

# The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC  
*Inspiring a Community of Writers*

*Sail On*

Sept. 2018

## Are You Missing Key Features That Other Authors Know About?

### Step Up to the Mic & Panel of Your Peers

*P.O.V. by Rusty LaGrange*

As eager authors and poets signed up for Open Mic during last meeting, no one was more surprised how much they learned at the Open Mic Salon than the attendees.

Roberta Smith opened her home to the first twelve responding to this new salon on Tuesday evening, Oct. 2. The idea came from the HDCWC Board last month when they wanted to offer some type of training in microphone etiquette and some hands-on practice.

Since this month is Open Mic, where we are the "guest speakers," it seemed natural to promote the salon. The practice session was not only for those without much public speaking experience, but for honing the skills needed to do a more professional presentation — no matter where they find a mic.

We had a full house with Jenny Margotta bringing refreshments, me bringing a portable microphone, and others bringing their practice pieces to read.

For our Open Mic session, be prepared for a skit treatment from the paranormal book excerpt by Roberta with Michael Raff, some endearing memoir poems, and a short excerpt from an amazing vacation story by Katina \*\*\*\*\*, and more.

Most of all we wish to entertain you, showcase our work, and get some great personal feedback from our closest peers. If you'd like to critique our presentations anonymously, you can take a sheet at the door and leave it at the Welcome table.

For the second half of our meeting, you'll hear directly from a panel of your peers who have more experience in attaining some of "your" goals. They work diligently to learn from their mistakes and hope you'll gain some insight to their process of learning what an author's job really is.

Roberta Smith is our Webmaster and is easy to each if you wish to promote your works on our branch site. More free exposure is a win-win for you and our club.

Michael Raff and Smith became partners in their plan to reach more horror and paranormal readers through their business, Nevermore Enterprises, and their book fairs.

Mary Ruth Hughes knew she needed to reach the marketing audience in Oklahoma where her fact-based historical novels made the most impact. She planned her road trip and incorporated PR, book signings, and newspaper interviews with the precision of a military field marshal.

Jenny Margotta is our branch's Treasurer with a wealth of knowledge for managing

your basic author's requirement for sales tax, permits, and all those details we tend to set aside until its too late.

Whatever it is that helps move you forward on your journey, take the clues. Many are free services for you. The best you can be may seem a bit trite, but it does exemplify the main emotional surge that propels the board in most aspects of our branch. We all wish you the most success and the means to reach it.



## You asked for Workshops

Marilyn Atlas took center stage with her "Dating Your Character" program.



**A nice pastry spread for the nibbling crowd.**

*(Photos courtesy of Bob Isbill )*

**More photos continued on Page 5**

High Desert Chapter of California Writers Club Board of Directors



*The following officers and appointed positions are current to the fiscal year of July 2018.*

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## Publicity is Every Member's Business

Whether you know it or not, every dues-paying member of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club is an ambassador. As an ambassador, each member is therefore responsible for publicizing our club. Every time you mention the HDCWC to your friends, family, and colleagues you are serving as an ambassador. Ambassadors are representatives, and as such, you publicize our club whenever you share information about it, even when you simply tell those you live with that you are heading to a HDCWC event. Now I ask that you consider taking your ambassadorship to the next level by more actively promoting the HDCWC so that our club thrives and we are better able to fulfill our mission.

Here is the mission statement of the California Writers Club, and as one of its branches:

*The California Writers Club (CWC) shall foster professionalism in writing, promote networking of writers with the writing community, mentor new writers, and provide literary support for writers and the writing community as is appropriate through education and leadership.*

The club supports all genres, writing styles and related professions such as editing, publishing, photographic journalism, and agents.

When we pursue our mission, we all benefit, and our community benefits. As members, we will be able to have more programs that assist our individual writing and publishing goals, and we will be able to continue sponsoring extraordinary presenters, and help others.

How may you actively assist with the publicity of our club? I'm so pleased that you asked. Here are a few things that you may do now.

