



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On
January 2022



January 8 Meeting Writing Buffet

We're starting the new year with a very special face-to-face or mask-to-mask meeting. Six tables will be set up throughout the room with various topics for you to learn about. These include:

“What Constitutes Poetry?” Mary Langer Thompson

“Writing Realistic Dialogue” Jenny Margotta

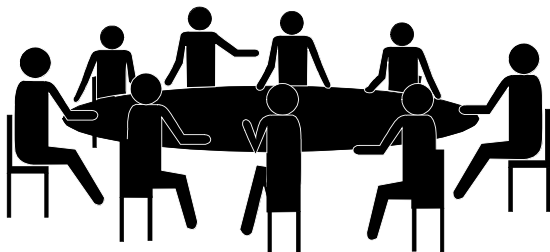
“Basics of Screewriting” Roberta Smith

“Putting a Twist to Your Story” Mike Apodaca.

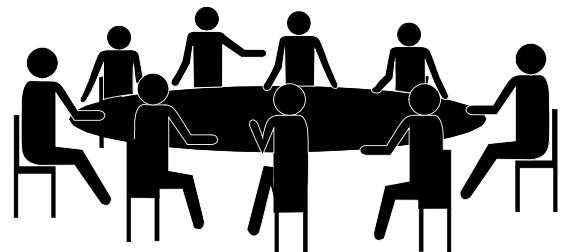
“Taking The Stress Out of Interviews” Rusty LaGrange.

“The Benefits of Writing Horror (Don't Be Afraid)” Michael Raff

We'll also have a table available where writers can skip a session and sit with their peers and discuss their writing. Come to learn, acquire new tools, and connect with other writers.



We meet at the
Community
Church at Jess
Ranch from
10:00 to noon



January 25th Zoom with Tim O'Neil

Our monthly ACT II meetings have been truly exceptional. They allow us to have relationships with giants in the writing field. Our last one had ten branches of the California Writers Club joining us. If you haven't attended one yet, then put January 25th at 6:00 PM on your calendar now.

For this month's ACT II we'll be visited by Tim O'Neal via Zoom from Colorado. Tim's a health specialist, focusing on nutrition, with degrees from Berkeley and San Diego State. He currently works two jobs. But Tim's secret passion is writing short stories. Tim has agreed to squeeze out an hour of his precious time to share with us some of what he has learned on his journey.

For years I've been with Tim in various critique groups. He's always impressed me with the scope of his stories. He can write in any genre. He has been published in various magazines and recently took first place in the *Page Turner Magazine's* Flash Fiction Contest.

Tim will share with us how to be a writer while also living a very full life. He will also share with us his process of getting his stories published and entering contests. Best of all, he will take our questions and share his insights.



High Desert Branch
of the
California Writers
Club
Board of Directors



*The following officers
and appointed positions are current for
the fiscal year ending July 2022.*

President

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Webmaster

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Quote of the Month

By
Michael Raff

It I can stop one Heart from breaking

I shall not live in vain

If I can ease one Life the Aching

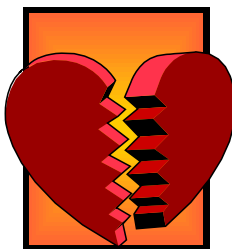
Or cool one Pain

Or help one fainting Robin

Unto his Nest again

I shall not live in Vain

-Emily Dickinson



For what it's worth

Writing is word mining

Our Address

HDCWC
17645 Fisher Street
Victorville, CA 92395



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dwight Norris

**from the
President**

The Power of Groups

If you're a member of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC), and I think you are, you had some good reasons for joining. One was that you probably wanted support and encouragement. You came to the right place. HDCWC is a writing club that provides a supportive writing community.

All of us share a common passion for writing, and by coming together in close association we make new friends, and learn from one another. As we get to know each other better, trust develops and we're able to share our experiences, feelings, thoughts, reactions, and ideas about all kinds of issues.

We know in a large group that we will meet people who have experiences that we have not had and sometimes we will have the answer that another is seeking. There is a lot of knowledge in a group of seventy-five to eighty people. And when we combine that knowledge with the idea that we will be exposed to experiences with other writers who have traveled different paths and encountered different issues, the exposure to diverse fields of knowledge becomes almost limitless.

One thing to remember is that technology and our world are constantly and rapidly changing. Imagine the quick pace at the turn of the 19th century as we moved from horseback to horsepower, and geniuses named Ford, Chrysler, Studebaker, and others came along. We're told that our pace for change is many times faster than theirs.

The core of our club is communication. So long as we remain flexible, we can be vibrant and relevant. When we cut off our communication, we begin to decline. If we are told we can no longer meet face to face, and we stop meeting, our numbers will decline. But if we find another way to meet and communicate, we will continue to thrive.

When an entire branch of our club is told we cannot meet face to face any more, it means we cannot use that method of delivery of information. It does not mean we can no longer communicate. We do well to focus on what we *can* do, not what we can't. Can you spell ZOOM? This is when we double down on our Mission Statement and strive to fulfill it. The Mission Statement offers us structure and guidance as to what our activities should be. It helps people and causes the club to flourish.

If you're not familiar with what our charter mandates of us, it goes something like this:

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.

The branches provide an environment where members can obtain critique of their efforts, attend workshops, and share experiences. Branches are encouraged to mentor writers of all ages by providing educational programs for adults and fostering youth programs.

When an individual writer encounters change, he or she must make adjustments. For example, the writer is asked to come to the meeting of another branch and talk about his or her most recent book. He is not inclined to do so because sales have been scarce. A member of his branch asks his method of collection when selling a book. The writer says *cash, of course!*

Does the writer know what a QR code is, that weird little square that looks like a black and white paisley tie? Your buyer scans it and pays for your book! Does he know what the white square reader for magstripe is where you can accept credit cards on your iPhone or iPad? Another way to pay for your book! Or what about Zelle and Venmo? They are electronic methods of paying for your book and they don't even have to be present with you!

How could a new writer even know about such things? A friend in a supportive writing community would tell him. The fact that technology and life in general change so rapidly is the reason you can't go it alone. It's the reason you need the writers club!





Mike Apodaca

from the
Vice President

In a Weird Place

I reside in a place of fear and nearly crippling uncertainty, where rejection is almost a given and success a one-in-a-million shot.

I'm trying to get published. I am already self-published. I am trying for a traditional publisher.

Currently, I have three stories submitted to magazines and I've pitched my novel to seven agents, two of which have already rejected it.

Publishing is where the rubber meets the road in our confidence as a writer. It's not for the weak. It tests a writer's mettle, his/her grit.

I need to be careful not to let the near certainty of rejection become an immobilizing force that prevents me from submitting my work.

I need to stop comparing myself to other writers. I know some really good ones.

All writers get rejected. Books about writing are brimming with examples of very famous writers who were rejected when they first ventured into publishing. Norman Vincent Peale, who wrote *The Power of Positive Thinking*, a blockbuster best seller, was rejected. He became so frustrated that he threw his manuscript in the trash and told his wife not, under any circumstances, to take it out. His wife took the manuscript to a publishing company—in the trash can. The company saw the value of the work and the rest is history.

**Publish or
Perish?????**

How to better
the odds that
our work will get
published.



1. Make sure we are submitting to a place that is looking for works like ours. Many stories get rejected simply because the author didn't research the publisher.

2. Make sure we're following the submission guidelines. Assunta from the Inland Empire recently did a presentation on paying attention to the details. When I submitted to *The Literary Review*, they were very up front about rejecting any work that did not conform to their simple guidelines.

3. Make sure our work is the best it can be. I always present my work to my critique group first. These are my writing partners, my team, and my support. They are honest with me and point out every problem they see in my piece—all the blemishes. I value their help more than I can express.

4. Submit a lot. Submitting many pieces in many places increases your chances of success. Solomon said, "Cast your bread upon the water." You gotta put your stuff out there.

5. Don't take rejection personally. The agents/publishers are not rejecting *you*. They are rejecting your work. They are saying, "This doesn't fit our needs right now." They are putting the ball back in your court. You can rework the piece and submit it somewhere else, or you can put it aside and work on something new. But, by all means, do not give up.

I did track and field in school—the high jump. Becoming a professional writer is not right for everyone. At this point, I'm not sure it's right for me. But those of us who desire it need to practice our writing, learn, develop our voice and style, build our platforms, and then take a running leap for this most intimidating bar. Others have made it. We can too.





Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH

Language is not fixed and immovable. It is constantly changing as new words are added and obsolete ones deleted. Spelling has changed—even for some of the most basic words—over the centuries, as well as grammar, sentence structure and punctuation. Even the meaning of words has changed over the centuries. Here's a quick look at the evolution of the English language over the last 1,000 years.

OLD ENGLISH: The epic poem "Beowulf," which dates to around the year 1000, is generally accepted as the first literary work written in English (what we now call Old English).

Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.

Now Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings,
leader beloved, and long he ruled
in fame with all folk, since his father had gone.

MIDDLE ENGLISH: Move forward 400 years to *The Canterbury Tales* written by Geoffrey Chaucer, first published in 1400 in what we now call Middle English.

Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;

When in April the sweet showers fall
That pierce March's drought to the root all
And bathed every vein in liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;

MODERN ENGLISH: Now let's move forward nearly 500 years and look at *Cleopatra*, written by H. Rider Haggard and published in 1899. While we don't need a translation to understand the text, it's still full of words we no longer use and written in a stilted style not found in current publications.

"Methought, my uncle," I said, "that thou wast somewhat harsh with her."

"Ay," he answered, "but not without a cause. Look thou, Harmachis, beware of this Charmion. She is too wayward, and, I fear me, may be led away. In truth, she is a very woman; and, like a restive horse, will take the path that pleases her. Brain she has, and fire ..."

20th CENTURY CLASSIC ENGLISH: Our next stop along my "literary highway" is only 40 years, but what a difference we find in *The Grapes of Wrath*, written by John Steinbeck and published in 1939.

A huge red transport truck stood in front of the little roadside restaurant. The vertical exhaust pipe muttered softly, and an almost invisible haze of steel-blue smoke hovered over its end. It was a new truck shining red, and in twelve-inch letters on its sides—OKLAHOMA CITY TRANSPORT COMPANY. Its double tires were new, and a brass padlock stood straight out from the hasp on the big back doors. Inside the screened restaurant a radio played, quiet dance music turned low the way it is when no one is listening. A small outlet fan turned silently in its circular hole over the entrance, and flies buzzed excitedly about the doors and windows, butting the screens. Inside, one man, the truck driver, sat on a stool and rested his elbow on the counter and looked over his coffee at the lean and lonely waitress. He talked the smart listless language of the roadsides to her. "I seen him about three months ago. He had a operation. Cut some pin out. I forget what." And she—"Doesn't seem no longer ago than a week I seen him myself. Looked fine then. He's a nice sort of a guy when he ain't stinko." Now and then the flies roared softly at the screen door. The coffee machine spurted steam, and the waitress, without looking, reached behind her and shut it off.

Not much has changed since Steinbeck's day, with the exception that the now-acceptable style is to start a new paragraph every time a new character speaks or the action changes. So the single paragraph above, if formatted according to the current *Chicago Manual of Style*, would be in four paragraphs as follows:

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Now and then the flies roared softly at the screen door. The coffee machine spurted steam, and the waitress, without looking, reached behind her and shut it off.

TODAY'S ENGLISH: While books are still written very similar to Steinbeck's, today's "digital English," especially among our younger generations, is a different matter altogether. According to Pew Internet research, in the United States, 75% of teenagers text, sending an average of 60 texts a day. It is the most common form of communication among teenagers, beating out phone conversations, social networks, and actual, face-to-face conversations. "Texting isn't a written language," says linguist John McWhorter. "It much more closely resembles the ... spoken language."

hi how r u?
wat u doin?
i miss u...hvnt seen u in ages
c u l8r
btw – byob to prty
U will hv goat

That last one threw me. It apparently translates to "You will have the greatest of all times."

Personally, I'm stuck in the pre-texting era. I love the English language too much—and I have spent too many years trying to master it—for me to insult the written word by devolving into "text-speak." I don't text because, if I did, it would be in complete sentences with proper grammar and punctuation. Diehard "texters" would simply roll their eyes and refuse to read my messages.

So that's a very quick look at the progression of the English language in the last 1,000 years. I would love to be around to see what our language looks like in 3021.



Prologue of "The Wife of Bath's Tale," by Geoffrey Chaucer from the Ellesmere Manuscript

Public Domain: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1492723>

WORD OF THE MONTH

ABSQUATULATE: [ab 'skwäCHə,lāt]

VERB *humorous* NORTH AMERICAN

To leave somewhere abruptly.

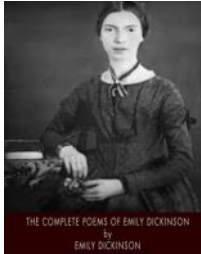
EX: The club member who absquatulated early from the meeting still came to the party.

The most commonly used letter in English is the letter "e." Based on the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, it is used in 11.1% of all words in English.

The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff

Emily Dickinson



Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born in 1830 in Amherst, Massachusetts, into a prominent family. After attending Amherst Academy, (her paternal grandfather was one of the founders), she studied at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary before she returned to Amherst. She was described as being very bright and an excellent scholar.

When Dickinson was a teenager, her family befriended an attorney, Benjamin Newton, who probably introduced her to the writings of William Wordsworth and gave her Ralph Waldo Emerson's first book of poetry, which influenced her greatly.

At a very young age, mortality troubled Dickinson. In 1844 she lost a second cousin to typhus. She grew so depressed that her family sent her to Boston to recover. Probably an agoraphobic, Emily tended to isolate herself. She became lifelong friends with Susan Huntington Gilbert, who married her brother Austin. They corresponded regularly and Dickinson called her "most beloved friend, influence, muse and adviser." She befriended her academy principal, Leonard Humphrey, whose death at twenty-five impacted Emily immensely.

Dickinson's mother became bedridden, and Emily and her sister Lavinia took care of her. Emily's writings, both letters and poetry, however, excelled. She befriended Samuel Bowles, the editor of the *Springfield Republican*, and he published a few of her poems. Around this time, her "Master Letters," written to an unknown man, remain the subject of speculation. By 1866 her isolation behavior had become worse. She refused to leave home and talked to visitors from behind a closed door.

In 1874, Dickinson's father died, and, soon after, her mother suffered a stroke. Her friend, Otis Phillips Lord, a judge, grew close to Emily and there may have been a romance. When he died she referred to him as "our latest Lost." In 1884 she wrote, "The Dyings have been too deep for me, and Before I could raise my Heart from one, another has come."

Emily continued to write in her later years. A fainting spell was followed by a long period of illness. She was confined to her bed but still wrote letters. It's believed that she died of Bright's disease at the age of fifty-five. She never married.

Dickinson's poems tend to fall into three periods:

Pre-1861: when her poems were often conventional and sentimental.

1861—1865: her most productive period and most vigorous and creative writing. It's estimated that she wrote 767 poems from 1861 to 1864 alone. It was during this time she developed themes of nature, life and mortality.

Post 1865: a period when only a third of her poems were written.

Dickinson's style, structure and syntax are quite unique. She used dashes and unconventional capitalization extensively. She often used ballad stanza and frequently used slant rhyme. Because of her use of ballad stanza, some of her poems can be sung to fit the melodies of folk songs and hymns that also use common meter.

Late 20th century scholars were fascinated by her use of punctuation and lineation. Much of her work was edited to suit the guidelines of publication at the time. Some of her major themes were flowers and gardens, the master poems, (characterized as confessional), morbidity, gospel and undiscovered continent. (Suzanne Juhasz claimed that Dickinson saw the mind and spirit as tangible places that she often lived within).

Fun facts about Emily Dickinson:

A Quiet Passion is a film about her life.

The vast majority of Emily's work wasn't published in her lifetime. Only when her sister Lavinia found her cache of poems did her work become public.

Considered a major American poet, Emily was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Until next time—stay safe, keep writing and take a look at Emily Dickinson's body of work.



Club Meetings

Our December Meeting Was a Pitchfest!

We are writers. But we don't write for ourselves. We write to be heard. Tonight, I read a friend's story and wrote back to him how much I thoroughly enjoyed it and that I thought it needed to be published. This is where the writing leaves us and becomes part of the lives of others.

The hardest part of this writing landscape is the marketing. I'm so thankful our club has provided so many opportunities for us to get ready to be face to face with agents and publishers.

One part of this preparation is getting our pitches right. Pitches should be short and to the point. They should include something about how our book came about, the word count, the basic plot, why our book is important just now, and an explanation of our social media platforms.

