



The INKSLINGER

Sail On



HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

APRIL 2023



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dwight Norris

Waltzing Matilda

Since Richard Zone has become the editor of *The Inkslinger*, he and I have become pretty good friends. He lives in a nice gated community on the other side of the Community Church where we hold our meetings, and there are times when I have to stop by his house for one thing or another. Richard seems to have developed great delight in ensuring that the security guards give me a hard time as they eventually allow me entrance into Richard's community.

The other day I drove up to the visitors gate where a security guard greeted me, or should I say *harassed me*. It was her first day on the job, and it was obvious she intended to do a good and thorough job at protecting Richard's homestead from any intruders. I had to repeat my name six times. SIX TIMES! Shoot, my name has only six letters in it, for crying out loud. And speaking of loud, yes, I admit my last five or six recitations might have been on the slightly loud side. I finally snatched the clipboard from her hands and etched my name on her list myself.

Unbeknownst to me, because this was Matilda's first day on the job (and yes, her name was Matilda!) she was accompanied by two uniformed, male, and armed supervisors. OMG! I drifted backwards towards the gate. They couldn't know exactly what I did, but they knew I got physical with our lady of the hour when I shuffled the clipboard out of her hands. When Richard instructed three strangers to give me a hard time at the gate, having fun with this request as he usually does, he had no way to know he was talking to three strangers for the first time.

As the three charged from the door of the little security cottage, two large men led the way with the porky Matilda bringing up the rear. The biggest of the men had drawn his gun and looked like he had intended to tackle me low, and the lighter man was going high. Matilda was out of breath, but she just kept coming. I made my leap and took everyone to the ground. Okay, well it was more like gravity took us to the ground, and I was on the bottom. My youthful leaps and bounds were great. I just forgot to elevate.

I blacked out momentarily, only to wake up spread-eagle in the driveway. I turned my head to the right and watched as one of the owners drove her Mercedes through the gate, heading for home. She looked me in the eye, and her mouth popped open. I heard her through the open window. Aah! Her dentures dropped out of her mouth and landed in the desert sand below.

And oh yes. *April Fools Day!*



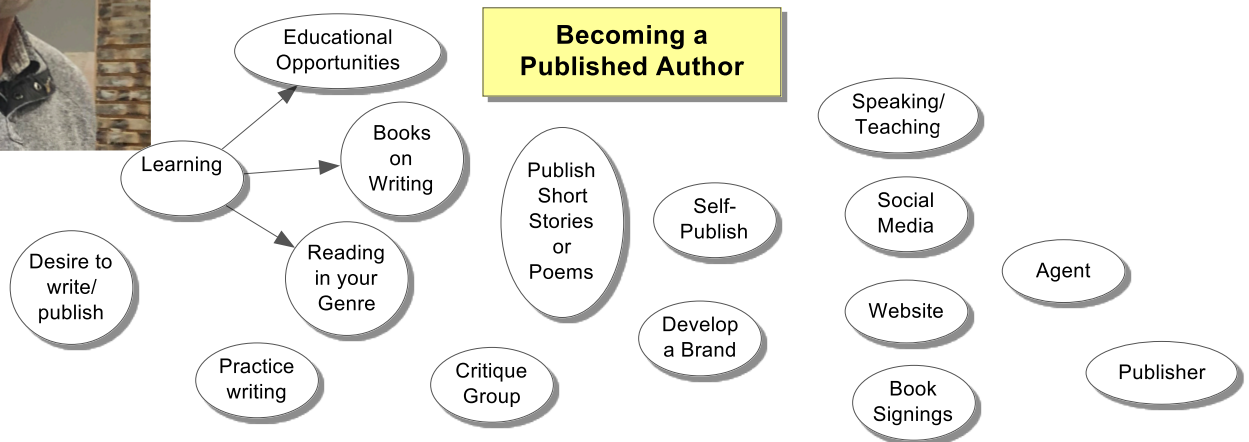
FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Mike Apodaca



AN OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING JOURNEY

Every journey requires we know the destination and the path. The better we know each section of the journey, the better we'll be able to gauge how we are doing. This is my idea of my own writer's journey.



Desire: The engine of writing is the desire to write. Keep this fire flaming. You may have to revisit your reasons for writing from time to time, and your reasons may change or mature. Your personal reasons for writing may be different that someone else's. That's okay!

Learning: This is a continuous part of writing—lifelong. Really. We never stop. This includes attending writing workshops and classes (like those in our club or our YouTube channel), reading books on writing and books in your genre.

Practice Writing: Like any other art form, your personal voice and style are developed with lots of practice. Write at every opportunity. Write articles for *The Inkslinger*. Write in different genres. Always have writing projects you're working on.

Critique Group: I find this indispensable. Ever since I started this journey (about 30 years), I have been a member of a critique group. It's where I grow the most. Your friends will help you in more ways than you can imagine.

Publish Short Stories and/or Poems: There are many opportunities to get published (including our coming anthology). It's so satisfying to see your work in print. You can also publish in magazines (paper or online). There are contests you can enter. Just polish your best pieces and get them out there.

