



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On
August 2021



Club Meetings for August

Saturday August 14th 10:00

Hello! It's Been Too Long!

There's nothing like being with a friend, someone who has cheered you on through your attempts to become a writer—a most terrifying endeavor. When you see their smiling face, the intensity of their welcoming eyes, and the warmth of their pat on your shoulder, you know you belong.

Saturday, August 14th, will be our first in-person meeting in a year and a half. And I for one am ready. I miss the bright faces, the fold-out chairs, Dwight getting up front and trying to be funny. I miss Rita's scrumptious snacks and Anita's hot coffee. I miss Michael Raff welcoming me at the front table and giving me a cheesy name tag and Jenny Margotta manning her outpost with the highest possible efficiency. If you haven't renewed your membership, she'll make it easy for you.

I can still see Joan operating the video camera in the middle of the room, yet somehow remaining invisible, never distracting from the meeting.

I miss putting away the chairs at the end of our time together, working side by side with those willing to pitch in wherever needed.

Most of all, I miss the laughter. I remember our meetings being a light and positive time where we learned, made connections, and enjoyed one another.

I can hardly wait to do this again.

We meet at the Community Church in Jess Ranch.

Tuesday August 24th 6:00

- Tenet (2020)
- The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006)
- Kill Bill: Vol. 2 (2004)
- Space Cowboys (2000)
- Ocean's Eleven (2001)
- Contact (1997) ...
- Hulk (2003)

What do all these movies have in common?

They were shot in our back yard!

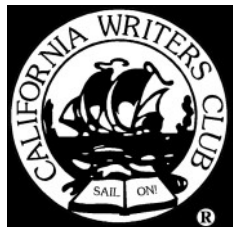
Matt Cabe, editor of the *Daily Press*, will be our featured guest speaker on Tuesday, August 24 at 6 pm for our Act 2 Zoom presentation. He will talk on a topic favorite and familiar to him, "Movie Making History in the High Desert." Mr. Cabe has written nearly 200 entries of "This Desert Life" for the *Daily Press*.

You won't want to miss this interesting meeting.

Join us for an entertaining and historical performance by someone who has a great deal of little-known facts about this topic.



High Desert branch
of
California Writers
Club
Board of Directors



*The following officers
and appointed positions are current to
the fiscal year of July 2021.*

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Quote of the Month

By

Michael Raff

“One day I was speeding along at the typewriter, and my daughter—who was a child at the time—asked me, ‘Daddy, why are you writing so fast?’ And I replied, ‘Because I want to see how the story turns out!’” Louis L’Amour, novelist.



For what it's worth

Writing is Cathartic

Our Address

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Dwight Norris
from the
President

Always Human

I like to write short stories in different time settings and cultures because eras and settings can change, but human nature does not. A cowboy in the Old West may still be driven by greed or revenge, but the cultural environment is quite different from today's. Therefore, legal implications and societal responses may vary significantly.

To be effective in portraying another time period we need to do rather thorough research. We need to be historically accurate and culturally authentic.

I'm currently finishing a story called, "The Tale of Baldric Shovelhands." It takes place in medieval times (roughly late 5th to 15th centuries).

By the way, throughout the ages last names were often assigned to people based on the work they did. Someone named *Miller* likely had ancestors who worked in a mill. The family name *Carpenter* often indicated ancestors who worked with wood, building things. The name *Cooper* stood for those who constructed and repaired barrels and casks.

Then we come to the name *Baldric Shovelhands*, the creative name bestowed upon our main character by the author because of Baldric's working in the dirt with his hands, even working in a quarry mining iron ore. A hard worker was he, letting nothing stand in his way of moving the valuable stones to the wagon.

In structuring a story in this era one has to be aware of the social structure of the times, the classes of the people and how they functioned together. Classes spanned from the king and queen down to peasants, with lots of peasants and only one king and queen. Issues of slavery came into play. A slave (vassal) was not a free person but was owned and controlled by another. Slavery was rampant all over the world. It might be a conditional slavery such as an indentured servant. If I paid a debt for you or fulfilled an obligation that you owed,

you would serve a period of time under indentured servitude without freedom. You'd be obligated to me until the debt was paid. This would restrict your life and your decisions for a prescribed period of time. It was about freedom and slavery. It was about the ability to own property and not being able to own property. It was all about power.

In these times, all property was ultimately controlled by the king and queen—royalty. This is the source of the term *Kingdom*. *Royal domain*. *Nobility*.

Obviously, the king or queen could allow a person of lesser authority within the kingdom to act as the owner, but the ultimate decisions as to the use of the property and its disposition belonged to royalty.

In the story of Baldric Shovelhands, the ultimate local magistrate is Roland, Duke of York. Peasants own no land and have to work under the authority of and for the benefit of Roland. Roland is part of the nobility in this kingdom, and can make decisions that have the power and authority of law over the occupants of York. Think of York as a large region like a county in our country. And although Roland, Duke of York, has local authority, the king is the ultimate authority. A duke helps the king by being in charge of security and putting down insurrection in a smaller part of the kingdom. So, this is the background of my story.

How far does the writer go in detailed research? As far as needed to present all relevant information in an authentic way. A story isn't finished if there are loose ends and distractions. Don't leave a reader wondering, *yeah, but what about this, or what about that?* Present a story with loose ends resolved, or don't let them loose!

Now, this is a *short* story. Mine seem to be running between four and five thousand words these days. There are issues that don't command center stage in a short story. Did the people of these times wear funny-looking clothes? By our standards, I suppose so. Although some examples seen in our malls today would probably make *them* laugh. So it's all relative.

But the point is, a detailed description of their clothes is not relevant to the telling of this story. So we'll let the reader provide some detail by using their imagination!

If you read this story, I hope you will realize this is the story of the miracle of America. What once belonged to only royalty is now a treasured right of all who live in this country—freedom, ownership, and dignity.





Mike Apodaca

from the
Vice President

Plotter or Pantser?

I'm working on a short story. I started it with an idea, something quirky and outside the box. My main character commits a murder—but he shoots the wrong person. Then, as he is holding the gun with his horrified mother, a director yells, "And cut." The protagonist (and the reader) discover that the entire scene was a performance on a movie set—one reality melts to reveal the other. The main character is having a mental breakdown, his acting role is becoming his reality. He sees a therapist about this, but the advice he is given—to get out of acting—is summarily rejected.

