



The INKSLINGER

Sail On



HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

Inspiring a Community of Writers

July 2022

LUIS FUERTE, AUTHOR AND AWARD-WINNING CAMERAMAN FOR HUELL HOWSER TO SPEAK TO HDCWC ON JULY 9TH

Huell Howser, the exuberant, hugely popular host of *California's Gold* and other public-television shows, was always exclaiming to the camera in his Southern drawl, "Louie, take a look at this!" Three years after Howser's death in 2013, Louie—aka Luis Fuerte, a five-time Emmy-winning cameraman—shares the stories of their adventures exploring California, making great television, and showcasing Howser's infectious love for the Golden State.

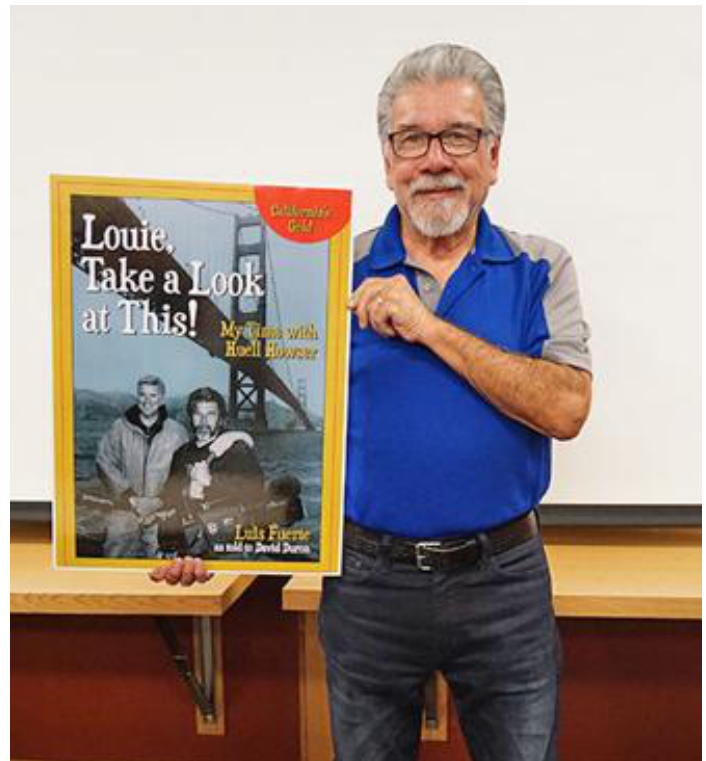
During their twelve years together, Howser and Fuerte developed not just a great working relationship but a true friendship. Genuinely interested in the people he interviewed, and fascinated by the history of his adopted state, Howser led the way from the Mother Lode to the Inland Empire, and from Haight Street to Sunset Boulevard, as the duo uncovered everything that makes California special. In this charming and informative book, Fuerte recounts some of their greatest discoveries, reveals the secrets of their success, and pays tribute to the man who struck gold wherever he looked.

Fuerte was born in San Bernardino and grew up in Colton. He graduated from Colton High School and served in the U.S Navy. He attended Valley College where he studied Telecommunications Engineering. Luis Fuerte has worked in all aspects of television and worked as a cameraman for 40 years. Fuerte is winner of 5 Emmys, received an international monitor award, and the Golden Mic for editing. He has received awards from the State of California and County of San Bernardino, for speaking and helping young people achieve, and awards from press

Photographers Association of Greater Los Angeles. He was honored as Latino of the Year in 2008, inducted into two Halls of Fame, and received the "Salt of the Earth" award in 2001.

"Take a Look at This, Luis! My Time with Huell Howser" has been reviewed by Adam Carolla on Amazon.

An "insightful" portrait of Huell Howser, California's favorite tour guide, by his longtime cameraman and partner in crime: "It's amaaaazing". 🎉



DEAN KOONTZ TO VISIT WITH CWC MEMBERS IN JULY

By Bob Isbill



Prolific author Dean Koontz has generously agreed to meet with California Writers Club members via Zoom on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 4pm, hosted by the High Desert Branch of the CWC. This special event is presented at no charge to CWC members. Links to the meeting will be distributed to CWC presidents for distribution to their branch membership.

In coordination with the July 19 release of his latest novel, *The Big Dark Sky*, Koontz will discuss his writing career.

With a track record of many of his 150 books on the *New York Times* Best Seller list and at least 16 of his novels made into movies, Koontz is on the short list of America's most prolific and successful writers.

Watch for the email from VP Mike Apodaca close to the zoom meeting on July 26th at 4:00 pm. 🚢

JULY 25 HESPERIA LIBRARY WORKSHOP PLANNED

Opening the first of three educational workshops on Tuesday, July 25, at the Hesperia Library from 5 to 7 pm will be Mary Langer Thompson teaching "How to Start Your Memoir" and Dwight Norris, discussing "Researching Historical Novels and Non-Fiction Work."

The community partnership of the HDCWC with the San Bernardino Adult Literacy Program, designed to teach the public how to "Write the Story You Have Always Wanted to Tell," will be the first of 3 presentations on this theme. August 29 and September 26 will be the following Monday evening dates for the future events.

Anyone with a desire to instruct on topics pertaining to this theme should contact Bob Isbill to discuss their idea. Contact him at risbill@aol.com or 760.221.6367. 🚢



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dwight Norris

PROMOTING THE CRAFT OF WRITING

We are a small group promoting the craft of writing but quite a busy one. Our membership is filled with talented writers, some more advanced than others but all somewhere on the journey.

