



The INKSLINGER

Sail On



HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

Inspiring a Community of Writers

MAY 2022

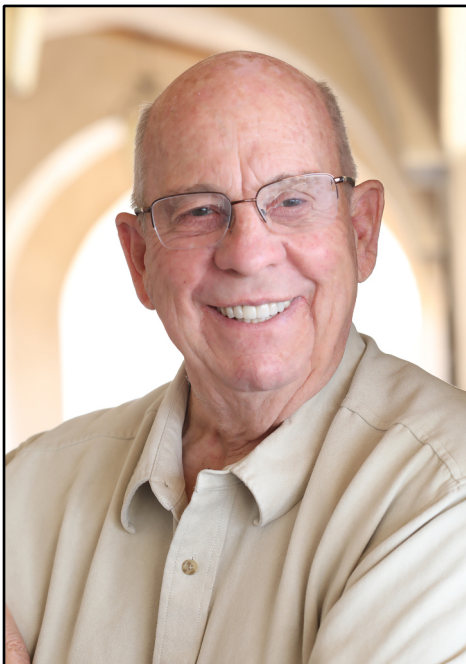
OPEN MIC READINGS SCHEDULED FOR MAY MEETING

In the tradition of Jack London and others who would meet in John Muir Park to read their stories to fellow-writers, the members of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club will meet on May 14th and share their most recent works.

Jim Grayson, Ann Miner, Aileen Rochester, Roberta Smith, Jenny Margotta, Mike Raff, Judith Pfeffer, Diane Neil, Mary Langer Thompson (or one of the Poemsmiths), Anita Holmes, and Dwight Norris are HDCWC members who have signed up to read from their works at the May meeting at Jess Ranch Community Church in person and on Zoom.



Jim Grayson Mic. In hand



Mr. Bob Isbill

BOB ISBILL TO SPEAK AT SWIM MEETING ON MAY 19

Bob Isbill was contacted by the Seniors With Inquiring Minds (SWIM) organization through the www.ontopicspeakers.com to be a guest speaker on May 19, 2022.

His topic will be “Are You Thinking of Going to Prison? Five Things I Learned at The Federal Pen.”

Bob Isbill, in his second term as publicity chair of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club, was the contact person and coordinator for a 24-month writers’ workshop at the Federal Correctional complex (FCC) in Victorville, California.

His presentation at SWIM will talk about several things he and his team of writers experienced during that time and addresses the questions: Does it really make any difference? Can it genuinely help those in prison? What risks are there and is it dangerous? In other words, is it worth it?

Bob Isbill has over 30 years’ experience in dispute resolution as a labor representative and negotiator. He has been a mediator for the San Bernardino County Court system and has been an arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau since 1997. He likes to write and is currently in his second term as president for the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club in Apple Valley.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dwight Norris

A WRITER WITH SOMETHING TO SAY

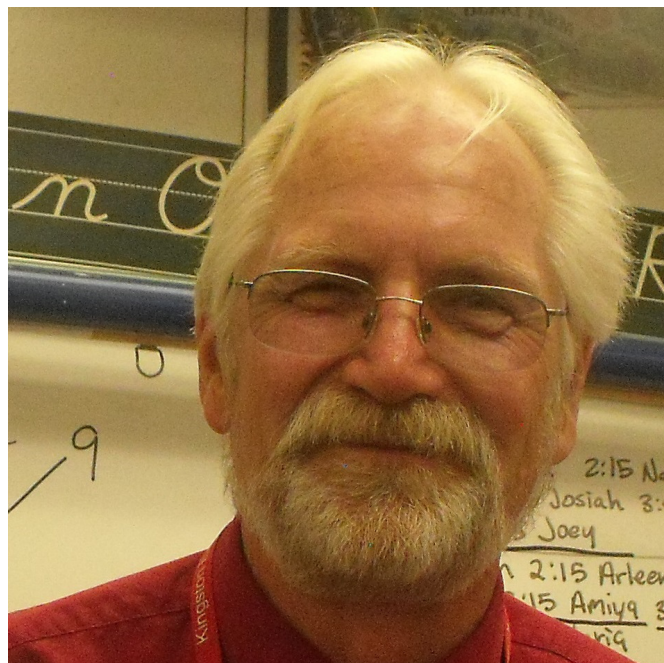
Of the twenty-two branches comprising the California Writers Club, only one has its own speakers bureau, and that's us. I was delighted to know that on the first date any of our speakers ventured out to speak, the first one scheduled was Mike Apodaca. After countless hours working on our website and helping all of us get ready, Mike deserved the honor of being the first one called.

Mike spoke at the Church of the Valley in Apple Valley on the topic *God's Image, God's Plan*. When they saw him listed as an available speaker with that particular topic, they knew he was exactly who they wanted. So, on April 14th, I accompanied Mike to one of the fellowship halls for a beautiful luncheon, along with Ann Miner who helped keep the peace. Actually, Ann is pretty good behind a microphone too and she helped with some announcements, some singing, and general crowd management.

Mike is a retired teacher, an ordained minister, and is very qualified to speak on Bible topics, as well as education and public speaking. His qualifications probably extend beyond those that I know of, but I must say that the audience loved him and rightfully so. They said he was exactly the speaker they wanted for this occasion.

By the way, Ann Miner is scheduled to speak in June for this adult group at the church. She will be speaking on Parkinson's Disease, a topic she is well-qualified for, having cared for her ailing husband and also having written a column for the *Daily Press*. She is a fount of professional knowledge and practical experience on this topic.