At our meeting on Saturday, December 11th, we heard pitches from Linda Cooper, Judith Pfeffer, Aileen Rochester, Anna Diamond, Diane Neil, Rusty LaGrange, Mike Raff, Mary Langer-Thompson, Ann Miner, Dwight Norris, and me.

We are all storytellers. Once we took the mic, none of us had trouble sharing. Some read selections from their books (Diane Niel read a short piece from a book she is writing that choked me up). Rusty LaGrange put a brilliant spin on her pitch, sharing with us how she has found ways to market her book to new audiences.

We had a very good showing to this meeting with some new faces and some we haven't seen for a while. I enjoyed talking with some exceptional people after the meeting. What a terrific group!

The morning ended with a delightful gift exchange. I'm excited to read the book I picked up.

After the meeting, many of us met at W Spoon, a Chinese buffet. I filled my plate twice, even trying the seaweed salad on Dwight's recommendation. Not something I would get again.

The conversation was lively and full of fun and, of course, stories.

So, what is a pitch?

There are different types of pitches. Some are very short and some are longer.

There is the elevator pitch. This is your cleanest purist explanation of your story in about 30 seconds. This is where you condense everything you can into a nice package, like Sears used to do. It's called an elevator pitch because it is supposed to only last as long as it would take to get to another

floor.

More complete is the kind of pitches we made at our meeting on Saturday. This is the pitch you would make if you were able to sit down with an agent or publisher and you had five to ten minutes to tell them about your book. I've been in those seats. It's probably what speed dating feels like. You have a small slot and you follow someone and you know someone is following you. It's pretty intense.

In this kind of a pitch, you want to sell not only your book—you also want to sell yourself. The agent or publisher is generally not interested in a one-hit wonder. They want to know that you are serious about writing and that you have many books in you.

The things involved in this type of pitch include:

1. The reason why you wrote the book. The need you saw and how this book meets that need.

2. The word count. Different genres have acceptable word counts. It does matter to some publishers that you stay within these parameters.

3. The basic plot. You want to highlight your main character(s). Explain what their problem is and what is keeping them from solving it. Get the person receiving the pitch to feel like this is a great story that needs to be told. Make it personal and emotional.

4. Explain why you are qualified to be represented by this agency. What expertise do you have? What degrees? What experience? Where have you been published? Consider this part like a job interview.

5. What is your marketing platform like? What is your social media presence? On which sites? Do you have a website? A blog? A newsletter? How big is your email list. To be clear, this is not how many emails do you have in your Contacts list on Google. These emails are from people who have signed up with you and specifically want to hear from you about your writing. These are people you send your newsletter to because they requested it.

Along with these, it is good to have several bios, a query letter, and a synopsis on hand.

The key to all these pitches—be prepared. Don't plan on winging it. Type out your elevator speech and practice it. Type out your longer pitch and practice that. Make sure it doesn't feel wooden or trite. Put all the energy and excitement you have about your story into your pitch. After all, if you don't love it, why would the person you're pitching to believe that anyone else would?

Mike Apodaca

Continued on page 9

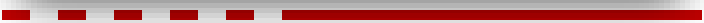


Club Meetings

Our December Meeting Was a Pitchfest!



Pictures by Robert Isbill





Chris Vogler The Writer's Journey

There's no way I can pack into this small space everything we learned on 12/21/21 from Chris Vogler. You will have to watch the video on our YouTube channel.

Mr. Vogler began searching for the outline of what made a great story. He became acquainted with the work of Joseph Campbell (*The Hero with 1000 Faces*) and discovered the algorithm or pattern for storytelling.

Basically, all stories show someone on a journey of discovery. Mr. Vogler said this works on two levels: 1) That of storytelling and 2) Our lives as writers.

He said the key is to capture the emotions of your audience. He quoted Maya Angelou, who said people will never forget the way you made them feel.

He challenged us to be intentional in our writing. He said we should get in touch with the music of our story and get others to join in. People read books to enter the vibe of a story, to participate with it. Great writers trigger reactions in their readers.

Mr. Vogler explained that to be a good writer we have to know the structure of writing well and then bring something new to it. Make it memorable. He challenged us to be able to express the **theme** (one word) of our story as well as the **premise** (an expansion of the one word depiction).

One system of writing is not enough. The various systems play well together. Learn them all and build your toolbox. Chris Vogler



Mr. Vogler said that a story is a vertebrate organism that has a spine that everything connects to, the infrastructure.

After this head-spinning introduction, we were taken through the 12 stages of story. Mr. Vogler used the *Wizard of Oz* to illustrate.

1. Ordinary World.
2. Call to Adventure (the problem)
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting the Mentor
5. Crossing the Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach the Cave
8. Ordeal (central drastic event)
9. Reward
10. The Road Back
11. Resurrection (big event, climax)
12. Return with the Elixir (give to others)

In stories there are two worlds, the ordinary world and the special world. This can be as dramatic as Dorothy in Oz or as normal as the Mail Official who is forced into retirement in the movie *Colewell*.

Mr. Vogler used many metaphors to crystalize his thinking. He compared a story to seasons of the year, to chakras of the body, to linear expressions and circular ones.

In the end, he took questions and ended with a personal story of when he was lost in the mountains and night was falling. In his panic he heard a voice inside tell him to "Stay on the path." Well, there was no path. He then saw some ants making a line, so he followed them. This led to mice trails, and so on until he found the road and made it home. Mr. Vogler is on his own journey and inspired us to appreciate the ones we are on.



Your HDCWC Board at Work



Our HDCWC board meets the first Tuesday after the first Saturday of the month. We meet for at least two hours and discuss the amazing things happening in our branch.

Dwight Norris, our president, puts together our agenda (which can run over a page long) and guides us through the meeting with his gentle good-natured way. I recently complimented him on his ability to herd cats. We begin with Joan Rudder-Ward's minutes from the last meeting. After approving these, we get a treasurer's report from Jenny—and let me tell you, she has everything down to the penny. Mike Raff gives a membership report and I provide an update on the *Inkslinger*.

Then the fun starts. Old business in December's meeting included a discussion about *The Literary Review*, the On-Topic Speakers program, the Town's End book selling, the High Desert Chamber of Commerce, our current club promotional packet, and the Scholastic judging program that we are about to start.

We discussed each of these topics at length, looking at them from many different sides and making appropriate decisions where necessary.

Then we turn to New Business. This included the photo shoot for February 6, the special events that our own Mary Thompson heads up (Black History Month, Women's History Month, Poetry Month, and World Book Night), the guidelines for critique groups, the San Bernardino Arts Connection, the plans for the December 11 meeting and the December 21 Act II Zoom meeting, coming events in the club, and our social media presence.

You can see why this meeting took us two and a half hours.

My favorite part of our meeting is the spirit of congeniality.

We don't always agree, which is fine. Each of us is willing to be outvoted. But we also really like and respect each other. We're able to laugh together and to laugh at ourselves.

Most people would say they would hate having to come to a long meeting every month. But I really like it. When the meeting is lively and fun, the time goes by quickly. One of the factors in our having such a healthy club is that we have a healthy board.

Mike Apodaca



On-Topic Speakers for You Gaining Ground

How Can I Get My Books Sold?

With a heavy investment of research and time, you have written your book(s)—a repository of your ideas and original point of view. You put your treasure on Amazon, where you are hoping people find it and buy it. What can you do to boost your sales? You can become a speaker who speaks to various groups (most of which will pay you) and sell your books. Think about how many authors our club has sponsored through the years. That could be you. Speaking is how you and your work become known.

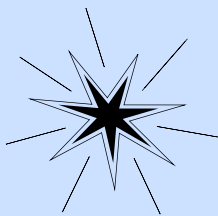
How Can I Get Involved?

Contact Bob Isbill at risbill@aol.com and let him know you are interested. Send the following information to me (Mike Apodaca) at mrdaca.ma@gmail.com.

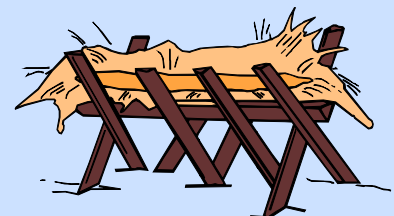
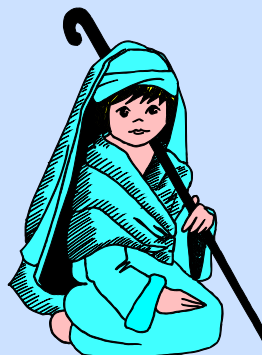
- ◆ A headshot
- ◆ A short biography (one that you would want to be introduced with)
- ◆ A list of presentations you will do with a short logline for each
- ◆ Pictures of your book covers and a short description of each book
- ◆ Any social media or website you want linked to your page

Put together your speech, including your audio visuals (PowerPoint, videos, artifacts, etc.). Practice your speech. Keep studying and become an expert on your topic. Contact Bob Isbill and see if you can practice your presentation for an audience.