This is what I've written so far. I don't know how the story will end, although I have an idea.

There was a time when this would have stressed me out. I tend to be a control freak and like to have everything clearly mapped out when I write. But here I am.

When I was in college at Loyola Marymount University, we had a special speaker—William Peter Blatty. This was just after the movie of his book, *The Exorcist*, came out and shattered all box office records and scared millions of us. There was a dare circulating around my high school to go see *The Exorcist* in the theater and then spend the night at the local cemetery. As far as I know, no one took the dare.

Mr. Blatty was talking about his process of writing the book. He explained the scene where the mother's friend, the director, Burke Dennings, came by to check on the family. The mom was gone on an errand and the possessed daughter, Reagan, was in her bedroom.

As the director ascended the stairs to Reagan's room, Mr. Blatty suddenly pushed himself away from the typewriter and yelled out, "She's gonna kill him!" Up to the point, he had no idea.

There are two types of writers: Plotters and Pantser. **Plotters** like to lay out their entire story or novel before they plant words on a page. There are wonderful templates available for those who like this approach. As I said, I'm most comfortable being a plotter. I'm working on the fifth installment of my Godsend series. In my workroom hangs a seven-foot-long outline of the entire book. I've typed it into my computer and use it as a guide while I write. Some famous plotters include J. K. Rowling, R. L. Stein, and John Grisham. It's fun to Google J. K. Rowling notes and see her handwritten grid where she planned her books.

Other writers prefer to be pantsers; they write by the seat of their pants. This sounds risky, but it does have its advantages.

Pantsers have the freedom to allow the subconscious to work on the problems of the story. In the short story I'm writing, I came up with a clever ending, one better than I could have devised, simply because I've given the story time to ruminate.

Pantsers also have the fun of being surprised by their own story and where it ends up.

Some famous pantsers include Margaret Atwood, Pierce Brown, and Steven King.

My recommendation is that writers try both methods and find what works best for them. It may be that you will want to try a hybrid approach, which is what I am doing. I am a plotter when it comes to my books, but a pantser when I write short stories.

'Outlines are the last resource of bad fiction writers.' Stephen King

'Pansting (sic) things and going off on tangents wastes a LOT of time' Kait Nolan

<https://tinadubinsky.com/plotting-pantsing/>

Choosing a writing path is personal. There are no rights and wrongs when it comes to being a plotter or a pantser. Find what you like, but from time to time, try the other side and see where it leads you. You might be surprised.

If you're not quite sure which type of writer you are, you can take a quiz at <https://www.tckpublishing.com/writing-quiz-plotter-or-pantser/>

Either way, keep on writing.





Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

The Answer is: READ

If the answer is read, what, then, is the question? The question is this: What is one thing can writers at any level do to help improve their writing? Read! But just what should a writer read?

The first thing that probably comes to your mind is all the how-to books out there dealing with the craft of writing. There are literally thousands, ranging from a good dictionary or thesaurus, books that address technical issues, such as The 38 Most Common Fiction Writing Mistakes (Jack M. Bickham, ISBN: 0-89879-503-6) or Sentence Skills (John Langan, ISBN 978-0-07-312374-5) to genre-specific books such as How to Write a Damn Good Mystery (James N. Frey, ISBN: 0-312-30446-3) or The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life from Prohibition through World War II (Marc McCutcheon, ISBN: 0-89879-697-0). And if you really want to get technical, don't forget The Chicago Manual of Style, The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers. (all 1,100+ pages.)

Such books can be invaluable. They can also be excellent reading material for those nights when you suffer from insomnia. (Hint: many of them tend to be quite dry and pedantic.) And while they lay it all out for you, they don't always give you practical examples.

For instance, Chapter 10 in How to Write A Damn Good Mystery starts by telling us that almost all mysteries are built around a five-act design.

Act I: Tells how the hero/ detective accepts the mission to find the murderer. The purpose of Act I . . . is to get the reader involved in the story world and to get the chain reaction of the events of the plot rolling.



So far, so good. But how do you do that? Here's where what I consider real reading comes in. If you want to write mysteries, read other mystery writers. Are you familiar with Agatha Christie's style? How about James Patterson, Jeffery Deaver, Alexander McCall Smith, or Tom Clancy? Want some humor with your mystery? Consider Janet Evanovich or Charlaine Harris. Children/young adult mysteries? Carolyn Keene or Franklin W. Dixon. The possibilities are nearly endless.

I'm currently editing a book for a writer who has absolutely no idea how to handle dialogue. If that's your weakness, Robert B. Parker and Stuart Woods are absolute masters at moving a story along with a maximum amount of dialogue and a minimum amount of narrative.

Are you interested in writing humor but don't really know how it's done? I already mentioned Janet Evanovich, but there's also Oscar Wilde, Douglas Adams, Dave Barry, or Jimmy Buffet. Life in Alaska? Dana Stabenow or Sue Henry. Time Travel? S.M. Stirling or Diana Gabaldon. Historical fiction? Edward Rutherford, Martin William, Lilian Harry, or James Michener.

Regardless of what you want to write, there are published authors in your genre. Romance, Suspense, Historical (fiction and non-fiction), Mystery, Science Fiction, Poetry, and more.

At the very least, read those authors in your chosen genre. But don't stop there. You'll be surprised what you can learn about the craft of writing when you read any book. (Even the "bad" ones can teach you what not to do.)

WORDS OF THE MONTH

Librocubicularist

(n.) Someone who reads in bed

Epeolatry

(n.) The worship of words

Bibliosmia

(n.) The smell or aroma of a good book

Omnilegent

(adj.) Reading, or having read, everything

Ballycumber

(n.) One of six half-read books lying in your bed



The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff

Harper Lee

(Nelle) Harper Lee, 1926–2016, was born and raised in the town of Monroeville, Alabama. Nelle was her grandmother's name spelled backwards and Harper was the name of the doctor who had saved her sister's life. Her father, Amasa Lee, was a lawyer and worked in the Alabama State Legislature, and was a descendant of General Robert E. Lee. In high school, Harper studied English Literature and her teacher Gladys Watson became her mentor. She attended Huntingdon College in Montgomery, then the University of Alabama, but she left without a degree. She also studied at Oxford University in England for one summer.

