

The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On

Feb. 2019

Is This Your Year to Get Published?

Prepare to be inspired to write when you hear about the nine noteworthy points to craft and promote your book during the next meeting of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC). The meeting will feature author and columnist Dave Berg. You may wish to arrive a bit early to grab a seat. The word is out and Jay Leno fans will want to ask questions about his years producing the late night talk show. Admission is free.



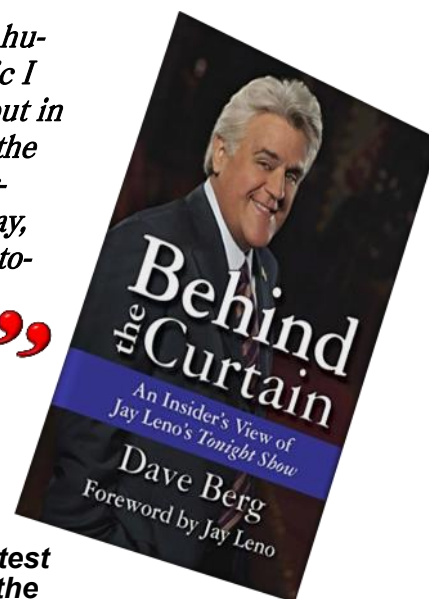
Berg is a columnist for "USA Today" and has written for numerous publications including "Christianity Today," "The Huffington Post," "The Orange County Register," and "The Washington Times."



"I'll be talking about the current state of late-night television and humor. This is the topic I most often write about in my columns and in the radio/TV/press interviews I do. By the way, I'm a harsh critic of today's late-night shows."

"Then I will discuss the craft of writing a book, emphasizing six takeaway points, followed by three takeaway points on how to promote a book."

~~ Dave Berg



Dave Berg's latest book: **Behind the Curtain**

High Desert Chapter of California Writers Club Board of Directors



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Delta Kappa Gamma Thrilled to Learn Apodaca's Book Program



Mike Apodaca during presentation

by
Mary Langer
Thompson

Educators everywhere are well aware of reading deficits when children are not read to before they come to school. On Tuesday evening, January 15, 2019, Members of the Iota Xi Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG), an international honorary society of teachers and administrators, were thrilled to hear High Desert California Writers Club member, Mike Apodaca. Mike is a sixth grade teacher at Kingston Elementary School in Hesperia. He explained his program in which new parents leave delivery rooms of local hospitals armed with books to read to their newborns.

Mike explained how his own son learned to read and achieve in kindergarten because he and his wife read to him from birth. Last year, with the help of his classroom, school staff, and Barnes and Noble, Mike sent 889 books to local hospitals, approximately 200 books per hospital and 5 books per new parent. DKG members learned about Barnes and Noble's plans to offer up to 15 percent of all profits from purchases at their Victorville store and online January 19-26 to this program.

"Children are like sponges from birth to age 5," says Mike, and "Literacy is all!" New picture books, board books, cloth books and books in English or Spanish suitable for newborns can be dropped off in the front office of Mike's school, Kingston Elementary, 7473 Kingston Avenue, and at Hesperia Unified School District Office, 15576 Main Street, Hesperia.

DKG members left their monthly meeting at the Sterling Inn wanting more districts and schools to know about this worthy, wonderful program. Mike left the meeting with a bag full of books for newborns donated by the Iota Xi chapter.



Not A Resolution: Sift Thru Your Goals

Making Small but Determined Changes in Your Work Patterns Will Prepare You For Good Work Habits.
More advice from Daphne Gray-Grant Communications and PublicationCoach.com