- Enthusiastically tell everyone you know or meet about our wonderful club.
- Keep HDCWC information cards in your purse or wallet and in your car, so that you can share them with those you meet. They are available at the registration table during regular meetings and upon request.

- Include the HDCWC in all of your social media platforms; link to us and be sure to "like" us on Facebook.

- Share "The Inkslinger," "The Bulletin," and our anthologies with others.

- Post flyers and cards in public areas whenever possible. This includes your work place, school, place of worship, and even local coffee shops and stores. Of course, you need to check with the managers before posting our materials.

- Make announcements about the HDCWC monthly meetings and special events during community meetings. A lot of organizations allow attendees to speak about miscellaneous topics.

- Address your city council during the "public comments" period of city council meetings when members of the public are allowed to speak on non-agenda items. Here you may just share general information about our club and provide meeting information verbally and leave materials with the secretary so they become part of public records.

- Inform the HDCWC board of directors about events where we may display information or make presentations about our club.

- Think of out-of-the-box ways to publicize our club, and share your ideas with the rest of us, your fellow members.

When you publicize the HDCWC remember that we are a multiple-award winning club. We welcome people with varying writing experience, from beginners to authors who have published several books and screenplays. We are great community members too, and we provide financial and in-kind support to various community agencies and schools.

As a member you already know that we are a lively, diverse and fun group of people who love writing and its related parts, who are dedicated to excellence and supporting each other. However, to thrive, we all must participate in publicizing our club and helping it to grow.

Following our spectacular October 6 writers conference, we'll be gearing up

*Continued on Page 5*

# Managing Your Writing Career

by Rusty LaGrange



Whether you write for fun, for profit, some articles, a novel, or poetry, it will always be your job to expand your training and your experiences to become a better writer. I'm active in our poetry group, the PoemSmiths, and as an active member, I am always surprised by new concepts or old ones that I have never heard of before.

I came across a *Huffington Post* article by Carol Kuruville speaking on the ancient writings of Zen Masters, the term "koan" and early forms of Haiku, and ways that poetry was used as a teaching tool to the masses. In this look at Haiku, one of the easiest forms to master, and often taught in schools as the primary step to poetry, I was stunned by my lack of understanding in how the poem is actually created, and how koan fits in.

Sure, anyone can count five syllables for the first line, seven for the second, and five for the last — the basic structure, although there are others. But the true inner thoughts of the lesson in a Haiku, or any other assortment of short thoughtful poems, is derived from the basics of Zen and Buddhist teachings.

“ Zen master is a somewhat vague English term that arose in the first half of the 20th century, sometimes used to refer to an individual who teaches Zen Buddhist meditation and practices, usually implying longtime study and subsequent authorization to teach and transmit the tradition themselves. —Wikipedia ”

So, of course, I opened a search for the meanings of the meanings — and fell down a rabbit hole — hours later, and feeling rather hungry, I decided to stop and reflect. When we write a Haiku, as an example, we try to fit the words to the form rather than write from the spirit of the thought and let the form fit. Hmm... so while I've been tapping out syllables, I missed the true point of the teaching. A piece of wisdom or an intellectual insight should inspire the poem and be creatively ended with a twist, a hook, and “ah-hah” moment in order for the reader to appreciate it. Enter the koan, pronounced ko-an with accent on the first syllable.

“ A koan is a riddle or puzzle that Zen Buddhists use during meditation to help them unravel greater truths about the world and about themselves. Zen masters have been testing their students with these stories, questions, or phrases for centuries. Many koans can be traced back to the collections of sayings amassed by Chinese priests in the 12th and 13th centuries. ”

*Koans may seem like paradoxes at first glance. It is up to the Zen student to tease out their meaning. Often, after a prolonged and exhausting intellectual struggle, the student realizes that the koan is actually meant to be understood by the spirit and by intuition.*

*[Kō-an - Wikipedia](#)*

I won't promise to use more koan in my creative pursuits, but now I know what it is. I believe I do have the spirit of ideas that I can transmit to paper in my poems and short prose. Although I may not know if the reader understands everything I write, I am making an attempt to communicate at a higher level than seventh grade — the national average.

