

all sizzle, no steak

all wax and no wick

all that and a bag of chips

all thumbs

all wet

all's fair in love and war

almighty dollar

always a bridesmaid

ambulance chaser

another day, another dollar

ants in your pants

apple-pie order

arm and a leg

armchair quarterback

army brat

art imitates life

artsy-craftsy

artsy-fartsy

as luck would have it

as old as time

at loggerheads

---B---

babe in the woods

back against the wall

back in the saddle

back to square one

back to the drawing board

bad to the bone

badge of honor

Badonkadonk

ballpark figure

balls to the wall

baptism of fire

bare bones

bark is worse than the bite

bark up the wrong tree

bat out of hell

bats in the belfry

battle royal

beat around the bush

beat the bushes

beats me

behind the eight ball

bent out of shape

best foot forward

bet your bottom dollar

better half

better late than never

better mousetrap

better safe than sorry

better than ever

better the Devil you know

between a rock and a hard place

beyond the pale

bib and tucker

big as life

big fish in a small pond

big man on campus

bigger they are (the)

bird in the hand

birds and the bees

birds of the feather

bite the dust

bite your tongue

bitter disappointment

black as coal

blast from the past

bleeding heart

blind as a bat

blood is thicker than water

blood money

blood on your hands

blood sweat and tears

blow this pop stand / joint

blushing bride

boil it down to

bone of contention

booze and broads

bored to tears

born and raised

born with a silver spoon in your mouth

born yesterday

bottom line

brain drain

brain dump

brass tacks

bring home the bacon

broken record

brother's keeper (thy)

bull by the horns

bull in a china shop

bump in the night

busy as a bee

but seriously

by and large

---C---

calm before the storm

candle at both ends

can't cut the mustard

case of mistaken identity

cat out of the bag

cat got your tongue

caught red-handed

chapter and verse

checkered career

chickens come home to

roost

chomping at the bit

cleanliness is next to

godliness

clear as a bell

clear as mud

cold shoulder

communist conspiracy

conniption fit

could care less

couldn't care less

couldn't get to first base

count your blessings

countless hours

creature comfort

crime in the street

curiosity killed the cat

curry favor

cut a fine figure

cut and dried

cut to the chase

cut to the quick

cute as a button

---D---

darkest before the dawn

dead as a doornail

death and destruction

death and taxes

death's doorstep

devil is in the details

dim view

dog days

dog in the manger

don't count your chickens before they're hatched

don't do the crime if you can't do the time

doubting Thomas

down and dirty

down in the dumps

down pat

down the drain/toilet

down the hatch

down to earth

drive you up a wall

dutch uncle

dyed in the wool

---E---

E-ticket

ear to the ground

early bird catches the worm

easier said than done

easy as 1-2-3

easy as pie

eat crow

eat humble pie

enough already

even money

every dog has its day

every fiber of my being

everything but the kitchen sink

evil twin

existential angst

experts agree

eye for an eye

---F---

facts of life

fair-haired one

fair weather friend

fall off of a turnip truck

fat slob

favor us with a song

fear and loathing

feather your nest

fellow traveler

few and far between

field this one

fifteen minutes of fame

fish nor fowl

fly by night

fly the coop

for the birds

fox in the henhouse

freudian slip

fun and games

fun in the sun

--G---

garbage in, garbage out

get the sack

get your groove back

gets my goat

gift horse in the mouth

gilding the lily

give a damn

give me a break

gives me the creeps

go him one better

goes without saying

good deed for the day

good time was had by all

greek to me

green thumb

green-eyed monster

grist for the mill

guiding light

---H---

hair of the dog

hard to believe

have a nice day

head honcho

heart's content

hell-bent for leather

hidden agenda

high and the mighty (the)

high on the hog

hold a candle to

hold your horses

hold your tongue

hook or by crook

horse of a different color

hot knife through butter

how goes the battle?