Remember when three months ago, we met Jonathan Maberry, a close friend of Danny DeVito with a long litany of credits and an agent who would advise him not to accept certain assignments because he'd already done better than that? Jonathan was already a millionaire from his writing and a very heavy producer. Some of us had dinner with him at The Olive Garden, and all of us enjoyed his insights and tips at the club meeting at Jess Ranch Community Church the next day. Up to that time, I believe he was the most successful writer I had personally met.

Other writers we've had contact with included Chris Vogler who wrote *The Hero's Journey* and others who have written on specialty topics having to do with writing.

Recent meetings have included an open mic session at Jess Ranch where about ten members read from their recent compositions. The most recent meeting at the Hesperia Library was an outreach to the community to discuss "How To Write the Story You Always Wanted to Tell." The turnout was good and many members were able to give a testimony about how the club has helped them.

This month our branch will be making a donation to the Hesperia Library for \$200. The donation will be presented to library manager Alyssa Lovell, who we understand is quite happy about it. Not too many of our branches enjoy the privilege of sharing in this way.

In July we have two special meetings, one is our regular 2nd Saturday of the month meeting at Jess Ranch Church, with author and award-winning cameraman for Huell Howser, Luis Fuerte, five-time Emmy-winning cameraman. And on July 26th, as a ZOOM meeting, we will welcome world-renowned award-winning author Dean Koontz. Yes, that's DEAN KOONTZ!

And last but far from least, our branch has a speakers bureau known as On-Topic Speakers for You. Many of our members are participating and have spoken at different venues. Jenny Margotta, Jim Grayson, Mike Apodaca, Bob Isbill, and Ann Miner are among our speakers. Others are ready to go, and we can be proud of them. They are known as writers with something to say.

This is a branch of the California Writers Club that reaches out in fulfillment of the club mission statement, which reads in part, "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."

We want to thank Bob Isbill for his ideas and his hard work to implement them. Thank you, Bob! 🎉

WRITING IS NOT MY LIFE

By Mike Apodaca



Writing is not my life. My life is my life. There are many things in my life that are far more important to me than writing. My God, for instance. My wife (I write this on the morning of our thirty-ninth anniversary—it's okay, I'm not ignoring her; she's in the shower). My kids and grandkids will beat out writing every time. I will put writing aside for my friends. I wouldn't trade my health for it. All of these I would gladly give up writing to preserve. None of them would I give up for my writing. In a recent discussion with Freddi Gold, we agreed that the important thing for all writers is to find a way to write that fits with their lifestyle. The amount of writing is not important. It will be different for every person.

Take, for instance, that person who holds down a full-time job (or maybe two or three). They won't be able to produce writing at the same level as someone who is comfortable in their retirement and may have fewer obligations. The same is true with dads and moms who're investing their time into the lives of their children. This is time they won't get back. It must be prioritized. It's easy to assume that we of the HDCWC only think about writing or the writing club. Nothing could be further from the truth. While we value writing and are attempting to craft pieces with a high degree of quality and to create the most supportive

club possible, this is not everything we think about.

At our last club meeting, we had the opportunity to meet some new people and to learn about their lives. After our meeting, we went to lunch and talked more about what we were going through. It wasn't all about writing. We connected as people.

Those who only have writing in their lives have very little to write about. It's through living—being overjoyed by surprises, disappointments, shattered by grief, thrown into bed by sickness—that we have something to write. It's by falling in love, by dealing with rejection, ridicule, and betrayal that we accumulate the emotional thesaurus that makes our writing come to life.

When I was introducing Jim Grayson and reading his short biography (where I compared him to a character in a Clive Cussler novel), I kept thinking, Now this is a guy who has something to write about. Why? Because he has lived. I have a friend who recently left on a journey of discovery. He'll be traveling in Mexico, France, Spain, and India, all in an attempt to find himself. I encouraged him to journal and to write the book when he gets back. He will have something to write about.

So, some advice. Live first, write second. Give yourself permission to do this. Don't get caught up in daily or weekly word counts (unless this is something you want to do). Take stock of your life and do what works for you. If you go through a period where you cannot write at all—it simply doesn't work with your life at this moment. THAT'S OKAY! Write what you can when you can while still living your life. The important thing is to be faithful to those who matter in your life. And, when writing can work in your life, do it. If you want to write for three hours a day, go for it. If you want to do what Jonathan Mayberry does and treat your writing like a business and you clock in and follow a very regimented schedule, that's fine, too. As long as it's what you want to do, and it enhances the important things in your life rather than replacing them.

Writing can enhance our lives in many ways. But it must never replace it. 🚩

MAY I ASK YOU? Why We Do Surveys

By Mike Apodaca VP

You may have noticed that the HDCWC has conducted several surveys over the last couple of years. We do this for one reason alone—the board wants to know what you think. We want to give you a voice in the direction of our club. Our mission statement says that our club is here to help you in your writing. We can do this much better if we know what your needs are. In light of this, we ask that you to complete the surveys we send out to you.

The most recent survey, sent out last month, was meant to give the board a better sense of the talents and needs of our club. Those who did respond (about 40 percent of the club) gave us very helpful information. THANK YOU! Some were very happy with the way things are going, others had excellent suggestions that will inform the board's choices for the future. But more than half the club did not fill out the survey. Unfortunately, they were silent.

When you see the next survey, a social media survey coming in just a few days, please fill it out promptly. The surveys take just a few minutes. The board will use the results to guide us in designing future meetings and trainings.