Other speakers who have been scheduled are Mary Thompson for the Church of the Valley in August. Her topic will be *Healing Through the Arts*, about dealing with grief and loss. Also, Bob Isbill has agreed to speak to the SWIM group on May 19th on the topic, *Are You Thinking of Going to Prison?* You definitely need to come and hear what he has to say on this topic. You may be surprised.



Mike Apodaca

We are just getting started offering our services through the *On-Topic Speaker's Bureau*. One of the reasons we are off to a good start and expect to continue in our success is that there are many small groups and clubs up here who need speakers frequently, some as often as every week. They have expressed a hearty *thanks* to Bob for answering at least some of the demand. SWIM is one such organization needing a speaker every week. Without some help it is not easy to have such a large supply of speakers.

Another point of value is that you might consider wanting to prepare to be a speaker yourself. We know that not everyone has the desire to speak in front of audiences, but this is an opportunity to develop your talents free of charge. You can take your area of expertise and polish it to help others.

We'll be following your progress in *The Inkslinger*. Won't you join us?

Jonathan Maberry Explains How It's Done

By Mike Apodaca



Jonathan Maberry

Saturday, April 9, we learned from the accomplished author Jonathan Maberry.

Mr. Maberry explained the secrets of his abundant success. He started writing non-fiction martial arts textbooks and for some of his fellow teachers who were not writers. In 2000 he began writing his first novel. He read five well-made books in the genre to begin to understand the underlying structure. His first book took four years to write.

In the '70s and '80s the horror genre was dying and slasher films were becoming the rage. He decided to brand his books as "supernatural thrillers." His book sold and by 2006 it was in bookstores.

He explained that his agent is not a horror fan, but she's good at finding places to sell his work.

When he was twelve, his librarian connected him with top-notch writers like Ray Bradbury, Gene Rodenberry, and Richard Matheson.

Matheson advised Jonathan, to not let himself get pigeon-holed into a particular type of writing or genre. Write everything. Expand yourself. Jonathan applied for many writing jobs he was not comfortable with. Publishing in many genres makes your books not compete with each other. You build multiple audiences, with multiple publishers, and multiple income streams. Also, write multiple genre books. These are easy to pitch because they hit so many different audiences.

Use your social media to tell different audiences about your books in other genres.

Also, he was told, "Don't be a jack-ass. Be kind". And, "A writer writes."

Social media has changed everything. Get involved and build your platform.

Marvel Comics approached Mr. Maberry and asked him to write for Black Panther comics for two years.

Jonathan edits the magazine *Weird Tales*.

Jonathan was approached to write for an Oz anthology. This was out of his comfort zone. He did

it. The story did not get accepted in the anthology, but he was contacted by the L. Frank Baum estate and his story became part of the official Oz lore. Writing is like a trellis with roses growing on it.

The supporting infrastructure is vital. It is fixed and does not change. It holds everything up. But you also have to have the organic part that happens during the writing. It is the story that grows on the structure.

Mr. Maberry usually writes his ending pretty early in the writing process. This way he knows exactly what his target is. It guides all his writing. It is easy to stay focused and not include scenes that don't quite work toward the ending.

Jonathan recommended the book *Writing the Breakout Novel* by Donald Maass. This book asks piercing questions about your characters, forcing you to get to know them deeply. Jonathan gets a new one for every book he writes.

Any writer willing to try new things can succeed. Write everything and have fun. Jonathan said that his comfort zone is so big he cannot see the walls. You can do so much more than you think you can. Everyone gets rejection letters. Don't worry about it. Doors are not locked for writers. Everything in our world comes back to writers.

We were given homework. Use a writing prompt every day and write for fifteen minutes. The prompt could be something we are completely unfamiliar with. Do research and then attempt it. It'll stretch you. And who knows, you might get a great idea for a story.

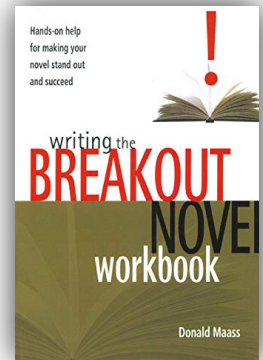
Jonathan's daily schedule goes something like this:

1. Begin day reading poetry
2. Write and answer emails
3. Write 1000 words
4. Do ten minutes of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tic-Tok). Write light-hearted stuff. Give links, repost cartoons and memes, have fun. Tell what you are up to.
5. Walk the dog for one mile (repeat 3 thru 5 four times a day)

Our writing is our job. We should treat it that way. Take a shower and get dressed. Stay focused and disciplined.

For finding an agent, try Publishers Marketplace, a subscription service that allows you to research agents. Write a personal query letter. Another resource is #booktok. This gives you a window into what people are doing in the writing world.

Mr. Maberry told us that there are many free resources available on his website: jonathanmaberry.com.



Cornflakes and Peanut Butter

A Book By *Gary Layton*

Am I a Writer?

(From the first chapter)

This is the question I always ask myself. I flunked every English class I attended in school. I never knew an adjective from an adverb, but I have always been able to express myself in words. I have a natural ability to put words into cohesive sentences, and I started writing short stories at an early age. I would show these stories to my friends and get positive comments from them. Some would tell me they could imagine themselves in the story. They would tell me I should be a writer, but a lingering thought was always in the back of my head: "You can't be a writer because you're not good at English."

I lost my father at an early age, and my mother disappeared for 30 years. Both my grandfathers passed away when I was an infant, so I only had my two grandmothers for memories. I realized I had no idea of my parents' lives. How did they grow up? What were their childhoods like? There was nothing. No memories and no history. By the time I had a family of my own, I realized that I was not going to let this happen to my children and all who followed them.