Lee moved to New York City in 1949, worked in a bookstore, then as an airline agent and wrote in her spare time. She published some short stories and found an agent. As a Christmas present, her friends gave her enough money to write without having to work for a year. During this time, Lee began writing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which underwent endless drafts and was published in 1960, her first and only novel until 2015. To her amazement it became an immediate success and best seller. Based on events in her hometown in 1936, it concerns Jean Louise Finch, (Scout), and her brother Jem's experiences growing up. It also focuses on the trial of a black man who is accused of raping a young white woman and is defended by Scout's father, Atticus, (an honorable man with integrity), who was based on Lee's father.

Historian Joseph Crespino said, "In the 20th century, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is probably the most widely read book dealing with race in America." The novel went on to win the 1961 Pulitzer Prize, was voted "Best Novel of the Century," in 1999 by the *Library Journal*, and in 2007 Lee was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George W. Bush. In 2010 she was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the highest U.S. government award for "Outstanding contributions to the excellence, growth, support and availability of the arts." Lee became ensnared in publicity tours, which were against her private nature, then abruptly quit in

1964. She all but stopped writing as well, publishing only a few essays, until 2015 when *Go Set a Watchman* was published. The book was thought to be *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s sequel, but was actually its first draft. It had been said that *Watchman*, is an important aspect in understanding Lee's work. In a rare interview, when Lee was asked why she almost never wrote, she responded: "One, I wouldn't go through the pressure and publicity I went through with *To Kill a Mockingbird* . . . Second, I have said what I wanted to say, and I will not say it again."

The film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, (1962), remained faithful to the book. It won three Oscars, including one for writing and one for Gregory Peck, whose performance thoroughly personifies Atticus Finch. I viewed this movie recently and it lives up to the book in every facet. Lee watched the production for three weeks. Happy with what she saw, she left and remained friends with Peck. She even gave him her late father's pocket watch.

Fun facts about Harper Lee:

While writing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, an exasperated Lee threw the manuscript out her window and left it in the snow.

A mockingbird is a known symbol of innocence.

Truman Capote was Lee's childhood friend and the basis of the character Dill Harris.

Capote confirmed that he and Lee had a neighbor (aka, Boo Radley), who hid items in a tree.

Go Set a Watchman was the original title for *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Lee helped research Capote's book, *In Cold Blood*.

Until next time, *Aloha!* Keep reading and writing!



A WRITER'S LIFE

RUSTY LAGRANGE



The Invisible Library

Just two years ago, I was invited to a birthday event at my daughter's high school library. Many years earlier, I had worked there part-time as a library aide. I was looking forward to the visit. I love libraries.

But I stopped in my tracks when I entered.

At the far side of the large empty room was one shelf of books that spanned about four feet. I spun around and saw that all the shelves were empty or completely removed. I grabbed an administrator walking by and asked where the books were. "On pads and tablets," he said. "We surveyed the students and our inventory. Did you know that no student had checked out a book in over three years? It's a Media Room now." My mind muddled at the thought.

"Sign of the times," he said as he strolled on by.

Knowing your audience is paramount to doing your marketing research, designing your campaign, and reaching your audience, and I had completely missed the mark if I was planning to sell to young broadcast and journalist students. My interviewing book would fit seamlessly with them ... or so I had thought.

Millennials have changed the landscape of book marketing. Not that paper books are gone. No *Fahrenheit 451* here. But the vast majority are finding the convenience of keeping their books on a Kindle Reader, among others. Portability is key. And we better plan to have our books in electronic format or miss the boat completely—the boat, the dock, the harbor, the whole dang ocean.

Another point that needs clearing is the variation in print houses and publishing companies. If you wish to be an independent author with your own publishing imprint name, you'll do better tackling all of your options early on. For example, I created Rusty's

Rose Enterprises as my overall imprint. I can then publish different projects under that name with clear separation of the names as I develop them. My dream of producing and selling a membership magazine in flip page format is called *VintageWest Magazine*, and inside it I can post my ads for my products: books, posters, key fobs, etc, without having to think about registering all of these items in trademarks for whichever category.

If I wish to sell in different genres or purposes, I can create a greeting card line—Rusty Bucket Ranch—and place it under the enterprise name. Even my Old West Stagecoach Trading Company, fashioned after a frontier suttler's store, can still live within the cover of my imprint. Maybe it's too much to share right now, but by thinking and planning ahead, I have saved a lot of future paperwork.

A print house will print your products at different rates. For example, some POD (print on demand) companies will charge you a one-time set-up fee and print out your books as you need them, while others want you to pay up front for a large number of copies before you've sold the first one.

Those called vanity presses are also print houses that can offer you a complete package for a higher price in a contract, then add on fees for every little change you might request. They seem more demanding. They are also more likely to go bankrupt sooner than others—leaving you without a file, contract, or reprint agreement.

Each house should give you "prospective formats" that can help you sell your books. Will they offer eBooks, KDP Kindle formatting, special sizes for specific formats, short runs, nominal prices for a full revision later on, or a clause that allows you to move your books to an estate for future family members? Can you do the formatting to save money?

Needless to say, by the time I had left the library, I learned a big lesson, and I followed through by revisiting the KDP Kindle options, making sure my book converted to the best format, and swallowed my pride by dropping the cover price to meet the other non-fiction how-to books out there in cyberspace. (I am not a professional; this is free advice.)

Better to sell more at a reduced cost than expect larger returns through sales for a published paperback.

Are books going away? No, just adjusting to the readerships' demands. Are you?



DR. GREG CUMMING
SHARED WITH US . . .
WRITING ABOUT HISTORY



Dr. Greg Cumming has just published a book about Patricia Hearst and her place in history. The book explains Ms. Hearst as a bridge between two eras: the student anti-war protests and the Reagan Revolution.

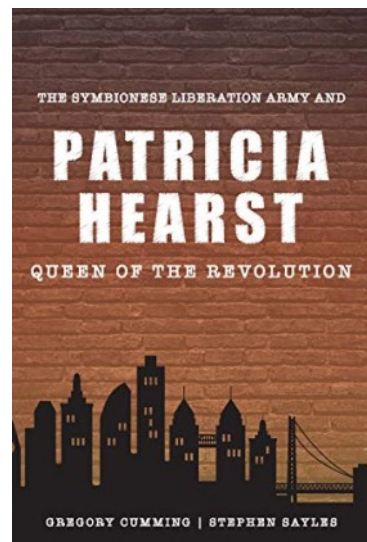
Mr. Cumming said that writing this book was better than writing fiction—so many crazy things happened.