Again, thanks to those who have made their voices heard. 🚩

Poetry

By Karen F Ohta

TO LOVE CANADA 12

Where red gold leaves fall
In the fresh cold of autumn
Breathe luster through me.
Maple leaves, crimson
Surrender to winter's chill
Lie on frosty ground.
Emerging buds of hope,
Verdant sprigs, blossoms pink-white.
Spring's sweet love song chimes.
Warm midsummer harvest
Blessings of land and spirit.
Creator's bounty. 🚩

MAMA SENT A HUMMINGBIRD

By Karen F Ohta

Mama died last week. I should be over my sadness. It's a different kind of sadness, not like a disappointment or not having the winning lotto ticket. It's deeper, it's like your heart's crying and won't stop. I saw Mama there in the hospital, then she was in that box at the church. First, I saw her, then I didn't. It's like she disappeared.

"Mama, where are you? Do you hear me, Mama?"

This morning I was walking around the yard in a big giant circle, round and round I went from the porch to all around the yard until I came to the pink rose bush Mama planted. She just loved the way the pink and white colors blended together. I remembered how my mama's face would light up and how she laughed because she thought she was the luckiest person in the whole world because she had the prettiest roses, even if the roses stuck her with those thorns and made her yell out, "Ouch!" She loved those roses so much.

But now, because Mama's gone, to see those roses that made her so happy now makes me so sad. Sometimes I even cry, then Daddy holds me tight. Daddy says he's not crying even though we're both making our clothes all wet.

Daddy cut a rose for me and put his handkerchief around the stem so I wouldn't get stuck. "We can't be sad when we look at these roses. We have to thank these roses for making Mama happy," he said.

Just then a hummingbird with a shiny red throat and sparkling green feathers flew past my ear!
Bzz bzzz.

It zipped back and forth over my head then perched on the rose in my hand.

"Daddy, look!" I whispered.

"What a pretty hummingbird!" Daddy said.

"She's not flying away. She's looking at us, like she knows us!"

"You know what?" Maddy said. "I think that's Mama telling us she's okay and for us not to be so sad."

The hummingbird looked at Daddy, then at me. Then, she turned her head sideways to caress the rose petal with the side of her face just like mama used to. The hummingbird stayed with us for a little while looking here and there like she was 'feeling' the quiet in the air. Then, she fluttered her wings, zipped up and down in the air then flew up and away. Daddy and I stared after the hummingbird until we couldn't see her anymore. As I looked in the bare distance, I spoke through my eyes, "Mama, come back...please," I pleaded in silence as moisture welled in my eyes. 🚩

JUNETEENTH 2022

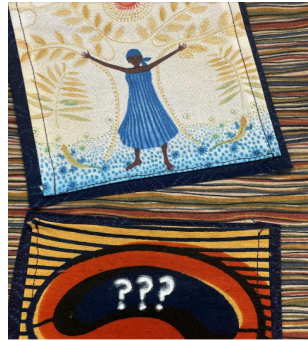
By Debbie Rubio

Sadly, on Juneteenth 2022 we admit the struggle goes on and on for the beautiful people in the High Desert. The “*Wade In the Water* Art Experience” will display quilts, paintings, dolls, and other art at the Victor Valley Art Museum, June 1- July 2. The event title was inspired by the book of this title that interprets each Negro Spiritual so the cultural history will never be lost. Author of *Wade in the Water*, Dwight L. Wilson, wrote Psalm 20:22 for the occasion. 🏹

Sheltered by Your love we harmonize with the old folks who moaned the lines of songs whose lyrics were shrouded in pain-mysteries. We bow our heads asking You to heal spirits. We are the ancestors’ continuation. They were sustained by your compassion and the promise of a future where love showers like a spring waterfall thawing snow melt into summer flowers. Through You our joy is clarified justice and their moans are transformed into joy.



The beautiful art settled in my soul. My favorite paintings—a graphic, bold oil piercing of Christ’s side spilling out water after he was whipped and hung on a cross to bear the transgressions of this world and, in contrast, the beautiful, peaceful, strong woman in blue rowing her boat across the water silently to freedom. The old negro spirituals and the crowd gently rocking as they sang moved me to tears because, after all these years, we struggle still as a community with inequity. 🏹



Wade in the water
to get the dogs off your track
Wade in the water
To avoid paddy rollers puttin’ \$10 in their sack

Wade in the water
to run from the whip on your back
Wade in the water
to never go back living in a shack

Wade in the water
to risk all to break free
Run for your money
to become the joy you should be

Look for salvation quilts
Stitched in faith caringly
Embracing slaves as brothers
Quakers like my great great grandmothers and me

believing in equality and equity...
Because God almighty made both you and me
Unity convicts me to help my brothers
have equal treatment and opportunity even if they
chase me through,
I will wade in the water and run free, too.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

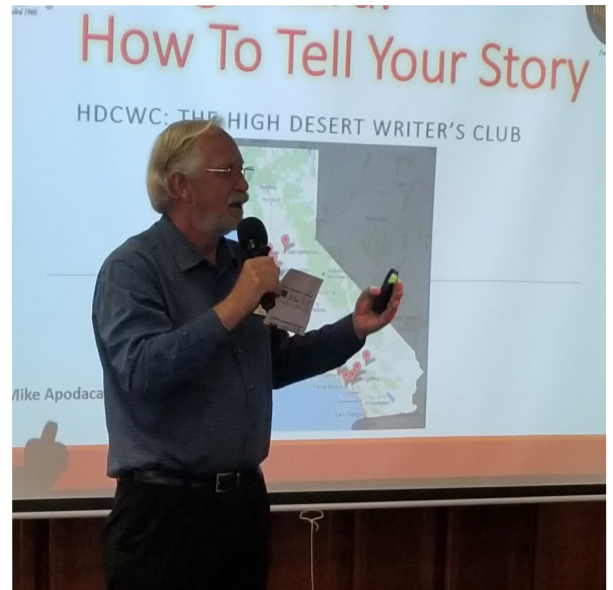
On June 6 HDCWC's vice president, Mike Apodaca, introduced our club to the High Desert Chamber of Commerce Coffee Break at the Desert Valley Senior Wellness Center.

