



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On

February 2021

Accomplishments Honored in Black History Month

EmmaLisa Hill Hosts Reading Event

~~ From the Desk of Dwight Norris, with notes by Mike Apodaca

I want to let everyone know that February is Black History Month, sometimes known as African American History Month. Traditionally, we have done special readings and commemorative events to honor the accomplishments of so many. This year EmmaLisa Hill is hosting our celebration of this event by organizing a reading at our regular Zoom meeting on **February 13**.

For this event, EmmaLisa Hill will be joined in our Zoom meeting honoring black authors and sharing the podium with wonderful readers, including Ann Miner, Avalynn Morse, Roberta Smith, Dwight Norris, Allen Reid, and Jenny Margotta.

We anticipate each reader will have at least five minutes during the meeting to read one of their favorite passages. Thank you so much for



Photo credit: R. LaGrange

Artist: C. J. LaGrange

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OPPORTUNITY TO BE PUBLISHED

As announced in the January *Inkslinger*, the submissions window for submitting work to the 2021 CWC Literary Review print magazine is now open!

Closing date is March 15, 2021.

Guidelines may be found on www.calwriters.org.

<https://calwriters.org/publications/>

Don't miss this opportunity to be published in this prestigious magazine!

~~ *Bob Isbill, HDCWC Central Board Representative*

**Zoom Room Saturday
13th at 10:00 am**

**High Desert branch of
California Writers Club
Board of Directors**



The following officers and appointed positions are current to the fiscal year of July 2020.

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MrDaca.ma@gmail.com

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Risbill@aol.com

Membership

Michael Raff
mprseven@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Rusty LaGrange
Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com

Newsletter Proofreader

Jenny Margotta
Jennymargotta@mail.com

Salon Coordinator

Lorelei Kay
LoreleiKay7@gmail.com

Webmaster

Roberta Smith
hdcwc_web@aol.com

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Black voices. Human voices. Voices with a distinct history. The vibrant words of Amanda Gorman at the Inauguration of President Biden. With unique struggles. Voices of those who overcome obstacles with faith and tenacity and the audacity of hope. Inspiring. Empowering. Striving for the full realization of the unifying dream.

Please come join us in our Zoom Room to honor and appreciate these wonderful writers and their powerful voices. Thank you so much for your participation. I look forward to seeing you at our meeting, at least virtually!



Kudos to You

**—Readers Raise Funds Through
National Scholastic Service**

To All Readers,

This is a rewarding project that raises a substantial amount of money for our branch and uses our skills to help young writers.

I had a panel of submissions turned in by junior high schoolers and I could hardly remember they were so young. Their quality is improving each year.

Thank you for your hard work and for finishing your part of the project.

And thanks to Jenny Margotta for helping so many of us finish up.

~~ Dwight Norris, president

[Money awarded to us for our time offering encouragement to them helps offset our expenses for local writing events. ~~ editor]

**Featured Artist Selected for
Kaiser Medical Gallery—**

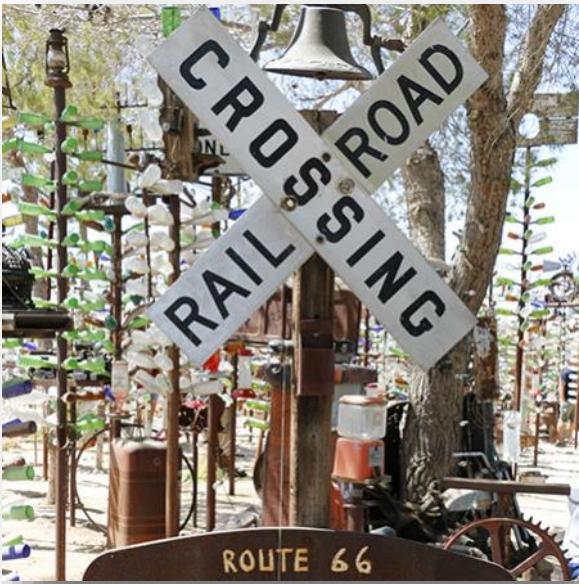
Joan Rudder-Ward, our Secretary

No one wishes to go to the hospital, but if you happen to be in the new Kaiser Medical building in Hesperia, take a look at the walls featuring High Desert photography.

You'll see Joan's accomplishments — so, consider these a sneak peek. Congratulations, Joan!