- 1. Examine your previous pattern of starting and stopping.** Make a list of every past unfinished writing project you can remember. Write down why you *started* those projects, and when and why you stopped. Can you determine any common themes? Being aware of your habits will help you better arm yourself against them in the future.
- 2. Differentiate between experiments and commitments:** When researching this column, I discovered an intriguing proposal from blogger Scott Young. He suggests that we need to differentiate between tasks we really want to finish and those we are just experimenting with. For example, we don't need to *finish* every book we start. Thus, starting a book can be viewed as an "experiment." But there is also great merit in building the habit of being a "finisher." The message of Young's column: Be mindful about what you put in the "finishing" category. And if you put it there, do it.
- 3. Count the full cost.** Sometimes we don't finish projects because we haven't fully prepared ourselves for them. And, frequently, we bite off more than we can chew. If you are going to commit to a project, make sure you truly understand it first. Talk to others who have undertaken similar goals and learn what they discovered while doing it. Most of all, don't let 'stretch' goals turn you into a pretzel. Be ultra-realistic as you plan for your project. Even if you're unhappy with the idea that it might take you 10 times longer than you want, isn't it better to be aware of this timeline than surprised by (and disappointed by) it later?
- 4. Don't get stuck on the big picture.** With a big project, it's all too easy to feel overwhelmed about the size of it. That book you want to write needs to be 80,000 words. ACK! How can anyone ever write so many words? Don't think about this right now. Instead, just get started.
- 5. Set exceptionally small daily goals:** I've noticed that many of my clients tend to overwhelm themselves with lofty, onerous goals — thinking that this strategy will help them become more accomplished. Instead, the reverse is true. The bigger the project, the *smaller* the goals need to be. I like what psychologist Martha Beck has to say about this idea: "To train an animal," she writes, "you give high levels of reinforcement for very small moves. To train a killer whale to jump out of the water, you start by rewarding it just for coming to the surface. If it won't come all the way to the surface, you reward it for advancing four or five feet."
- 6. Find the pleasure in the work:** Work will ALWAYS take longer than you expect. And if you focus on the endpoint, you're likely to become tired and worn out. Instead, if you can remind yourself of WHY you're doing this piece of writing and create some pleasure while you're doing it, you're going to be better

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Managing Your Writing Career

by Rusty LaGrange



What is it that makes a star? I've been around actors of star quality, and met young celebrities wishing to become actors. I've had the privilege of attending a few stunt awards shows. The film industry says it's talent. Sure, but in that list of qualifying talents is a magic spark or a heavy dose of charisma.

Even as an author, there will be times when you might be considered a celebrity for a book fair or some special event surrounding your career and your talents. It was fun to see two Brazilian guys, during our last meeting, make their stamp in Hollywood and begin that climb to fame. Are you ready for fame?

What is it that makes a star? Is the exuberance of hoping to be that one actor found for the audience that brings more actors to Los Angeles? Is it just hard work and a goal to step up the unknown ladder that will reach to a level of stardom? Or is it being in the right place at the right time?

Having the pleasure of meeting Brazilian actor, Guile Branco, and Gui Pereira writer/creator of *Cortacao del Cowboy* (*Cowboy's Heart*), I would say it was vitality of loving the craft of film making. Branco's charisma and Pereira's energy rose from the same focus that created their independent feature films, but it was actually years later in Los Angeles where they crossed paths and have since worked together on several projects.

Branco's laser focus on his audience and ideal enthusiasm is balanced by Pereira's quieter demeanor and anchors the pair's public appearances as they promote their feature film in US and foreign locales on an international film festival circuit. High Desert film viewers were first introduced to the pair during the Desert Rocks International Film and Music Event (FAME) held in Hesperia. The October venue, created by FAME Founder and Executive Director Phyllis Overall, allows audiences to vote for their favorites. *Cowboy's Heart* was voted best of the festival out of the 21 films shown. Overall was also in our meeting and took a quiet bow, allowing the guys to take center stage.

"I must admit, we are doing very well in the film festivals. The people are voting us number one in most of them," Guile Branco said, while getting the verification nod from Pereira. "We love the momentum it's taking. I attended our US premier held in Knoxville, Tennessee. What, you say, but yes, it is true."



"The festivals, like Sundance, were once a place for unknown projects and actors to introduce their work," said Branco, "to an audience eager to view them. Now, not so much. It's more commercial and the audiences are there to party and drink lots of wine. It's very hard to get in and compete."

Just a quick look at the Sundance Festival webpage and you'll see how the simple concept created by Robert Redford in 1978 has exploded into four locations and five theaters for viewing with attendees numbering over 46,000 last year. Their film has been distributed and shown in over 200 theaters in Brazil, and has recently had a special Los Angeles screening for the Foreign Press Association.

For Guile Branco, the complete edge is in his goals to be a film star. He began in Sao Paulo, Brazil, with film and TV gigs, then took weight training to build a better body that would attract more roles, then a move to Los Angeles nearly 20 years ago. And the chance meeting of young filmmaker Gui Pereira.

"We met in LA for a project and found we lived just a 10-minute ride away," said Branco. Their film process for locations, and keeping a tight six-week shooting budget for this

Branco's publicity still as man of action .