Creating a book like this takes painstaking research. Dr. Cumming used Patty Hearst's own biography as well as many other sources. He noted that many sources were weak in research and in citing their sources. He kept asking himself, Where are the primary sources here?

He got a real break in his research when he found that the FBI had hundreds of thousands of documents related to the Hearst case in their storage. Incidentally, these boxes were slated for destruction. Dr. Cumming's interest in them spotlighted their historical significance and caused the FBI to change their plans and to digitize the materials. Dr. Cummings has all these files on CDs.

Another source of research is firsthand accounts. Whereas Dr. Cumming contacted many of the original players in the Patty Hearst kidnapping and later indoctrination, they did not want to talk to him. F. Lee. Bailey, who was Hearst's lawyer, also declined his request for an interview.

Dr. Cumming said this was okay, however. He has found that when people give interviews after the fact, they often try to put their own actions in the best light, and they may leave things out or add materials to confuse the interviewer. Therefore, it is not best to rely solely on the words of the eyewitnesses. When we do interview someone, it is good to send them the notes from the interview so they can agree with them or point out things that are incorrect.



Dr. Cumming did find an unpublished manuscript by F. Lee Bailey among the FBI files. It was unpublished because the publisher felt it did not have enough sex and violence in it to make it a popular book.

Dr. Coming emphasized the importance of footnoting everything in his book. A stickler for accuracy and accountability, he wants the reader to be able to go back to the primary sources and to see that he has reported everything correctly. In an era filled with misinformation, it is important that writers of history stick to the facts.

Now, this doesn't mean that we have no freedom to be creative and to fill in gaps with invented dialogue, for instance. However, this must be made clear to the reader so they understand what they are reading.

We had a lively Q&A where Dr. Cumming dove deeper into writing history, presenting us with his many insights.

Patty Hearst: Queen of the Revolution is published by Great Oak Press. After getting many rejections from publishers, Dr. Cummings talked to a friend at Great Oak Press who felt that the project was worthwhile. He praised the publisher for the support he received from them. He recommended that we begin all such relationships with a query letter and a chapter or two of our manuscript.

The key, as exemplified by Dr. Cumming, is to be persistent. People will block your path. Figure another way in. Do not take no for an answer. Pursue your dream and do it with a high level of integrity and professionalism.

We are thankful for such a terrific speaker.

Mike Apodaca



ACT II

Getting Paid

This month's ACT II meeting was devoted to something near and dear to all of us—getting paid.

The topic came about when I was talking to Dwight about the Town's End event where I sold some of my books. I had recently purchased a Square which allowed me to take credit and debit cards. Dwight did not have one, but I introduced him to it and got him all set up. This made me wonder how many others in our club need to have multiple ways to get paid.

My presentation, which should be on our website soon, involved three parts: Cash, Web-based Apps, and the Square.

I explained the pros and cons of each of these ways to get paid and did a walk-through of setting up a Square account. I had walked through this with Dwight and took notes and pictures for this presentation—thanks, Dwight!



Dwight Activating His Account

The first time I actually used the Square was at Town's End in Apple Valley. It was amazing. I was no longer limited by the cash people had on hand. Since everyone carries cards these days, I could sell to everyone.

Like anything else, using the Square takes a little getting used to. And there is always the possibility of human error. One person attending our meeting explained that she accidentally pushed the wrong button and refunded someone (she does not know who) for the books they bought.

The way I look at it, we're all on this trek together and we are here to help each other along the way. I am thankful for each member who showed up to the Act II meeting and shared their experiences.

If you haven't yet acquired a Square, you can get one on Amazon for a very low cost. The presentation I made should help you with the set up. It is on the HDCWC website.

And, best of all, you will have new ways of getting paid.

Mike Apodaca



HDCWC Speakers Bureau

The Bible says that without vision the people perish. We are fortunate to have the visionary Bob Isbill in our club.

Bob's vision is to see us all become highly successful, well-known authors. And the way that happens is by doing public appearances—speaking engagements to writing clubs, reading clubs, and special interest venues. Speakers sell books.

On July 22, 2021, we had an Act 2 meeting regarding the creation of a speaker's bureau where our members would be taught how to do presentations and possibly sell their books if they were invited to speak at an event.

If you missed the meeting, please visit www.hdcwc.com and click on the side panel link Professional Presentations and watch the 23-minute PowerPoint.

Bob asks for all interested authors to send him an email expressing their interest. So far, eight people have responded by emailing Bob at risbill@aol.com

Those who have taken advantage of this amazing opportunity are:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Mary Ruth Hughes | Robert Young |
| Anita Holmes | Emilissa Hill |
| Rusty LaGrange | Debbie Rubio |
| Mary Thompson | Lorelei Kay |
| Mike Apodaca | Joan Ruddard Ward |
| Ann Miner | |
| Gary Layton | |
| Jenny Margotta | |



Speaking at the special meeting for Black History Month at Hesperia Public Library

If you're interested in knowing more about this program, please respond within the next five days. Our hope is to get 20 members who will form a solid team that can work together to create and improve their presentations and get bookings.

You became a writer because you had a message to deliver. Let the Writers Bureau help you reach your audience and push sales of your books.



Four of Our Writers Are in This Year's Literary Review

Anita Holmes

HDCWC Poemsmiths designated Anita “Covid Home Poet Laureate.” A Zoom mentor for many, since March 2020 she’s diligently hosted Zoom critique groups and meetings.



She has served our branch in various capacities. As we

meet in person again, you’ll most likely find her serving coffee.

Ms. Holmes sends haiku e-mails, is writing a cozy mystery, and shares her home with current Dog-in-Residence, Archibald “Archie” MacLeash. Allergies [un]fortunately prevent her from becoming a cat lady.

Anita I. Holmes’ poem “I might’ve been a cat lady,” chosen for inclusion in the *Literary Review*, is a humorous yet pragmatic look at cat collecting’s consequences.

Amy Burnett

My position now in the club is more an encourager than active.

I’m definitely a seat-of-the-pants writer, no outline, no formula; just sit by the campfire and tell stories. I work best (and more often) working with a frequently meeting group.