In my early attempts at poetry I remember this little one (in blue box) that I created in the 1970s, in Pioneertown where I lived for several years. It was a great place for inspiration and insight especially at night. Coyotes, desert breezes, and a velvet night sky can pry into the creative depths, making you feel worthy of taking pen to paper.

There sat the moon  
on a branch of a tree  
like the smile of a Cheshire cat  
and I smiled back.



## To Have and To Hold

by *fumi-tome ohta*

There's an elderly oriental couple living in our apartment complex. When they come out of their apartment they're holding hands. They walk in unison, side by side, walking in slow deliberate steps. They're on their way to check the mail. He walks slowly as a courtesy, but mainly, the slower pace gives him added time to be in her company. As they walk, they give the impression that they have just met because they are unusually sensitive to each other, childlike in their show of intimate affection, and they communicate in soft whispers. They were born in an era where they were not allowed to touch each other in public. Thankfully, attitudes have changed through time.

He leads with a dominant male bearing. He does not smile. She is quiet and delicate like the petal of a poppy dancing to the slightest hint of a passing breeze. She leans into his shoulder, not overbearing but soft and gentle. She trusts him and is there for him, and with him, even to check the mail. She feels his love and a certain kind of kinship. Like smoke spiraling from the tip of a single incense, flowing and weaving then rising up, such is their love.

It is only two doors down to the wall of mailboxes. He opens the mailbox with the simple turn of a metallic key. Her eyes are upon his hand, the beating of their hearts stop in synchronous as he draws the mail out. He stoops to check the back of the mailbox for stragglers. Satisfied, he stands, then, completing a task together, they intermesh fingertips in play then he takes hold of her hand. They walk back to their apartment as softly and gently as they had arrived.

Whether to share a cup of tea or to share a fragrant peach ... they are happiest being in each other's company, not to talk of world situations or arguing a point. They have the luxury of a minute moment in time, to have and to hold. They do and they will, until the hourglass stills the sand and when it does, they will be together ... forever.



*continued from page 3*

for an early-December bookfair at the Victorville Barnes & Noble. This will be an excellent opportunity to publicize our club to hundreds of shoppers who come to the store daily. Members will also be able to conduct book signings, readings, and sell books (which have ISBNs). We'll need volunteers to staff our table during the eight-hour period as well. More information will be provided as soon as it is available.

In the coming months, I will also share information about more plans to publicize our club. I am hopeful that I hear from several of you who share your ideas. You may know that we have other wonderful members who work tirelessly to make our club successful and who use countless hours of personal time and various social media platforms toward that goal. All of this greatly aids our publicity efforts, and we can do even greater works with your assistance. Your comments and ideas are welcome.



**Give a big thanks to Rusty Bull Roadhouse Restaurant in Apple Valley that gave two gift certificates of \$50 and \$30 toward its meals. Our other prize was a 50/50 cash award. Most of the attendees opted to dine at the Rusty Bull.**



*Photos by Bob Isbill*



*Dr. Richard H. Reeb Jr.*

Dr. Richard Reeb brought a different perspective to the nature of how our ability to share a story is intertwined with our concepts of political diversity and cultural dynamics. He is a retired political science, philosophy, and journalism instructor at Barstow College, and a columnist for Victor Valley Daily Press and the Desert Dispatch.

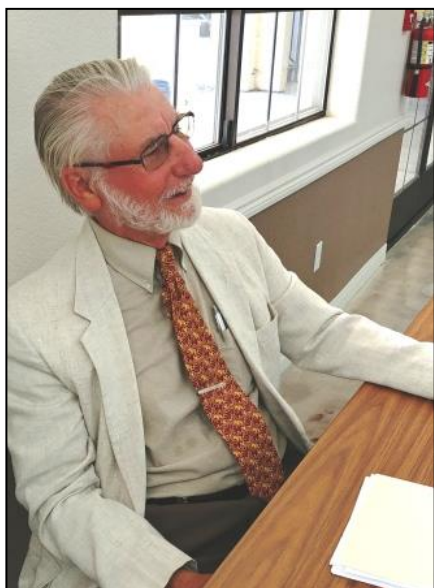
## What You Missed

Text & photos  
by Rusty LaGrange

By sharing the history of printing and a shortened timeline, our nation's capability to share the news was instrumental in Western expansion. From the 1830s high-speed printing press with government subsidies, it was more affordable to eventually get to a free press by 1860s.