We launch our On-Topic Speakers for You Website in January. We intend to begin the new year with new opportunities for your to introduce yourself and your passion and sell your books.



Mike Apodaca



Help Wanted: Storage Unit Manager

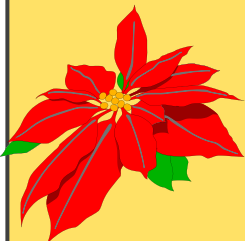
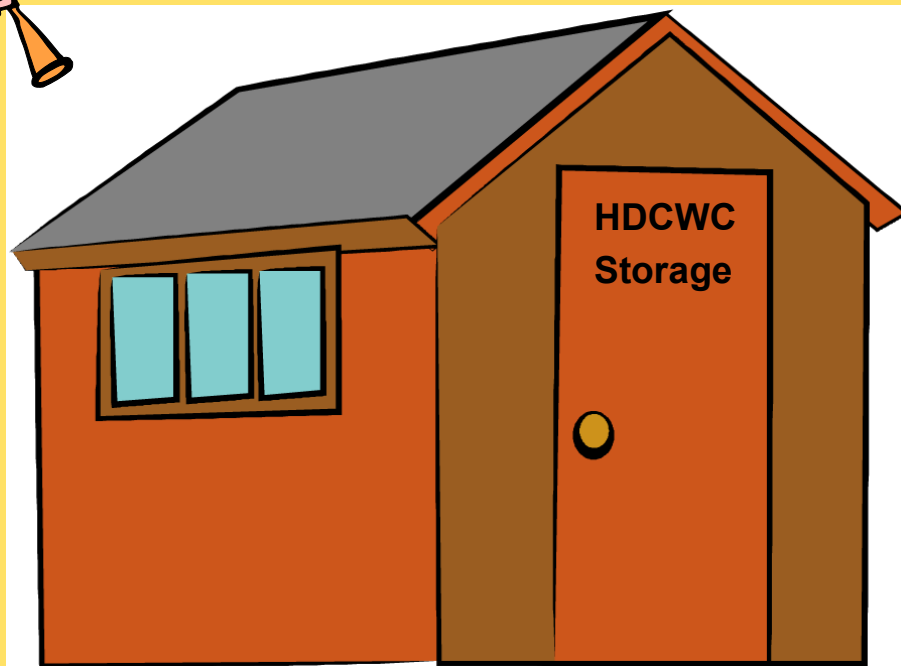
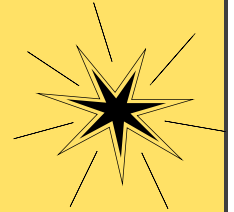
If you are that person who straightens every picture when you enter a room, we want to talk with you.

If you have ever reorganized a messy and disorganized shelf in a store and felt great satisfaction afterwards, then this might be your next venture.

If you have ever offered to clean someone else's messy room, then you might have what it takes for this job.

The latest **HDCWC volunteer opportunity** is for a Storage Unit Manager. We currently have a storage unit that would drive a person with OCD right up the wall. It's become the place where we "stuck" things for a while and now, to be quite honest, we aren't even sure of everything that is in there. What we need is someone who would be willing to donate some time for a few weeks to organize and clean out our current storage area, make an inventory list of what we have there, and then organize it all so that it becomes useful. Also, be available to help when we need things from storage.

The Board's hope is that we'll eventually have a fully working storage system with an inventory that is functional. In other words, we want to go from simply storing stuff to keeping things ready for use. We want this facility to change from stuff that sits to vital tools that are used. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Dwight Norris at:
hdcwcpresidentdnorris@gmail.com.



2021 Inkslinger Contributor Awards

Okay, so I made this up and there are no real prizes or anything cool like that. But I couldn't let the new year start without recognizing those who have consistently contributed poems, stories, photographs, and articles to our newsletter. These talented writers breathe life into this publication and I am deeply grateful to them for their generous help.

First to be recognized are those who are the backbone of this newsletter and of our club. Dwight Norris, Bob Isbill, Jenny Margotta, Mike Raff, and Rusty LaGrange contribute every month. Their articles are always informative and fun to read. They, along with Linda Boruff, also help me with editing the newsletter.

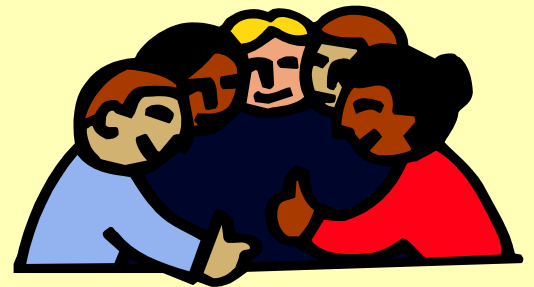
The following have been listed in order of the number of *Inkslingers* they contributed to from May to Dec.

Diane Neil, fumi-tome otah, Lorelei Kay, Ann Miner, Gary Layton, Sarah Metcalf Leach, Barbra Badger, Anita Holmes, Tom Foley, Judith Pfeffer, Mary DeSantis, Peg Ross Pawlak, Amy Burnett, Jim Grayson, Assunta Vickers, Freddi Gold, Mary Langer Thompson. If I missed anyone, please forgive me.

This newsletter is a team effort. It's an expression of the talent of our branch. And we are able to lift our heads high because we are showing our writing ability month by month.

If you want to join this amazing group of writers who use *The Inkslinger* as a platform to share their talent, please email me your story, poem, article, or photograph at mrdaa.ma@gmail.com. I will try my best to showcase your work.

Mike Apodaca



If you don't think there is magic in writing, then you probably won't write anything magical.

Terry Brooks

Native Voices' 12th Annual Short Play Festival

TRICKSTER : Coyotes, Rabbits, and Ravens, Oh My!

Many Native stories involve a Trickster, a cunning, crafty, clever, mischief-making being who often teaches humankind how to be while embodying what not to be. A Trickster is the ultimate disrupter. He can be charming, witty, funny, harsh, critical, but he has a truth to share with us if we only listen. And if we don't listen? Well, he will find a way whether we like it or not.

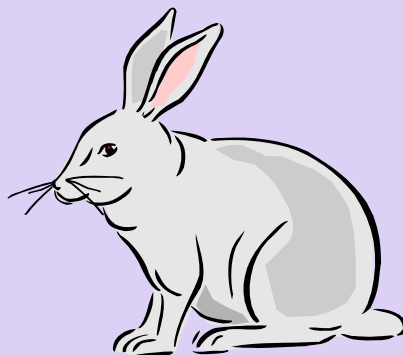
We promise: this isn't a trick! For our 2022 Short Play Festival, we invite you to tell a story inspired by a Trickster. These plays can be funny, sad, triumphant, or anything in between. The only rule: they must be 10 minutes long. They also must incorporate the theme "Trickster" (see? I tricked you! I said there was one rule but there's actually two!). Authors must be of Native American descent.

Plays chosen to participate in the 12th Annual Short Play Festival will also be entered to win the Von Marie Atchley Excellence in Playwriting award—a \$1,000 cash prize!!

Scripts longer than 15 pages or read aloud at longer than 10 minutes will not be accepted. Fresh, surprising perspectives are welcome, and unique theatricality is a must.

Submit here:

<https://bit.ly/NV22subs>



“Oh my!”

Professional Photography Bargain for Headshots Set Up for February 6th

Several of you were unable to take advantage of the August 15, 2021, photo shoot. Because of this, and because many of you have now seen the quality of those photos, we have requested Joan Rudder Ward to do another photo session for CWC members and their family and friends.

Some of the comments by those who attended on August 15 were: "Beautiful work!" "Incredibly professional!" and "Outstanding value!"

Through her generosity, we are again able to offer an extraordinary value for two professional headshots for only \$30.

Joan will provide 2 jpeg files of softly retouched photos. Each photo will have one 5x7 300 dpi format and an emailable publicity jpeg file for your portfolio. The cost for each photo is \$15 when combined in this deal!