All photo credits: Joan Rudder-Ward



Kaiser Permanente put out a call in August 2020 for High Desert photographers to submit work for a display they were installing at their Hesperia Medical Offices building. Joan heard about it from a friend who sent her a flyer (and had only a couple of days before the deadline to get something submitted) ...

The theme for the display was The Golden Hour— which is the time just after sunrise and right before



Continued on page 5

NEWS YOU CAN USE



Griz Drylie

<https://www.hesperiaparks.com/harrison-exhibit-center>

A MAN WITH A PLAN

It's always nice to find an entertaining guest speaker. Ours in January was Griz Drylie, who has a passion for preserving Hesperia's past.

He gathered, curated, and found a home for the extensive collections at Hesperia's Harrison Exhibition Center.

He also shared the manuscript protocols that made writing the Hesperia history book with the 200-page limit for Acadia Publishing.

Many cities across the country have taken on the job to share rare photos of their communities with a broader readership. Griz had a small "staff" of volunteers help proof and prep for the book 10 years ago—one of the first here.

As Griz spoke about his collections, he would take a framed photo off the museum wall and give us the story related to it. But though he said curating the growing collection was his passion, he knew nobody else would do this job. He also admitted:

*“ I'm kinda shy and reserved,
but you hand me a microphone
and you better be prepared to take
it away from me. ”*

If you'd like to ask Griz a question about the historic town of Hesperia, writing processes he used for the book, or other details, go to:

OldTownGriz18@gmail.com



RACING FOR DEADLINE..

Last Call for entries submitted for consideration to the **Literary Review** is March 15. See details on our state's website: www.CalWriters.org

ZOOM ROOM NEWS



HDCWC Game Night

By Mike Apodaca

On January 19th, seven of our members gathered for a special night of fun and games. Although they didn't know what to expect, they all came to have a good time.



We started the night with a very simple game—Two Truths and a Lie. In this game, the players tell two things that are true about them and one thing that is a flat out bold-faced lie. Although I was the host and did not play the games, I gave the first example saying: 1. I was the president of my junior high school; 2. I was arrested in Egypt and held by a soldier with a machine gun; 3. I was almost stoned to death in Jerusalem.

The other players then had to guess which one was the lie. The players got a point for every other player they fooled. This game was like an ice-breaker. It allowed us to learn so much about each other.

For instance, Joan Rudder-Ward is a true animal lover. Rusty LaGrange is a wrangler (I never heard the word wrangler as much as when it was her turn in this game). I also learned that Rusty once killed a Mojave green snake, skinned it, and made a hatband out of it. These are just a couple of the things we learned about each other.

After this game, we moved to an online game played on the Kahoot! platform. In this game of Disney movie trivia, each player

Continued next page

Continued from Page 4 Games

downloaded the app onto their phones and I launched the game on my computer. I shared my screen with everyone.

The questions would come and each player would answer on their phones. The points (based on correct answers and the speed with which the answer came) would be tallied automatically. This game was a true nail-biter! As the game began, Danessa Murdock catapulted in the lead. But soon the other players caught up (that is, all except Ann Miner, whose computer and phone were not cooperating—ugh!). Emma Hill, Rusty, Katina Newell, and Joan were in hot competition. They moved up and down in the standings. When the final question came, the game could have gone to anyone, it was that close. But it was Joan who pushed to the top. Danessa took second place and Emma third.



We ended the night with the game, Never Have I Ever. Emma took first place while Katina and Joan took second. When the points were all tallied, Joan Rudder-Ward was the night's winner and took home a 50 dollar prize. Thanks to all who participated in the fun and laughter.



The "first" statewide anthology created by members of CWC.

Available now.

Each story is specifically written for 2020.

Buy direct from Michael Raff for \$10 each but you must pick up orders at his door for this price.