The political battlegrounds began in earnest with Hearst, a Democrat, and Pulitzer, a Republican, sparring over national sides of the news. Their prestige developed when Presidents showed support of their views.

"Factual accuracy" and "comprehensive truth" are just as important today, as the public deals with political and cultural dynamics.



*Dr. Reeb after the program*



*Dr. Reeb*



*Rita Wells, front, and Sally Ortiz set another creative and colorful design for our refreshments table. (photo by Bob Isbill)*



*Dr. Reeb*

*(photo by Bob Isbill)*



Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

## #1 in a series on creating dynamic description

As an editor I am faced with a wide range of authors' talents, from the neophyte to one who has been writing for years. I deal with a variety of issues: punctuation, grammar, weak character development, points of view problems, timeline errors, and more. But the most frustrating for me is the author who believes—and there are many of them—that one need only record a series of actions, interspersed with dialogue. I'm not just addressing those who write fiction; poets and writers of non-fiction need to incorporate description too.

Many of you may remember sitting around a campfire as a child, listening to the camp counselor try to scare you out of your socks before you crawled into your sleeping bag. I seriously doubt the storyteller simply said, "There was a man. He came into the camp. He killed everyone. He left." That's not very scary. No, I rather believe the story might have started something like: "The drenching rain was cold, turning to sleet in the high altitudes, but the campers were stranded on the mountain. Earlier that day, unseen by anyone, someone had disabled their bus, the only vehicle for miles around. Now they gathered around their only radio, hunched

against the bitter cold and desperately trying to hear the words of the announcer as the last of their batteries failed: ". . . escaped serial killer . . . preys . . . young children . . . eats . . . last seen . . . campground . . . And then the radio died."

You knew it was only a story, but it's a good guess you were frightened, even if you didn't admit it to your friends.

A good storyteller does not simply recite facts and actions, he—or she, of course—uses words to paint a picture. A good storyteller invokes every one of our senses. Makes us mentally *feel*, *taste*, *smell*, and *hear*. We must almost believe we can reach out and *touch* the characters and their surroundings.

“A good story—a great story—will transport us *into* the story.”

If I could give only a single word of advice to any writer, it would be, "Description!" Don't just recite facts and record action and events. You are an artist creating a verbal piece of art. Ca-jole us, make us laugh and cry, makes us *feel*.

Weave your dialogue and action into a seamless tapestry of words. Give us a story worthy of remembering.





## News You Can Use

### **Holiday Fundraiser & Your Book Sales**

From Sheryl Thomas-Perkins:

Here's some good news. Jerry (the Barnes and Noble bookstore manager) and I signed the Bookfair agreement last week, so we're confirmed for Sunday, December 9, from 11 am - 7 pm.

Start planning your booth materials and time schedule. More information is coming. You won't want to miss out on this pre-holiday sales event.



### **Paying it Forward**

Additionally, our donations generated during the B&N one day event, will give us an option in accepting a gift card instead of the cash as payment for funds generated during the day.

We are considering donating the gift card to a literacy program or an organization helping with support for our mission.

Remember, this is where customers must use our fundraising code when buying throughout the store (as well as any online or other B&N locations nationwide) for us to receive the donation. We can direct them to our table and otherwise ask them to use our code when making purchases.

Code information coming soon.



## **Desert Rocks Film & Music Event Oct. 20 in Hesperia**

The 6th Annual Desert Rocks Film and Music Festival is once again bringing exciting up-and-coming as well as established Film and Music artists to the High Desert.

Films play from noon to 8 pm. In addition to last years entries from Australia, Europe, the Middle East and the U.S. hope to attract entries from Asia and Bollywood, Africa as well as Central and South America.

