



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On

May 2021

Club Meetings for May

Saturday May 8th 10:00 AM

Jules Horne

Method Writing and Audio Books

Jules Horne is from the Scottish Borders, an area rich in literature and history (Walter Scott, James Hogg, Andrew Lang). She wrote poems and stories in English and Scottish from a young age. She studied German at Oxford, becoming a translator. She joined a theatre group and decided to write plays. She now writes stories, spoken word and plays for stage and radio. She's written 12 plays for BBC Radio and touring companies and is currently writing a play about women's rugby. She also writes and publishes non-fiction and teaches Creative Writing for the Open University. Her stage plays *Allotment and Thread* for Nutshell Theatre have won Edinburgh Fringe Firsts and her lyrics have been set by composer Suzanne Parry for Scottish Chamber Orchestra musicians.

Jules' writing has a distinctive mix of Gothic and dark humor. She's inspired by the natural world, technology, and larger-than-life stories.

Ms. Horne will speak to us on the explosive market for audio books and on Method Writing—utilizing all



Tuesday May 25th 6:00 PM

Roger C. Lubeck, Ph.D.

V.P., California Writer's Club Board

Roger C. Lubeck, PhD. is vice president of the California Writers Club, immediate past president of Redwood Writers and president of It Is What It Is Press. Roger's publications include: ten novels, two business books, short stories, poems, and two contest-winning stories, two produced ten-minute plays. Roger's blog is <http://www.rogerinblue.com>.

Roger will share his insights as to what makes for a professional presentation, based on his 25 years as a business speaker and workshop leader. His career has focused on leadership and management combined with 15 years of teaching university classes on psychology, and 10 years conducting workshops on writing, self



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Roger C. Lubeck, Ph.D.

Roger's career includes: author, business consultant, workshop leader, retreat facilitator, professional speaker, publisher, photographer, speechwriter, assistant professor, researcher, parent trainer, pigeon wrangler, and dogcatcher.

Because this topic is so essential to the overall Mission Statement of the CWC in assisting writers to market their work, we're offering this Zoom presentation at no charge to the statewide membership of the CWC. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at 6 pm.

Registration for this free meeting is required and may be made with this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86220784034?pwd=TTThCMWhyc0FYbjRid1JmUnZiWit6Zz09> or by visiting www.hdcwc.com

As most people know by now, Rusty is the editor-in-chief of the CWC state newsletter, the *Bulletin*. It is published three times a year, and Rusty has been doing that for the last five years. The job has entailed collecting, archiving, and compiling the news articles and photographs of the 22 branches of the California Writers Club and putting them together in an attractive format. Until the November 2020 edition, Rusty has been doing this entirely on her own. People have emailed her asking her to remind her staff of something and are amazed when Rusty replies that she has no staff.

When Rusty took over the editorship of the *Bulletin*, it was published in hard copy and mailed to the members two times a year. With the emergence of the electronically distributed newsletter in a pdf file, the cost became less than \$200 per issue as opposed to several thousand dollars per hard-copy edition. We were able to solicit paid advertising, which has become a positive part of the budget rather than a liability.

In addition, Rusty sought out and secured the flip-page software to enhance the attractiveness of our *Bulletin*, and unfailingly, the advertising has covered the cost of that addition.

Under the best of circumstances, the *Bulletin* editor is a job that can be difficult and frustrating. However, Rusty, by choice, lives in a section of Southern California near the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin where her husband has had a long career in the space exploration industry. Broadband is rare, and Wi-Fi undependable because she must rely on satellite resources.

Despite life-changing events, including the birth of twin granddaughters and a serious bout with health issues, Rusty has never missed an issue. She has truly served the Central Board in an extraordinary way and deserves the Ina Coolbrith Award and the recognition that accompanies it. The nomination was seconded and unanimously approved by the CWC Central Board.



Rusty LaGrange
Approved for

Distinguished Ina
Coolbrith Award for
2021

On Sunday, April 18,
2021, the CWC Central
Board considered the

latest nomination for the rarely bestowed Ina Coolbrith Service Award for outstanding contributions made to the Central Board of the California Writers Club. Our HDCWC member, Rusty LaGrange, was nominated as follows:

I, Robert Isbill, of High Desert Branch of the CWC, am proud to nominate one of the most dedicated and hard-working individuals I know of in the CWC, Barbara "Rusty" LaGrange.

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.*

President

Dwight Norris
hdcwcpresidentdnorris@gmail.com

Vice President

Mike Apodaca
MrDaca.ma@gmail.com

Secretary

Joan Rudder-Ward
imaker@msn.com

Treasurer

Jenny Margotta
jennymargotta@mail.com

Member-at-Large

Linda Boruff
linda jeanboruff@msm.com

Programs / Publicity Chair

Bob Isbill
Risbill@aol.com

Membership

Michael Raff
mprseven@aol.com

Newsletter Editor (Temporary)

Mike Apodaca
Mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

Webmaster

Roberta Smith
hdcwc_web@aol.com

Quote of the Month

**By
Michael Raff**

“Anyone who wishes to become a good writer should endeavor, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid.”

H. W. Fowler

2021 HDCWC Anthology

Deadline Extended to May 15

Our Address

HDCWC
17645 Fisher Street
Victorville, CA 92395



Where are they now....?