Continued on Page 6

Continued from page 5

film brought them right back to Brazil. It's easier to get film grants from the government as a start-up to establish a career, Pereira explained. And with Pereira's uncle owning a farm, pasture, pond, and trees, it became the free location to help them set their movie location home base.



As they became more relaxed, that charisma glowed while speaking to our group about their love of film creation and writing. Guile and Gui bantered back and forth about script changes being as fluid as same-day shooting. Gui explained that indie film flexibility on the set was easier to do.

"In one scene, the script called for a dog to eat the prop engagement ring," said Gui. "But we didn't have a dog on the farm," added Guile. "So we thought of alternates ... like a pig ... on a farm," said Gui. "Well, that would work," said Guile. "Someone's friend owned a pig," said Gui, "so the next thing we had was a pig come to the set." Guile added, "wearing a dress. She was very cute."

They worked the audience and answered questions about the process of film making, while beaming star-quality smiles and humbling personas — just what the roles call for. In the blink of an eye, their time was up.

If the magic of filmmaking is based on finding a charismatic star, then these two have found the rising stardom in Branco, the passion of creating a well-received film in *Cortacao del Cowboy --Cowboy's Heart* in Pereira, and the chance meeting that lead to their mutual climb up a very competitive ladder.

Guile Branco (left) and Gui Pereira.

Photo credit: Rusty LaGrange



News You Can Use

Passing along this message from Beckie Lindsey about two upcoming events in the planning stages of the Hesperia Library. Specific date for the "Meet an Author" event is not yet known, but expected to take place in April.

Action requested by the Hesperia Library manager is simply to notify her of your interest and in which event are you interested.

~~ **Bob Isbill, HDCWC Programs**

Beckie says: I have been making arrangements with Robin Hawley, Branch Manager of the Hesperia Library in order to coordinate a "Meet an Author" night this spring. The event is mainly for

youth, but there will also be adults in attendance. There will be a write-up in the *Daily Press* to invite the community.

Authors are not allowed to sell books during the event, however, we may bring our books and let people know we have them in our cars. She said it's fine to sell books in the parking lot.

Also, *Mission Crest Elementary* contacted Robin to see if she knew of any local authors willing to meet students and talk about their books January 31. (Since that date has passed, it may be available later in the year. It doesn't hurt to ask.)

For those interested in either/both, please contact Robin as soon as possible at:

Robin.hawley@lib.sbcounty.gov

Be sure and tell her which events you have interest in, and a short description about yourself and your books.



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equipped to deal with the inevitable frustrations of any large project.

- 7. Track how you're doing:** Many people who don't finish projects fail to do so because they have no accountability to anyone else. If you're looking for accountability, my Get It Done program might be the right choice for you. Or, alternatively, you can also track your own writing by sharing your goals with another writer who will keep you steady on your timeline. And you can do the same for her.
- 8. Stop ruminating over the negatives:** Sure, things will go wrong while you're writing. That's just the nature of the beast. But if you focus only on your failures, you're going to hurt your own chances of finishing. Instead of obsessing over what's gone wrong, focus on what's gone right. Celebrate your successes — even the small ones. This will not only boost your creativity, but it will also improve your odds of finishing. (I suggest you generate a daily list of one to three things you're happy with about your project.)
- 9. Change the story you tell about yourself.** Do you tend to describe yourself as a slacker or a procrastinator or a perfectionist? Stop it! Those kinds of labels are not only not helping you, they're also explicitly *hurting* you. By attaching a negative label to yourself, you're increasing the odds of it being true. Instead, tell yourself that you're diligent and hard-working and successful. Even if those statements feel like a lie, they will start to work on your brain, gradually helping to transform you into someone who is more accomplished.

The only obstacle to finishing what you start is YOU. Your fears. Your anxieties. Your inability to plan. Forgetting how to say "no" to another project until you complete this one. Don't let these often reoccurring issues hold you back. Decide you're going to be a finisher.

Daphne Gray-Grant with tips for beating writer's block, writing, copywriters, ... in which I scan the world to find websites, books and articles to help other writers

<https://www.publicationcoach.com/blog/>



TIME FOR
A LAUGH



If you are too open-minded, your brains will fall out.



My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.



If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.



No husband has ever been shot while doing the dishes.



A balanced diet is a donut in each hand.

Men are from Earth. Women are from Earth. Deal with it.