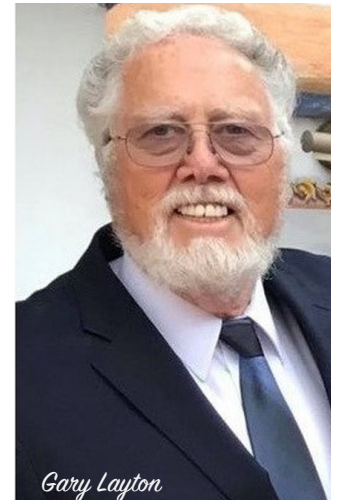
My paternal grandmother kept a diary every day from her teen years on. I had the privilege of reading them when I was in my early twenties, so I started keeping a daily diary myself. I realized over time that the short entries were not going to give those who follow me an accurate view of my life, so I started writing essays of my memories from my earliest recollections.

I wrote essays throughout the years. I would run in and make a note in my diary when a memory hit, and then I would write an essay about that memory. I kept the essays in a scrapbook, and eventually, the book was over two inches thick. I ended up with over 200 essays and they would run from a single page to ten or twelve pages.

My next-to-youngest granddaughter was given an assignment while attending Stanislaus State to interview someone over 70 and write about their life. I emailed her some of my stories, and she printed them out and put them in a book with some pictures she had of me. She said that was the easiest "A" she ever earned. She graduated with a degree in journalism and has published children's books in her spare time. Her full-time career is as a journalist for a large international trade magazine.

I was writing another essay one day and had just printed it out. I was preparing to put it in the scrapbook when the doorbell rang. I walked from my office to the front door with the scrapbook and essay in my hand. I

opened the door and a couple of my nieces were there for a surprise visit. I invited them in, and we sat down in the living room to visit. I set the essay and scrapbook down on the coffee table while we were visiting. I am getting old, and bathroom breaks are a common occurrence, so I excused myself to go to the restroom. My nieces were reading my essays when I returned, and they looked up at me and said, "These are really good, Uncle Gary. You need to put the ones about Riverside on the Riverside Facebook page."



I looked at her and said, "The what?" She told me about the group and asked if she could take one of the essays and post it for me. I told her it was okay, and she said she would send me an invite to join the group.

I got on Facebook the next day, and there was my invite for the Riverside group. I filled out the application and was soon accepted into the group. When I found my essay posted on the group's page, I was surprised. Most postings get 10 or 20 likes and maybe 5 or 10 comments. My essay already had over 100 likes and over 30 comments. I thought, if everybody likes my essays, I will post one every day.

I posted a story every day for about 6 months but realized that I was going to run out of stories if I kept this pace up. I started posting one each week. I would post it Friday night right at midnight so the story would be there when everybody woke up on Saturday morning. I was getting some great comments on the stories, with people asking me to put the stories in a book and they would buy it. I think the most memorable comment was from a guy that said the best part of his week was sitting at his kitchen table on Saturday morning, reading my story while drinking his coffee. There are no words to express how good that made me feel. There is no better joy in life than making someone happy.

I talked with my kids about the possibility of publishing a book of my essays, and they thought it was a good idea. I had no visions of grandeur about being a successful author. I just looked at it as a hobby.

I had no idea how to publish a book, so I started searching on the internet. The more I read, the more confused

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

I became. I found there is an international writers club with a chapter in California, and the California Writers Club has a local chapter right here in the High Desert. I started attending the monthly meetings and joined the club. It wasn't long before I found several editors in the club. I gave a flash drive with the essays on it to one of the ladies, and we started the publishing project.

Jenny started putting the book together. She edited and formatted the essays into book form. I gave her a bunch of pictures I wanted in the book, and she formatted them into a picture section. She designed the cover using a picture of my 14-year-old self bending over a campfire in the Santa Ana river bottom near the 7th Street bridge. I always remember Riverside being such a garden paradise in my youth, so I selected green for the color of the cover. We decided on the title—*Growing Up in Riverside*—and put it on Amazon Kindle Publishing.

I posted a picture of the book's cover on the Riverside group's Facebook page and announced it was ready and could be purchased on Amazon by typing the title in the Amazon search bar. I had no idea if there would ever be enough books sold to make back the publishing cost and was shocked when they sold out of the first printing within 20 minutes of my announcing it was available.

I have received so many great reviews and comments on the book that it makes me swell with pride. I am so happy that so many people got such enjoyment reading it. I have been told by many of the readers that it brings back a flood of memories about their own childhoods. Many have told me that they have read it several times.

This first book had 130 stories and 10 pages of pictures for a total of 311 pages. People who bought the first book were clamoring for another one, but you have to understand that it took 30 years to write the first one, and that was an accident. Those essays were for my children, not for a book. Be patient, for I am doing the best I can. I am currently up to 186 pages, so that makes it 2/3rds of the way to another book like the first one.

And so, I ask the question. Am I a writer? I would like to think so, but I still feel I don't have the qualifications. I just got lucky!

Writer's Block:

When your imaginary friends won't talk to you.

HDWC Joins Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce

The HDCWC is now a member of the Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce as of March 2022.

They meet for networking and socializing weekly on Friday mornings. Each Friday they have a different presentation. Our own Mike Apodaca is scheduled to speak on Friday, June 10th, so plan to join us in seeing his presentation, "**What the HDCWC Can Do for You.**"

In the meantime, you may join the Chamber for its coffee event and bring one of your books to donate to their raffle. Just one more way to publicize your book!

The Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce hopes you will join them for the next in-person Coffee Break at their **new location:**

**Desert Valley Senior Wellness Center
located at 19181 Town Center Drive
in Apple Valley.**

The GHDCC invites you to enjoy coffee and donuts while networking with other local businesses. Start your weekend with an upbeat and informative morning. Please also consider donating an item for their raffle.