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

This remarkable value would ordinarily cost around \$150. This is only one more example of getting your money's worth out of being a member of the CWC! Please make checks for \$30 payable to **The Image Maker**. **PayPal will not be available for this amazing offer.** Personal checks or money orders only, mailed to:

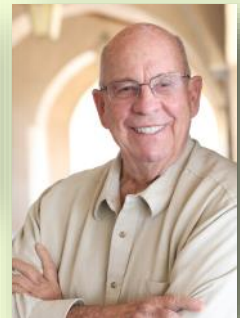
HDCWC
17645 Fisher St.
Victorville, CA 92395

This offer is also extended to the Inland Empire Branch and is anticipated to fill up fast, so don't delay. First come, first served, and once the maximum number of clients is reached, the offer will be withdrawn.



Sunset Hills Memorial Park
24000 Waalew Road
Apple Valley 92307

Sunday, February 6, 2022
9:30 am to 3:00 pm



Group photo times to be announced prior to that date

We will also be taking a group photo of our **Scholastic Judges** on that day, so be sure to attend. Another photo of our members present will be taken at that time also.

Those interested in this offer, please notify us by emailing hdcwc@aol.com. Put your name and the word Photo in the subject line.

Put the desired time of your photo appointment in your email. **Upon receipt of your check, we will make every effort to comply with your requested time slot.**

Because of this great value, there will be no refunds if appointment is cancelled by the member or in case of no-shows on the date of photography. The only refunds that will be made are if this offer is cancelled.

A New Critique Group!



Marilyn Ramirez (King) is starting up the Wordsmith's critique group again. Meetings will be held twice a month on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. If you've been wanting to join a critique group that is serious about getting your work published, this group is for you.

You can contact Marilyn at:

marilynking6318@gmail.com .

Any member can start a critique group. You just have to let me know (as Marilyn did) at mrdaca.ma@gmail.com and I will get the word out through this newsletter. Being a member of a critique group will definitely improve your writing. It will also give you a team that will cheer you on as you venture out into publishing.

Mike Apodaca

Marketing Thoughts

Copy and Paste and Upload By Mike Apodaca

I'm not a big one for New Year's resolutions, but if you're looking for one may I suggest increasing your comfort with technology.

I've been submitting my novels, looking for an agent and sending them to publishers. What I discovered shocked me (although it shouldn't have).

Publishers and agents now are using a completely online process to pick up new clients. This is not to say you can't pick up an agent or editor by going to a writing conference and signing up to meet them face to face. I know that does still happen.

But the easier way for these organizations to screen for their next big thing (you, hopefully) is to do everything online.

So I suggest you get your pitch, query letter, synopsis, etc. In one file. When you go to the website and put in your personal information, you will be asked for this. If you are ready, all you have to do is copy and paste.

Also, have your manuscript in an easily accessible folder. Some publishers want three chapters and the final chapter to look at. If they like what they see, they will ask you to upload the entire file.

Don't miss the Zoom meeting Tuesday, January 25th, with our own Tim O'Neal who will share with us his strategies for getting published. Mr. O'Neal has had several stories published this year and won first place in a prestigious writing contest.

Roberta Smith & Michael Raff Make

a Killing

Roberta Smith and Michael Raff (Nevermore Enterprises) booked a table the weekend of December 17th to December 19th at the Season's Scream horror event at the Pasadena Convention Center. All weekend long they were able to rub elbows with all kinds of goblins and ghosts, (wearing masks of course). Friday night things looked bleak. The readers were staying home to read other books. But on Saturday the event was haunted by all types of creatures that came out of the woodwork, including readers anxious to be scared out of their wits. Sunday traffic was slower but steady. In all Roberta and Mike sold exactly 50 books, the best they, or Nevermore Enterprises, has ever done. The moral of this macabre little tale?

Never give up the ghost!



Let's Walk and Talk: Weather Permitting

I can't be the only one who needs to exercise. A great way to get our needed daily steps is to walk the Apple Valley River Walk, a wide two-mile walkway of beautifully laid concrete. The ground is level and easy on the feet. It's one of the great features of the Victor Valley.

On January 18th at 2:00 pm, we will meet at the starting point of the trail, just east of Victor Valley College, up from the Campus Police Station.

Directions: From Bear Valley Road go north on Mojave Fish Hatchery Road then a quick right on the first street (the one next to the Campus Police Station). Take that road to the end and you'll see the covering over the tables where we'll meet at 2:00.

Suggestions:

Wear comfortable shoes

Watch the weather and dress appropriately

Use sunscreen and bring a hat and sunglasses

Bring water

Come ready to make a friend

Mike Apodaca

Put it on your calendar now before you forget



Prose

Lifeless Limbs Little Feet

by
fumi-tome ohta

Each morning from January through December I would see a little eucalyptus tree with the upper half of her crown laden with thin, lifeless limbs. This little eucalyptus tree was in a sad and unkept condition with shoots of little silver-dollar sized green leaves on the lower half but the upper half in a permanent state of dormancy. Of all the trees in the neighborhood this was a tree seemingly forgotten but for some reason birds of various size would flock to this little eucalyptus tree and sit on its pencil-thin limbs. When I first saw this tree, I thought it visually unappealing but every day, as my dog Farley and I passed it on our twice daily walks, this little eucalyptus tree grew on me. I named her Eubrice. I looked forward to seeing Eubrice and her community of birds always looking happy, always brightening the moment with good cheer.

There were birds such as pigeons, doves, hummingbirds, robins, finches, phoebes, and whether it was early morn or late afternoon, the little eucalyptus tree was always in the company of birds, some fluttering from one thin branch to another ever mindful to the activities all around, reflecting back to memories past or just appreciating the moment. As Farley and I stood before them, we heard the joy and happiness in their song, the chirps of excitement, their mutual friendships so pure, so deep that even the tiny hummingbirds emanated love and heartfelt sincerity through their tiny feet. Each day the birds came. They cared not to be anywhere except here, with Eubrice, their faces aglow as the evening breeze danced and whirled invisible pirouettes rejoicing Eubrice's universal love. I could feel it in the air that Eubrice and the birds understood each other. Seeing them each day, it was evident that their friendship and kinship ran deep as they included us, included everyone into their circle of good times, laughter and sparkles of love on a Blue Chip stamp.

The best thing to hold onto in life is each other.

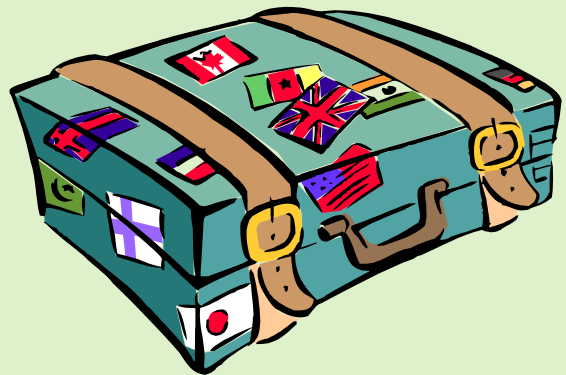
Audrey Hepburn

Happy New Year 2022!

The Old Steamer Trunk

By Ann Miner

The travel stickers on the old steamer trunk were faded and torn. I lifted the lid, held secure with well-traveled but efficient metal clasps.



My mind ignored the reason for being here in front of this relic.

Instead, I was transported to 1959 when my mother- and father-in-law handed the antique over to me, the young bride of their middle son, Jim. The stickers were fresher then. It had been only about ten years since the family had left North Africa. Memories of Marrakesh, Rabat, smelly, outdoor markets . . . the stickers triggered my imagination then, as well as now.

Mom had been a teacher in an American military school there, Dad worked with the U.S. Postal Service. While their future held visits to every country in the Free World, including stints of living in Ethiopia, Egypt and India, they foresaw no reason now to keep the trunk.

I was on my way to Europe for a two-year stay in Germany. Grateful for the trunk, I packed clothing, some linens and my cast iron skillet.

Memories came tumbling back.

Ann Miner

As I walked from the garage to the side door of my home, I noticed a black Honda slowly cruising by on the street. By the time I made it to my house, the car with Oregon license plates was far up into my driveway. I walked over to see what the young man behind the wheel wanted.

"Does Yolanda live here?" he asked.

"No, does she live on this street?"

"Somewhere around here," he said.

"Do you have her phone number?"

"Yes, but I don't have my phone."

I let him use mine. He dialed, no answer.

"Are you sure this is her street?" I asked.

"I don't know, I'm not from around here. I'm from L.A."

"Is she black?" I asked this because he was black.

"Yes."

