



# The INKSLINGER

Sail On  
HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC  
Inspiring a Community of Writers

**November 2021**



## November 13th Celebrate our Anthology

**It's time to celebrate!** Our club has reached another milestone. We've published our sixth anthology—*Unforgettable*. This book highlights the importance of unforgettable characters that drive stories and poetry.

Come celebrate with us on November 13th at 10:00 at the Community Church in Jess Ranch. Bring your friends and family.

There will be readings—poetry and stories—from the authors.

The submissions were also judged according to a clear rubric and the winners will be announced and cash prizes awarded at this meeting.

The anthology will also be on sale that morning for a reduced price of ten dollars.

The volunteer team for *Unforgettable* is Editor Jen-ny Margotta, Membership Chair Michael Raff, and HDCWC Historian Steve Marin.

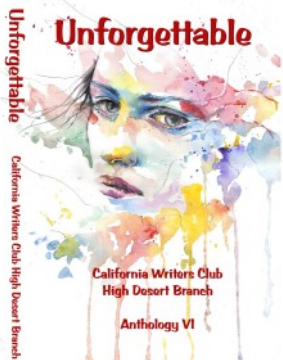
Characters are the foundation of any story. Although memorable stories have great plots, even more essential is a strong character who breathes life into that plot and carries it along. Whether you hate the characters or love them, without them a plot is merely a series of events requiring little emotional investment from the reader.

Characters can be flawed and brimming with weaknesses or they can be heroic, putting others before themselves and performing unthinkable sacrifices. In any case, characters must be believable, coming to life on the page.

The members of the High Desert Branch of the prestigious California Writers Club were challenged to submit character-driven stories, memoirs, or poems for the branch's sixth bi-annual anthology. The results are the 41 unique offerings from 21 authors found here.

"My mother often asked true stories about unusual people by saying, 'He was a real character, alright.' As I read through the stories and poems in *Unforgettable*, that's what I lost thinking. There are some great characters here, brought to life by authors who have honed their craft and understand how to provide an engaging story, whether in prose form or poetry. From poignant to humorous, this book offers a lovely sampling of unforgettable characters."

—S. Kay Murphy, author  
The Painted Legacy of Retha Gifford  
Guest Contributor



## November 23<sup>rd</sup> Zoom with Brian Gaps



Whether you are a branch organizer or a writer, if you want to know more about reaching a wider audience, join us on Zoom for an interview with a marketing professional on Tuesday, November 23, 2021,

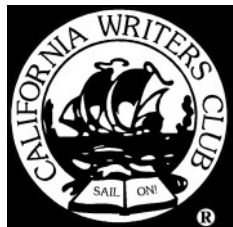
at 6pm. We have arranged for this expert to share his insider knowledge and guide us toward success in this format designed to increase our branch membership.

Brian Gaps is the CWC branch president and 2021 Jack London Award recipient for Orange County. He will share techniques used to grow club membership in a year in which most branches lost members. Equally vital to the future success of the club is that the new member's average age is an estimated 25 years younger than the club's traditional membership.

Brian is currently a senior copywriter working in the advertising and marketing industry. He is a former partner at a boutique digital agency and co-hosted a marketing radio show on KLAA AM830. He taught an 11-year-old how to build a YouTube channel that reached over 50 million views.

**We are inviting all branches to attend this event.**

High Desert branch  
of  
California Writers  
Club  
Board of Directors



*The following officers  
and appointed positions are current for  
the fiscal year of July 2021.*

**President**

Dwight Norris  
hdcwcpresidentdnorris@gmail.com

**Vice President**

Mike Apodaca  
Mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

**Secretary**

Joan Rudder-Ward  
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**Treasurer**

Jenny Maraotta  
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**Member-at-Large**

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Mike Apodaca  
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**Webmaster**

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## Quote of the Month

By

Michael Raff

"There is no such thing as a self-made man. We are made up of thousands of others. Everyone who has ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has entered into the make-up of our character and of our thoughts."

George Matthew Adams, newspaper columnist.



For what it's worth

Writing is getting happy

Stephen King

### Our Address

HDCWC  
17645 Fisher Street  
Victorville, CA 92395



**Dwight Norris**  
from the  
President

## The Story of Sandy Armistead

A few years ago I walked into one of my favorite places for lunch, the El Pollo Loco down on the corner close to where I live. It was about 1:30 PM when I entered and I was surprised to find a small line of half a dozen people waiting to place their order.

I said to the man in front of me, "You would think you could come in here some time of day and not have to stand in line."

He smiled and asked, "Do you know why?"

"Yeah, I know why. The food is *really* good."

He agreed, and we met over at the soda machine. I guessed he was in his mid-seventies. Now, he happened to be a black man, and while we were getting our drinks I don't know what made me say this, but out of my mouth came the words, "So what's *your* story?"

"Huh?" he wondered.

"Well, you look like you've got a story to tell."

We ended up having lunch together for about two and a half hours. The first thing that he told me was he was ninety-six years old. I was shocked—missed it by just a little. The next thing I recall hearing was that his grandfather was a slave. This also was shocking to me. Of course, I never had to deal with such a thought regarding *my* family.

"What?" he sounded off in a high-pitched voice.