May Birthdays

James Elder May 15

Naomi Ward May 19

Note to members: We get the birth month and day from the Member Records Management System (MRMS), so if you are born in the month recognized but you are not on our list, it is because you have not indicated your birth date and month on MRMS. If you need help doing this, contact Systems Admin Bob Isbill for assistance.

The Best Roster for Local Members: MRMS

The MRMS database allows members of our branch to view contact and writing information for other HDCWC members. It is an important tool for all of us, so it is important for members to keep their record information current.

If you do not know your USER ID and/or PASSWORD, please contact Bob Isbill (risbill@aol.com) Mike Raff (mprseven@aol.com), or Jenny Margotta (jennymargotta@mail.com) for assistance.

You can access the MRMS in two ways:

Type <https://www.mrmsys.org> in the URL box. This will take you directly to the MRMS website.

OR

Type <https://www.hdcwc.com> in the URL box to go to the club's website.

On the left menu **CLICK "Links for Club Members"**
CLICK on top line **"Link to MRMS Membership Site"**

You will now be in the MRMS website.

On the yellow Home Page, **SELECT** the **High Desert Branch** from the **Select Branch** drop-down menu

Enter your **User ID** and **Password** in the boxes indicated

Click the **"I am not a Robot"** box and follow the prompts.

Then Click the **Log In** button

Type your name in the white box

Click on the gray button marked **Edit my Record**

Move down through each white box:

- Change your address, if needed
- Update your phone, if needed
- Update your email address
- Update your birthday so you can receive a Birthday Card
- Type info to your Genre box: share your recent projects, books, awards, accomplishments, and any genres that you write in (limited characters)
- See your dues paid, date, and method of payment
- Click on **Submit Changes** button. A completed form pops up to verify what you just changed.



You can search for information on any of our members by entering their first or last name in the box on the first page.

When you click the Log Out button, you are automatically directed to HDCWC website.

Thank you for updating your record!

Speaking

April 9th we had a terrific speaker—Jonathan Maberry. What made him so great? Here are some things I noticed:

- 1. He's a successful writer. This is what we all want to be, so he grabbed us from the start.**
- 2. He gave practical advice.**
- 3. He explained his attitude toward his writing—it's his business and he's a disciplined professional.**
- 4. He had interesting stories to tell.**
- 5. He was very complimentary to his audience and made us feel we could also be successful.**

I'm writing this a few days before my first On-Topic speaking assignment (April 14th). I'll be speaking at the Church of the Valley in Apple Valley. My topic is the image of God.

To prepare, I've been studying, reading books, and spending quite a bit of time in deep thought. I've also prepared a thorough PowerPoint slide show. Years of public teaching has taught me of the importance of visuals for learning. Graphics, cartoons, diagrams, and icons can really help people understand what you are trying to say.

I've been in constant communication with the people from the venue. I've tried to be positive and express appreciation for the opportunity to share my ideas.

Yesterday, I got a call from the church custodian. He'd been given the responsibility to set up the projector and wasn't sure we would have the right cords. He sounded a little shaken up. I packed up my computer and went to the church to meet with him. I discovered I would need to bring an adaptor in order for our devices to communicate. I told him I'd take care of that. I could tell he was still a little concerned, so I assured him that it would be fine and said I'd show up early, set everything



Mike Apodaca speaking at Church of the Valley

up, and test it. Also, I'd bring my own projector as a back-up. He visibly relaxed.

Writing April 14: I did the presentation today. It went well. There was one surprise—the microphone cord wasn't long enough to allow me to see my computer, so it was hard for me to know which slide was on the screen. I had to look behind me a lot.

Fortunately, I'd practiced my speech at least thirty times and knew it well. This also allowed me to be comfortable and to really enjoy sharing.

We have over 20 members in our On-Topic Speakers bureau. We're starting to get opportunities to speak. This gets us out in front of people, lets them hear our ideas, and, hopefully, will inspire them to read our books.

For the last two years, many of our speakers, including Jonathan Maberry, have encouraged us to build our brands. We do this by creating websites, engaging in social media, and doing speaking engagements. We also have to do many different kinds of writing, not just what works in our comfort zones. We may even want to think about audio books or whatever new venture presents itself.

The point is to be heard. I'm thankful for the opportunity I had today.

HDCWC NOMINATING COMMITTEE SLATE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR JUNE 11, 2022 ELECTION

By *Bob Isbill* - Nominating Committee Chairman

In accordance with the HDCWC Bylaws the slate of officers standing for election at the June 12, 2022 meeting is hereby announced:

Those incumbent officers willing to stand for election are:

President Dwight Norris

Vice President Mike Apodaca

Secretary Joan Rudder Ward

Treasurer Jenny Margotta



The election is scheduled to happen at the June 11, 2022, meeting will be determined by those present and voting. The meeting location this year is the Hesperia Library, 9650 7th Avenue, Hesperia, beginning at 10 am.

If anyone else is interested in standing for election in any one of those four roles, please contact me.

Nominations may be made at the June 12 meeting. However, the person nominated must be willing to serve in the office nominated. If that person is not present, the person nominating the individual must have it in writing that the nomination for office is agreeable with the nominee.

Bob Isbill risbill@aol.com 760.221.6367

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHAKESPEARE AND CERVANTES!

In Honor of World Book Night, April 23, the birthday of Cervantes and Shakespeare, the High Desert California Writers Club, for the 11th year, gave free books donated by local authors to our community. The recipient of adult and children's books in several genres this year was. . .

**The Wild Goose Vintage & Thrift Store
21810 California Hwy 18 in Apple Valley.**

The purpose of World Book Night is to spread the joy of reading.