"Then check those houses down there," I pointed. I said goodbye and walked back to the side door of my house. By the time I got into the kitchen, the dogs were having a fit. They and my daughter walked toward the front door as the man was opening it to enter the living room.

I stood inches from his face as he asked me again which houses might belong to the girl. I told him, and he left.

Moments later, he was around the corner, pulling an old lady out of her wheelchair 'demanding to know where her money was. She promised to tell him if he wouldn't kill her. She told him and he left her alive but terrified.

Helicopters swarmed the sky while sheriff's units roamed the neighborhood.

Who was this person? That night we saw his mug shot on the news. "That's the guy!" we said.

Yikes!

The next morning's newspaper also featured his photo. He was still at large when he robbed the doughnut shop around the corner, then went to Tustin to steal goods at a jewelry store, where the owner shot him—dead.

We learned that he had also broken into the home of a well-known elderly couple, beloved in their neighborhood, only a mile from us. He killed them, put their bodies in the garage and ran over them with their car.

Why me? Because I had white hair and was probably alone. Easy pickings. The cowardly young man, a recent prison escapee, preyed on helpless old people as he drove around in a stolen black Honda with Oregon license plates.

The old woman in the wheelchair sold her house immediately and moved out of state. We have bells on all our doors and have kept the doors soundly locked at all times since. Although he's dead, he haunts our memories still. He stole our sense of freedom in our quiet neighborhood. But we're getting bolder now, because, of course, he's gone.

I believe I know where he is. It's where he belongs.



DRIVE IN MOVIE THEATERS

by Gary Layton

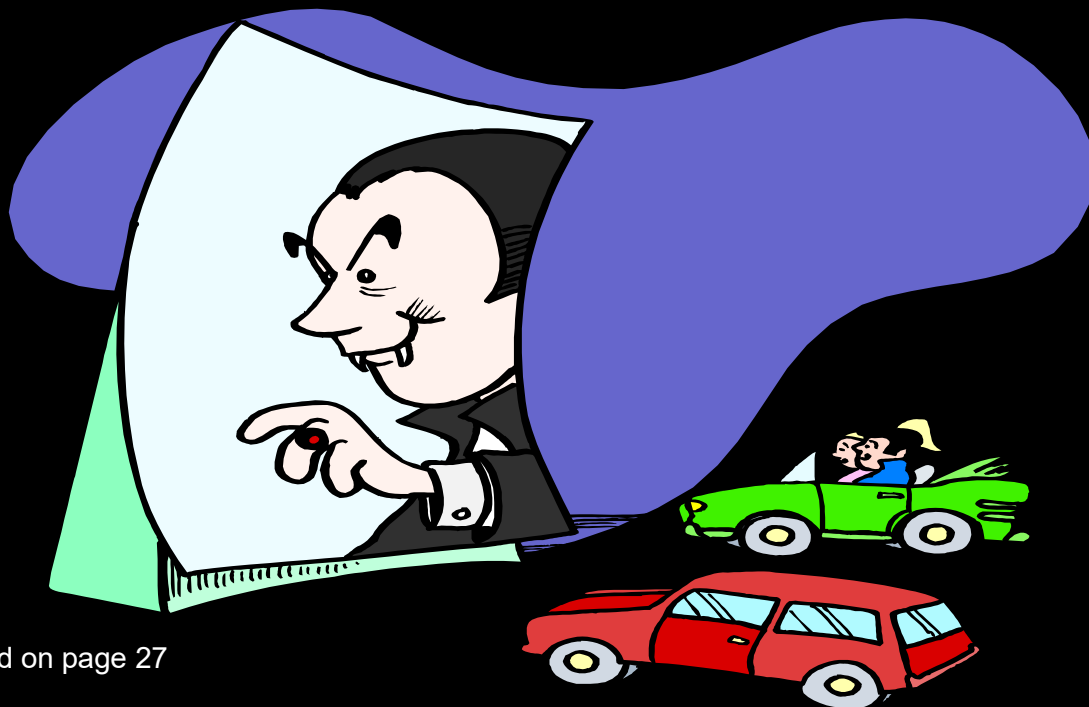
The drive-in movie theater was very popular, and many a warm summer night was spent watching the movies in the comfort of our cars. Since we were young and had limited funds, we devised many ingenious ways to get access to the theater without paying.

One of the fun ways was to back in the exit, but this strategy was often a failure. One night Doug, Gerry and I tried backing into the drive-in theater on Mission Blvd. in what is now known as Rubidoux. We had just pulled around to find a parking space when this guy who obviously worked for the theater came running up, hollering and blowing a whistle at us. The jig was up; we had been discovered. Doug pulled out and started driving up the aisle with the guy running right behind us blowing that darn whistle. Doug continued driving just keeping the guy close to us. He drove around the theater up and down the aisles several times before heading for the exit. Just as we got to the exit ramp, Doug stopped and let the guy catch up to us. As the guy got next to the window of the car Doug said, "We were just leaving." This poor guy was totally out of breath, panting and gasping.

It took him a minute to catch his breath and he replied, "Oh Ok have a nice evening."

We drove off laughing hysterically. We laughed about the incident for months.

We would often find a blind spot on the rear wall of a theater and would slide over it and look around for somebody we knew to sit in their car and watch the movies with. The theaters were set up with benches near the front of the theater with speakers so you could sit outside and watch the movie. People would sit up there if it was too hot in their cars or the kids just wanted to get away from their parents. The benches were hardly ever used. We would walk up and sit on those benches if we were unable to find any friends in the theater.



Continued on page 27

Drive-in Movie Theaters (continued)

by Gary Layton

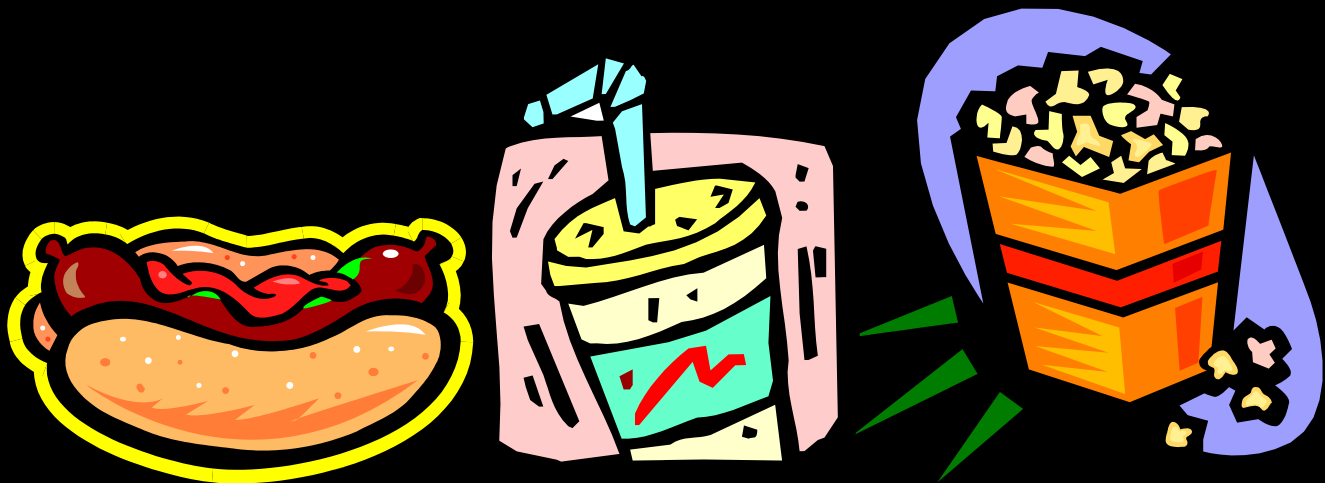
One of the most common things was to have everybody pool their money and then pile into the trunk. One guy and girl would drive in and pay the admission. The cashier would just assume that it was a couple on a date. You had to watch out when getting the people out of the trunk because the theater people would watch for trunks to open. I solved the problem in my Mercury by setting the rear seat on hinges and opening up the back wall in the trunk. That way when we pulled in the guys could push the seat down and crawl into the car without opening the trunk. That Mercury had a large trunk and could hold a lot of people. It was a favorite with everybody on movie nights

I used to hang out at Tommy's house on 4th Street in San Bernardino. Tommy was married to Millie and Tommy's sister Jo lived there as well with her husband. One night we all decided to go to the movies. Everybody but Millie climbed into the trunk. She was so claustrophobic that she just couldn't get in the trunk so my girlfriend climbed in the trunk and Millie was to ride with me up front and pretend she was my date.