Continued from page 1

**VARIETY SHOW
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STARRING
JACQI BOWE**



**BOWE SINGS, DANCES
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Ms. Bowe's show is a don't-miss combination of Broadway show tunes, jazz, ballet and tap dance comedy and novelty ukulele songs.

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Coffee ~ Tea ~ Water**

Furthermore, he writes jokes for politicians, journalists and commentators, and he will talk about the current state of late-night television and humor which is the topic he both writes about most as well as discusses most during broadcasts.

In addition to writing, Berg co-produced "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" and "The Jay Leno Show" for two decades, and appeared in numerous comedy sketches. He is an accomplished musician who plays multiple instruments for his church worship team, and he writes songs for country singers.

His book is "Behind the Curtain: An Insider's View of Jay Leno's Tonight Show." He produced "The O'Reilly Factor," was a writer for "NBC News," and worked as the Los Angeles bureau chief for CNBC.



Memoir Project Adopted by Community Church of Jess Ranch

by Mary Langer Thompson

What began as a High Desert California Writers Club memoir project with local high schools — the Dorothy C. Blakely Memoir Project — recently appeared at The Community Church at Jess Ranch in Apple Valley when Mr. Don Allen was interviewed at their monthly Family Night on January 16.

Church and writers club member, Mary Langer Thompson, was approached to interview Don Allen, a community member of long standing. They met, and as Don talked about the identified turning points in his life, Mary took notes and came up with questions to ask Don on Family Night. One question was: "Many of us attended your wedding to Vicki (Godden) 7 years ago now. Tell us how you two met and fell in love."

Don also talked about his time in the U. S. Navy, his experiences in the West Coast Blue Jacket Choir, Toastmasters, his leadership of an Alzheimer's support group after his first wife, Leota Jean passed away, and his world travels with Vicki as other turning points.

A poignant part of the interview was when Don talked about his diagnosis of Pancreatic Cancer. Although he plans to fight this disease with the help of prayer, The City of Hope and nutrition, Don ended by reading his obituary. Don's philosophy is "Life is good. Love is better."

Attendees concluded that Don's discussion of his life was inspirational and allowed them to know him better and appreciate a life well-lived.

More "Memoir Stars" from the congregation will be featured in the future.



Analysis of Character for Writers

– a seven-part series

PART 7

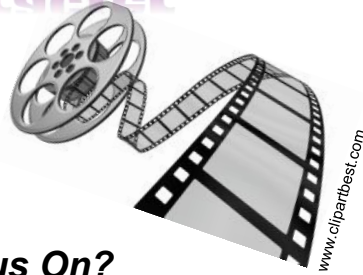
Which Character Do I Focus On?

Stories should have one Main Character. You should not divide the audience's allegiance by having more than one protagonist, unless you are writing a Buddy Movie (see below). Audiences invest themselves emotionally in your characters. They need to know right from the start whose story they will be following. Don't introduce secondary characters first, because the audience will invest precious emotion in them, only to have to switch allegiances once they figure out who the Main Character is. Also, don't write secondary characters that eclipse the main character, because this will cause confusion as to who your audience should root for.

The way to focus on one character more than others is to introduce him/her immediately, focus on his/her dilemmas and goals, and give him/her more screen time during the first ten pages.

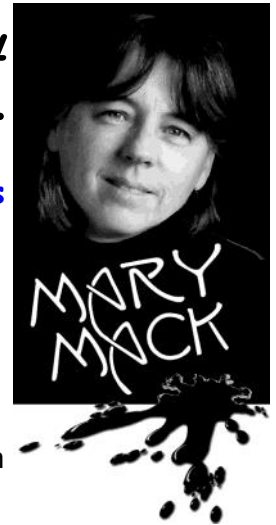
If you don't introduce your Main Character immediately – on the first page, if possible – the audience will become confused. We are psychologically conditioned to latch onto the hero, or protagonist, of any story. We must follow some thread of logic or reasoning from the beginning to the end. Stories are meant to reveal or cement a Life Truth, which is revealed through the discoveries of the characters. Therefore, we are vitally interested in following the person who will be learning that powerful life lesson, and who will be revealing it to us through the course of his/her actions and dialog.

Buddy Movies break the One Main Character rule. Buddy Movies focus on two or more friends who share the audience's emotions equally (for example, *Bad Boys*, starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence). To do this properly and without confusing the audience, you must introduce each of the 'buddies' immediately, show them together, show how they are connected, what their relationships are with one another, reveal some aspect of their individual personalities and personal lives, show how each one is connected to or invested in the



Graphically Speaking ...

by Mary DeSantis



dramatic conflict, and show how the inciting incident impacts each of them.