**Thank you to these HDCWC authors who
generously gave of their books:**

Journeys of the Heart by Aylin Belle Amie
The Journey of John Bunyan by A. A. Andrews
Godsend by Mike Apodaca and Jeremy Apodaca
In Boyhood Adventures: A Memoir by Frank Irving Atherton
The Wind Blows to the South by Evelyn Bender Blocker
Name of the Game by Freddi Gold
Willow Flower's Gift by Mary Ruth Hughes

Messy Missy by Lucille E. Hull
Table for Two: An Anthology with work by Lorelei Kay
The Winds of Grace by Marilyn King
A Microphone is Not the Muzzle of a Gun: The Art of Interviewing by Rusty LaGrange
Poems in Water by Mary Langer Thompson
I Lift My Eyes: Inspirational Short Stories to Soothe the Soul by Ann Miner (Photographs by Kat Miner)
Ajjic by J.P. Newcomer
Johnny McCarthy: A Coal Miner's Son by Dwight Norris
Silk or Sugar by Elizabeth Pye
Special by Michael P. Raff
Janie Plants a Tree by Rita Wells
Footprints From Around the World: A Collection of Memoirs by University Preparatory High School (Victorville) students in association with HDCWC
Howling at the Moon, Anthology of the California Writers Club, High Desert Branch
Tales Between the Sand and Stars by the High Desert Branch California Writers Club

Thank you Linda Boruff, Robert Keith Young and Mary Langer Thompson for distributing!



Jenny Margotta
From an Editor's Desk

DICTIONARIES

“Look it up in the dictionary.” I’m sure every one of us has been given that particular directive at least once—from a teacher, a parent, or both.

The key word in that directive, at least for the purposes of this article, is the word *the*, as in *one*. In grade school, there was probably only one in your classroom and, generally, one at home. So you didn’t have to ask, “Which dictionary?”

In high school, when required to take a foreign language, your choice of dictionaries most likely grew to two. Your standard, English-language one, and a French-English, Spanish-English, German-English, or whatever language you were studying.

Today, as I sat here wondering what to write for my monthly *Inkslinger* article, I studied the bookshelf of reference books behind my chair. I knew I had several dictionaries, but I was surprised when I actually counted them: 18! I have 3 Spanish-English ones, 3 Italian-English ones, 1 French-English dictionary, 2 standard, current-English dictionaries, 1 Encyclopedic Dictionary of English, and 1 English dictionary published in 1902. (For those words you can no longer find in current dictionaries or whose meanings have changed.) Then there are “specialty” ones: the *Dictionary of Problem Words and Expressions*; *The Highly Selective Dictionary of Golden Adjectives for the Extraordinarily Literate*; *The Grandiloquent Dictionary*; the *Describer’s Dictionary*; *Webster’s New Explorer Dictionary of Word Origins*; *An Informal Dictionary of Computer Terms*; and *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*. I also constantly access 2 online sources: one for idioms (idiomsonline.com) and one for etymology (etymonline.com). If you’ve never looked at either of those, you should! I find them fascinating and a *must* for writers.

I also have 6 distinctly different thesaurus publications, as well as books like *2107 Curious Word, Origins, Sayings & Expressions*; *FUBAR: Soldier Slang of World War II*; *The New York Public Library Science Desk Reference*; *The Synonym Finder*; *The Grammar of the Ancient World*; a book

of delightful regional idioms called *Butter My Butt and Call Me a Biscuit*; and more. But I’ll save discussing those for another article.

Given all my dictionaries then, I am definitely justified to ask, “Which dictionary?” They all serve a purpose, depending on what I’m editing or writing, especially if I’m working on anything historical. For me, at least, I find it very jarring when I find characters using words or phrases or referring to something that didn’t exist in the story’s timeframe. I distinctly remember removing numerous “time” references such as “hours,” “minutes,” etc. from my own adventure novels set in the early 12th century.

In most cases, it’s an obvious choice which dictionary to use in any given circumstance. But some are “specialist” dictionaries. For instance, if a character is highly educated and somewhat of a vocabulary snob, I pull out *The Grandiloquent Dictionary* by Russell Rocke, which offers “exotic, curious, and recherché words” you don’t normally hear in general conversation. Words like *morbific* (causing disease or sickness), *noetic* (of or pertaining to the mind or intellect), or *omophagic* (of or pertaining to eating raw flesh.) You want to be careful having your characters use too many of those words too often; few readers enjoy the necessity of keeping their own dictionary next to them to constantly research words they do not know.

Another favorite is *The Highly Selective Dictionary of Golden Adjectives for the Extraordinarily Literate* by Eugene Ehrlich. It offers up words like *crepuscular* (dim, resembling twilight), *ignominious* (humiliating, contemptible); *nescient* (ignorant, agnostic); *raffish* (tawdry, engagingly disreputable) and *stridulous* (emitting or producing a shrill, grating sound).

The Dictionary of Problem Words and Expressions offers more than just spellings and definitions. It compares words that some might think are synonymous but really are not. For instance:

curious; inquisitive. *Curious* suggests a desire to know, especially to learn about matters that are not really one’s concern ... *Inquisitive* implies the asking of questions, the act of prying, in order to satisfy curiosity.

All that said, as writers—and hopefully, ones who want to improve their writing skills—it should never be just, “Look it up in the dictionary.” It should always be a question of, “Which dictionary?”

WORD OF THE MONTH: *captious*. (Look it up!)

Poetry

Somewhere in Space

By Aylin Bele Amie
(February 14, 2021)

Tinkling belles, a sweet sustained flute. . .
Tranquil music played next to my bed.
Buzzing, grinding awakening groans. . .
Of garden blowers blare outside my windows.