Continued from Page 3 Photos

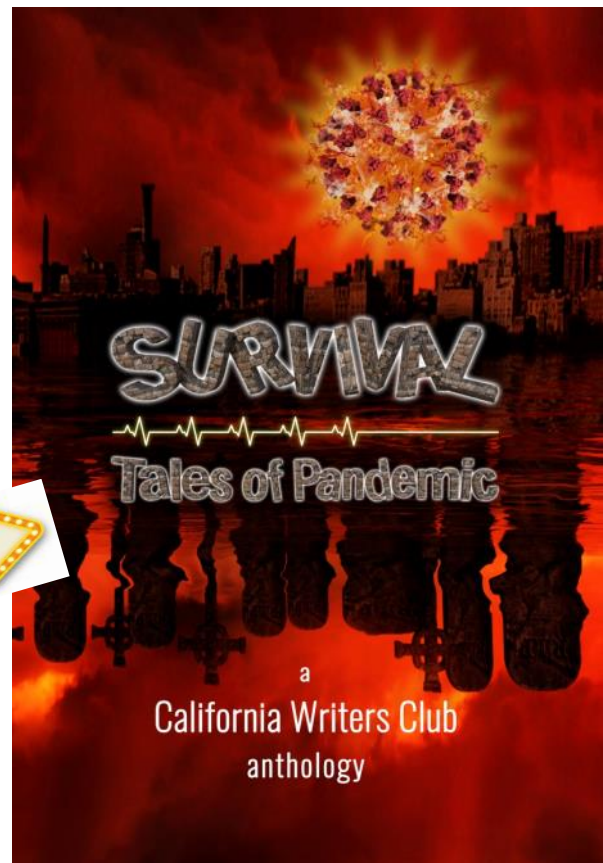
sunset when the light is favorable for optimum photography. Requested were photos of anything around Hesperia and the surrounding High Desert— skies, landscapes, trees, plants, flowers, old buildings, mining equipment, animals... no photos of people, signage, or anything political or inflammatory. Each photographer could submit up to 10 photos. Since Joan admits to having "a bajillion images(😁)" she submitted 10. Photos were voted on anonymously by administration and staff of Kaiser.

Four of Joan's were selected.

The photos are to be printed on aluminum and displayed with title of photograph and maker's name in the Public Square at the Kaiser Permanente medical office building at 9550 Escondido Ave.

Word from Joan:

I last heard from the committee head in December is that the installation of the display was going to be at the end of January. I haven't heard further, but what I'm going to do is go by the offices and see if the display has been put up yet. I'll let you know what I find out. Thanks!
~~ Joan





Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

Character-Driven Stories

A *plot-driven story* derives most of its action from a well-constructed plot. There are, of course, well-developed characters, but the story's location and events take precedence over the characters. A great many mysteries and sci-fi novels tend to be plot driven. For example, look at *The Lord of the Rings* and the character of Frodo. Replacing him with another Hobbit would not change the main event—the battle for Middle Earth. While the characters in a plot-driven story can be unique and memorable, they do not drive the story—the story drives them.

A *character-driven story*, on the other hand, focuses first on the development of complex characters. What are your characters fears or flaws? Do they have a secret that drives them and shapes them? The characters—by their decisions, reactions, and growth—create the story. Character-driven plots are often found in books based on real life. They deal with your characters' insights and their evolution based on the events they are living/have lived through and their reactions to those events. The story is more internal—the characters reflect on their actions and discover who they are, and those things shape the plot and the outcome of the story.

In plot-driven novels, the priority is the action, and the characters are there simply to let things happen to them. But in character-driven novels, it's all about the characters. The emphasis is on who they are, their emotions, how they interact. The action is there to advance the development of the characters, not the other way around.

The website MasterClass.com has a great article on developing character-driven plots. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-plot-driven-vs-character-driven-stories#quiz-0>. It lists the following four tips for writing a character-driven story:

- 1. Develop a rich backstory.** Good character-driven stories have interesting characters with well-developed backstories.
- 2. Trace a compelling character arc.** Most character-driven stories have plots that correspond fairly directly to a character's individual arc.
- 3. Focus on inner conflict.** Character-driven stories are able to center in on inner conflict that occurs largely within a character or characters.

- 4. Build a point of view.** Develop a well-defined point of view. Think about what makes your character tick and how they see the world. A clear point of view is necessary for creating a character that will carry your story and engage your readers.

Of course, you can't have a plot without characters, and you can't have characters who never engage in actions, so many books are a blend of both plot-driven and character-driven stories. If you're not sure which category your stories falls into, *The WritersStore.com* provides a free test to help you make that determination. <https://www.writersstore.com/character-driven-or-action-driven/>. It's well worth taking the test if you have any questions. At least I found it to be a great learning tool.

Character-driven literary greats include *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, and *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison.

[Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/character-driven) goes into great detail, providing a list of 1,623 character-driven books in 24 categories. <https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/character-driven>.

So, dust off your keyboard—or sharpen your pencil and grab a new yellow pad—and get busy writing your own character-driven story or poem. (Yes, poems can be character driven too.) Our next anthology deadline will be announced soon. I expect to enjoy reading new titles from every one of you. Most of you probably have to stay home these days anyway, so what excuse do you have for not participating? And there will be cash prizes, so . . . get creative!



Word of the Month

DOORBELLIST (“doorbel’ ist”) (noun):

No, it is not a persistent doorbell ringer, trying to sell you something you don't need or convince you to join something you aren't interested in.

A doorbellist is another, far finer word for calling someone an idiot or a moron. Or a dolt. (And I'm not referring to actual IQ here. Think recent current events maybe?)

So now, if you're like me and afraid to confront such people out in public for fear of retaliation, you can accuse them of being doorbellists without them having the faintest idea they are being insulted.

My thanks to *The Cabinet of Linguistic Curiosities: A Yearbook of Forgotten Words* by Paul Anthony Jones for this month's word.

Salon Corner

Anita Holmes has recently been named *Covid 19 Home Poet Laureate of the High Desert* for her contributions to poetry.

This honor was bestowed on her by Poemsmiths, a critique group founded in 2015 by Mary Langer Thompson.

Since the pandemic has altered their meeting schedule, Anita has been hosting the group through Zoom which enables them to come together and continue to refine their poetic ambitions.

The members have been successful in placing poetry in magazines, online publications, and anthologies, and adding poetry contests back into the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville.

The poem that clinched Anita's nomination was a haiku she wrote titled "When Life Gives You Lemons," which mentioned her in-residence-literary pup, Archie. A white Maltese-terrier mix rescued from the Victor Valley Animal Protective League, he's named after Archibald Macleish, poet, playwright, lawyer, and statesman. Apparently aware of his muse status, Archie hangs out on the couch during each Zoom gathering and keeps a watchful eye on things.

RUNNING ON EMPTY...

So what did you do during the "dumpster fire" known as Year 2020? As Naomi Ward used to say when she ran low on articles for *The Inkslinger*—10 long years ago—'Ok, folks. My pantry is getting low. I need to fill my pantry.' Now I need help.

- Consider poetry
- Short news items about you book sales
- News about a book campaign
- What you do for end-of-year tax filings
- How about a new story idea you're mulling over
- Your "staycation"
- New software you found for writing ease

No excuses. I know you didn't stay in front of the TV for a year, right?

Send to Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com

~~ editor

When Life Gives You Lemons

By Anita Holmes

haiku family
sees no need for despairing—
hope springs eternal

it's week 6 at home
family reunion meets—
noon in the kitchen

then at four o'clock
we dance in our pajamas
Neil Sedaka sings

poetry contest
here— between me and the dog
I think I'm ahead

but it's hard to tell
current dog-in-residence—
literary pup

I'm at two months now
as poet – writer – artist-
-in-residence—and –

I've been short-listed
for Home Poet Laureate
I'll keep y'all posted



APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Help celebrate this annual occasion by submitting two or three poems that you created.

Any line length is okay, short poems are a better fit for the newsletter. Any style is okay. No political or religious themes. If you PREVIOUSLY won an award or contest from it then let us know.

Submit your entries to:

Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com in MSWord format.
Place "HDCWC Poetry Month" in the Subject Line.

DEADLINE: before MARCH 23RD



Mike Apodaca
from the
Vice President

BEING A MAN (OR WOMAN) OF FEW WORDS

When I was in college, I signed up to do a summer internship with a minister in Los Gatos, California, near San Jose. I traveled to the minister's home for an extended interview (I was going to live with the minister and his wife). When I returned, I had to wait for an answer to know if I was accepted. When the letter came, I opened a sheet of paper that was blank but for one word: Come.

I have always admired how much was communicated in that one word.

One of the things that all writers have to keep in mind is not saying too much. We can insult our reader's intelligence by putting in too many details or slow down our story by lengthy descriptions or explanations. When I edit I encourage writers to use the most simple and straightforward way of writing.

James Scott Bell recommends using a summary of dialogue if the dialogue itself is not intriguing. The point is to engage the reader and to never bore them.