Publish Your Book: Up to this point in the wiring journey, everything's been fairly linear. But from here on out, anything can happen. There are many paths. You can self-publish (a more popular option), or you can seek out an agent and/or a publisher. You may self-publish first and then seek out a publisher later. You can make audiobooks or get a movie deal. You can even forge your own path. Who knows, maybe you'll meet the right people at the right time and your writing career will skyrocket. Like anything else, success is a combination of hard work and good fortune.

Develop Your Brand: Once you get on your feet with writing, you may want to expand your audience by developing a brand, using social media, a website, speaking engagements (like our On-Topic Speakers Bureau), and book signings (like our Town's End opportunities).

As with any journey, there are many temptations to leave the path (just ask Red Riding Hood!). But if you start with passion and keep the end in mind, the process, however daunting, will produce a body of work that you'll be happy with—the culmination of all your hard work.


Your legacy. 



Miss Evalani eagle was lamenting something that was circling in her mind night after night, never giving her answers but showing a pensive side to her days. To her friends they say she seemed quieter, reflective and perhaps resigned, if resigned was a better descriptive word for their friend Evalani

One night Evalani was thinking to herself as she lay in bed. How is life different today compared to when I was a child? It was so different then and now, what's happened? It's different now. When I was younger, I had stars in my eyes, energy and curiosity to infinity. All I knew was that I wanted to do things, go places and to make a life in the road ahead. Now I am in my terminal stage of life. My mind and heart have that look in their eyes, asking me, "Why aren't you chasing that sparkle of life? We sense you're different. We're the road of life, we know there's lot more adventures ahead. Come on. Get up! Let's go!"

I hesitate because I am afraid. "You're afraid?" my inner voice scolded me. I'm cautious, I look for safety in my golden age, me a once proud and adventurous eagle. To know I feel this way, so hesitant and afraid, makes me look at myself with disappointment. I used to be able to see a mouse skittering across a field from far up in the sky. My feathers used to be shiny and sleek and now they're looking dull and lifeless and mottled with embarrassment. I have difficulty catching a current in the sky and have mistakenly veered too close to the cliffs and trees and skyscrapers in the cities.

If anyone who knows me, correction, the word should be, knew me. Knew me is what I was then. And now? I'm not sure. I was happiest decades ago when the dawn in the morning and the evening horizon were friends calling me. I only knew to have the sun and wind in my face as I went forward. Why has all this changed? "No, you go ahead. I can't fly as I used to. You understand, don't you? Don't you? You're right, even I don't understand. Go on...go ahead, we had a lot of great times together. Running to the horizon is not part of my life anymore. I'm an eagle, let me be the kind of eagle I remember. Since I cannot fly and I cannot see very well, I can only sit and look to "what was". To the past and now the future and the closing of the day. Kiss me, hold me. Aloha Nui Loa. I love you." 

April is Poetry Month

**Celebrate with
poetry shared &
created onsite!**

**Hesperia Library
Community Room
9650 7th Avenue
Hesperia, CA**

Sponsored by High Desert branch

CALIFORNIA

WRITERS CLUB

Featuring the
HDCWC Poemsmiths

Monday April 17th
5:00 to 7:00 pm

Free!

Public us
welcome and in-
vited to attend

THE RIGHT WORD

By John Paul Garner




There are basically three reasons why we read: for enjoyment, to be informed (which includes being educated) and, if you're a serious writer, to learn about words and how they can be used. In fact, if I'm to believe the education I received at Cal State, San Bernardino, the way to improve your vocabulary is to read. With that in mind, I try to read a book a week—emphasis on the word, “try.” As I write this article, I'm reading Michelle Obama's book, *The Light We Carry*. She's an elegant and eloquent writer from whom I'm learning a lot about words and how they can be used while, at the same time, learning lessons about life.

To this end, I use two strategies to improve my vocabulary when I read. I highlight words whose meaning I don't know and I highlight words I don't commonly use. The first reason is a practice fairly common among writers, while the second I would venture a guess is not. After a reading session, I go back and write the words down in my notebook and look them up at Thesaurus.com. Next to them, I write down two words that are similar in meaning.

For example, in Michelle Obama's book, I encountered a word I had never heard of before: *chyrons*. Heck, I didn't even know how to pronounce it. Just from the look of it, I thought it might have something to do with Greek mythology. Geez, was I wrong! Turns out, it refers to “... a text-based graphic overlay displayed at the bottom of a television screen or film frame, as closed captioning or the crawl of a newscast.”

I had been looking at “chyrons” when watching a news broadcast or ESPN all these years and didn't even know it. I bet you didn't either. It's pronounced *kahy-ron*, by the way, and now that I know what it is, there's a good chance I'll use it. As for a synonym, however, there is none, according to Thesaurus.com. No sweat.