Anne Fowler, past HDCWC Treasurer and active member who helped revitalize our Branch in 2009, writes:

“Dear Bob, Thanks for your nice note. Glad to know you and Judi are still doing well. I miss all of our friends in the High Desert but have accommodated well to living in Orange County, where almost all of our living relatives now live. That includes our youngest son, James, and his two children, Andrew—Robert’s son and his wife and their year old baby—and most currently, Sarah who was living in the Bay Area but moved down here because the schools are open. So we are surrounded, and we love being part of this busy scene.

We joined Oasis, the local senior center, and were happily participating there in a weekly writer’s group, but that all came to a halt last year when COVID (spelling) hit. But I hope to get back to it soon.

How about you? Are you still writing? Please tell everyone that I miss them. And hope to hear from you again. XX Anne”

Who of us involved in the HDCWC in the first few years of the second decade of the two thousands will forget that loyal couple? Clark was always there early to make the coffee, and Anne was always there for the club she loved.



Nominations

HDCWC Nominating Committee Slate Announcement

For June 2021 Election

By Bob Isbill

Nominating Committee Chairman

In accordance with the JDCWC Bylaws, the slate of officers standing for election at the June 12, 2021 meeting is hereby announced:

Incumbent officers willing to stand for election are:

President Dwight Norris
Vice President Mike Apodaca
Secretary Joan Rudder Ward
Treasurer Jenny Margotta

The election is scheduled to happen at the June 12 meeting and will be determined by those present and voting.

If anyone else is interested in standing for election in any one of those four roles, please contact me.

Nominations may be made at the June 12 meeting. However, the person nominated must be willing to serve in the office nominated. If that person is not present, the person nominating the individual must have it in writing that the nomination for office is agreeable with the nominee.

Thanks.

Bob Isbill risbill@aol.com 760.221.6367

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HDCWC MEMBERS BORN IN MAY

JAMES ELDER, May 5; *ALLEN REID*, May 11; and

NAOMI WARD, May 19.

Authors born in May include . . .

KARL MARX, May 5; JM BARRIE, May 9, DAPHNE DU MAURIER, May 13; L. FRANK BAUM, May 15; JODI PICOULT, May 19; ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, May 22

HDCWC Plans Backyard Celebration

For June 5th

For over a year, our HDCWC meetings have been conducted via Zoom technology. We are grateful for that innovation and have had some excellent speakers and events that would have been otherwise impossible to do.

For those who feel comfortable attending an outdoor face-to-face celebration with food, HDCWC is planning a gathering on Saturday, June 5, 2021, at Judi and Bob Isbill's home in Apple Valley. Masks and vaccinations optional.

We will be able to accommodate a maximum of sixty guests. Therefore, we are opening up registration to members only until sixty people have signed up or until May 15, whichever comes first. Reservations will be on a first come, first served basis. After May 15, we will open up registration to members' significant others who want to attend.

This event will be free to members, just \$10 for guests signed up after May 15.

The fun will begin at 5:00 pm, food served at 5:30 pm. Location and other details to follow. Those wishing to pay their renewal dues for next year may do so at this event.

If you want to attend this affair, please email your name to vvmediator@aol.com. Put Backyard Party in subject line.





STEPPING UP

All members of the California Writers Club are volunteers. There are no salaries, but there are benefits. To be sure, those of us who participate in our membership, take away much. We help one another, get along with each other, and become better writers. We may better learn specialty skills from someone else with more expertise. And we have all become good friends because we share a passion for this activity that we love—writing. But none earns a salary by giving to the club and helping others. This is true throughout all twenty-two branches of the CWC throughout the State of California. It's part of our bylaws.

Some of the smaller jobs take less time and expertise, but are also very important. Greeting people at meetings, sending a get-well card, and welcoming new members all lend a personal touch to our writing community.



These things make people feel at home and happy to be a part of our little family. Sometimes someone performs a volunteer task for a long time and simply runs out of steam. Sometimes people move away, pass away, or get away. Life intervenes. It's all good. We're volunteers!



I believe the club runs more smoothly when our volunteer tasks are spread out among those who are comfortable doing them. If only six to eight people bear the brunt of most of the volunteering, it's a little more difficult to balance things out and feel enthusiastic about everything.

Some of the smaller jobs take less time and expertise, but are also very important.

In our branch, we have split the duties of producing our newsletter, *The Inkslinger*. Some of the smaller jobs include keeping track of and reporting on members' birthdays, upcoming events, member services, writing an announcement when one of us publishes a new book, keeping up a poetry page, reviewing past events of the club—like a bookfair or last month's speaker—news from the board, and reporting on upcoming club events. There is much information the club needs in order to keep fully informed and maximize our membership benefits. Most of these tasks involve writing up a paragraph or two and submitting the news to the acting editor, the one who is assembling the newsletter that month.



STEPPING UP (CONT.)

We are targeting the first of the month as the publication date for the next newsletter. So, if we can stay on schedule, the May *Inkslinger* would come out on May 1st. Mike Apodaca has taken on the big task of assembling the submissions and producing the finished document.

Now, I don't have to tell you that since becoming vice president about a year ago, Mike has spent countless hours in service to our club. We all appreciate his dedication, his love of the club, and his commitment to help each and every one of us. Frankly, he can't do this task forever.

Do you know how one person loves to perform a task that another just hates or doesn't have the time to do? One person loves to run their business, but dreads the bookkeeping and the math. Her accountant, however, loves to crunch the numbers. A homeowner wants his house to look like a work of art but doesn't have the time or desire to pull weeds or plant flowers. So, he hires a landscaper whose artistic canvas is a beautiful yard. It's a win/win and everybody's happy!