Host Venue for the Film Festival is Cinema West Civic Plaza 12 and all Music and other activities will be taking place outside in the Hesperia Civic Plaza Park. go to [www.desertrocksfame.org](http://www.desertrocksfame.org) for more info.





# Analysis of Character for Writers

– a seven-part series

## PART 4

### Conveying A Character's Emotions on Screen

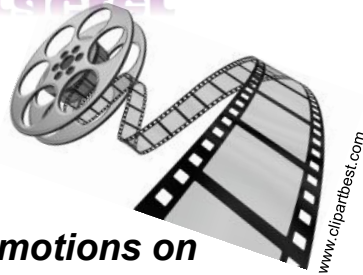
Novelists can spend chapters analyzing a character's thoughts, describing memories, delving into a character's life experiences, hopes, dreams, fears, phobias, etc., but screenwriters must portray all those intangibles via images on a screen. We have to write a visual story that unfolds in the reader's mind like a movie playing on the screen. We have to visualize the unfolding action and describe it with words; but we also have to externalize the internal by using images and dialog. We could cheat and use voiceovers throughout the film, but that would never earn us an Academy Award. We could use hundreds of parenthetical directions to describe how the actors should deliver their lines, and pray that the actors will understand the character and be able to portray the suggested emotions perfectly, but we are not guaranteed talented actors.

Screenwriters have to create images that convey a character's emotions. Envision yourself creating a coloring book for children; drawing pictures with words. We can't just write, "He was furious." We have to describe him throwing things around, smashing windows, stomping on a picture of his wife, and yelling obscenities. We can't just write, "She was devastated," and hope that a great actress will play the part and know how to show 'devastated'. We have to describe her slumping to the ground, eyes filling with tears, clutching the 'Dear Joan' letter to her heart.

In his introduction to Harlan Ellison's *I, Robot – The Illustrated Screenplay*, Isaac Asimov described the difference between writing for print and screen:

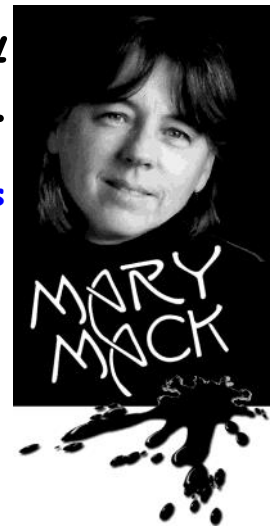
**The medium of print uses the word. Images may be evoked by the word, but this is a subsidiary side effect. It is the sound of words tiptoeing their way through the mind that is primary.**

**The medium of the screen uses the image. Dialogue is almost always involved, but this is a subsidiary side effect. It is the patterned light of colored images**



Graphically  
Speaking ...

by Mary DeSantis



flashing their way past the  
retina that is primary.

### Creating Empathy

The audience has to **relate** to your characters, but that does not mean they have to like or approve of them. In order to relate to the characters onscreen, the audience must first identify with them.

Screenwriter Akiva Goldsman (*i, Robot*) says that a writer has to create a strong connection between the protagonist and his dilemma "as part of the construction or the weaving of an emotional tapestry that you could relate to as an audience member... An audience needs to identify with the [Main Character's] need to solve a mystery or find the truth." In *i, Robot*, the Main Character has a strong connection to the man who is murdered, and this drives his need to find his friend's killer.

In the opening scene or sequence, help the audience **identify** with your protagonist by using one or more of the following techniques:

- events that force the Main Character (reluctantly) to enter conflict
- make him a victim of some undeserved misfortune
- put him in jeopardy
- establish his likability through his strong traits
- arouse the audience's curiosity
- have secondary characters like/admire him
- give him redeeming features
- establish some element of inequality – he is unjustly downtrodden; the underdog
- the more normal and real the character, the better empathy will work
- familiarity – gives the audience comfort
- give him foibles – can't remember names, can't operate a cellphone, is always late, can't cook, has big dreams
- let him admire admirable qualities in others
- powerful characters are intriguing

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- give him omnipotence by enacting the drama through his POV only
- introduce the protagonist ASAP to focus the audience on the right character
- mix and match the above!