As for words I don't often use, I highlight them and look up their synonyms so I can learn where they can fit into a story and give it some punch. A perfect example of it that I came across in Michelle's book is *inert*. When you think about it, how often do any of us use that word? Not often or probably not at all, I imagine, but I was captivated by how she used it in her book: *I could see it for exactly what it was: something soft, inert, and unthreatening—and maybe even a little cute*. The ‘it’ she was describing was a stuffed turtle doll that was being used as a stage prop. Two synonyms for the word are “lifeless” and “motionless,” which the stuffed turtle was, but assigning the word “inert” to its description conferred on it a more distinctive nuance that would grab a reader's attention in a way the two synonyms wouldn't.

These two strategies have served me well, especially when I needed nuance to elevate a sentence, a thought, or a description of something. My goal, however, isn't to impress a prospective reader with my command of the English language, but to have at my command the most accurate word that will convey my meaning to the reader. I probably state the obvious when I suggest that there's an elegance to being accurate, even an eloquence, which great writers have mastered and is best achieved when we use the right word. 

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

By Mike Apodaca



SATURDAY SPEAKER: ERIC UGLUM

You're probably in a room right now. That room has its own sound signature. Ambient sound surrounds us at all times—most of us just don't hear it. Our brains usually filter it out.


Eric Uglum, who runs his own home studio, gave us an education in audio science at our March Saturday meeting. Mr. Uglum shared with us the equipment that is used to make audiobooks, some fairly inexpensive and others that will wipe out your savings. His professional studio uses the latter.

Here are some of the things he taught us about creating your own audio book:

1. All chapters in your book should be in their own audio file.
2. Begin with about five seconds of silence.
3. Tell the listener what chapter it is and the title of the chapter.
4. Keep the volume in the middle range as much as possible. No screams or shouts.
5. Some audio platforms that promote books (like ACX) have their own submission guidelines for the audio file.
6. Save the audio to an MP3 file.
7. Do opening and closing credits, what appears on the cover. Also, provide the cover for the audiobook.
8. Tell who the book is written by and who it is narrated by.

It is more economical to read your own book rather than to hire an actor to do your audiobook.

Mr. Uglum explained that his studio is available for our writers for about forty dollars an hour—this is a real bargain. It takes about fifteen hours to put together an audiobook. In a professional recording service, errors and various sounds are edited out.

Mr. Uglum's email address is: euglum@aol.com 

HDCWC HONORS SPUNKY WOMEN PAST AND PRESENT

by Mary Langer Thompson



Spunky women abound in the High Desert and all of history, according to those celebrating Women's History Month at the Hesperia Library on Monday, March 20, 2023. Emcees Mary Langer Thompson and Lorelei Kay, both award-winning published authors, dressed in costume, Lorelei to honor Jane Austin and Mary to honor suffragettes.

The Poemsmiths of the Mojave High Desert introduced their forthcoming book, *From Out of the Silence: Women of the Bible Speak Out*. Lorelei Kay read her poem, "Miriam the Prophetess," and when she came to the chorus, members of the audience picked up tambourines and recited lines with her. Mary Langer Thompson read "Just Kidding," her poem about Sarah; and Bob Keith Young read "Anna the Prophetess." Other readers from the Bible anthology were Bob Isbill, Judith Pfeffer, Debra Joy Rubio, and Mike Apodaca.

Many remember the "Wise Women," a group of four women of the High Desert California Writers Club, all over 90 years of age, who were part of a critique group: Evelyn Blocker; Winnie Rueff; Amy Burnett, and the last surviving member, June Langer, who will turn 100 this June. Rita Wells read from Evelyn Blocker's book, *Life is Basically Tragic—But Not Mine*, and Mary Langer Thompson read a Bible anthology poem of her mother's and her column "Women" from this month's Sun City Community's magazine, *The View*, for which June Langer writes. Her article ends, "Frankly, I don't think the world could get along without women."

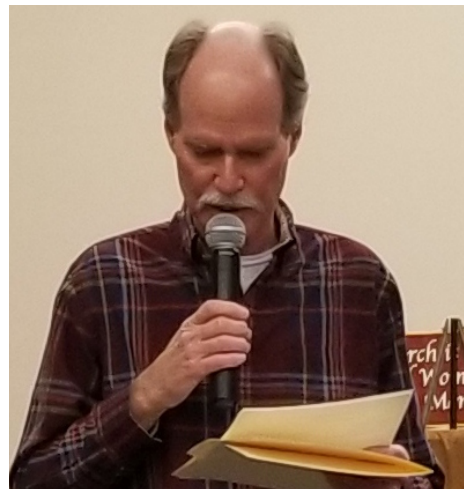
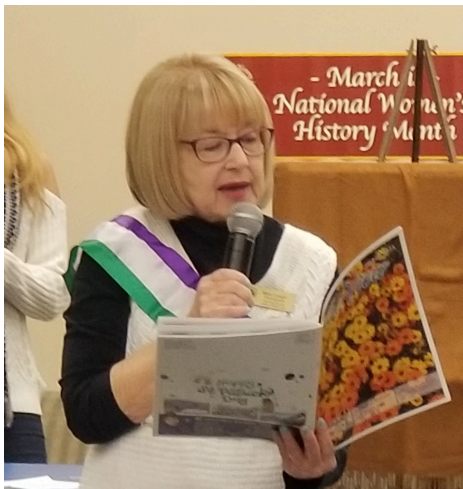
Lillian Brown read a poem about her spunky daughter called "Beth's Quest," and unveiled her painting of Beth in the hands of God. Beth passed away at a young age of pancreatic cancer but was an adventurous young woman who traveled the world by herself.