Surrounded by leaders of hospitals, businesses, and organizations throughout the High Desert, Mike did a PowerPoint presentation explaining the benefits of being a writer and joining the HDCWC. Bob Isbill and Ann Miner were there to support Mike and represent the club. Ann even made some contacts, secured a speaking engagement, and sold a book!

The presentation became emotional as Mike talked about the importance of preserving personal stories (something at which our club has excelled) and shared about his mom.

Several potential members talked to Mike and Bob after the meeting.

The HDCWC joined the Chamber in an effort to support our community and to bring greater exposure to our excellent club. So far, it is paying off. 🍷



*"There are three rules for writing the novel.
Unfortunately, no one knows what they are."*

– W. Somerset Maugham

WRITERS ARE READERS

BOOK REVIEWS *by Mary Langer Thompson*

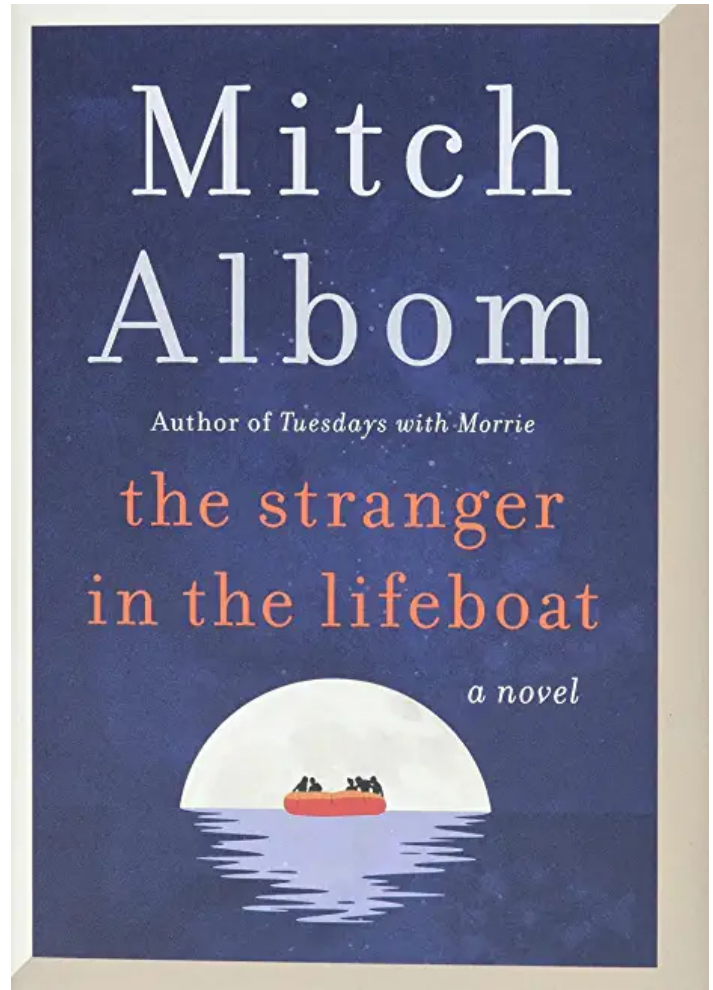
THE STRANGER IN THE LIFEBOAT

Many are familiar with Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the story of a student and his college professor described as "the bestselling memoir of all time." It is included in several memoir bibliographies. I read it when it first came out in 2002 and loved one of its quotations in particular: "Love is how you stay alive, even after you are gone." Since *Tuesdays*, Albom has gone on to write seven number one *New York Times* bestsellers plus award-winning TV films, stage plays and screenplays, newspaper columns and a musical. He's been called "The Babe Ruth of popular literature" and "a literary Spielberg."

Since 2002, I had not read any of Albom's other works, thinking *Tuesdays* was good but just too sad. Then two separate people I would not have expected began to mention Albom's name and books, saying to me, "Albom's books changed my life," and "I'm saving up to buy his latest, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*." These were some strong statements about a book and author, so I thought I should take another look, beginning with *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*.

This latest bestseller is easy to read, and you will feel you are on this lifeboat with ten passengers whose larger ship has sunk. They pull someone else out of the sea. Is he "the Lord," as he claims? Can he save them? There are plot twists, back stories of characters, and an unexpected ending in this book about survival and grief. I found it a bit too open ended in its message but a valuable message of hope and faith, nevertheless, and a gripping read.

I plan to read *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* next. Or maybe I'll get the 20th anniversary edition of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and reread it. 🚤



CANADIAN PATTERNS

Aylin Belle Amie

Maple leaves tumble
Surrender low on cold earth
Fall to frosty glow.
I look down, outlines
of crimsoned pointed endless
patterns thick and soft
Give me a vision—
Of our banner, so many
Mimicked in a carpet
Staring at me above
Maple leaves listen and beam
Glad symbol of peace

CONGRATULATIONS!