First time writers should limit themselves to two Main Characters when writing a Buddy Movie. It is very tricky to juggle all the different aspects of a Buddy Movie with multiple characters (for example, the *Ocean's Eleven* movies) and ensure that the audience becomes emotionally attached to each individual, while at the same time setting up the dramatic conflict during the first 10-15 pages of the script.

Romance Movies – while ostensibly about two people – always focus on one character more than the other. The story is always told from one person's point of view. While the boyfriend or girlfriend is integral to the plot, he/she is never more than an elevated secondary character. Usually, in fact, the Main Character's love interest in a romance movie is also the Main Opponent!



A Tiny Grammar Lesson

There's this little thing that annoys me says Amy: Writers who use "I" instead of "me" when linked with another subject. Example: "Dad took Helen, Fred and I to the circus." I was shocked when I read a similar statement by an editor of our local newspaper. The correct form should read "Dad took Helen, Fred and me to the circus."

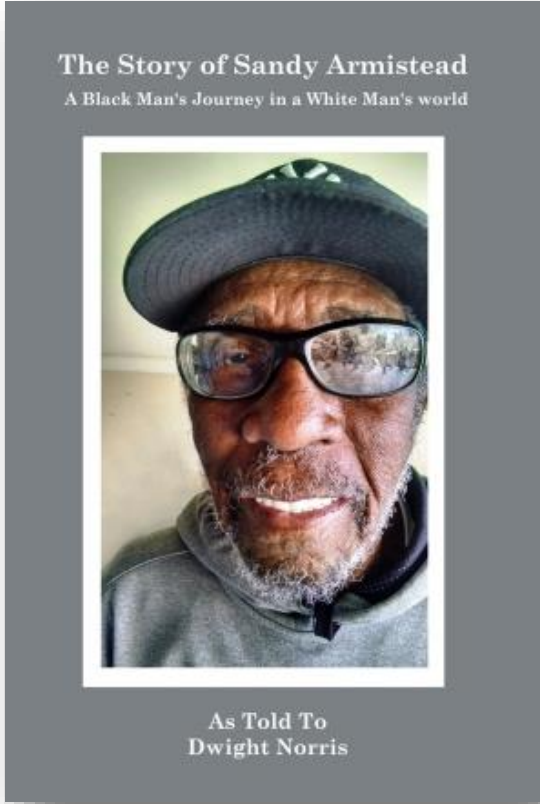
But how do you know which is correct. Simply eliminate all others (Helen and Fred) and retain only "I" so it reads "Dad took I to the circus." Whoa! You'd never say that. Now reword the sentence: "Dad took me to the circus." Put this correction into the original: "Dad took Helen, Fred and me to the circus."

After you mentally make this correction a few times, you'll recognize the correct format just by the sound of it. ~ Shared by Amy Jo Burnett

Book: Hot Off the Presses



Dwight Norris



My memoir is at last finished, entitled *The Story of Sandy Armistead* –

A Black Man's Journey in a White Man's World

www.dwightnorris.com

BOOK SIGNING

We have a book signing scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at El Pollo Loco in Apple Valley, near corner of Apple Valley Rd and Bear Valley Rd. This is where Sandy and I met and interviewed for the preparation of this manuscript. Book is \$10 including tax. All are welcome. It should be a good time and the food is delicious.

FROM THE BOOK JACKET:

Sandy Armistead is a 97-year-old black man, whose grandfather was a slave. He has lots of good memories and interesting stories to tell. He is happy in his life and content with himself because he had great parents. His father was a good provider and worked for Ford Motor Company as a machinist. He was a wise man and a good teacher. Every night he would dress up for dinner with a coat, tie, and shiny shoes. He made it a special event, focused on his children, and made them feel like they were the most important people in the world to him. Sandy says that some of what he learned in life he doesn't see much in society today. "I guess we'll get through it, but it sure would be nice if we could go back to some of the things that worked not that long ago."



Do you have a new book coming out this year?

Share the news and you can have a page just for yourself.

We're proud of our authors. Let us be your promoters.

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More News You Can Use

Celebrate Black History Month with CWC at Hesperia Library Feb. 20

Save the date — Feb. 20, Wednesday at 5:30 to 7:30 pm in the Hesperia Library meeting room, when HDCWC will celebrate Black History Month. Free to the public.