During intermission, attendees enjoyed Girl Scout cookies and talked about Juliette Gordon Low, founder of Girl Scouts, viewed art by students of High Desert Premier Academy as part of the Art and Ink Matters (AIMS) program started by Debra Joy Rubio and Mary Langer Thompson, or purchased wrapped books as part of Blind Date with a Woman Author.

At the beginning of the second hour, Bill Lopez played his guitar and sang a song about the Biblical Woman at the Well. He also gave a tribute to his "feisty" mother, the late Jessica Price. Other reading attendees were Ann Miner, Judith Pfeffer, Joan Rudder-Ward, and Latasha Davis.

The program concluded with announcements of upcoming events. The High Desert California Writers Club meets the second Saturday of every month at Jess Ranch Community Church in Apple Valley. April 8th HDCWC's speaker will be Tony Award-winner Poetri, author of "I Stepped on an Ant Last Night" and "I Am Marvelous."

Poetry Month will be celebrated April 17, 2023, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., also at the Hesperia Library. This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. 





Jenny Margotta

From an Editor's Desk

WRITING SCIENCE FICTION

Several months ago I decided it would be interesting to write a series of articles, each based on a recognized genre of fiction. My article on mystery writing appeared in *The Inkslinger* several months ago. This time I'm writing about science fiction. I thought the research would be as easy as what I did for the mysteries article. Not so.

Wikipedia.com lists 20 different categories in the genre of science fiction, and many of those have multiple subcategories. But I'll get to those later. The first piece of information should probably be what exactly is science fiction.

Wikipedia defines it as "speculative fiction with imagined elements that are inspired by natural sciences (physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc.) or social sciences (psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc.). Common elements include time travel, space exploration, and futuristic societies." (I find it interesting that science fiction was originally regarded as "scientific romance.")

The website fantasybookfanatic.com states: "The fundamental difference between science fiction and fantasy is that science fiction narratives describe what is *possible*, whereas fantasy narratives describe what is *impossible*. Science fiction elements have a firm basis in reality. In contrast, fantasy elements are founded purely on facets of the imagination."

Possible, then, is the "science" part of the genre. But it probably wouldn't be very interesting if a sci-fi story only dealt with what is possible *now*. So long as the "science" part stays within the realm of what might *someday* be possible, a story continues to fall within the genre. The "fiction" part is the writer's answer to "What if." Just because it doesn't exist *today* doesn't mean it might not *someday*.

Further online research led me to masterclass.com and an excellent article called "What Are the Elements of the Science Fiction Genre?" The article lists three basic elements found in most science fiction stories:


- **Science:** Science can be incorporated in a wide variety of ways, but it must always be present in some way, shape, or form.
- **Technology:** Science fiction often explores advanced technologies like time travel and space travel or life on other planets or onboard futuristic spaceships. Even if it's within a recognizable, real-world setting, there are often new technologies that create obstacles for the characters.
- **A dystopian setting:** Sci-fi writers generally set their stories in a dystopian society. The stories often explore themes such as a far-flung world that bears striking similarities to our own world's philosophical and moral issues.

Notable science fiction authors include Ray Bradbury (*Fahrenheit 451*), Anne McCaffrey (*Dragonriders of Pern* series), Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*), and Isaac Asimov (*I, Robot*). Iconic science fiction movies include *Star Trek* (movies and TV), *Star Wars*, and *Dune*.

Following is a breakdown of the currently recognized categories and subcategories within the science fiction genre:

- Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic
- Christian
- Comedy
- Utopian and dystopian
 - Dystopian: a society the author views as being worse than the one in which they currently live
 - Cyberpunk: juxtaposes advanced technology with a less-advanced, broken-down society. Derivatives include:
 - Biopunk
 - Dieselpunk
 - Japanese cyberpunk
 - Nanopunk
 - Solarpunk
 - Steampunk: blends technology with steam-powered machinery.

(Continued on page 9)

- Utopian: (often satirical) set in a utopia; that is, a community or society that possesses highly desirable or perfect qualities.
- Feminist
- Gothic
- Isekai (Japanese: “other world” or “different world”)
- Hard
 - Climate fiction
 - Parallel world
- Libertarian
- Mecha (robots or machines controlled by people)
 - Mecha anime and manga
- Military
- Soft
 - Anthropological
 - Social
- Science fantasy: sci-fi inspired by mythology and folklore, often including elements of magic.
 - Dying Earth
 - Planetary romance
 - Sword and planet
- Space opera: fiction that take place in outer space and center around conflict, romance, and adventure.
- Space Western: blends elements of sci-fi with those of the western genre.
- Spy-Fi: spy fiction that includes elements of science fiction
- Subterranean
- Superhero
- Tech noir
- Techno-thriller 

WORD OF THE MONTH

Jenny Margotta

DYSTOPIA: [dis'tōpēə]] (noun) an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically, one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.