CONGRATULATIONS TO TIM O'NEAL FOR BEING GRANTED MEMBERSHIP IN THE SFWA (THE SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS OF AMERICA), A PRESTIGIOUS GROUP OF PROFESSIONAL WRITERS. TIM SPOKE TO OUR CLUB AT AN ACT II MEETING LAST JANUARY ABOUT WRITING SHORT STORIES AND BEING PUBLISHED (HIS PRESENTATION CAN BE FOUND ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL). GREAT JOB, TIM! 🚀



GRANDMA LAYTON

By Gary Layton

Every day of her life from the time of her youth my Grandmother Layton wrote in her diary. This inspired me and I follow the tradition to this day. I am sorry to say that I accidently lost most of her diaries but cherish the few I have left.

I hope someday my grandkids enjoy reading my diaries as I have hers. There is a telling gap in Grandma's diary in the middle of April of 1959. The entry on the 15th was the last entry until June 29th of 1959. When her writing resumes, you can see the deterioration in her strength by the lack of the excellent penmanship that had been in all of her entries throughout the previous years.

Grandma had been suffering a horrid sickness for weeks that was documented in her diary. She finally had an appointment to enter the hospital on the 17th of April for tests. In the early hours of the 16th of April, she had a massive heart attack that would debilitate her for the rest of her life.

I remember that night like it was yesterday. I was sleeping in a truck stop at Van Horn, Texas and was aroused by a dream of Grandma crying in terrible distress begging me to help her. The dream was so vivid that it woke me. I got out of my bunk and went to the payphone at the truck stop and called her number. One of her tenants answered the phone and advised me that she had just had a massive heart attack at one o'clock in the morning, and they were getting ready to transport her to the hospital.

I asked the tenant to tell her that I heard her calling for me and I was on my way home. I went out and got in the truck and headed straight back for California and I was sitting by her hospital bed that next evening.

Grandma always had this long, beautiful hair and kept it in a braid. It was causing her discomfort trying to lie on it and she knew she would no longer be able to maintain it, so I cut this 24-inch-long braid off. I still have it to this day and it is still beautiful.

Grandma lived another nine years after the heart attack but was never the same. She was housebound from that point on with angina pains. I did manage to take her out a few times for drives and a couple of visits to our home but most of the remainder of her life she was confined to her suite in the apartment house she owned. She did manage to continue to run her apartment house and maintain her income.

She passed on the afternoon of the 28th day of May 1968. I was at her bedside, administering oxygen and CPR, but it was her time to go and she went to heaven.

She came to me in my dreams for several years after her death. I always woke up the next morning feeling refreshed and thanked her for coming. It was nice seeing her again, but one day she just quit coming. She was an amazing lady. God, I loved that woman. 🚀





Jenny Margotta

From an Editor's Desk

LOGOMANIA

Logomania: an obsessive interest in words or, alternatively, excessive and often incoherent talking.

In the May edition of *The Inkslinger*, I wrote about many of the great dictionaries I have in my reference library. I recently acquired another one and am thoroughly enjoying perusing its pages.

Most of you who know anything about me at all know I love words, and yes, I have been accused of excessive talking (but hopefully, the “incoherent” part doesn’t fit.) I love knowing unusual words such as *omphaloskepsis* (the practice of contemplating one’s navel in order to aid in meditation) or arcane words such as *accismus* (a form of irony where a person feigns disinterest in something while actually desiring it.)

Given all that, I’m sure it won’t come as a surprise when I tell you that my latest book is also devoted to words. The book is *NTC’s Dictionary of Changes in Meanings* by Adrian Room. NTC, by the way, stands for National Textbook Company. The rather wordy subtitle to the book is “A Comprehensive Reference to the Major Changes in Meanings in English Words.” I seldom read a reference book from cover to cover, but I am doing just that with this one (usually over a leisurely breakfast before I start to work). With each word in the book, Mr. Room not only gives the new/changed meaning but also the historical meanings, along with examples of those meanings.

We all know that, over time, many words take on new meanings or become associated with an idea or action different from the original definition. Good examples are the words “gay” and “rainbow,” both of which, in today’s world, include totally different connotations than they did a century ago. Another example is the word “decimate.” Historically, it meant to kill or reduce a group by ten percent. (Think “decimal” in our base-10 numbering system.) But the common definition today means to “kill, destroy, or remove a large percentage of something,” which is almost the antithesis of the historical definition.

I delight in knowing things like that. If nothing else, they are great bits of trivia to use at a party. Following are a few I’ve discovered in my new book that I can add to the list.

DISCUSS (investigate by reasoning): When the word was first used, in the fourteenth century, it simply meant “investigate.” An old medical sense of “discuss” from the

sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries was “dispel” or “disperse.” (Samuel Johnson, in the periodical *The Rambler*, issued for a couple of years in the mid-eighteenth century, wrote of a pomade that had “virtue to discuss pimples.” In today’s usage, the much-weakened definition has become to simply talk about something.

PROPAGANDA (dissemination of information or ideas with the aim of promoting or defining): I find it interesting that to most of the world, the word simply means “the promotion of any particular doctrine or practice” and has no specific negative connotation. But here in the United States, propaganda is viewed as a bad thing, the twisting or distorting of information for the purpose of swaying the public to a particular doctrine (generally in a political sense).