My story came from my dad in a discussion during his last years.



This story first appeared in our club’s anthology about four years ago. It is called, “Bedtime for Everett.” It’s a humorous account of a man deciding to change to the other side of the bed after sixty-seven years of marriage. The results were amusing and endearing.

Mike Apodaca

Mike Apodaca is the HDCWC’s vice president. He currently edits the newsletter, *The Inkslinger*, and provides support for our club’s Zoom meetings. He also put together the Act II meetings which have helped us during COVID.

Mike is the author of a book series called *Godsend*. He has written four of the planned six books. His short story, “Aftermath,” was published in this year’s club anthology, *Survival: Stories of the Pandemic*.

The story Mike contributed to this year’s *Literary Review* is called, “The Stupidest Thing I Ever Said.” It’s about a camping trip when he was in high school.



Lorelei Kay



My favorite part of the Writers Club is belonging to the Poemsmiths, headed by Mary Thompson. We help each other motivate our inner poet while working to refine our talents.

Although poetry has grown into my brightest writing passion since publishing my memoir, I am now back working on another project—a third-draft of a novel based on a true story. Apparently, I like writing about Mormons!

I wrote the poem “Ballet at Hesperia Lake” when I first joined the club after seeing hundreds of black starlings in flight. “Guarder of the Nectar” ended very differently when I first presented it at Poemsmiths. Their input completely transformed it.



SS Stavangerfjord

By Ann Miner



At the age of 20, I was traveling across the Atlantic to Copenhagen on the *SS Stavangerfjord*, an ocean liner that sailed for the Norwegian America Line to and from ports in Norway, Denmark, and the United States.

There was a knock on my stateroom door as I was retiring for the night. I opened it to find a large Norwegian sailor dressed in dark blue turtleneck shirt and trousers. A dark blue knitted cap hugged his head.

"I close window," he said, with a strong accent.

"It is closed," said I, as I looked at the porthole above my bed.

"No, other one. Going through North Sea. Maybe bad weather."

Leery at first, I recognized that his intent was to help not to harm. I saw that there was, indeed, an iron window purposed to protect the porthole and therefore the stateroom. I moved away from the door in the tiny room to allow the seaman access. He closed the window, left, and all was well—until the next morning.

My stateroom companions were Norwegian: Anna, a young woman who spoke good English, and an elderly woman, Fru (Mrs.) Bachlan, who spoke no English. Each day, as the steward walked the narrow halls playing the gentle chimes to remind us that morning had come and breakfast would soon be served, light greeted us through the porthole. On this morning, however, with the porthole covered, it was dark as midnight.

The women across the hall from us had dressed their little children and let them outside the room while they got themselves ready for breakfast. The children chattered noisily.

There had been some commotion the night before in the room next to Fru Bachlan's bunk, and she had knocked on the wall ... many times to quiet them. In the darkness of this morning, she assumed that it was still night and that the couple next door was still fighting. She began forcefully knocking on the wall, shouting something in her native tongue. In my limited Norwegian, I informed her that it was morning.

The couple was an American male and a young Danish woman who had met on the ship shortly after leaving port in New York and formed a relationship. By the time we reached the North Sea, the shipboard romance had evidently gone sour, and they were arguing.

All the fuss had produced a sleepless night. I dressed and went upstairs to join my tablemate; I was ready for a strong cup of Norwegian coffee and some of that delicious Jarlsberg cheese that was placed on the buffet table for every meal.

I was busy recounting the events of the early morning when all of a sudden, a huge noise came down from above. I nearly fell out of my chair. That's when I realized that our table was placed directly below the ship's foghorn. We were navigating thick North Sea fog and the captain was sounding the warning every few minutes.

That's only some of many memorable moments of that nine-day journey on the Atlantic Ocean and the weeks that followed as I made my naïve way from Copenhagen to the far north points of Denmark.



Hurdy-Gurdy Man

(music produced when a hurdy-gurdy falls into unskilled hands)



By Tom Foley



I made a business trip in 1982 to Manilla, Philippines. The days were long and hot working outside in the elements, so after work and a shower, we would go out for dinner and explore the nightlife. Back then, it was a wild place but quite entertaining as a spectator. My local contact was Mac, and my partner was Frank as we went out at night.

Mac was in charge of the nighttime entertainment. He picked us up at the hotel in his car with a driver. We went to a nice restaurant where he had reservations. The seating area overlooked a dance floor and a bar running down the opposite wall, the doors opened to an ocean view and a refreshing sea breeze. The dinner was a combination of Malay, Chinese with a little Spanish mixed in, and of course, fried rice for Frank. He lived on the stuff.

After dinner we went to a bar with a huge Bengal tiger in a cage. Customers were encouraged to stand next to him while the photographer safely outside took their pictures. Remarkably, no one was mauled or killed.

At the same bar stood a guy with a wooden box hanging around his neck with "Hurdy-Gurdy" painted across the front, a crank handle extending from one side, and a lever on the top of the box. Two wires with metal pipes on the end came out the front. He was walking around the bar tapping them, and asking, "Shock mister? Only a dollar. Shock mister? only a dollar."