I exist in the midst of two
I grasp then, that we live
In the expanse between
The mellow and the maddening.

When Love is Thine

By Dwight Norris

When love makes light thy darkest hour,
And gives brilliance to thy very being,
Like the filtered sunlight of a waking forest.

When love sparkles thine eye like new blossoms
In the greening field,
And runs down thy breast like streams
Of fresh melted snow

When love rests upon thy neck in a wreath
Of triumph
And graces thy shadow in the misty morn.

When love adorns thine head like a crown
Of precious jewels,
And fills thy soul like rich red wine.

Decline it not,
For thou knowest not,
When love shall once again be thine.

8-it

By fumi-tome ohta

I had a big exam the next morning and I planned on staying up and cramming for it. I wasn't going to gorge myself with food because I knew that if I had a good meal, I would start to fall asleep. I had also heard that eating too much chocolate would make me sleepy so I put my family-sized Snickers away.

A couple of hours went by. I went into the kitchen to make a pot of coffee. As I was seeking out the coffeepot and Kona coffee grounds, I spotted three Godiva chocolates sitting atop the toaster. I didn't think anything of it as I picked up one chocolate, unwrapped it then ate it. After the chocolate melted in my mouth, my eyes focused on the next Godiva chocolate. I popped the next one in my mouth. Two pieces shouldn't hurt me, I'm not on any diet. That chocolate melted too quickly in my mouth. I saw one last piece in its shiny foil wrapper. Godiva chocolate is so much smaller than a See's candy, and it would be a shame to leave that one Godiva chocolate on the toaster by itself. I rationalized that I know I would forget about that lone Godiva as I further rationalized that the chocolate would deteriorate, looking whitish, dry and old, so...I ate it! As I savored it, I worried that I had jeopardized my wakefulness. After a few deep breaths of guilt, I worried a split second, took a personal physical inventory of my mental state then waved any guilt away. When the Kona coffee was ready, I nixed two couplets of vanilla-flavored cream away to drink my coffee black, then clicked my body upright for a fight to cram with all my might and any urge to let even one eyelid think of dropping its shutters. I repeated a mantra because I wanted to believe, "Humph, I'm not sleepy at all," I said with twothumbs up.
Pomaika'i (good luck!)



Weapons of mass production



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Writers with something to say

THE VALUE OF CRITIQUE GROUPS

By *Michael Raff* (Critique Group co-chair)

I've belonged to at least four critique groups since joining the club, and for a while, three different ones at the same time. I could write an entire book about how much I picked up. (Keeping your narrative in the same tense, and same point of view, for example.)

I had learned the importance of critique groups back in the eighties, when I was living in Chino, nearly a lifetime ago. A lot of writers think they've just written the next *Grapes of Wrath* until receiving a reality check from another writer or a rejection slip from a publisher. Sure, moms, husbands, friends and wives *adore* your work. But they're not the best judges because they're not *objective*. Your writing peers, however, are a different story. (No pun intended). The input you receive from them is not only valuable to your writing, but you also learn the *craft* of writing, an almost on-the-job training session but without pay. (Wouldn't that be nice!) And of course, your peers can learn valuable tools from you as well.

Joining a critique group, in my humble opinion, is the most important benefit to our club. Check out the guidelines on our branch's website, then consider joining or starting one. You won't be sorry.



THE MOST FAMOUS AUTHORS OF ALL TIME

By *Michael Raff*

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Born in Minnesota in 1896 but raised in New York, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was an American novelist, poet, essayist, short story writer, and screenwriter. As a boy, he was described as unusually intelligent with a keen interest in literature. His father, Edward, an alcoholic, had problems keeping jobs, and although they lived off the mother's inheritance, were considered middle-classed. Fitzgerald attended St. Paul Academy and Princeton University, where he befriended future literary critic Edmund Wilson. He published his first story in a school newspaper at 13. He also published stories and poems while at Princeton and was recognized for his literary potential.

Fitzgerald fell in love with Chicago socialite Ginevra



Fitzgerald in 1929

King. Although she loved him, due to their differences in social status, they were doomed from the start. Their relationship ended after her father told Fitzgerald, "Poor Boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls." Ginevra, would be his literary model for many of his short stories and novels.

A depressed Fitzgerald enlisted during WWI—he never saw
(Continued on page 13)



Ginevra King

(Continued from page 12)

Combat— and received a commission as a second lieutenant and attempted to have his first novel published, but he was rejected, even after revisions. Yet, the reviewer praised his writing.

When stationed in Alabama, Fitzgerald met Zelda Sayre, a 17-year Southern belle from an affluent family. It was a complicated relationship from the beginning. He was still in love with Ginevra, but when she married a wealthy businessman, he began pursuing Zelda more aggressively. When the idea of marriage arose, she declined until he proved himself financially successful. When he was discharged from the Army, he moved to New York City, wrote advertisements, and continued trying to

be published. Even though they lived apart, he and Zelda became engaged. Yet, her family were against the match, wary of his lack of finances, Catholic background, and excessive drinking.

Fitzgerald lived in poverty in New York. Rejected 120 times, he sold one story, “Babe in the Woods.”

After Zelda broke off their engagement, Fitzgerald quit his job, returned to Minnesota, and moved in with his parents. It’s believed he was suicidal. He made a last effort to rework his book, changing the name to *This Side of Paradise*, an account of his Princeton days and his relationships with Ginevra, Zelda, and others. When he received a telegram his book had been accepted, he was so happy, he ran outside and halted cars to share the news.

This Side of Paradise proved an instant success, selling 40,000 copies its first year. It grew to be a cultural sensation, and Fitzgerald became a household name. It was hailed as the year’s *best* American book, the first realistic US college novel. It launched his career, and his short stories started selling at a better price. It also brought Zelda back, and although his feelings for her had dissipated, they were married in April 1920 at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.