PUBLISH (a word near and dear to our writers’ hearts): The word dates from the fourteenth century and had several usages, most of them defining the word as “to make known generally.” EX: “publish a will,” meaning to “execute it properly in front of witnesses.” Or “publish a libel,” meaning “communicate it to one or more people,” and “publish the banns of marriage,” meaning to “announce in public the names of those intending to marry.” The current definition of the word, of course, now is “to prepare and issue (a book, journal, piece of music, etc.) for public sale, distribution, or readership.”

Finally, let’s look at the word **AFFECTIONATE**. Today, we define it as being “fond or loving.” But the original meaning of the word was “affected, especially unduly so or even deliberately so.” For example, author John Foxe in the late 1500s wrote of “judges not indifferent but very much affectionate against me,” meaning that the judges were prejudiced against him. In later years, the word came to be defined as “kindly inclined, favorable to,” as used in such phrases as “affectionate to a cause.” William Shakespeare is credited with changing the word from its obsolete meaning to our present one.

If, like me, you are a *logophile* (a lover of words), you might enjoy purchasing your own copy of *NTC’s Dictionary of Changes in Meanings* and begin to discover for yourself how much the English language has changed—and continues to change—over the centuries.

WORD OF THE MONTH:

Bloviate (verb): To speak or discourse at length in a pompous or boastful manner.

Stanley ignored the fact that Sylvia was looking for a polite way to change the conversation and went on bloviating. Synonyms include bluster, boast, crow, exult, gloat, grandstand, showboat, and swagger. 🎪

GREATER VICTOR VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

By Ann Miner

Hey, HDCWC. Did you know that we are members of the Greater Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce? Did you know that you can attend Friday morning “coffee” every week at 7 AM because our board paid for a membership? I have been going for 4 weeks now. Mike Apodaca spoke at the coffee 3 weeks ago about HDCWC, using PowerPoint and loads of knowledge and enthusiasm. I was so impressed! I give away a book every week, and I have sold some. People ask me about the club, and today, I gave information to two interested persons. In addition, I have been asked to speak at two different Rotary Clubs—one of which I did last week—just from attending the meetings. A spinoff from that talk led to an invitation to the Military Officers Association to talk. A bonus for me is that I hold a support group for people with Parkinson’s disease and have made some valuable contacts there just by having a flyer on the entry table. So, it’s something to think about. I love the high energy the group brings. It really wakes you up first thing on Friday mornings! The next meeting will be at the Percy Bakker Center in Hesperia on July 15. I will be there. Will



Aylin Belle Amie

Blue dress billowing,

Beauty sleeps—in Streams of
Dreams—Torrents [downpouring](#).



JENNY MARGOTTA SPEAKS AT SWIM

By Mike Apodaca

On Thursday, June 23rd, I dropped in to hear Jenny Margotta speak at a SWIM meeting at the Percy Bakker Community Center in Hesperia, representing our club's on-topic speakers bureau. There were 30 people in the audience (delightful people). Jenny spoke on overcoming life's obstacles as a disabled person living alone. I was enthralled. Her presentation was positive and realistic. Jenny was transparent about her own struggles—beginning when she was just a toddler. Polio, surgeries, breathing problems, and severe mobility issues are just some of the difficulties Jenny has had to overcome. The best part—she does it with a smile. She encouraged all of us to enjoy our lives, to smile more and laugh, to find the humor in all of life. Best of all, Jenny said, is to learn to laugh at yourself. Thank you, Jenny, for inspiring us. 🏠



TELL ME A STORY

By Michel Raff

I received this image from Dragon Seed Press via Dropbox, of the *Haunt* anthology, which features my short story, "Tell Me A Story." *Haunt's* upcoming anthology has 17 authors and will be available in 13 countries around the world on September 30th. I knew when I wrote, "Tell Me A Story" that it had a lot going for it, and I'm very pleased to be published by a traditional publisher in a paperback format. Michael Raff. 🏠





THE MOST FAMOUS AUTHORS OF ALL TIME

By Michael Raff

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD (conclusion)

After Fitzgerald’s death, Edmund Wilson completed *The Last Tycoon*, using his friend’s notes. Its publication sparked new interest in *The Great Gatsby*. When the novel was published in 1925, it was considered a commercial failure. By 1960, however, it was selling 100,000 copies annually. By 2000, it had sold millions of copies and had become required reading in many colleges and high schools. John Kuehl of New York University wrote, “If you want to know about Spain, you read Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. If you want to know about the South, you read Faulkner. If you want to know what America is like, you read *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald is the quintessential American writer.” Author Charles Jackson said *The Great Gatsby* “is the only flawless novel in the history of American literature.” To this day, it’s his most influential work. Quote the *New York Times*, “In a literary sense he (Fitzgerald) invented a generation.”

During his lifetime, Fitzgerald’s authorial voice evolved, more so than the other writers of his era. His style influenced many current and future authors. He used a narrative to unify passing scenes and give them deeper meaning. Several of his peers said he possessed “the best narrative gift of the century.” High praise indeed, especially coming from his fellow writers. As with many artists and authors, Fitzgerald’s continual fame escalated *after* his passing. Tragic, considering his brief success and his inevitable downfall most certainly contributed to his alcoholism and death.

I read *Gatsby* while in high school. Although I don’t remember much, I recall how I found the character Daisy Buchanan flawed and tragic. I suspect much of the novel’s meaning was over my head, and I hope to revisit Fitzgerald’s masterpiece someday.