As painful as it seems, often we'll have to cut entire sections out of our writing to improve it. When I wrote my first novel, I had to cut an entire scene. It was a deep description of one of the main characters, showing her engaging in a typical activity for her—but it stopped the story. I was at a writer's conference at the time and attended a session on cutting out scenes that slow down our stories. So I went back to my room and cut out the entire section. It was painful (I still feel it), but it improved the story.

It is said that Ernest Hemmingway cut out the first thirty pages of his book, *The Sun Also Rises* (on the advice of F. Scott Fitzgerald) and was considered a genius for it.

Our problem, like that of Hemmingway, is that we don't always see where we've added unnecessary words or scenes to our stories.

This is one of the reasons we need others who will read and critique our writing. I find this support in my critique group. They hold me accountable. There's not a time we get together on Zoom when I'm not told to cut words or phrases or paragraphs from my writing.

Here's what some great authors have said about brevity:

If it is possible to cut a word out, cut it out.

~~ George Orwell

Cut every page of dialogue by one-third.

~~ Hillary Mantel

Cut like crazy. Less is more.

~~ Sarah Waters

Cut out the metaphors and similes.

~~ Esther Freud

When you finish writing, go back and cross out all adverbs.

~~ R. L. Stein

Enough said.

For What It's Worth

A Mouthful

Quite a few years ago, a "very well-spoken philanthropist," was standing at the podium in a huge conference hall, expounding on the benefits of giving grandly to the nonprofit of his choice.

One gentleman, dabbing a bit of salad dressing from his lip, leaned to his coworker at the luncheon table, complete with wine and lobster.

"Do you think we should inform someone that his microphone is off?"

The other scanned the room: "Why ruin a perfectly good meal?"

MANAGING YOUR WRITING CAREER

BY RUSTY LAGRANGE



Clean Up Your Mental Environment

Whether you know it or not, your little muse rushing around in your head is causing you to do disruptive things. Is it the toddler that you never left back at home? The encapsulated frustration you gathered up into a character that you created and can't manage? Can it be your lack of admitting you are a professional writer and someone else is much better than you?

Whatever title you place on it, it's destructive. It's a form of self-sabotage that can hold you back from being the awesome writer you really are. You need to stop it. Now.

As Canadian publication coach and author Daphne Gray-Grant says, self-sabotage refers to **behaviors or thoughts that hold us back** or prevent us from doing what we want to do. While the human capacity for self-sabotage is almost infinite, here are seven of the most common reasons for it.

Do any of them ring a bell with you? (*Italics is mine.*)

1. **You're bored** — *finding time to write just became a chore. Maybe you need to redirect your thoughts to something else to allow time for newer ideas to simmer.*
2. **You prefer the immediate** kind of reward you can get from answering an email — *the bane of time crunchers and a wonderful distraction if you don't have discipline.*
3. **You can't say no** to other tasks or other people — *the Mom syndrome, where mediating fights and stepping in to help has never faded. You can make things better now. You'll get back to work after the fire is out.*
4. **You're worried about being an imposter** — *many of us are shocked that what we've done is a value to others. Internal thoughts might be: They can't possibly know I'm not worthy of their attention and like my work. It will be any day now that I'll be exposed!*

5. **You need your work to be perfect** — *Oh, please. There is no such thing as perfection in the crafting world of writing. Do good now, fix things later. That's why they have book revisions...*
6. **You're afraid** (whether of failure or success) — *I used to fall into this category. I was afraid that if all my magazine articles were accepted, I would never meet the editors' expectations to offer better work. Crazy, right? You see, my first magazine article gained me over \$800. I thought it was a fluke, so I bought my home office an oak computer station. I figured at least I got a good investment whether I ever earned again or not. I was wrong. The editors asked for more.*
7. **You'll do it, but later** — *Beating yourself up for being lazy is not procrastination. Turns out many of us need "to think it through," "ruminate," "mull it over," "let it simmer," then ... and only when we're ready... it all pours out in a gush. The game is over.*

Want to share a limitation that has made progress a bigger fight than creating the idea in the first place?

Others have struggled just like you. Climb out of the rut and find a new light.



The Mother Source—

"Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman."

—Virginia Woolf

Alarm Clucks

By fumi-tome ohta

Alarm clocks.
Can there be
would there be
another way to fall out of bed?
A rather traumatic situation
archaic
jolting
unnerving.
This buzzing
clacking
resounding
unforgiving madness.
Good morning,
time to get up.
Rise and shine.
It's another *Kellogg's* morning!
Who wants happy so early in
the morn?
Ugh!