Everything went well until we arrived at the theater with Millie sitting next to me pretending to be my date. There was always a line of cars two abreast lining up to get into the theater. The ticket booth was located in the center of the roadway to take the admission from the two rows of cars. They would take the admission money through the driver's side window in one row and the passenger side window on the other row.

We were about two cars back from the ticket booth when Millie noticed that in the car sitting next to us in the other row were Tommy's parents, and they were staring at us. Millie went into total panic and started screaming, "Tommy's in the trunk." We were so close to the cashier that I was afraid they could hear her, so I started revving up the engine to try to drown out her voice. The more I revved the engine the louder she screamed. I yelled at her to shut up, that she could go over to his parents' car with Tommy after we got in and explain what was going on. I finally got her calmed down by the time we got to the cashier, and fortunately, they didn't hear her over all the noise. We all went over to Tommy's parents' car after we got settled in and explained what was going on.

Tommy's parents got quite a kick out of the incident.



Purging

by
Diane Neil



During the long months of social isolation during the pandemic, I did a *lot* of housecleaning. I don't mean dusting or sweeping floors. I mean emptying cupboards and drawers and closets and storage cabinets.

It's amazing what turned up and the piles of stuff we gave to the Salvation Army--clothes we no longer wore, extra dishes, books we'd already read, tools we don't use, et cetera, et cetera. A lot of trash got thrown out. Our closets are not bare but newly spacious, and the whole house shines in its decluttered appearance.

I did the same thing with my written material. I don't mean my many short stories, poems, and memoirs that are acknowledged in their labeled folders and have a place of residence in a file cabinet. I'm talking about the scribbled notes, stacks of correspondence, *old* cards, ideas, obituaries of people long dead, newspaper articles I once thought were important to keep--and on and on.

Whew! I spent months purging. It was totally worth the effort, for some treasures emerged. A few gems of story ideas, some things I thought I'd lost, and the best of all--a lovely green faux leather "Sustainable Earth" notebook my daughter had gifted me with years ago. I have eight refill inserts, enough to last me a lifetime and will definitely inspire my writing.

XXs

by
Fumi-tome ohta

I was on the 5 Freeway going from Glendale back to Placentia. The 5 was its usual heavily congested, snail's pace traffic. A long truck was ahead of me; I decided to move to another lane. As we moved along at a boring speed, I happened to glance over to my right at the long truck. I saw a hand dangling from the open window. The hand was lithe with long slender fingernails with shiny red nail polish and a delicate bracelet around its wrist. Who is this guy? I wanted to know what kind of burly guy had a hand such as that. When I glanced over, I saw it was a young female truck driver flicking her hand in the air in play. Alright!! I said to myself with a smile. Then, coincidentally, farther up the freeway, I crept along with the traffic now stop and go, mostly stopping, not going. I glanced over to my right. There was a huge moving and storage-like truck next to me. I happened to glance over, then my eyes were riveted. The truck driver was again a young female truck driver. She was brushing her hair and looking in her rearview mirror now and then as she flicked her finger to brush a lock of hair that was bothering her eyes. I was taken with two commercial female truck drivers out and about. This called for a fist pump!

Today, I was driving along when I saw a long trailer, the kind of trailer that hauls those huge cranes and heavy equipment, the kind that has an escort with a sign, WIDE LOAD. What caught my eye was the driver. The driver was a female wearing one of those reflective vests. She was on top of the trailer dusting her trailer down. Then as she dusted, she picked up a broom and started to sweep the trailer free of its dirt and grime. I could see the immaculate difference in her trailer because by the time I saw her, she was toward the end of her trailer. That was the first time I had ever seen anyone dust and sweep their trailer. The fellas would never stoop to such a domestic task. Sissy stuff. Well, these are female quirks. It's something that we do and we do them well, don't we?

Dec 23, 2021

A Zambian Bazaar

(An excerpt from my memoir, 1984)

By
Tom Foley

Every country I've visited left an impression. Zambia topped the chart with its extremes. The beauty, the harshness of the poverty, the socialist/communist government, and the insecurity of living alongside deadly wildlife. A Zambian who survived past ten had a very good chance of living to see adulthood. Not something we consider in the U.S., is it?

Regardless of the politics or economic hardships, I've always found the local people made the difference during my travels. At the end of my trip to Zambia, I visited a local bazaar. These people were strangers but left me with a long-lasting impression of determination, craftsmanship, and something you may have never considered—surviving poverty.

One afternoon, Pete Jenkins, the Douglas rep, and I wrapped up early at work. The aircraft was in London, and the Alitalia mechanics headed out sightseeing. So, Pete and I headed to a local bazaar. We found a cornucopia of animal carvings, wooden pots, and handcrafts of every description. As we walked the bazaar, I saw a kid sitting under an umbrella carving the head of a woman. I walked over and asked, "Mind if I watch?"

"No problem, sir."

"How much in dollars?"

He smiled, knowing dollars were more valuable than Kwacha (the local money), "Four dollars American, sir. I have several just like this one. It's my sister."

"Really, I'd like the one you're carving. It looks like you're almost finished."

"No problem, sir."

"Does your sister really look like that?"

"Sort of, sir. See for yourself. She's right there." He pointed behind me.



A Zambian Bazaar

(An excerpt from my memoir, 1984)

By
Tom Foley

My African Carving

I turned to see a very slender woman, nearly six feet tall. She looked to be in her twenties, standing with the stature of a track star, holding a three-string, cigar box-style guitar slung over one shoulder. She was in deep conversation with two guys, roughly her age. One musician caressed the drum in anticipation of a tune.

The carving was a caricature of his sister's head. High forehead, long neck, and braided hair falling halfway down her back.

"What kind of guitar is that?"

"We call it a Ramkie. I made it for her. Do you want one? I can make it for you."

"No, I don't play."

"Neither does she," he said with a brotherly smile. "They perform tonight after a wedding. They are practicing. You should go listen while I finish."

I walked over just as they began to sing and harmonize in Bemba, the common language spoken in Lusaka.

The Ramkie, also called an *Afri-can*, is a type of guitar, usually made in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, and Malawi. It's manufactured using a discarded oil can for the soundbox. The neck, an unwanted piece of wood, is bolted to the can. It has three or four strings made of fishing wire or bicycle brake wire and is normally fretless. The instrument is used for repetitive chord-playing. (Google it—they are amazing).



The Djembe Drum is a common instrument across Africa and is made in the shape of a two-and-a-half-foot tall goblet. The top of the wooden goblet is covered in animal hide and tuned with ropes running down its sides. It is a beautiful piece elegantly hand carved or inlaid with a contrasting wood . . . but I digress.

The trio sang in harmony and occasionally a capella. Their performance costumes were matching faded floral prints of red and blue. As I came closer, I could see the fabric was well worn, with obvious repairs. Her leather sandals had been repaired with wire (probably by her brother). His sister sang lead, with the other two harmonizing. The drummer slapped and drug his fingers against the Djembe drumhead's skin and thumped the side to establish the backbeat.

She played the Ramki in an uneven rhythmic quaver, a reverberating sound with a metallic twang. The music and the rhythm had a haunting and erotic feel. Their bodies swayed in time with the beat. It reminded me of a slower version of "Blues Shuffle in C" by ZZ Top. I couldn't understand the language, but I could feel the blues beat in each repetitive riff.

They had a tomato tin out for donations, seeded with change. I dropped in a five-dollar bill as her brother called me back to pick up my carving. (I still have it). I gave him a five as well. He said, "I have no change, sir."

"Keep it. I think it's well worth the price. Thank you, it's a wonderful carving."

As I walked away, the music faded into the din of the bazaar but not from my memory. Even today, when I hear a riff in an old blues song or a Robert Johnson recording, I can hear that same rhythmic beat.



Poetry

CELESTIAL VIEWS IN THE DEEPEST BLUE

March 6, 2021
Aylin Belle Arnie

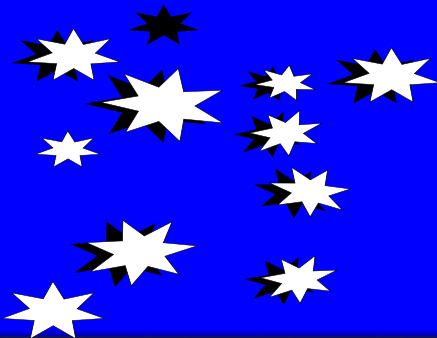
Rain birds spray my trees,
brown and bleak,
to form a misty shower in the air.
A white bird streaks the bluest sky.