The newlyweds lived at the Biltmore Hotel until such behavior as Fitzgerald doing handstands in the lobby and Zelda sliding down the banisters got them kicked out. They moved to the Commodore, where they were asked to leave for spinning in the revolving door for half an hour. Dorothy Parker first met them riding on the roof of a taxi. Their joy mirrored the societal giddiness of the Jazz Age—a term Fitzgerald created in his essays and stories—an era of a morally permissive time when Americans became embittered with prevailing social norms and obsessed with self-gratification. Yet—the couple quarreled and Fitzgerald’s drinking escalated.

(To be continued)

IN MEMORIAM

*Allen Reid, former HDCWC member,
passed away on April 19.*

*Although there is no official cause of
death at this time, it is believed to be a
result of complications from a surgery
he had early in April to remove a
cancerous tumor.*



HDCWC POETRY MONTH

I didn't know exactly what to expect from the HDCWC Poetry Month presentation at the Hesperia Library on April 23rd. What transpired was a true delight.

Mary Thompson, who put this event together along with World Book Night, explained that the first hour would be a workshop with three different stations where people could experience various types of poetry by creating it. There was a table for Haiku, and one for Free verse using metaphor dice, and one where participants would look at pictures and use them to help them create verbal imagery. Everyone who participated seemed to have a great time.

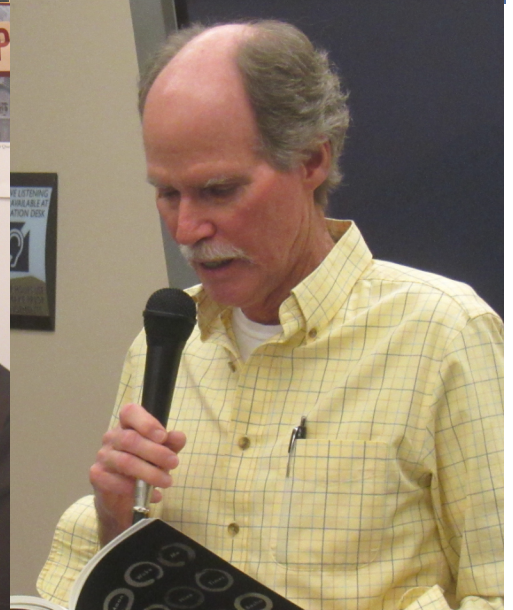
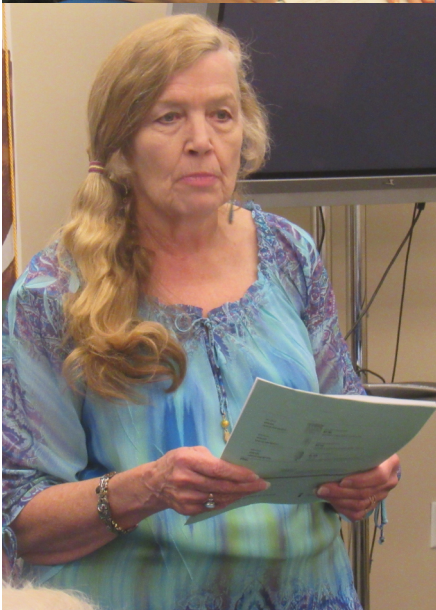
We had a short break and ate snacks provided by our own hospitality queen, Rita Wells.

The program ended with a special session hosted by Lorelei Kay. Judith Pfeffer, Aylin Bell Arnie, Linda Boruff, Robert Young, Dwight Norris, Lorelei Kay, and Mary Langer Thompson each took the microphone and shared very moving poems.

This was a wonderful event where we connected with people from the community. We made our club known (we were giving out cards and inviting visitors to our Saturday meetings). Best of all, we took a deep dive in the beauty of language and how it can touch us.

In the last Harry Potter movie, *The Deathly Hollows*, Dumbledore explains to Harry that the greatest magic is the magic of words. They are powerful, doing great harm and great good. Poetry is the highest form of the raw power of words.

By *Mike Apodaca*



WRITERS ARE READERS

Book Review

by Mary Langer Thompson

April was Poetry Month and I am delighted to review here the newly released anthology *Doctor Poets & Other Healers: Covid in Their Own Words*, edited by Thelma T. Reyna, twice a speaker at HDCWC meetings. Since her first book of stories in 2009, *The Heavens Weep for Us and Other Stories*, Thelma has published five poetry books. This is the fourth anthology she has edited since 2015. She has also started Golden Foothills Press, an independent publishing company, and her own books and anthologies have won several awards. Dr. Reyna co-edited this book with physician scientist Frank L. Meyskens, Jr. and psychologist Johanna Shapiro.

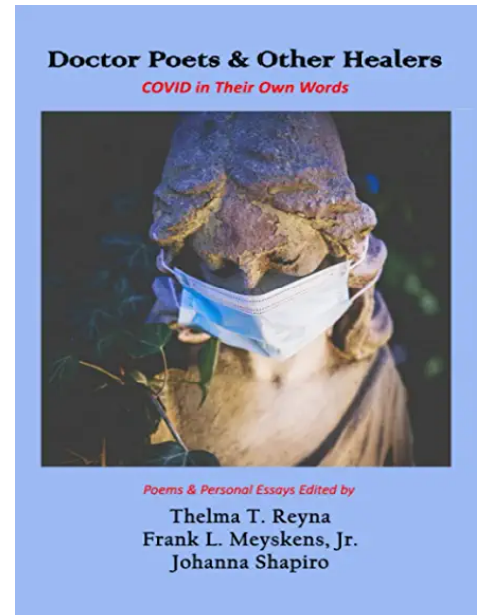
If you have ever thought doctors stay objective and only think clinically about their patients, you need to read this anthology in which nurses, doctors, psychologists, caretakers, social workers, medical students and a hospital chaplain write both essays and poetry about their experiences in a world affected by Covid. The selections deal with their feelings of grief and loss in an uncertain world.