We need to always be working out that sort of thing here. We may have a member who always wanted to learn how to produce a small publication. Contributing to *The Inkslinger* could be a good way to learn. And we're all writers, aren't we? We could select a news area that we take charge of, make a few phone calls, and report on that information so it can be made known through *The Inkslinger*.

And even though there's no *paycheck*, there's always a *payoff*. Because when we give a little of our time and energy to an organization we love, we are now vested in it, and it automatically becomes more valuable to us. To current HDCWC volunteers, thanks for all you've done for the club. To our other members, please think about these things and how you might be able to help keep our club thriving.

Contact vice president Mike Apodaca at 760-985-7107, or mrdaca.ma@gmail.com.

Benefits to belonging to the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club include . . .

1. The newsletter, which you are reading right now. The excellent website and YouTube channel.
2. The quality speakers we have each month to learn from.
3. The Act ii meetings, which focus on specific projects and maintaining our relationships.
4. Special writer's groups like the Poemsmiths.
5. Critique groups where our work can get positive evaluation from our peers.
6. A network of writers, artists, editors, and speakers to help us get our work published.
7. Book events where we can showcase our novels, non-fiction books, and anthologies. Hopefully, these will start up again very soon.
8. Access to the *Literary Review* to publish our stories and poetry.
9. Access to club anthologies to showcase our stories and poetry.
10. The DCB Memoir project, which allows our club to serve the wider community by training young writers and preserving the stories of our High Desert residents.

And so much more!



Mike Apodaca

from the
Vice President

Skin Thickening

As a kid I spent many hours on the playground. Even in those days, a person with a keen eye could spot what his friend's favorite activities were. The kid with callouses running up the side of his/her right hand was a tetherball player. Pounding the ball with a clenched fist would always toughen that skin. Or there might be the kid with callouses on the inside of their hands—thick buttons of leather just below where the fingers meet the hand. This was a monkey bar fan. The callouses showed where the skin was being rubbed and toughened. As an elementary school teacher and a guitar player, every year I'd shock my class by taking straight pins and sticking them in the tips of the fingers of my left hand. With callouses, I didn't feel the pain.

We writers need to be tough when it comes to our writing. There've been some who have aspired to a life of writing only to be crushed and turned away by having their work challenged or rejected. They gave up. Their voices have been silenced.

Critique versus Criticism

Recently, one of the pastors of my church explained that there's a big difference between critique and criticism. **Critique** is done for the purpose of improving and, thereby, benefitting the person or work being scrutinized. It is an act of true friendship.

If you've ever been a part of a good critique group (I've been blessed to have been a member of several), you know what it's like to be with people who will call you on every missed (or added) comma and who ask difficult questions about what you've written. I don't think I could write without such a group to challenge me to continuously improve my craft. I simply don't see the mistakes I make, but they do.

One of the best comments I've ever received from a critique session was when one of my group members said that my story (which was supposed to be a serious thriller) reminded them of a *Scooby Do* episode. They were right. I still laugh about this.

Criticism is different. Criticism is usually done for the purpose of making the person dishing it out feel superior. Critics are faultfinders who want to put others down to push themselves up.

I don't think we should take critics seriously. We definitely shouldn't allow them to affect the way we feel about ourselves or our writing. These people are just unhappy. Don't let them make you the same.

Not Everyone's Going to Like Your Work

We can't please everyone. This just comes with the territory. People like what they like. There are some people who don't like poetry. Some don't really care for romance novels. Most all of us have a preferred genre. So, naturally, there will be people who don't like what you write because they don't care for your type of writing. That's just the way it is. It is not a true comment on you or your work.

Develop your Callouses

Back to my playground analogy. I remember every year, when school began, I had to start my callouses all over again. I'd come home with blisters and pain. Eventually, the skin would thicken and I'd be able to play without even feeling it. Writing calluses come from writing and allowing others—people you trust—to carefully look over your work for errors and story problems. Thick skin comes with time and putting your hands on the monkey bars often. The fun starts when we push past the pain and embrace the calluses.





Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We never know when—or even if—we are making a difference in someone's life. A few years ago, I took my friend Davey Murray to one of our monthly meetings at the Jess Ranch Community Church. I thought he might get something out of the meeting, but at the time I never dreamed it would have any major impact on him.

Davey's a very interesting character, by the way. Born and raised in Scotland, he immigrated to Canada in his adulthood. As you might imagine, he has many interesting stories to tell. For instance, he was seven before he ever saw a banana, thanks to rationing that continued in Great Britain for years after World War II. And he left school after eighth grade to apprentice as an electrician. As an adult, he spent a number of years in Gibraltar, working on ships from many nations—including the Soviet Union—that stopped there during their journeys and required repairs.

I met Davey through one of our now deceased, former members, Ivan Summers. Davey is a long-distance bicycle rider, and Ivan found him one day stopped along a road in Death Valley, overheated and parched. Ivan "rescued" him and the two became fast friends. Before the pandemic closed the U.S./Canada border, Davey came to the States at least once a year for an extended, long-distance ride. One year he traveled the route of the Underground Railroad through the South. He spent several months in New Orleans as a volunteer electrician, helping after the devastation left behind by Hurricane Katrina. He often met Ivan somewhere in his travels, like the times they went to the Panamint Mountains, explored Death Valley, or travelled to New Mexico. The year I took him to the club meeting, Davey had ridden his bike from Las Vegas to Victorville and would continue his ride after several days visiting with me.