Its first definition (1844) was as a medical term meaning “displacement of an organ.” It’s current meaning, “a bad place,” was first used in 1952.



THE HAUNTING OF PETER ASHTON

By Roberta L. Smith




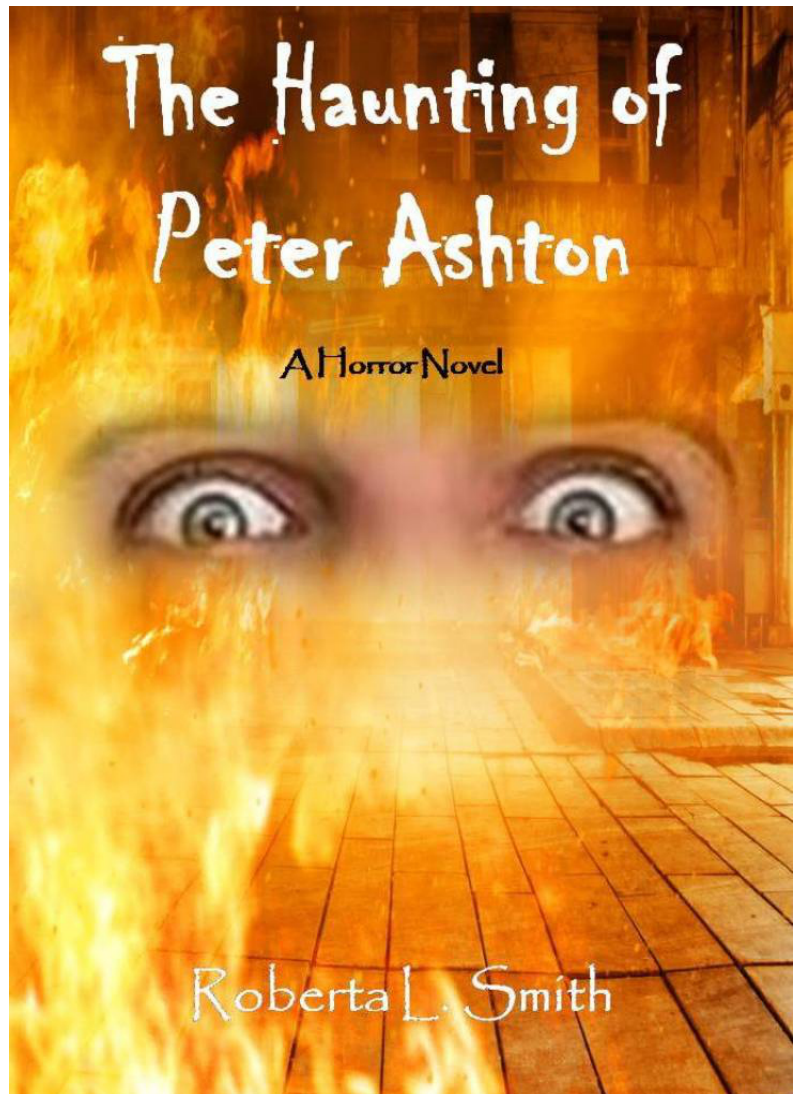
Roberta L. Smith recently released her latest novel, *The Haunting of Peter Ashton*, on Amazon.com. The book is a suspenseful psychological horror tale set in modern-day Los Angeles that is part chilling crime drama and part supernatural thriller. As she says, “This time I set out to write a horror novel as opposed to a paranormal mystery for all those horror conventions where fellow club member Mike Raff and I sell our books. This story kind of became an ensemble piece with lots of surprises where all elements tie together by the end.”

Here’s the story in a nutshell: Peter’s rock-star sister destroyed his life and took her own with the strike of a match. Now she haunts him, and he may think he knows why, but he’d be wrong. Terrified by his sister’s ghost, and under duress from her many die-hard fans, Peter is in a downward spiral. There’s help, but it’s the mysterious kind. Caught between an evil he doesn’t know exists, and those who want to help, Peter has a date with destiny where fate will decide if he’s to be freed from his past, able to start anew, or if he’s to succumb to malevolent circumstances beyond his control.

The Haunting of Peter Ashton was inspired by Roberta’s short story, *The Comeback*, found in her anthology, *Distorted 2*. In fact, it’s what happened next.

Roberta Smith has been a member of the HD-CWC since 2009. She has served as Membership Chair, Vice President, and is currently serving as Webmaster. She earned the CWC’s Jack London Award for outstanding service to the California Writers Club in 2013. She has written and published seven novels, two short story anthologies, a memoir based on her two-times great grandfather’s civil war diary, and a children’s book. Her YA novel, *Simone’s Ghosts*, won the grand prize, beating out all books of all genres, at the 2017 Hollywood Book Festival.