--I---

I beg to differ

if the shoe fits

I'm okay, you're okay

in a nutshell

in a pinch

in a wink

in harm's way

in the tank

in your dreams

in your face

inexorably drawn

info dump

influence peddling

intents and purposes

it was a dark and stormy night

it won't fly

--J---

Jack of all trades

jockey for position

Johnny-come-lately

joined at the hip

jump down your throat

jump in with both feet

jump on the bandwagon

jump the gun

jump her/his bones

junk in the trunk

jury is still out

justice is blind

---K---

keep an eye on you

keep it down

keep it simple, stupid

keep up with the Joneses

keep your cards close to vest

keep your chin up

keep your fingers crossed

keep your powder dry

kick ass

kickbutt

kick the bucket

kick up your heels

kick you to the curb

kick your feet up

kid in a candy store

kill two birds with one stone

King's English

king's ransom

kiss and tell

kiss ass

kiss of death

kit and kaboodle

knee-high to a grasshopper

knock it out of the park

knock on wood

knock your socks off

knocked up

know him from Adam

know the ropes

know the score

knuckle down

knuckle sandwich

knuckle under

---L---

labor of love

lap of luxury

last but not least

last-ditch effort

last hurrah

law of the jungle

law of the land

lay down the law

leaps and bounds

let sleeping dogs lie

let the cat out of the bag

let's split

liberal media

lie like a rug

life and limb

life imitates art

life's a bitch

lighten up

lights out

like a sore thumb

like butter

like the plague

like there's no tomorrow

lion's share

litmus test

little black book

live and learn

long and short of it

long lost love

look before you leap

lounge lizard

loved and lost

low man on the totem pole

luck of the draw

luck of the Irish

---M---

make my day

male chauvinist

man's best friend

many moons

many-splendored thing

mark my words

meaningful relationship

mellow out

moment of glory

moment's respite

Monday morning quarterback

monkey suit

monkey see, monkey do

motherhood and apple pie

movers and shakers

moving experience

my two cents

---N---

neat as a pin

needless to say

nip it in the bud

no guts, no glory

no love lost

no pain, no gain

no stone unturned

no time like the present

nose to the grindstone

not in my back yard

not on your tintype

number one fan

numerous to mention

---O---

off the wagon

old college try

old meets new

older and wiser

older than dirt

older than Methuselah

on the bandwagon

on the nose

on the wagon

on thin ice

one born every minute

one foot in the grave

one in a million

only game in town

only to be met

out of pocket

out of the frying pan

out on a limb

---P-Q---

p's and q's

pain and suffering

panic button

party pooper

patter of little feet

pass the sniff test

pay through the nose

peas in a pod

perfect storm

pig in a poke

pillar of society

pinko

plenty of fish in the sea

poison pen

poor as a churchmouse

poor excuse for

pot calling the kettle black

proud possessor

put my/your foot down

quick as a bunny

quick and the dead

---R---

radical chic

rags to riches

raining buckets

raining cats and dogs

rank and file

read my lips

red herring

redheaded stepchild

reign supreme

remember the alamo

road to hell is paved with good intentions

rob Peter to pay Paul

rock and a hard place

rocket science/scientist

rope a dope

run it up the flagpole

running dog lackey

---S---

safe than sorry

salt of the earth

save face

scared stiff

scared to death

school's out

screaming meemies

senses reel

set the record straight

shake a stick should of

shoulder to the wheel

shouldered his way

shut your trap

sigh of relief

significant other

silence is golden

slept like a log

small world

snake in the grass

snow job

snug as a bug

some of my best friends

something the cat dragged in

spade a spade

spare the rod

spitting image

spring to life

squeaky wheel gets the grease/oil

start from scratch

stick in the mud

stick in your craw

still waters run deep

stop and smell the roses

store bought

stranger than fiction

straw that broke the camel's back

stubborn as a mule

stuff that dreams are made of

stuffed shirt

---T---

take one for the team

take the bull by the horns

take the plunge

takes one to know one

talk turkey

ten foot pole

the earth moved

the final analysis

the real McCoy

the same old story

these things happen

thick as thieves

think outside of the box

third time's the charm

this day and age

this point in time

three strikes and you're out

through the grapevine

throw in the towel

tiger by the tail

till the fat lady sings

time and time again

time is of the essense

tip of the iceberg

'tis the season

to err is human

to the best of my knowledge

tongue-in-cheek

too hot to handle

touch of blarney

tough as nails

tough luck

tough row to hoe

traditional family values

trials and tribulations

tried and true

trip down memory lane

true blue

turn your smile/frown upside-down

twist of fate

twists and turns

two to tango

--U-V---

under the gun

under the same roof

understated elegance

unexpected twist

until the cows come home

up his sleeve

up the creek

up the wrong tree

very real concern

view with alarm

---W---

wakeup call

was my face red

watch your tongue

web of intrigue

week of sundays

what a bummer

what comes around, goes around

what the cat dragged in

what the dickens

what the heck/hell

what you see is what you get

what's not to like

wheeler-dealer

when in doubt, punt

when push comes to shove

when rubber meets the road

when the cat's away

when the going gets tough, the tough get going

who has everything

whole ball of wax

whole hog

whole nine yards

whole other story

wild goose chase

wild oats

will wonders never cease

wimp

win friends and influence

people

win one for the Gipper

wnning is everything

wisdom of the ages

without benefit of clergy

wolf at the door

words fail

work like a dog

worst nightmare

wrong side of the bed

---XYZ---

years young

yellow journalism

you are what you eat

you can run, but you can't hide

you know what they say

young and foolish

young and restless

yuppie