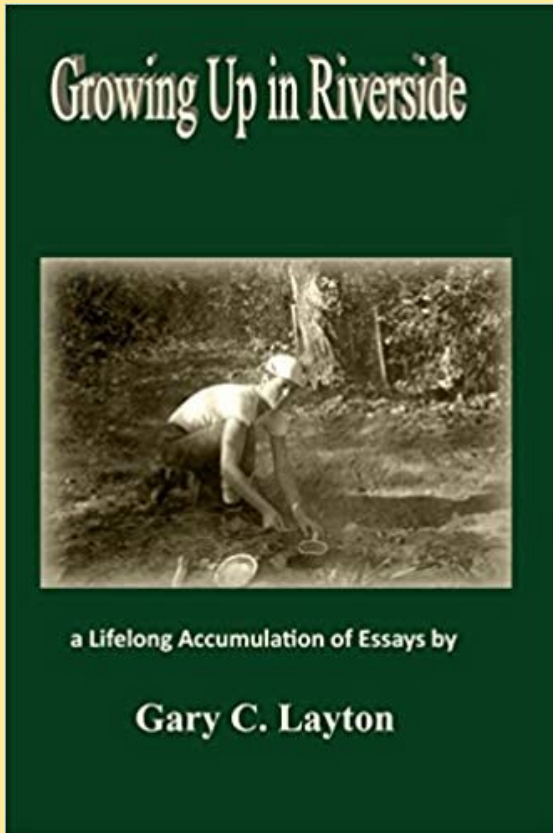
A few of the intoxicated sailors egged a buddy to try (what a rube). He paid the dollar, picked up the two pieces of pipe attached to the box, and the hurdy-gurdy man started cranking with the setting on low. The sailor started dancing, trying to let go of the pipes but couldn't due to the muscle contractions in his hands from the electricity. The operator asked his "friends," "Should I add more power? Five dollars more power!" Each time he moved the lever on top to maximum, his "monkey" would scream and jump. "Friends" of the monkey, even strangers, continued to supply five dollars, enjoying his predicament. The hurdy-gurdy would sweep the lever to max and back until another five went into his pocket, and another, and another. The sailor was dancing like an organ grinder monkey as long as the money kept flowing. Finally, they stopped paying. Their amusement had waned. The operator quit cranking, and the sailor fell to his knees, exhausted. Mack looked at me and said, "You can't fix stupid. I see this act every week."

It was a fun and exciting trip. We went well off the tourist path. The people were friendly, and the country was beautiful once we went a little outside the city. I'm sure the hurdy-gurdy man in the local tourist bars is gone. Today Manila is a cosmopolitan city, The U.S. Navy port is gone, and I am told they have cleaned up the city to support tourism. I enjoyed it then and would go again, given the chance.

My final takeaway on my trip to Manila is the hurdy-gurdy man. He offered a shock for a dollar. Knowing human nature, he knew his buddies, friends, and strangers would be willing to pay more to see the victim dance for just a little longer, enjoying his predicament. He would have lost money if the initial price was too high. "Well, for a dollar, I'll try it. What am I going to lose?" The devil is always in the details, isn't it, especially when you lose your money, dignity, and freedom. The hurdy-gurdy man knew that upfront.

We'd be wise to pay attention to what they are teaching our kids in school, who is running our state and country. I believe might very well be . . . the hurdy-gurdy man and unskilled hands.

Gary C. Layton's Growing up in Riverside



Published in 2018, *Growing up in Riverside* is a story of two young boys born into poor dysfunctional families who grew up in Riverside in the '40's and '50's and their struggle to live a normal childhood. Their enthusiasm, spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship helped them survive and grow up to be successful professionals. This book follows them from childhood thorough their adolescent years and into adulthood. It is 311 pages, including 10 pages of pictures, of their adventures, troubles and triumphs as they tried to find their way.

Gary's new book, *Cornflakes and Peanut Butter* will be published soon. It is another heart-warming collection of essays and short stories.

Productivity Haiku by Anita I. Holmes

productive writers
follow David Allen's tips
for *Getting Things Done*

two easy methods
free and nothing to purchase
to accomplish more

1.
faster keyboarding—
voice to text will need fixing—
touch typing still rocks
2.
fingers on home keys
and—whether PC or Mac—
start using shortcuts

The ABCs of Take-Control Shortcuts

choose the most helpful
these work in Microsoft Word®
and elsewhere—enjoy

Hold down both Control and select keys:

Ctrl + A	Select all
Ctrl + B	B old selected text
Ctrl + C	C opy selected text
Ctrl + D	Opens font options
Ctrl + E	C enter-aligns text
Ctrl + F	Opens "find" panel
Ctrl + G	Opens "go to"
Ctrl + H	Opens find & replace
Ctrl + I	I talicizes selected text
Ctrl + J	J ustifies text left & right
Ctrl + K	Insert hyperlink
Ctrl + L	L eft justification
Ctrl + M	Indent paragraph
Ctrl + N	Opens n ew document
Ctrl + O	O pens file options
Ctrl + P	Opens print window
Ctrl + Q	Removes selected paragraph's for matting
Ctrl + R	R ight justification
Ctrl + S	S aves document
Ctrl + T	Second line indent
Ctrl + U	U nderline selected text
Ctrl + V	Insert text on clipboard
Ctrl + W	Close document (W ind it up)
Ctrl + X	Cut selected text (Scissors shape)
Ctrl + Y	Redo last action (Y es!)
Ctrl + Z	Undo last action (Z ap!)

A Tribute to a Friend

By Gary Layton

I've told many stories about friends before, but this time the friend is my granddaughter's dog. A dog is just a dog but this was a special dog. Socrates was a big dog, a fierce dog. You could see the fear in strangers' eyes when Socrates would come running up on them for the first time. But within 15 seconds, they were friends for life. Soc was so hyper and playful that people thought he was a puppy well past his puppy stage. He was this way throughout his short life.



I always welcomed him when he came to visit. He was so happy to see me that he would clear the coffee and end tables with that huge wagging tail. He used to fluster his master because every time she would let him out to relieve himself, he would jump in the pool and she would have to dry him off before he could come back in the house.

My granddaughter and I went on a two-week camping trip after my wife's passing, and the memories of that great companion will warm me for life. You knew you were always safe with him around, for he surely would have given his life to protect you. One day his master noticed a lump, and the diagnosis was disastrous. Everything was done to try to save him. A go-fund-me was established to raise the money for the expensive chemo that was to follow. All treatments ended in failure and despair.

I remember the call the day they put him down and the heartbreak that followed. And yet the pleasure of wonderful memories of a great friend warmed me and gave me relief. If only humans could learn to be such a dedicated friend like Soc, the world would be a much better place.

News You Can Use

Looking for a Publishing Opportunity?

Authors Publish is a free resource that informs authors of publishing opportunities. They give multiple listings explaining the submission requirements and dates, what types of writing are accepted, and some inside information to guide your submission.

You can subscribe for free at <https://authorspublish.com/>

Poetry

THE HELPER by Sara Metcalf Leach

It is all he has
It is his good deed
To oversee another life
And put his own at ease

A man who roars
Doesn't want us to know
How much he cares
For a kindred soul

The stories he tells
Fool us not in the least
His gruff demeanor
Veils a gentle beast

We need not reveal
What Providence already knows



Image from Pixabay.com



Remembering Summer by Barbra Badger

Eye-catching

Breath-taking

Free-as-a-breeze

Serried lines

Flip and flap

Bringing to mind bending and
stretching

A labor of love

Performed millions of times.