There's a reason I'm telling you all this. When Davey and Ivan visited me—using my guest room as a halfway house in their travels—we would inevitably end up on my back patio, talking well into the night. Of course, writing was a common topic of conversation. Ivan was a long-time newspaper columnist and writer, and although Davey enjoyed reading, he always said he couldn't write. Both Ivan and I would encourage him, but he always demurred, saying he didn't have the talent or necessary education.

Then I took him to that fateful meeting. He ended up sitting next to "a delightful lady who used to live in Detroit, which was like sitting next to a neighbor." Davey lives just across the Canadian border from Detroit. She asked if he was a writer and gave him lots of encouragement when he said he didn't think he could be. In fact, Davey says he never met a group of people more welcoming and friendly. He has said on more than one occasion, "Taking me to that meeting was the best thing anyone has ever done for me."

Not long after that, Mike Apodaca, Dwight Norris, and I each posted a video meant to encourage writers on our website. Davey watched all three videos and, as intended, says he was inspired. The COVID pandemic forced him to put up his bike and stay home, and he finally began to write. He recently sent me about 15 pages of a spy novel he has begun. The subject line of my return email to him was, "And You Said You Couldn't Write." His story is exciting and creative, and I definitely want to read more. A new writer has been born . . . and we can all take credit.

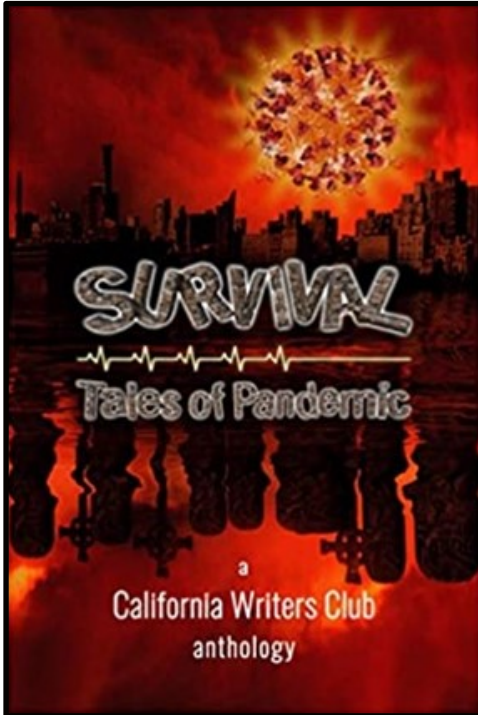
We may not always see the results of our encouragement. Sometimes, we might think we're wasting our time trying to interest others in what for us is a passion. But Davey is proof that our efforts are not wasted. I take every opportunity I can to encourage people who think they have a story to tell to put it on paper. Tell your story. Be creative in developing plots. Invent characters who come to life on the page. Technical issues can always be fixed but the story must be there first.

WORD OF THE MONTH

PLEONASTIC [*plee-uh-nas-tik*]: *adjective* relating to or having the characteristics of wordiness; needlessly wordy or redundant. Example: "I heard it with my own ears."

Synonyms include bombastic, garrulous, long-winded, loquacious, redundant and verbose.

It is More Blessed to Give . . .



The COVID pandemic has caused us all to live with added stress and to change our behavior in ways we likely never thought possible. As I go to stores wearing my mask and see the markings on the floor telling me where to stand and have people ask me if I have had any symptoms before allowing me to enter, I am more keenly aware that we are living an abnormal reality.

In an attempt to bring sanity (and fun) to our situation, the HDCWC decided to publish an anthology on the pandemic. We called it, *Survival* (something we all hoped for). The stories that were submitted (from across the state) were great. If you have not secured a copy, I highly recommend it.

As part of the project, we ran a contest. Awards were given for first through third place—first place was awarded \$150; second place, \$100; and third place \$50. On top of this, the net proceeds from the sale of the anthologies, which HDCWC matched dollar for dollar, were donated to charities chosen by the three winners. It was our way of offering help to those helping out in this time of need.

Laura looked around. “Every place I go is equipped with videocams or audio. There’s always someone watching or listening.”

“I’ve found a few locations that are blocked from detection by some natural force. Like this one.” Nathan looked up as a Territory service vehicle traversed a loop in the park. “They don’t know we’re here because I re-programmed this gate not to show my entry code.”

“You amaze me.”

From *Fatal*, by Violet Carr Moore

First Prize Winner

Donations in the amount of \$410.29 each were made to . . .

OPEN HEART KITCHEN (on behalf of Violet Carr-Moore) 1st place for “FATAL” (Individual prize money was \$150)
1141 Catalina Dr., #137
Livermore, CA 94550

GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND (on behalf of Susan Nack) 2nd place for “THE ROSE” (Individual prize money was \$100)
PO Box 151200
San Rafael, CA 94915

ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL (on behalf of Michael Raff) 3rd place for “ZANDER'S BOX” (Individual prize money was \$50)
501 St. Jude Place
Memphis, TN 38105

Congratulations to our winners and to all who participated in this project. A special thank you to those who put together the anthology—Steve Marin, judging director, Mike Raff, Jenny Margotta, and Steve Marin, anthology committee. Mary Desantis, did our cover art.

We received a very nice thank you letter from Guide Dogs for the Blind which you can read on the next page.