Emotions are experienced internally, so how do writers create **empathy** for a character's feelings in a visual medium? Some techniques are as follows:

- use well-chosen verbs to describe posture (slump, cringe, jutting chin), facial expressions (grin, grimace, wink), and motion (trudge, shudder, squirm, bolt upright);
- use dialog effectively (for example, when a character tells an obvious lie);
- add subtext (for example, making a character do or say the opposite of what they really want);

- contrast characters and their environment (for example, a business woman wearing a short skirt and high heels is stranded in the jungle, as in *Romancing the Stone* (1984) starring Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner);
- show how a character interacts with others (shyly, angrily, with fear, etc.);
- show characters reacting in different ways to events (for example, one person shouts, "Bring it on!" when threatened, but another person cowers and whimpers.) If these reactions contrast with the audience's perceived view of a character, you have just provided subtext and added a whole other dimension to your character.

Next month, I will share ideas for creating a detailed Character Biography.



## More Photos During HATM Conference



**Give a big thanks to Rusty Bull Roadhouse Restaurant in Apple Valley that gave two gift certificates of \$50 and \$30 toward its meals. Our other prize was a 50/50 cash award. Most of the attendees opted to dine at the Rusty Bull.**

**Photos by Bob Isbill**

**See more photos next month**



# Reading Room > Our Books in Print

## OCTOBER THRU DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

- Oct. 13** HDCWC regular meeting
- Oct. 20** The Desert Rocks Indie films in Hesperia 12pm to 8 pm.
- Oct. 28** Closing deadline for CWC's *The Bulletin* digital news. if you're planning a display ad, get it in fast.
- Nov. 2** HDCWC Board meeting (one week early)
- Nov. 10** HDCWC regular meeting
- Nov. 15** CWC's *The Bulletin* will be posted
- Nov. 30** Closing deadline for CWC's *The Literary Review*
- DEC. 9** Barnes & Noble Fundraiser event from 11 am to 7pm



Here, on this bookshelf, is the awesome accumulation of our HDCWC branch's anthologies over the past few years.

All titles are still available for purchase. If you wish to buy in person just ask and we will have the book available. Pre-order and/or pre-purchase is required in most cases.

Share our high quality anthologies with others. All titles are available online and make great holiday gifts.



Remember we now offer PayPal as a payment method for dues and purchases.



*The Inkslinger* will go dormant for the month of December — unless someone wishes to try their wings at desktop publishing. It's easier than you think.

Submit holiday stories early for the November issue. Send in your poems and photos.

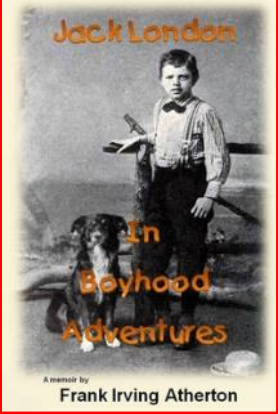
send to [Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com)

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Here's the link to the channel:  
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Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?  
Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to [Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com). We'll advertise it free of charge!

## Editor



Rusty LaGrange

*Editor of the  
CWC's  
The Bulletin*

## Notes From the Editor

*Gearing up for events in October means charging your cellphone, keeping your calendar up-to-date, and checking your email daily. Check Page \_\_\_ for the latest calendar dates. I'd like to thank our columnists who are helping to keep these pages full of high-quality expertise-laden information catered to you and your writing career. If you have some topics that you'd like covered, just let me know. You can even ask directly to the author of their columns. I know they'd love the feedback.*

*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](mailto:Rusty@RustyLaGrange.com). Articles and stories between 300 to 700 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome.*

*Don't be shy about giving me feedback on the job I'm doing. And tell me what subjects you would like to have covered in future issues.*

**November's deadline for submissions: Oct. 23**  
**The December issue will be dark. January submissions are due Dec. 28.**