Sun-kissed

Rainbows

Wrapping shivering children dusted
with sand

A thin shield of ground cover

For baking in the sun.

Image from Pixabay.com

High Desert CWC Participates in Summer Book Booth

Authors with books to sell occupied busy book booth at the Town's End in Apple Valley beginning June 10th and ending July 25th. Authors offered their own books and club anthologies for sale in a booth at the permanent farmer's market called Town's End in Apple Valley this summer. Collectively, almost 100 books were sold.

The venue offers vendor booths featuring food, art, jewelry, and fruits and vegetables. There is music, entertainment, and lots of foot traffic, with free parking and free admission. The HDCWC sponsored its authors so the cost of manning a booth was affordable for those partaking.

Participating HDCWC members included Dwight Norris, Ann Miner, Mike Apodaca, Michael Raff, Rusty LaGrange, Perrin Pring, Roberta Smith, and Monica Kuhlmann. The event was coordinated and supervised by our Membership Chair, Michael Raff.



High Desert CWC Will Go to Hybrid Meetings Starting in August

The High Desert Branch, like so many others, has been holding their meetings via Zoom since February of 2020. We have found that these meetings often contain extremely interesting presentations from far away. We've had a few speakers from hundreds of miles away in California, two from Chicago, and one from Scotland.

For several months, we have had an additional Zoom meeting which we call Act 2. We have offered free attendance for some of these for all CWC members. Speakers have included James Scott Bell, our own CWC Vice President, Roger Lubeck, on professional presentations, and we will offer another on September 21 featuring sought-after speaker, Dara Marks.

HDCWC is scheduled, at this writing, to meet in person for the first time in 19 months on August 14. It will be a time for great celebration as we go forward in supporting our members with excellent opportunities in crafting and marketing their work.

For those who wish to continue online, we'll provide access via Zoom. Our desire is to give as many ways to access the meeting as possible. So if you are out of town, or just not quite ready to attend in-person meetings, you can still participate virtually.

Well, Hello There

by
fumi-tome ohta

My dog Farley and I were out for our morning walk. As usual Farley wanted to sniff every previous dog's piddle. Of course, he had to make a doctoral thesis out of it by sniffing above, around, below and all about, thereby conducting a thorough departmental research once, twice, thrice or however many times he felt was necessary to get a clear and concise sniff of another dog's urine markings until I had had enough and would jerk Farley at his harness back to our morning constitution.

As we walked, I thought I heard someone say, "Well, hello there!" I turned about to see who was speaking but saw no one. I must be cracking up, I mumbled to myself. It was then that I saw many fine and delicate spider webs on various shrubberies here and on our walk. What made these webs so awe inspiring were the geometrically spaced bubbles, like microscopic strands of light worn by pixies and fairies as necklaces. "Oh my goodness! So pretty!" Before Farley and I pressed on, I took photos of these delicate spider webs, and as I did, I heard voices say, "Goodbye!" "Goodbye!" "Hurry back!" I turned to acknowledge the speaker but again, there was no one. "Hmm, that's strange," I muttered to myself.

As Farley and I were nearing home, he just had to do a Sherlock Holmes one more time before we went in. As Farley did so, I heard a voice. "Hello there!" What a jovial voice. I spun around to greet my neighbor but there was no one about. I looked up to each floor of our apartment building to see if a neighbor was greeting us, but no, there was no one. I chalked up the mystery to lack of sleep or being dehydrated. As Farley was pulling me home, I happened to see a circular disk on the lawn. I'd seen this disk many times before; it was a cover to the rotating sprinkler beneath but this time I did not see a sprinkler disk but a Happy Face! To see a Happy Face was obvious to me yet I wondered how many walked past without seeing it? I took a picture of the Happy Face to share with my family and friends. When we got home, I enlarged both the sprinkler disk and the delicate spider webs. Seeing the Happy Face on the disk made me smile. When I enlarged the spider webs, I could not believe what I saw. Each mist held a Happy Face in its bubble! As I admired the photos and the joy I was feeling, I could not help but reflect and hold dear to my heart, the voices, Happy Faces, and the greeting of a lifetime, "**Well, Hello There!**"



Professional Photography Bargain for Headshots for CWC Members & Families

Recognizing that professional headshots are an integral part of the publicity package for writers, the High Desert Branch of the CWC has set up an amazing photography bargain for CWC members. As of July 28 it has been opened up for family members as well. The offer is limited to a maximum of fifty paid customers, so it will be on a first come, first-served basis.

Through an arrangement we have made with branch secretary and professional photographer/videographer Joan Rudder Ward, we are able to offer an extraordinary value for two professional headshots for only \$30.

Joan will provide 2 jpeg files of softly retouched photos. Each photo will have one 5x7 300 dpi format and an emailable publicity jpeg file for your portfolio. That is not a typo. The cost for each photo is \$15 when combined in this deal!

Note: This offer is for the jpeg files only. Participants may obtain prints on their own through Walgreen's or Costco for example.

This remarkable value would ordinarily cost around \$150. This is only one more example of getting your money's worth out of being a member of the CWC!

Sorry, but PayPal will not be available for this amazing offer. Personal checks or money orders only mailed to:

**HDCWC
17645 Fisher St.
Victorville, CA 92395**

IMPORTANT: Please make checks for \$30 payable to **The Image Maker**.

The importance of obtaining good headshots for your publicity package cannot be overemphasized. The beautiful location and date will be:

**Sunset Hills Memorial Park
24000 Waalew Road
Apple Valley 92307
Sunday, August 15, 2021**

Window of photography beginning time is 9:45 am.

State the most desirable time in your confirmation email to hdcwc@aol.com and we will strive to accommodate you, however it cannot be guaranteed!

Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

AUGUST — SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

August 10 HDCWC Board Meeting
August 14 10:00 HDCWC Meeting
August 18 8:00 Accountability Meeting
August 19 3:30 Poemsmiths meeting
August 24 6:00 Act II meeting
August 25 8:00 Accountability Meeting
September 1 8:00 Accountability Meeting
September 2 3:30 Poemsmiths meeting
September 8 8:00 Accountability Meeting
September 11 10:00 HDCWC Meeting
September 15 8:00 Accountability Meeting
September 16 3:30 Poemsmiths meeting
September 21 6:00 Act II meeting
September 22 8:00 Accountability Meeting
September 30 3:30 Poemsmiths meeting

If you have a special group meeting regularly and would like to open it up to the membership, please contact Mike Apodaca to have your group included in the calendar.

mrdaca.ma@gmail.com



Four HDCWC Members Published in Lit Review

Four HDCWC members are slated to appear in the 2021 *Literary Review* later this year. They are Anita Holmes, Lorelei Kay, Mike Apodaca, and Amy Burnett. Lorelei had two pieces accepted, so we have a total of five pieces in the next issue, tying Tri-Valley and Redwood branches for the number of entries accepted.

There were over 300 submissions for this upcoming edition of the statewide publication. Every member will be receiving one copy at their home address as a member benefit of belonging to the CWC.

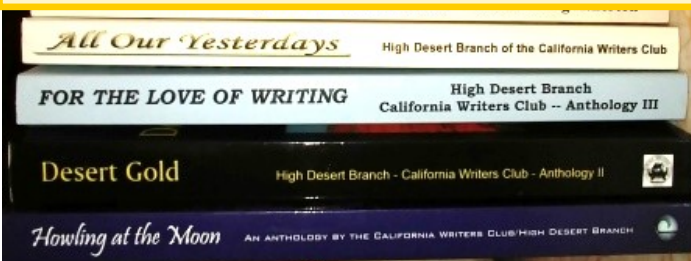
We are very proud of these authors and equally proud of all of you HDCWC members who submitted to this issue.

TIME TO RENEW

Remember, it's time to renew your membership. Go to www.hdcwc.com and renew now!

Adults: \$45, Students: \$10 before 9/30/2021. Use PayPal or send check to

HDCWC
17645 Fisher St.
Victorville, CA 92395



Order copies of our HDCWC anthologies for your bookshelf, gifts, or as a donation.

Titles can be found on Amazon.com in hardback, softback, and ebook editions

Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

"Writers Accountability"

Zoom call each Wednesday morning at 8:00 am

Discussions

Looking for weekly accountability to . . .

Write your book

Ideas on publicity

Website book page with links

Amazon Author Page

Join us on Wednesday mornings at 8 am

Zoom meeting ID: 985 7081 6164

Password: 216757

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HDCWC MEMBERS BORN IN AUGUST

August 3 Roberta Smith; August 6, Bob Isbill; August 8, Jerry Lentz; August 9, Karla Luther; August 10, Mary DeSantis; August 21, Jenny Margotta; August 26, Elizabeth Pye; August 30, Freddie Gold

Famous August Birthdays: 1, Herman Melville; 2, James Baldwin; 4, Percy Bysshe Shelley; 5, Guy de Maupassant; 6, Lord Alfred Tennyson; 7, Garrison Keillor; 8, Marjorie Kinney Rawlings; 11, Alex Haley; 14, Gary Larsen; 15, Edna Ferber and Julia Child; 19, Ogden Nash; 22, Ray Bradbury; 31, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly and William Saroyan.

Are You a Poemsmith?

You may be. Poets are the craftsmen of words. They love all words, from their syllabification, their beat and rhythm, to their origins and definitions. Poemsmiths love the hunt for just the right word to convey the feeling they desire.

We have a wonderful group of poemsmiths meet every other week on Thursdays at 3:30 on Zoom. Mary Thompson, who leads the group along with some other powerful writers, graciously sent me the following information:

1. We meet every other Thursday at 3:30, currently on Zoom. We bring one poem (must be unpublished! We expect drafts) only per session, any form or type (haiku, free verse, sonnet, rhyming). We send no later than midnight the night before, but no pre-reading (unless you want to) required. At the session, each poet reads his/her poem aloud. Then we take about 5 minutes for everyone to re-read silently and make notes on the paper (or screen if possible, to put on it). Then we go around, and each makes first positive comments (what are the strengths?) and suggestions for improving. The poet takes the suggestions or not.
2. If you are thinking of joining, we hope you like to read a lot of poetry (not just your own) and have goals of submitting and publishing and learning a lot from the group itself. We strive to be always kind but honest in our reactions. Poetry is probably the most personal genre there is, and therefore, we realize poets make themselves vulnerable to the reader. We all started writing poetry as amateurs; we've all grown in knowledge and understanding of what makes a poem better, stronger, and more powerful.
3. We'll be judging our anthology submissions in early July and hope for an October publication of our first anthology, *From Silence to Speech: Women of the Bible Speak Out*. We are keeping our fingers crossed that a California Humanities Quick Grant for \$1500 for the publication of the anthology will come through for us in August. Jenny Margotta would distribute the funds.

Poemsmiths meet July 8 and 22, August 5 and 19

Those who would like to visit the Poemsmiths and sit in on a meeting, please contact Mary Thompson at:

mh_thompson@hotmail.com

She'll give you the Zoom login information and answer any questions you might have.

MEMBER SERVICES



Dorothy C. Blakely



The DCB Memoir Project is alive and well. The committee met recently to discuss the guidelines being written for the project and to plan an upcoming project with Barstow College and the veterans' home.

Take advantage of your membership benefits

Free advertising and free posting of your book titles, your latest project, your free PR author's webpage and other free and fantastic benefits!

Because you belong to CWC High Desert branch.

Contact a board member, or our webmaster, Roberta Smith.

Or review your Benefits Booklet online at:
www.HDCWC.com

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg>

Managed by Joan Rudder-Ward

Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?

**Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to mrdaca.ma@gmail.com
We'll advertise it free of charge!**

Temporary Editor



Mike Apodaca

Notes From the Editor

I have to admit, I took the position of temporary editor of *The Inkslinger* because I didn't want to see this great publication cease—I still don't.

But for the last four months I've had so much help, the job has become far easier than I expected.

Thanks to all who supply me with content. The articles, poems, and stories you provide have allowed me to continue the tradition of excellence with this fine publication.

The Inkslinger is truly a team effort and I'm happy to play a part in its production. Please keep sharing.

Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Mrdaca.ma@gmail.com. Articles and stories between 300 to 700 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome. Please avoid sending items that were embedded in other media. Call me to discuss an article or idea, 760-985-7107.

Submit September items by August 23
Submit October items by September 23