Continued next page

March 22, 2021

Dwight Norris
The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club
17645 Fisher St
Victorville, California 92395

Dear Mr. Norris,



You are amazing! You stepped forward at a critical time to make a profound difference in the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired and the guide dogs we partner with them - thank you! We appreciate your donation of \$410.29 on behalf of your contest winner Susan Nack and the matching sponsorship of The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club received on 3/19/2021.

Your support to Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) helps our clients receive the enhanced mobility, companionship, and independence that their canine partner provides.

Your gift today is why we can continue providing the best training, support and education for human and canine teams - free of charge.

I deeply appreciate your donation to GDB. The difference between a good organization and a great organization is the support of its community. Thank you for making GDB great!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Christine Benninger".

Christine Benninger
President and CEO

P.S. Join us for the Virtual Canine Heroes Gala on Sunday evening, June 6th at 5:00 pm PT! Register in advance at [guidedogs.com/events](https://www.guidedogs.com/events)

Please retain this letter as your receipt for IRS tax purposes. We affirm that no goods or services were exchanged for this donation. Our tax ID number is 94-1196195.



Guide Dogs for the Blind

[guidedogs.com](https://www.guidedogs.com)

National Headquarters: P.O. Box 151200, San Rafael, CA 94915-1200 | 800.295.4050

California Campus: 350 Los Ranchitos Road, San Rafael, CA 94903 | 415.499.4000

Oregon Campus: 32901 S.E. Kelso Road, Boring, OR 97009 | 503.668.2100

James Scott Bell Shared with Us

How To Make a Living as a Writer



On April 10th the HDCWC was treated to a special Zoom meeting with James Scott Bell, a very prolific and successful professional writer and teacher. His presentation was entitled, “How to Make a Living as a Writer.”

Mr. Bell explained, as others have before him, that there are no shortcuts to becoming a professional writer. It took him seven years of very hard work before his career started to take off. He encouraged us to stick with it, sharing that persistence was key to being a writer.

Chance also plays a part. Getting that short story, novel, or screenplay in front of the right person at the right time. Hitting a nerve is often a matter of forces beyond our control. Maximizing the chances of being discovered as a writer and developing a writing platform comes by putting out a lot of product. The more we write, the more likely we’ll be successful. We never know which short story or article we’ll write that will get attention. Mr. Bell suggested writing short books about something we know deeply.

Although many invest themselves heavily in improving their writing—reading books on writing and taking courses, and in the writing itself (which is all very important)—Mr. Bell suggests that we also allow twenty percent of our time for marketing. Without learning how to market our books and stories (which are our products), it is unlikely that we’ll ever have much success.

So how do we get noticed? Sales people understand that there are two types of markets—hot markets and cold markets. We should start our marketing with the hot market. This is made up of friends and family, with people we know and who know us. Getting them to read our stories is our first priority.

Next we move out to colder markets, where people don’t know us. Mr. Bell suggested we network with blogs and podcasts that may be geared to writing similar to ours to get exposure. The best advertising—word of mouth.

We also need to have a nice website to promote our writing. There are many outlets online that will help us get started. Offering something for free is important, especially for collecting email addresses and building a fan base.

Social media isn’t the best way to promote our writing. Our interaction with social media should be mostly personal and connecting with our family and friends, with very few references to our writing. Too much will just turn people off.

Mr. Bell suggested that we stay away from paid ads. He’s had very little luck with them helping to promote his books, and they can get very expensive. On some, the writer is charged every time someone clicks on their ad. Ouch!

Part of our professional life, especially if we do Indi publishing, is our online platform. It’s very important to have a good author page on Amazon (Kindlepreneur.com/Amazon-author-center-page).

Along with our author’s page, we should have solid book summaries. It’s helpful to read what successful authors have written about their books in order to get guidance with this.

The best take-away for me from Mr. Bell was that anyone can become a writer. This doesn’t mean it’s easy—it’s not. But it’s a skill that can be developed and not an innate gift. He suggested that we read about his journey to become a writer (it can be found at <https://writerunboxed.com/2013/11/29/the-day-i-decided-to-become-a-writer/>).

For those who’d like a deeper dive into Mr. Bell’s approach to writing, he has a course available in The Great Courses. It can be found at <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/how-to-write-best-selling-fiction>

Mr. Bell also gave us some websites to look into. These included places where we can offer our books for free or for a discount: Bookbub, Book Gorilla, and Free Booksy.

It was great to be able to listen to someone who is in the trenches, who’s developed his career through persistent effort. Anyone can be an author if they’re willing to pay the price to get there.

A special thanks to Bob Isbil for securing Mr. Bell for our meeting.

Mike Apodaca

Local Writers Donate Books to Barstow Veterans



In honor of World Book Day, April 23rd, the birthday of Cervantes and Shakespeare, the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC) continued their ten year tradition of giving free books to our community, donated by local authors.

The recipient of books in several genres this year was the Veterans Home of California, Barstow, where about 200 veterans currently live. About 10 are World War II veterans, according to Laura Moraco, Public Information Officer, who received the books to distribute. The purpose of World Book Night is to get books into the hands of those who might not have easy access to books and to spread the joy of reading.

Thank you to the authors who generously gave of their books to Barstow Veterans Home, 2021.



Books Donated Include:

The Story of Sandy Armistead: A Black Man's Journey in a White Man's World, as told to Dwight Norris.

Footprints From Around the World: A Collection of Memoirs by University Preparatory High School (Victorville) students in association with HDCWC (2 copies)

A Soldier and His Redhead: Falling Stars from WWII by Jesse LaVerd Dobson, Flora Adams Dobson, et al. HDCWC member, Lorelei Kay and sister, Lisa Dobson Potter edited these poems written by their father to their mother during WWII. Flora Dobson wrote back a few of her own.