You can visit Roberta Smith’s website: berta-books.com, or go to RobertaLSmith.com which will take you to her Amazon author’s page. Here is a link to the book on Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/Haunting-Peter-Ashton-Roberta-Smith/dp/B0BZF7M36K/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr= 



ACT II: WIND UP AND MAKE THE PITCH

By Mike Apodaca

On March 28th, our branch was treated to a very special ACT II meeting on Pitching to Agents.

The meeting was led by Ellen McBarnette (a member of the Woman's National Book Association who runs the Beta Readers and Writers Group) and Elise Marie Collins (president of the San Francisco branch of the Woman's National Book Association and leader of Pitch-a-Rama, a Zoom event set for April 29th from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. You can sign up at <https://wnba-sfchapter.org/save-the-date-register-for-virtual-pitch-o-rama-2023/>

Here are just some of the things we learned from this fast-paced, informative presentation.


Pitching is about being inspirational, knowing your material, and knowing what the agent wants. Going to pitching events is good because you can always learn by watching other people do their pitches (the ladies play-acted a couple of pitches to show us how they work).

You are pitching all the time—any time you are telling people about your writing. When you do a pitch, follow up with a thank-you letter and, maybe, a follow-up letter.

While pitching, we need to control our attitude, body, and expectations. Be upbeat. Even if this particular agent isn't for you, they know other agents and can refer you. Take advantage of all open doors. Look nice and professional. Share what makes you an expert at your work, what you bring to the table. Get your most important information out—about you and your book—in about three minutes. Reveal important information, don't hold back.

Put together an author's resume (Ellen's is featured in the picture here). Make it a one-pager that you can leave with the agent. Put all important information about you and your writing in it.

Remember, everything you've done up till this moment was preparation for what you write about now.

This was a lively and fun presentation. 

**Ellen C.
McBarnette**

Author



Pronouns: She/her or They/them

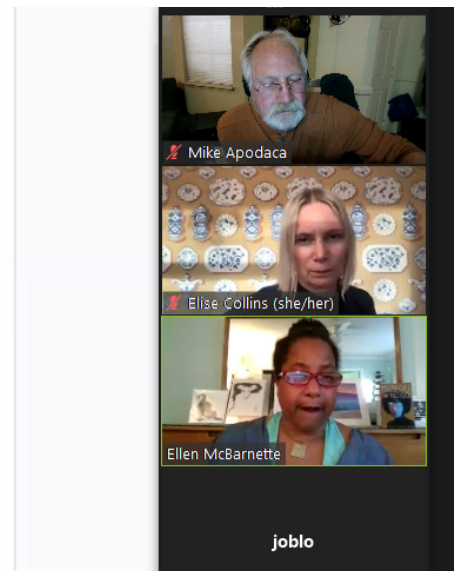
which she wrote policy statements, speeches, public correspondence and opinion pieces. In the evenings, she performed nonfiction memoir storytelling on the DC stage, occasionally making enough for cab fare home! Yes, she has performed at The Moth.

For four years, she also headed the Arlington Creative Non-Fiction Writers Group, a 1,000 member group supporting Washington area writers.

Today, she is active in the San Francisco literary community. On the board of the Women's National Book Association-SF Chapter, The California Writers Club-Berkeley Branch and The Afrosurreal Writers Workshop of California.

Manuscript and Genre:

Fiction: Afrosurrealism. To distinguish from Afrofuturism, Afrosurrealism is reimagining the Black American past and understanding its present while Afrofuturism is dreaming its future. The terms cover many types of speculative fiction and are used interchangeably in many contexts and by many




BIRTHDAYS FOR APRIL, 2023

THERESE MOORE APRIL 22

Our records on MRMS show only one HDCWC Member's birthday in April.

If we do not list it in the newsletter, that is because it is not indicated on our MRMS, our Member Records Management System. If you want to indicate your birthday, just go online and change your own record on MRMS. If you require help in doing this, contact Mike Raff via email at mprseven@aol.com.

Only your birth date is required, not the year of birth. 



SYLVIA PLATH (PART II)

An inquest ruled Plath's death "suicide resulting from carbon monoxide poisoning." Her estranged husband, Ted Hughes, wrote, "That's the end of my life. The rest is posthumous."

Plath's gravestone, at Saint Thomas the Apostle bears Hughes' inscription: "even amidst fierce flames the golden lotus can be planted." The gravestone was frequently vandalized by those convinced that his abuse caused her death, and they repeatedly chiseled off his inscription. When Hughes' mistress, Assia Wevill, killed herself and their four-year-old daughter, Shura, the vandalism increased. Assia's death led to claims that Hughes had been abusive to both her and Plath.

It was Sylvia's posthumous publication of *Ariel* in 1965 that triggered her rise to fame. Critics saw the work as evidence of Plath's death wish, which became her most famous, (or perhaps infamous), attribute. These poems were interpreted as much more personal than her earlier work, with their dark descriptions of mental illness. Her good friend, Al Alvarez, wrote: "In her mature work, she deliberately used the details of her everyday life as raw material for her art."