However, I vividly recall the short story, “Winter Dreams,” which I also read in high school. The romance between Dexter Green and Judy Jones struck a chord and rendered in me, a profound impression. Because of this article, I dug through my books and discovered *Short Story Masterpieces*, the paperback I’d purchased in high school, its yellowed pages still legible. So I read “Winter Dreams” the first time in 45 years. Elegant, heart-rendering, much of its meaning still escapes me, but nevertheless, I’ll speculate. The title, “Winter Dreams,” suggests its theme. A young dreamer meets the spoiled eleven-year-old Judy Jones. Years later, he falls in love with this gorgeous, social butterfly, endures her shallowness and selfishness, only to have his efforts crushed. Years later, when he learns Judy’s beauty has faded, he’s devastated. His dreams and memories of an unattainable woman, “more beautiful than anybody else,” that had comforted him through the years . . . “will come back no more.” It’s my favorite short story. 🚩

FUN FACTS ABOUT F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Born in 1896, Frances Scott Fitzgerald was named after his distant cousin, Francis Scott Key, the author of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Fitzgerald’s father, Edward, was the first cousin twice removed to Mary Surratt, who was hanged for conspiring to assassinate Abraham Lincoln.

In his early days in New York, Fitzgerald received 120 rejection letters and sold only one short story, “Babes in the Woods,” for \$30.00.

During WWI, while waiting to be deployed to the Western Front at Fort Leavenworth, Fitzgerald’s commander was Dwight Eisenhower.

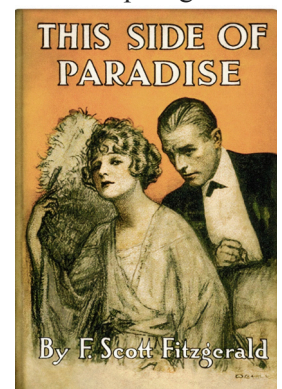
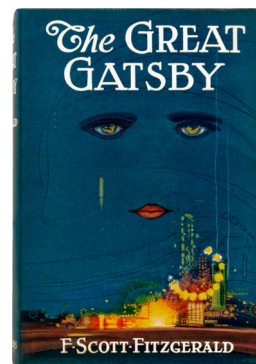
His polished dialogue for the film, *Gone with the Wind*, was never used.

Fitzgerald’s short story, “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” was filmed in 2008, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett.

The Last Tycoon was adapted into a 1976 film and in a 2016 as an Amazon miniseries.

The Great Gatsby has been adapted into film at least six times.

Until next month, keep writing, reading, and give Fitzgerald a try.



HDCWC DONATES TO SB COUNTY LITERACY PROGRAM

The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC) recently presented a check for \$200 for the San Bernardino County Adult Literacy Program. The donation, made possible by the CWC South regional division of the century-old nonprofit California Writers Club, is the third such club sponsorship of the program dedicated to teaching adults to read.

The San Bernardino County Library offers an Adult Literacy Program which helps adults learn to read or improve their reading skill through one-on-one tutoring. Adult volunteer tutors are trained through the program and paired with an adult learner to begin the program.

Such volunteers can positively impact the life of a struggling adult learner by volunteering as a reading coach. Being a reading coach is a big responsibility but is also very rewarding. Prospective reading coaches in the Read to Learn Adult Literacy Program should consult with the program to assess skills and requirements for volunteering.

The HDCWC is currently engaged in a community partnership with the Hesperia Library for HDCWC published authors to teach people with the desire to tell a story to write, publish, and market the story they have always wanted to tell. The public is invited to attend and there is no charge for participating.

Three workshops are planned for 5pm to 7pm classes on July 25, August 29, and September 26. For more information about the HDCWC, visit www.hdcwc.com or phone (760)221-6367. 🏠