A Childhood Remembered: A Woman's Story of Growing Up Adopted—Twice, by Ann Miner

On the Lighter Side, a collection of poems, short stories, and snippets of memoirs and personal memories by HDCWC authors (10 copies)

For the Love of Writing: An Anthology of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (2 copies)

Poems in Water, a first collection of poems, by Mary Langer Thompson

Retribution, by J Margotta-Ferrara

Resolution, by J Margotta-Ferrara, sequel to ***Retribution***.

Survival, by various HDCWC writers (2 copies)

Lucerne Valley: a Wild West Town of Character (s) 2nd Edition, by Mille Rader, Bill Lembright and Jan Lembright and edited by HDCWC member Rusty LaGrange

Johnny McCarthy: A Coal Miner's Son, by Dwight Norris (HDCWC president)

The Gentleman Host: A Cruise Ship Nightmare, by Dwight Norris

My Name is Inferno: Somali Pirates on a Caribbean Cruise, by Dwight Norris

Godsend, by Mike Apodaca (vice president of the HDCWC)

For more information about the HDCWC, please visit www.hdcwc.com or call (760) 221-6367

THE ORGAN-GRINDER'S MONKEY

BY
DIANE NEIL



Mrs. Lertz had lived next door to the organ-grinder ever since her husband died twenty years ago, and she never knew his name. Their brief meetings in the hallway between their apartments consisted of nods and glances. If ever words were exchanged, she couldn't decipher what he said through his thick Italian accent.

But she absolutely adored his little monkey. She always kept cut-up apples and bananas on her windowsill for Luigi. Each morning when he was allowed outside, the fruit would disappear, and she would be rewarded with chattering appreciation.

Every weekend the organ-grinder would dress Luigi in his little red coat and hat, and they would go out in the busy neighborhood to do their work. The children especially loved Luigi and gave him their nickels and dimes. Sometimes, Mrs. Lertz would go out to enjoy the performance. Once, she gave the monkey a dollar, and she caught a twinkle in the organ-grinder's eye.

Over the years she noticed the organ-grinder slowing down and becoming more stooped and lame. She had no idea how old he might be, but he seemed to be much older than her.

One Saturday she didn't hear anything in the next apartment. The usual morning hustle-bustle and exit of her neighbor didn't happen. The fruit on her ledge was still there, and Luigi hadn't been let out the window. By eleven o'clock she became concerned. She went out in the hallway and knocked on the man's door. He didn't answer, but Luigi was chattering loudly.

She found the apartment manager and asked him to check on the organ-grinder. When he unlocked the door, they found the man slumped over the table where he had been preparing to eat his breakfast. He and the breakfast were both ice cold.

"I'll have to call the police," the manager said, even though anyone could see that no foul play had occurred. "Would you take care of the monkey?"

Mrs. Lertz already had the poor, confused little creature in her arms.

In the days that followed, a son was located, and he came and cleared out the apartment. His English was much better than his father's, and he told Mrs. Lertz she could keep the monkey. He also told her she could have the organ if she wanted it as he had no interest in pursuing his father's career.

So Mrs. Lertz learned to play the instrument and now she and Luigi entertained the weekend crowds. She was having the time of her life. She found a red jacket in her closet, and she bought a jaunty red hat. When a reporter from Channel 7 came by one Saturday, she told him how much fun she was having, and Luigi chattered his agreement. That night they were featured on the six o'clock news, and soon the segment was repeated all over the country.

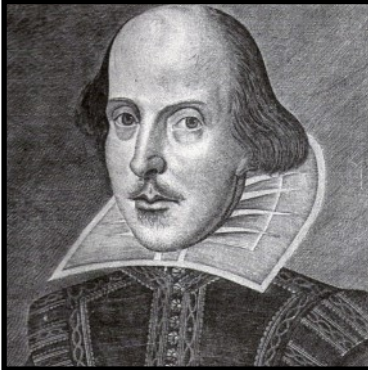
Apparently, a female organ-grinder was nearly unheard of. Mrs. Lertz enjoyed her fifteen minutes—and beyond—of fame. Who knows? It might even have given her many more years of life.

THE END

The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)



I can't think of any writer more famous than William Shakespeare, playwright, poet, and actor, to start off this column. He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. He married at the age of eighteen and had three children. Be-

tween the years of 1589 to 1613, he wrote 39 plays, 154 sonnets, and other works such as collaborations. He wasn't known when he started writing, but several of his plays were on the London stage by 1592. Most likely, he wrote the sonnets for private readership, and they were published in 1609. We're not sure what he looked like, as he never commissioned a painting of himself, but the Droeshout engraving was supposedly a good likeness. He retired from writing in 1613. It's believed he died suddenly of an unknown illness in 1616. Some of his most famous works are: *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. Some of his other works include: *Henry VI*, (three parts), *The Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

I took a Shakespeare class in high school. I'm not sure why I chose it; maybe, I thought it would be easy, (far from it, as it turned out), but I enjoyed the class and retained a profound respect for his work. We even took field trips to the movies and watched: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*. Some of the other plays we covered were: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice*. I had problems understanding the elegant, poetic language from the 16th and 17th centuries, but our instructor was well-versed in explaining every last word.