Dusty Shelves, open letter to Jenny Margotta

I thoroughly enjoyed your ramble (January issue of *The Inklinger*) through those dusty bookshelves...I am assuming yours are as dusty as mine.

My favorites are not as contemporary as yours. But my favorites do compel me to look for their titles. Andre Norton was one of my early sci-fi loves; Robert Heinlein, OMG. For WWII flavor I loved the lives beyond the war like Neville Shute and some of Ernest Hemingway. Louis L'Amour caught my attention for his movie adaptations at first. One of my favorites by JPS Brown is *Jim Kane*. *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy. For westerns I followed the 9+ book series of *Trail of the Spanish Bit* by Don Coldsmith. Apparently he wrote 28 titles related to the continuing saga until his death in 2009 at the age of 83. Guess I have some catching up to do.

Today, I'm more apt to be buying antique books about "How-To" build something like canoes, tools, wagon wheels, bow and arrows... and such. Lost crafts interest me and I want to preserve that knowledge. It absolutely irked me years ago to find that the library books I read to my child were pulled from the shelves for being too old and not really what parents wanted to read to their kids. I was worried that they would be lost. I searched them out on the internet and found many of my child's favorites were safe on antiquarian collectors' bookshelves. Ah, I feel old.

For now, if someone asks me who my favorite author is, I just tell them the *Roget's Thesaurus*. Some laugh, others look at me like I made that up. <sigh>

Readers, share your favorites with us, and let's see what comes in. *Join us*.

~~ Rusty LaGrange, editor



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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
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Contact a board member
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online: www.HDCWC.com

**Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?
Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad
to Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com.
We'll advertise it free of charge!**

Events Ahead >

FEB. & MARCH ACTIVITIES

February 9 meeting	HDCWC board meeting
February 13 meeting	HDCWC regular
March 9 meeting	HDCWC board meeting
March 13 meeting	HDCWC regular
Mid-March	Spring Bulletin issue (virtual meetings are in ZOOM format & dates may change)



BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

Feb. 12	Amy Burnett
Feb. 17	Michael Raff
Feb. 23	Steve Marin

If you would like to join the rest of our members enjoying a little recognition for another year shared with writing friends, be sure to update your birthday date. We use our local branch's MRMS database.

Go to www.hdcwc.com then from the menu go to "Links for Club Members" and click on MRMS. If you don't remember your sign-in name, then ask for help from Bob Isbill, Michael Raff or Jenny Margotta. ~ *the editor*



What's That Number?

Stay connected with your exclusive access to MRMS—our roster of members—That's how I found the birthdays listed. Ask for help to gain easy access anytime.



WE HAVE A YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:

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

Managed by Joan Rudder-Ward

Member Services

Seen in New Yorker ad:
*I used to call people,
then I got into emailing,
then texting, and now I
just ignore everyone.*

**ANGIE
HORN**

Blog Design & Blog Writing for Authors

Text: (760) 596-8334

Email: angelahornblog@gmail.com



References:

Mary Langer Thompson: (@Mary Langer Thomp, Twitter)

Elizabeth Pye: (epye.com)

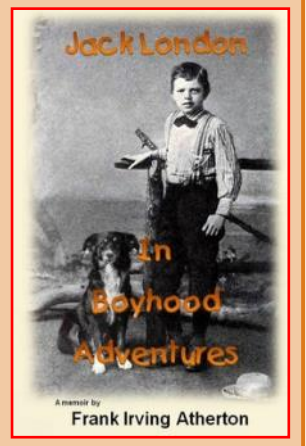
Marilyn King: <http://www.marilynking.net>



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Notes From the Editor



Rusty LaGrange

*Editor of the
CWC's
The Bulletin*

Are you climbing out of your box like a puppy from a large litter?

Get outside and enjoy the sunny weather while you can. Studies prove that, during winter, a loss in Vitamin D and natural sunlight causes you to become sad. In the ol' days we called it Cabin Fever. Seasonal Affect Disorder is the culprit. While most of us are avoiding folks, a small but serious amount of other folks are hiking, biking, strolling around the block, smiling.

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 200 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, 760-646-2661.

Submit March items by Feb. 23; Submit April items by Mar. 23

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