Plath's *Collected Poems*, published in 1981, edited and introduced by Hughes, featured poetry written from 1956 until her death. He worked on a more comprehensive publication of Plath's journals: *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, with newly released material. Author Joyce Carol Oates praised it as a "genuine literary event."

As Hughes and Plath were married at the time of her death, he inherited her entire body of work. He was criticized for burning Plath's final journal, stating that he didn't want their children to read it. He was also accused of controlling her estate for his own purposes, although royalties were placed into a trust fund for their children, Frieda and Nicholas.

Facts about Sylvia Plath:

Plath was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Sylvia felt that poetry was an aside and wanted to write both prose and poetry. Unfortunately, she was never successful at publishing prose.

Writer Robin Morgan published the poem "*Arraignment*", in which she accused Hughes of the battery and murder of Plath. When Hughes threatened to sue Morgan, the book was withdrawn by Random House.


Plath dated Dick Norton during her junior year, whom the character of Buddy in *The Bell Jar* was based on him. He developed tuberculosis and was treated at the Ray Brook Sanatorium. While visiting him, Plath broke her leg skiing, an accident that was fictionalized in the novel. She also used *The Bell Jar* to highlight the issues of women in the workforce, believing in women's abilities as writers and editors, while society forced them into secretarial roles.

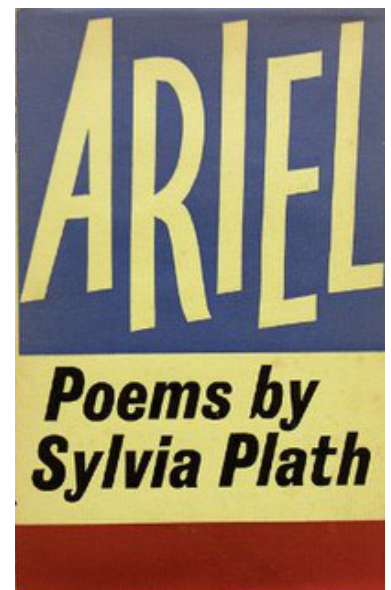
Plath's alma mater, Smith College, displays her literary papers in their library.

In 2012, The U.S. Postal Service introduced the Plath stamp.

In 2018, *The New York Times* published her obituary, part of the Overlooked History Project.

Plath's daughter, Frieda, became a writer and artist. In 2009, Nicholas Hughes, Plath's son, hanged himself.

Until next month, keep reading, writing and give Sylvia a try. 



WHOSE BUCKET IS IT, ANYWAY?

By Ann Miner



The critter bucket had just been refreshed when Robert the Rabbit came looking for his breakfast. Willie the White-Crown beat him to it and was having a feast for himself. When Willie noticed Robert, he became a bit nervous but, since he wasn't finished, he kept eating, bobbing his head up and down as birds often do, especially when anxious.

Robert sat on his haunches, patiently waiting for Willie to scam, trying to stare him down. Finally, he went to the bucket and put his front paws on the rim to peek inside, and Willie got the picture. He was out of there!


"Ah," sighed Robert, as he settled into the narrow bucket for a sumptuous repast.

But not for long. He sensed a pending intrusion. Slithering across the green grass from behind Robert came Simon Squirrel. The two of them squared off and Simon dominated. Robert hopped off into the sage to sulk.

I observed this frequent morning drama from my kitchen window. Simon greedily filled his cheeks, and when they became wider than his body, I decided he'd had enough, and I banged my knuckles on the glass.

Off Simon scrambled, with tail flying.

Willie and his feathered pals joyfully took over on the ground, in spite of the birdfeeder bursting with sunflower seeds just above their heads. Must we always want what someone else has?

As I type, a very contented Robert is back, nestled in the bucket with his little bunny nose twitching as he eats all remaining morsels. Victory is sweet! 

IN MEMORIAM

Al Andrews

We are sad to report the passing of one of our longtime members, Al Andrews,

Author of "*The Legend of Paul Bunyan.*"

May 4, 1935 - February 15, 2023

Condolences to Al's family and friends.

THE CWC BULLETIN: A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR MEMBERS

The California Writers Club *Bulletin* is a quarterly newsletter emailed to members of all 22 branches as a PDF attachment. The latest issue was sent on March 22. If you don't recall receiving it, you might want to check your spam folder, or if you're on gmail, the Promotions folder. The current and past issues of the *Bulletin* may also be found at <https://calwriters.org/bulletin>.

The *Bulletin* was extensively revamped and revised a year ago, and is now full of helpful articles on the writing craft, and publishing and marketing. Equally important, there are now several opportunities for members to promote their books and literary achievements.

Announce your latest book release in the Member Spotlight. Also welcome is news of literary achievements: short stories, poems or articles published, plus awards and honors. Send your announcements, 50 words or less, to editor@calwriters.org. Attach a copy of your book cover in JPEG format. Be sure to indicate which branch you belong to. This is a free service to CWC members, so do take advantage of it!