As for Shakespeare's writing style, you could say it shifted from comedy to tragedy, and used sub-plots to present a clear view of the main character. There have been countless adaptations of his works, including many films, *Romeo and Juliet*, probably most of all. (I recommend the 1968 version).



Here's a little scuttlebutt about *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare may not have included the balcony scene in his original play. Some experts claim it was added by another English playwright after Shakespeare's death.

For your reading pleasure, here's a really cool quote from *Othello*:

"O, beware, my lord, of jealousy: it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock The meat it feeds on."

(Whoa! Now that's writing!)

And there you have it! Until next time, when I'll choose another famous writer.

Adieu! Parting is such sweet sorrow!





On April 20th, to honor Poetry Month, HDCWC members were treated to an evening with our very own Poemsmiths, a group of poets led by Mary Thompson.

The Poemsmiths shared how they got started with the group and what it has meant to them. This is a group that loves to experiment with language. There seems to be no end to the power of words, structures, and patterns these writes engage in. For a time, they might play with different rhyming patterns. Another time, various structures, including Haiku and Fibonacci poetry.

Poetry heightens our experience with words—their textures, tempo, and emotional impact. Each of the poets in attendance read two of their poems. It was easy to get swept away in their imagery and emotion.

Rusty LaGrange shared how she drives home on the long lonely roads in Lucerne Valley. Sometimes, as she holds the wheel, a poem will come at her, phrases and ideas, weaving themselves into patterns. When she arrives home, she frantically scribbles these bursts of inspiration and creates a poem. Lorelei Kay keeps a folder with ideas. Whenever she gets a new idea, she writes it down and puts it in the

folder for safekeeping. This way she always has a large reservoir of ideas. Mary Thompson shared how she often finds ideas in the newspaper or in current events. Anita Holmes shared that she reads and follows various poets online, learning different styles from them. All agreed that poems are all around us; we need only learn how to listen to our environment.

The Poemsmiths meet every two weeks on Zoom. Mary Thompson explained that this is an open group and that all are welcome. If you have an interest in expanding your understanding of the power of words and structure, please consider dropping in on the Poemsmiths.

To receive an invitation to the Poemsmiths, contact Anita Holmes at pennedbyanita@gmail.com.

Flowers for Magawa
by Mary Langer Thompson

Not Algernon.
Not the Water Rat who prefers
messaging about in boats.
Stuart Little, step aside
to avoid those land mines
you might trip.

Make way for a small brave rodent
from Cambodia, who sniffs mines out
and saves lives faster than any human.
He's a critter to be commended
with a mini medal, bananas, and snuggles
with his handler, and to teach us
that sometimes rats
turn out to be heroes.



Poetry



Dear Poet,

The Poemsmith critique group of the High Desert California Writers Club is putting together an anthology of poems: From Silence to Speech: Women of the Bible Speak Out.

There are about 250 named women in the Bible. Poems can be about a woman or from the voice of the woman (Persona poems). We ask that each be no more than one page in length and that you put the text of what is considered the traditional Bible, Old or New Testament, any version, under the title in case someone wants to read more about your subject. We also ask that your poem be based on facts in the Bible or be plausible if you're writing about a woman's feelings. For example, Job's wife was exasperated with Job ("Curse God and die!") so she might have had more negative thoughts.

Your poem can be serious, funny, light or dark, in the 1st , 2nd , or 3rd person. It can be any style—free verse or traditional (haiku, sonnet,

abecedarian, ekphrastic—lots of Bible women are portrayed in art—villanelle, even erasure or prose poem). We already have about 20 poems written by The Poemsmiths. We have more than one on Miriam, which is okay because they are very different.

So find a woman who intrigues you or fascinates you and write us a poem!

Send 3-5 poems only in Times New Roman 12 (Previously published okay)

Title of Poem, "by" and your name, text reference (Ex: Genesis 18:9-15) send by attachment (Microsoft Word Doc) to:

mh_thompson@hotmail.com

Judges will be Poemsmiths

Submission deadline: June 30, 2021

Although you can write on any woman (or group of women), we need poems on the following women (don't forget unnamed women):

Bathsheba

Abigail

Delilah (and also the mother of Samson)

Deborah, the judge

Mary (Jesus' mother and John's mother)

Naomi (and the daughter-in-law who did not follow her)

Esther

Zipporah (wife of Moses)

Hannah (mother of Samuel)

Lydia, Apphia, Aquila, Prisca, Phoebe, (women who prophesized and taught for Paul)

Tabitha (Dorcas)

Lot's wife and Lot's daughters

Poemsmith Linda Boruff suggests this website: womeninthebible.net

We look forward to seeing your work.

The Poemsmiths

Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

MAY — JUNE. ACTIVITIES

May 8 HDCWC meeting with Jules Horne on creating great audiobooks.

May 13 Poemsmiths meeting.

May 25 Act II meeting with Roger Lubeck, the CWC vice president. Participants must register for this event.

May 27 Poemsmiths meeting.

June 5 HDCWC outside backyard party at Bob and Judy Isbil's home. Registration for this even closes on May 15. The cost is \$10.

June 10 Poemsmiths meeting.

June 12 club Meeting. Nominations for HDCWC officers.

June 24 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

HDCWC Announces Book Sale Booth Coming Soon

HDCWC is in the process of negotiating for space to sell our books at a location in Apple Valley beginning Wednesday, June 16, 2021.

This opportunity is only for those authors who feel comfortable occupying a booth (outdoors) and doing book signings with the public. We will adhere to the policies of the location with respect to wearing masks or social distancing.