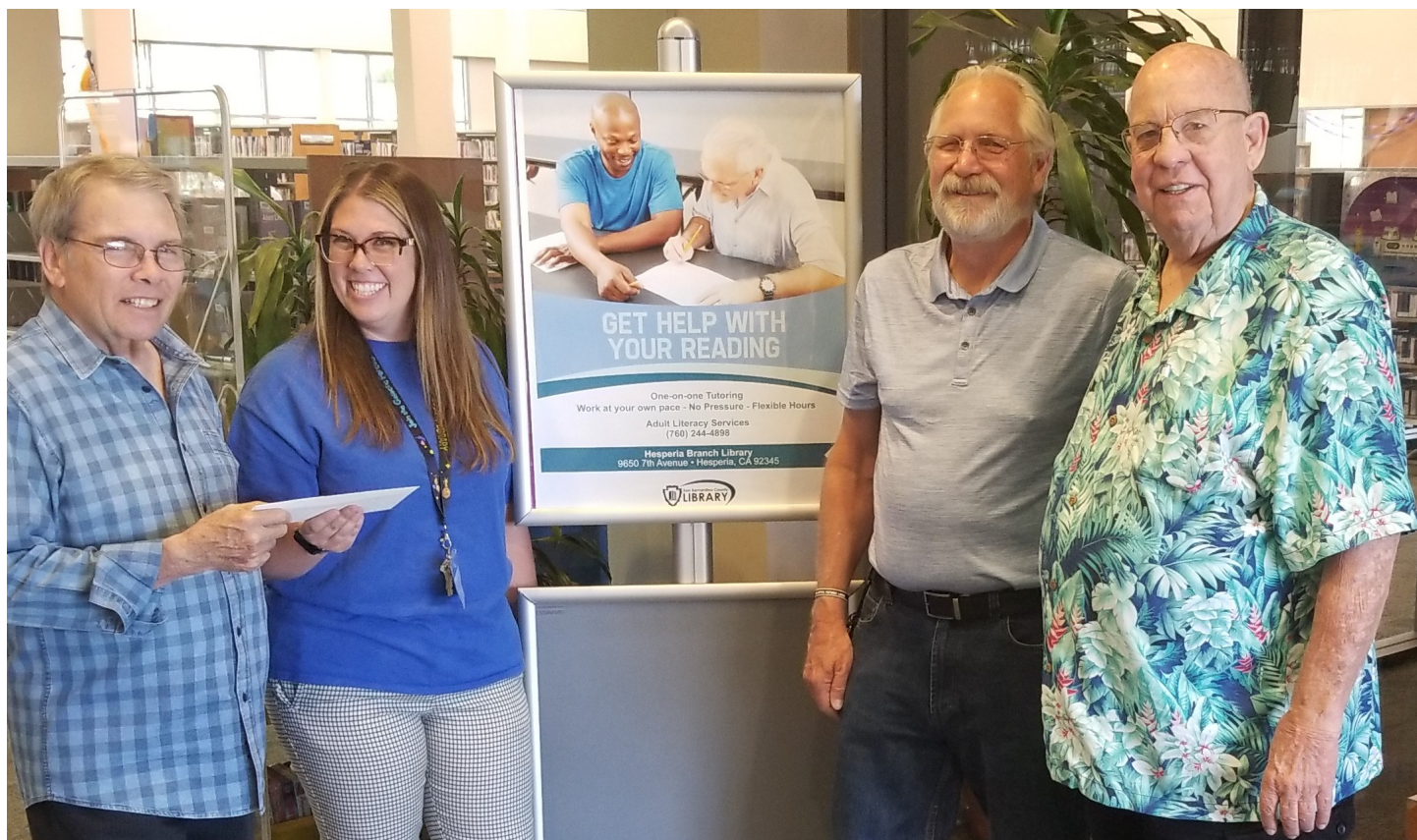


Photo caption: HDCWC President Dwight Norris presents check to Hesperia Library Manager Alyssa Lovell as HDCWC VP Mike Apodaca and Programs/Publicity Chairman, Bob Isbill look on.

ACT II

By Mike Apodaca

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. On the left, a web browser displays the website 'Much Ado About Writing'. The website has a yellow header with navigation links: 'About Us', 'Online Program', 'Editing', 'Contact', and 'Log In'. The main content area features a logo with a hot air balloon and a typewriter, and the text 'MUCH ADO ABOUT Writing'. Below the logo is a large text block titled 'Where Conference Meets Community' with the following text: 'Have you ever been to a conference or workshop and loved what you learned? Then went home and secretly wished you were still at the conference, networking with the friends and groups you met there? Or, perhaps while writing your manuscript, you thought how wonderful it'd be to get some feedback? Saying yes to any of these questions is why Much Ado About Writing came into existence. We're Kate and Gayvin, and we've longed to bring the information of our presentations and edits to a community who stays with each other long after the conference is over.'

On the right side of the Zoom window, there is a vertical grid of six video thumbnails for participants: 'gayvin powers', 'Mike Apodaca', 'Kate Penndorf', 'Richard A. Zone', 'Jane Blomstrand', and 'Pam Van Allen'. At the bottom of the Zoom window, there is a control bar with icons for 'Stop Video', 'Security', 'Participants' (21), 'Chat' (18), 'Share Screen', 'Pause/Stop Recording', 'Breakout Rooms', 'Reactions', 'Apps', 'Whiteboards', and an 'End' button.

On Tuesday, June 28th, we had an Act II meeting with the ladies from Much Ado About Writing, a new writer support service. The women, Gayvin Powers and Kate Penndorf, were vivacious and fun to engage with. They originally met in a writers group and found they clicked and wanted to work together. They were both developmental editors and discovered that many of their clients didn't know the writing craft well enough to warrant their editing services. So they rolled up their sleeves and created their web-based service, which functions much like a writers conference—a place where many writers get inspired.

For those who sign up at Muchadoaboutwriting.com, for about a dollar a day, they are taken into a daily mentorship with prompts, interaction with other writers, weekly classes with established authors, and much more. The emphasis of their service is to improve the writer's craft (focusing on things like POV, rules, character, show AND tell, description, and so on).

This service seemed like a good fit for those who love to write but need a boost to reach the high level that ends in successful publishing. 📖

HDCWC JULY BIRTHDAYS TO CELEBRATE!

July 3 Michael Patrick Brewer

July 8 Jeanne Newcomer

July 23 Monica A. Kuhlmann

July 24 Madeline (M.M) Gornell

July 29 Mary Langer Thompson

**HIGH DESERT BRANCH OF THE
CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



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Quote of the Month

By *Michael Raff*

"When the last tree is cut, the last fish is caught, and the last river is polluted; when to breathe the air is sickening, you will realize, too late, that wealth is not in bank accounts and that you can't eat money."

Alanis Obomsawin, filmmaker.

Members Only

Take advantage of your membership benefits

- Free advertising and free posting of your book titles and latest project
- Free PR author's webpage
- To find out more, contact a board member or Roberta Smith, our webmaster. You can also review your Benefits Booklet online at: www.HDCWC.com

HDCWC's Youtube Channel

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- We seek articles and stories of between 200 to 500 words.
- Poetry submissions are welcome, as are photos and illustrations accompanying submissions.
- Create a simple Word document.
- Images and text should be submitted separately.
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