The *Bulletin* is also looking for articles on writing craft, marketing, publication, and the writing life. Word count can be anywhere from 200 for short tidbits to 1200 or so for long pieces. Send a brief proposal to editor@calwriters.org. Contributors receive a short blurb and a photo, so this is a great way to promote your books or your writing-related services.

The deadline for the next issue of CWC's *Bulletin* is **June 1, 2023**, with publication slated for June 15. 

DIANE NEAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Many of you will be interested to know that Diane Neal has forwarded to us a change of address.

Her new domicile is:
**900 East Stanley Blvd. #201
Livermore, CA 94550**

THE RAVEN

By Ann Miner




It wasn't just a fire. It was a storm. A raging firestorm. Flames climbed over the tops of mountains, raced down to the dry valleys, rushed urgently to the freeway, then leapt across the lanes to continue the path of destruction, of devastation.

Cars burned. Boats burned. Trucks burned. Trailers went up in flames like kindling. Even the pavement began to melt.

Terrified drivers and passengers left their vehicles. Mothers grabbed babies from car seats and ran for their lives. Could they escape this inferno? Was the world coming to an end?

When the conflagration subsided, only blackness covered the earth. The charred remains of a small, makeshift wooden cross stood at the side of the freeway. Beside it was a raven, just standing there, looking at the cross.

It seemed to say, "Nevermore" 



AWARD WINNING POET TO PRESENT AT JESS RANCH COMMUNITY CHURCH

By Bob Isbill


The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC) is proud to announce that Poetri, a renowned poet, actor, and producer, will be giving a presentation at the Community Church at Jess Ranch 11537 Apple Valley Road in Apple Valley on Saturday, April 8, 2023. The event will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The public is welcome and invited to attend at no charge.

Poetri is widely recognized as a "poet rock star" and has made significant contributions to the entertainment industry. As the Director of Creative and Development at Amusement Park Entertainment, he has gained recognition for his unique creative and cultural contributions. With a Tony, Emmy, and several advertising awards to his name, Poetri has established himself as a multi-talented artist who has excelled in various fields.

Poetri's achievements as a poet include his performance on Broadway's Def Poetry Jam, touring the world twice, and co-founding Da Poetry Lounge, the world's largest poetry venue. He has also written, produced, and appeared in numerous advertisements and campaigns for major brands, such as Nike, Los Angeles Lakers, Delta Airlines, JBL, Snickers, and BET. One of his most notable accomplishments was his role in persuading LeBron James to sign with Nike by performing for him on Nike's campus.

In addition to his work in the advertising industry, Poetri has also made significant contributions to television and film. He has appeared in feature films like *National Treasure 2*, *Blades of Glory*, and *Yes Man*, as well as television shows like *Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Tyler Perry's House of Payne*, and *Bones*. Poetri was also invited by former President Barack Obama to be a part of the first annual Spoken Word event held at the White House, an honor that he cherishes deeply.

Despite his many accomplishments, Poetri remains grounded and committed to his beliefs. He has used his popularity to create two of the most popular-spoken word shows in Southern California, Da Poetry Lounge and Spoken Funk, and has even taken his talents to the High Desert in Spring Valley Lake Country Club in Victorville. He is a beloved figure in the spoken-word community and has created a positive atmosphere for young people to express themselves emotionally. Poetri's legacy has undoubtedly left a lasting mark on the culture of Los Angeles and the world of entertainment.

For more information about the CWC, visit www.hdewc.com or call 760.221.6367. 



HIGH DESERT BRANCH OF THE
CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS AND
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UNTIL THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR
ENDING IN JULY 2023.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

By *Michael Raff*

To bear up under loss, to fight the bitterness of defeat and the weakness of grief, to be victor over anger, to smile when tears are close, to resist evil men and base instincts, to hate hate and to love love, to go on when it would seem good to die, to seek ever after the glory and the dream, to look up with unquenchable faith in something evermore about to be, that is what any man can do, and so be great.

-Zane Grey, author (31 Jan 1872-1939)

MEMBERS ONLY

Take advantage of your membership benefits

- Free advertising and free posting of your book titles and latest projects.
- Free PR author's webpage
- To find out more, contact a board member or Roberta Smith, our webmaster.

You can also review your Benefits Booklet online at: www.HDCWC.com

HDWC'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Catch the latest happenings at:
youtube.com/@HDCWC

FREE ADVERTISING

Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?

Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to

retiredzone@gmail.com

We'll advertise it free of charge!

SUBMITTING TO THE INKSLINGER

- We seek articles and stories of between **200 to 500** words.
- Poetry submissions are welcome as are photos and illustrations accompanying submissions.
- Please avoid sending items that are embedded in other media (like Word files). Simply attach items to email.
- Submit in Microsoft Word.
- Send submissions to Richard Zone:
retiredzone@gmail.com.

Call Richard if you would

like to discuss an article or idea

909-222-8812