We'll be signing up authors on a first come, first served basis. Authors who have renewed their 2021 HDCWC membership will be given priority in choosing their dates of participation.

Remember, it is time to renew your membership. Don't miss out on all the CWC has to offer. Go to www.hdcwc.com and renew now!

Order extra copies of our HDCWC anthologies for your bookshelf, your gifts, as a Senior Center donation.

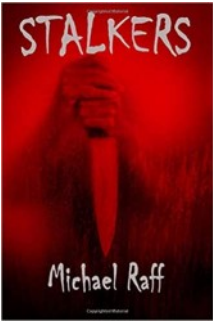
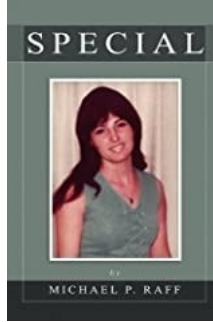
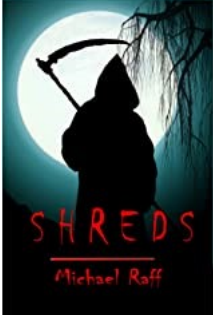
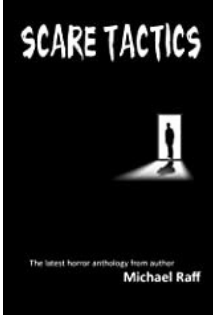
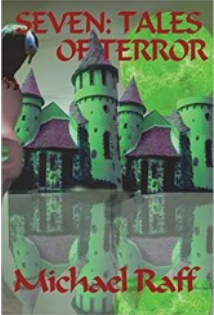
Titles can be found on Amazon.com

Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

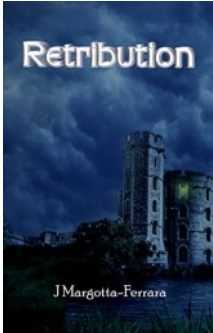
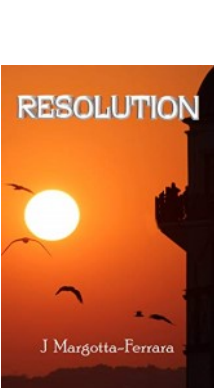


Some of Our Writers

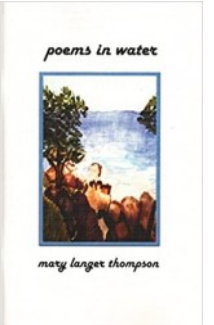
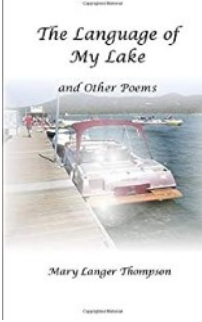
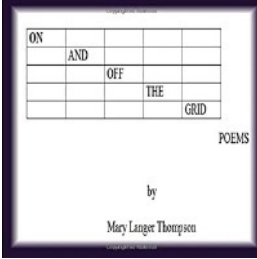
Michael Raff



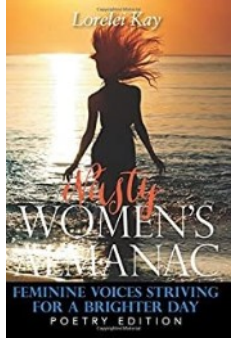
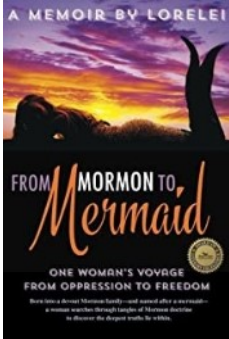
Jenny Margotta (as J Margotta-Ferrara)



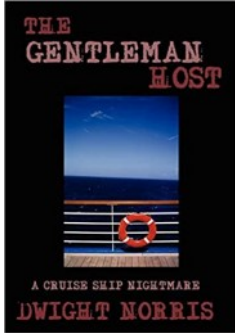
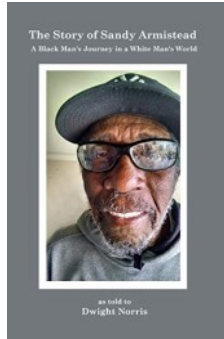
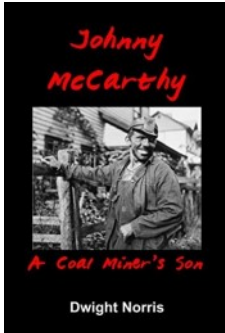
Mary Thompson



Lorelei Kay



Dwight Norris



MEMBER SERVICES



Dorothy C. Blakely
Memoir Project



The DCB Memoir Project is alive and well. A committee is meeting to determine how the project proceeds.

Take advantage of your membership benefits

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

Because you belong to
CWC High Desert Chapter.

Contact a board member,
our Webmaster, Roberta Smith,
or review your Benefits Booklet
online: www.HDCWC.com

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:

[https:// www.youtube.com/channel/
UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg)

Managed by Joan Rudder-Ward

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other writers?**

**Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to
mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com**

We'll advertise it free of charge!

Temporary Editor



Mike Apodaca

Notes From the Editor

EDITOR'S MUSINGS...

I recently finished landscaping my front yard. I had never laid bricks before. It took me three years to get the job done, but it looks great. Being willing to learn, to make the investment, and persistence definitely pays off no matter what the endeavor.



Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Mrdaqa.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 June items by May. 23
Submit July items by June. 23