“Chronic,” by psychologist Lisa C. Krueger, discusses her own child’s illnesses and those of other children. She says, “The ill child reminds us of darkness.” She talks about the isolation of illness and how we abandon each other when we need each other the most. Krueger admires her daughter and has hope for all of us during this Covid time. Meyskens, Jr.’s poem, “Connections,” is about different types of hugs. Miotto’s “Love in the Time of Covid-19” is a pantoum, a form recently discovered by our Poemsmiths. The final line of a poem by Nigliazzo, “Mask,” says, “I give you only my eyes.” “Loss,” by Rajaram asks, “Where was empathy?” and in another poem, “But when will these Covid times end?” Compassion shows through in a republished piece “In Need of a Prayer” by Jo Marie Reilly. A heart-rendering story is included in “I Lost My Sister to Covid” by Rodriguez-Rodriguez. Her beloved sister, another doctor who lived far away in Spain, died before the author could say goodbye. Many will identify with her numbness and denial. She says no matter how much you push your emotions down, “grief speaks out with unexpected timing and with unnerving intensity.”

You will learn how “health care workers have developed a culture where others go first” (pg. 73) and how they function, even if not always at 100%. Covid is considered “a war.” Read Shapiro’s prayer and question, “Who knows what anything really means these days?” Psychologist Shapiro, one of the editors, describes doctors as “filled with despair,” and admonishes us to “See yourself in them, then maybe they will see themselves in you.”

These poems and essays are personal, and there is great loss in the loss of sisters, fathers, and loved ones of their own. In “Face Time” by Peter Young we marvel at how a small virus demands so much from us.

Doctor Poets & Other Healers: Covid in Their Own Words is a 5-Star anthology available on Amazon and from Golden Foothills Press.



CHRIS VOGLER TAKES THE MYSTERY OUT OF ARCHETYPES

By *Mike Apodaca*

On April 26th our club was treated to another fascinating session with Christ Vogler, the author of *The Writer's Journey*.

Our evening began with casual discussion over heroes in today's world versus when some of us were growing up. It was pointed out that we've lost many of the guardrails today and that right and wrong are much less clearly defined. Our generation tends to be cynical.

Dwight started the meeting by welcoming members from the eight other clubs who had joined us for this meeting. We had forty people in attendance all together.

Chris began by telling us that archetypes are the ways that different characters work in stories. They represent patterns in mythology, dreams, and psychology. These types transcend cultures. When you focus on what the character is doing at any particular time in the story, rather than on a character type, you are far more likely to avoid clichés and create something interesting.

For the last six months, Chris has been studying the word "Character." It comes from a Greek word which means engraving tool or the marks, impressions, or grooves left in stone, leather, or wood. This is what a character is. S/he is a person made up by the blows of life and her/his reactions to them and how s/he shapes the world.

The Greeks took character aspects and turned them into gods. For example, excellence (Greek, *Irete*) is personified in the goddess *Irete*. Chris is doing a study on characteristics such as luck, contest, justice, and revenge.

Chris then began to explain archetypes. The characters in our story will wear different archetypal masks, trying on different personas at different times. The protagonist in a story may wear all the other masks. It makes them far more interesting. Archetypes include:

The Hero: The hero is a role model. S/he is generally the main character in the story. The change in the times has really changed the ways heroes function. We can also have dual heroes or collective heroes (as in *Lord of the Rings*). The audience usually has the most interest in the hero. They may have experienced tragedy. It's often important to have the hero do something nice or good in the beginning of the story. The hero usually has the most to learn. They are the most active person in the story. They are tied to the concept of sacrifice, of taking responsibility. Often, they are imperfect, flawed, or missing something.

Mentor: The mentor is a character who helps the hero. But they can only go so far, and then the hero must go it alone. Think Gandalf or Obi-Wan.

Shadow: This is the villain. The shadow is from Jung—it is the dark side of a person. It is the mistakes and regret, the pain. When this takes an external expression, it is the enemy.

Shapeshifter: Romance and Friendship. This is a person who doesn't show their cards. They make an initial impression that may not be true. It is someone not being completely transparent. This often works well in relationship stories.

Trickster: This has a long ancient tradition beginning in Egypt and Africa and coming to America with slaves. They began with stories of weak animals outsmarting their predators. They bring humor to stories.

Threshold Guardians: They guard the door to a larger world.

The Ally: Sidekick. Someone to be with the hero. A teammate. They can create humor and give advice. Sometimes they are threatened or sacrificed.

Chris Vogler is always a treat to be with. He's a deep-thinking, wonderful expert with tons of experience in the world of storytelling.

May Day

Sara Teasdale - 1884-1933

A delicate fabric of bird song
Floats in the air,
The smell of wet wild earth
Is everywhere.

Red small leaves of the maple
Are clenched like a hand,
Like girls at their first communion
The pear trees stand.

Oh I must pass nothing by
Without loving it much,
The raindrop try with my lips,
The grass with my touch;

For how can I be sure
I shall see again
The world on the first of May
Shining after the rain?

This poem is in the public domain.

Originally published in *Flame and Shadow*, by Sara Teasdale.

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Quote of the Month

By Michael Raff

*"Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things
which escape those who dream only by night."*

- Edgar Allan Poe, poet and short-story writer (19 Jan 1809-1849)

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