High above Sister Moon with
her ever-changing charisma,
is a shy crescent when waned or
a lantern on a string that lusters

With a rebound, she commands
the deep azure beyond us.
She's a harvest moon in blazing hues or
nature's deep red flower in the heavens.

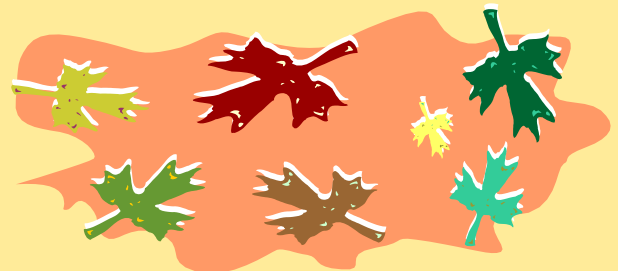
Sister Moon is often a pastel sapphire,
then a snowy faceless disk.
In a while, she's a winking yellow
demi shaped surprise.

Your mystery intrigues with a
stellar beauty that has inspired,
as long as we have lived, to those
who love and dream in the deepest blue.



Places to Publish:

Poetry and Short Stories
The Literary Review
<https://www.theliteraryreview.org/>



FALL HAIKUS at BIG BEAR

November 13, 2021
Aylin Belle Arnie

*Autumn's leaves of rust
Illustrious honey gold
middle years of my life.*

*Indian summer's
balmy- blowy- windy sweeps-
new awakenings.*

*Season's trees of red-
Shimmers- flutters of yellow
paint my old soul rich*



Poetry

Power of the Snowflake

By Barbra Badger

<https://www.facebook.com/writingbybarb>

Silence cracks because of
Water drops frozen in time

Boughs bow

Diamonds crush beneath my footfalls

Silence rules

Breathing sanctified air

Expelled as a visible expression of life
itself

This cathedral in white causes the knee
to bend

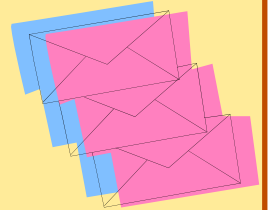
Winter is the comforter that envelops
all

The number of snowflakes rival the
stars in all the universe

Tiny gems vulnerable to being touched
Touch everything
Bending the boughs

I wrote the card to thank them for the gift. A year later, I discovered the sealed, addressed envelope in a pile on my desk, never mailed.

Did I mention that the gift was personalized, hand-made thank-you notes?



Ann Miner

Did You Know?

Jenny Margotta

At one time it was proposed that the ampersand—&—become the 27th letter of the alphabet.

The dot over “i” and “j” is called a “tittle.”

The singular of “spaghetti” is “spaghetto.” The same O/I for singular and plural forms applies to other words, such as graffito/graffiti and confetto/confetti.

“Datum” is the singular form of “data.” It is rarely used, however, probably because data typically comes in quantities greater than one.

“Going to the opera” sounds so much better than “going to the opuses,” but technically, both are correct. “Opus” is the singular form of “opera.”

Give Me a Head with Hair

Lorelei Kay

For seven long months during the pandemic lockdown,
nether my husband nor I ventured out for a haircut.

I grew my locks long, he purchased a Wahl trimmer,
and we toasted the beginning of my barbering career.

First time I trimmed his hair, I did a fine job—although
it did look like I'd used a bowl for a guide.

Next, I got even better—but I did cut it way too short by
using the small clipper guard all over without changing it.

Third time, almost perfect—except when he handed me
the trimmer, I assumed he had clipped on the guard.

Only as the clippers buzzed their way merrily up the back
of his head, exposing his pink scalp while he exclaimed,

“Don't get it too short this time!” did I realize my most
unfortunate mistake—there was no guard on the clippers.

Oops

As I stared at the 2" x 5" swatch of scalp I'd just laid bare,
I burst into hoots of laughter. I made a brave attempt to

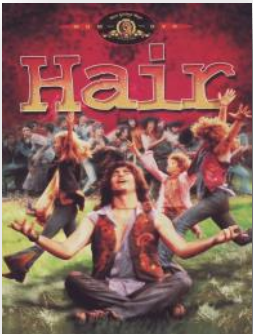
explain to him the cut gone comically rogue at the back
of his head, as looks of consternation and bafflement

crossed his face, leaving me in stitches, gasping for breath,
while holding my sides. I propped myself against the

kitchen counter for support as tears rolled down my cheeks.
Finally, smiling sweetly, I offered my defense:

“But dear, as long as you don't look at the back, your hair
looks awesome!” And thus, out of desperation, was born

the *Scalp-Touch-up-with-Brown-Magic-Marker Solution*
to save a marriage. Turns out, I have a knack for that, too.



*From the musical, *Hair*.



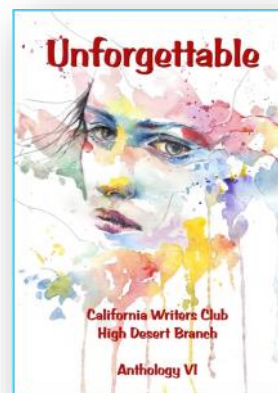
Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

JANUARY — FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR!
January 4	Board Meeting
January 5	8:00 Accountability Meeting
January 6	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
January 8	10:00 HDCWC Club Meeting
January 10	Scholastic Project Deadline
January 12	8:00 Accountability Meeting
January 13	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
January 18	2:00 Mojave River Walk
January 19	8:00 Accountability Meeting
January 20	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
January 23	Inkslinger Deadline
January 25	6:00 ACT II Zoom Meeting
January 26	8:00 Accountability Meeting
January 27	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
February 2	8:00 Accountability Meeting
February 6	Photo Shoot
February 8	9:00 Board Meeting
February 12	10:00 HDCWC Meeting
February 10	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
February 9	8:00 Accountability Meeting
February 15	2:00 Mojave River Walk
February 16	8:00 Accountability Meeting
February 22	6:00 Act II Meeting
February 24	8:00 Accountability Meeting
February 23	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
February 23	Inkslinger deadline

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



Do you
have your
copy yet?



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

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

Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

"Writers Accountability"

Zoom call each Wednesday
morning at 8:00 am

Discussions

Looking for weekly
accountability to . . .

Write your book

Ideas on publicity

Website book page with links

Amazon Author Page

Join us on Wednesday mornings
at 8 am

Zoom meeting ID: 985 7081 6164

Password: 216757

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HDCWC MEMBERS BORN IN January

January 6 Rusty LaGrange; 8 Angie Horn; 9
Anita Holmes; 15 Sally Ortiz; 18 Robert
Young; 22 Dwight Norris and Tom Foley.

Famous January Birthdays:

January 1 Mary Norton; 3 J.R.R. Tolkien; 4
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor; 5 Lynne Cherry; 9
Walter R. Brooks; 11 Robert C. O'Brien; 12
Jack London; 13 Sharon Robinson; 14
Hugh Lotting; 18 A.A. Milne; 19 Edgar Al-
lan Poe; 20 Tedd Arnold; 22 Rafe Martin;
27 Lewis Carroll; 29 Rosemary Wells; 30
Lloyd Alexander; 31 Gerald McDermott

Are You a Poemsmith?

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

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

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

Poemsmiths meet every other Thursday. Check the calendar in this newsletter.

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

mh_thompson@hotmail.com

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

MEMBER SERVICES



Dorothy C. Blakely



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

project and to plan an upcoming project with Barstow College and the Veterans' Home.

Take advantage of your membership benefits

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

Because you belong to CWC High Desert branch.

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

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

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:

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

Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?

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

We'll advertise it free of charge!

From the Temporary Editor



Temporary Editor

A New Year's Challenge

As the new year begins, I challenge all our members to write one poem or article or short story (flash fiction) to submit to *The Inkslinger*.

I am so thankful to those who have contributed. They are the life-blood of this publication. But I know there are others who have something to say. If you are one of those, here's your chance. This is your newsletter and can become a forum for your writing.

Send all submissions to me at mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

Happy New Year, everyone. May this year be your best yet.

Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Mrdaca.ma@gmail.com. Articles and stories between 200 to 500 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome. Please avoid sending items that are embedded in other media (like Word files). Call me to discuss an article or idea: 760-985-7107.

Submit January items by December 23rd
Submit February items by January 23rd



Mike Apodaca