In keeping with the tradition of this program, highlighting creative and historical accomplishments, poets and writers will have the microphone to share local talent.

“This is sure to be a creative, informative, and inspirational meeting where we can host for free our local black authors and poets in a public forum,” said Bob Isbill, HDCWC Programs Director.

The idea was brought to the Board just re-

cently when Mary Langer Thompson, retired teacher and principal, had used these programs for children to share historical literary significance among black communities.

The program will also be open to the public to sign-in to share their poems, essays, and short passages from books.

“The National African American Read-In” is the nation’s first and oldest event dedicated to diversity in literature. Since 1990, Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English makes literacy a significant part of Black History Month. This initiative has reached more than six million participants around the world.



Writers Supporting Writers in Fire Recovery

Many CWC writers who were displaced by raging wildfires this past year, are receiving donation support to help them get their writing lives back in order. We’re seeing other efforts to help authors get back on their feet from Woolsey Fire, Camp Fire, Holy Fire and others during 2018. If you can help a fellow author please check with your local CWC branch first for current funding pages. Here’s one from SPAWN.

From the President, Kathleen Kaiser, SPAWN

Update on SPAWN’s GoFundMe campaign to help author and book publicist Rhonda Rees, who lost everything in the Woolsey fire. We have raised \$2,000 and have gotten Rhonda a laptop, software, and hope to finish this off by February 15. If you have a little to spare, we would appreciate a donation so she can get her office outfitted and find a new home.

The link to the page is: <https://www.gofundme.com/rhonda-rees-woolsey-fire-fund>

Thank you to everyone who helped out. Rhonda is most grateful.

A Writer’s Service Announcement

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Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

FEBRUARY & MARCH ACTIVITIES

BOOK SIGNING

Dwight Norris' latest book entitled *The Story of Sandy Armistead, A Black Man's Journey in a White Man's World* is now available.

His book signing is scheduled for Saturday, February 23, 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at El Pollo Loco restaurant in Apple Valley, near the corner of Apple Valley and Bear Valley Roads. Dwight says: "This is where Sandy and I met and interviewed for the preparation of this manuscript." Book is \$10 including tax. All are welcome. "It should be a good time and the food is delicious." ~ ~ **Dwight Norris**,

www.dwightnorris.com

Send in your upcoming events and book signings so we can share



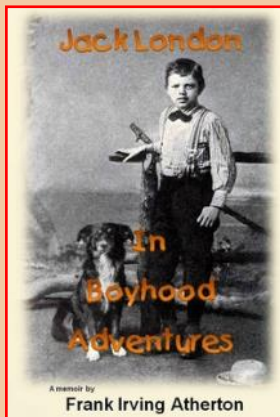
Order extra copies of our HDCWC anthologies for your bookshelf, your gifts, as a Senior Center donation. Titles can be found on Amazon.com. Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

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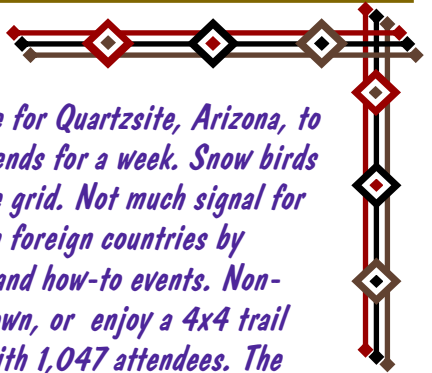
Editor



Rusty LaGrange

*Editor of the
CWC's
The Bulletin*

Notes From the Editor



One of my annual vacations involves leaving the state for Quartzsite, Arizona, to immerse myself in amateur radio fun and meeting old friends for a week. Snow birds congregate at our free campground and are totally off the grid. Not much signal for cell or wi-fi, which suits me, but they know how to reach foreign countries by bouncing signals off the atmosphere. Plenty of contests and how-to events. Non-ham spouses can find crafts and seminars, shopping in town, or enjoy a 4x4 trail ... 57 vehicles this year. Overall we broke our record with 1,047 attendees. The last day ends with a major drawing: I won two large solar panels and a controller!!

Submitting to The Inkslinger is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com. Articles and stories between 300 to 700 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome. Please don't send items that are embedded in other media.

**March's submissions are due Feb. 28.
April's are due March 23**