He went on to speak of his family life growing up in New York City with seven brothers and sisters. He lived in a big three-bedroom apartment in a building nine stories tall. All in all, there were four boys and four girls, so the spread on the bedrooms was just right. Father worked as a machinist for the Henry Ford Motor Company and made a good living. Mother always worked hard in the kitchen and with cleaning and laundry.

From time to time I'd jot down a note about something he said. A lot of this I did not want to forget. I started to realize that this was most unusual—his story and everything—and finally, I said to him, "Why don't we write up your story?"

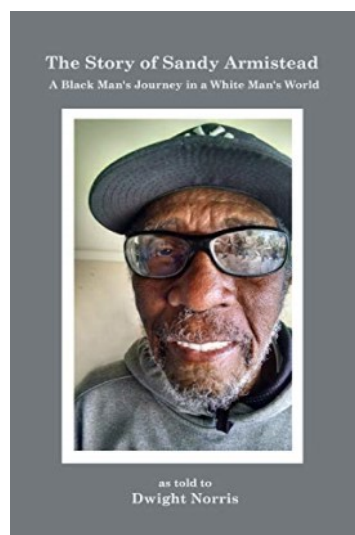
"What?" he squealed.

"Well listen," I said. "You've got the values and the experiences that the younger generation needs to hear. We could write up your story and put it in a little book. What do you think?"

This man was obviously not walking around thinking about getting his story written down and sharing it with others. In fact, he was too humble to even think himself worthy of such attention. After repeatedly talking about it, he finally gave in. We met at El Pollo probably about twenty-five times. I'd ask him questions and he'd give me answers and tell me stories.

This book took a year and a half to write. It's called, *The Story of Sandy Armistead, A Black Man's Journey in a White Man's World*. The day it was ready, we met at the restaurant so I could place a copy of the book in his hands. As he looked at his picture on the cover, he teared up and turned around so I wouldn't see him cry.

You know, life can be funny sometimes. More than five hundred days earlier, I went into that restaurant to get some chicken, but I came out with a friend and a story worth telling.





**Mike Apodaca**

**from the  
Vice President**

## Life's Lessons

On Saturday, October 9th, Southwest Airlines had one of the worst days in their company's history. Whether from COVID, air traffic controllers in Florida, or grossly overbooking their flights—or all three—they had to cancel over 500 flights and delay another 700. They ended up cancelling almost 3,000 flights in three days. Shockwaves rippled throughout the company.

My brother and his wife and dog were flying out of Tulsa on that Saturday. Their flight was canceled and the new flight they were assigned was as well. They ultimately had to secure a flight on another airline, rent a hotel room and a car, drive three hours to the Oklahoma City airport and land in LAX instead of John Wayne, where their car was parked.

I was flying out of Ontario on Southwest the next day, Sunday, the morning after this debacle. I was also headed to Tulsa to our mom and her husband, Joe. My mom was having a fit. She tried to get me to cancel my flight. She was worried I'd end up like so much lost luggage.

I explained that I was retired (unlike my brother) and did not have to get back to a regular job. I also had checked the flights and everything seemed fine on this end of the country. Finally, if things were bad in Tulsa, you bet they would have it all cleared up by the time of my return trip on Thursday. So, I took the leap and got on a plane in Ontario. I'm writing this from the Phoenix airport (my layover). I checked and my connecting flight to Tulsa is still on schedule.

When our plane parked in Phoenix, people jumbled out and yanked their too-big carry-on bags from the overhead compartments. And then the flight attendant (who had a Phylis Dillar sense of humor), told everyone to sit back down. The

plane was not in position and had to be moved so it could be in line with the bridge to the shoot-tunnel that leads to the terminal. It made me think of the trouble I sometimes have parking my giant truck—back and forth, back and forth.

Some lessons to be learned here, which apply to our writing. First, don't let other people's difficulties dictate how you're going to act. Everyone's situation is different. If I'd used my brother's difficulties and my mother's concerns to dominate my thinking. I'd have cancelled my flight, ate my ticket, and sat at home missing a chance to be with my mom and Joe. Same with writing. Listen to everyone else's story with the understanding that it's their story, not yours. You're going to make your own path based on your raw talent, your commitment to the craft of writing and improving on it, and your discipline to actually sit down and punch the keys.

Second, let the small stuff stay small. The parking problem at the airport was a small thing, as many inconveniences are. Leave them that way. Don't blow them up. Don't lose your cool. And don't say anything to people who work in the company you are mad at that you would not want someone else saying to your wife, child, or best friend. Treat everyone well. Most people are doing the best they can. This comes with our writing as well. I just received another rejection email this week. Okay. No big deal. It says nothing about me as a writer nor them as a publisher. It is what it is, so keep going forward. Those who can't stand rejection should do something else, something that won't offend anyone or invite criticism—if there is such a thing.

## Treat everyone well

Writing is hard. That's why more people don't do it. Those who love it, who find it fun to weave tales and to see themselves grow as writers, these will endure. Steven King called writing telepathy. I agree. It's crying over your keyboard at the suffering and struggles of your character and then, later, hearing that a reader did the same when reading your story (like I did recently with one of Michael Raff's excellent stories).

It doesn't get better than that.



Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

## Memorable October



Recently, one of the questions asked on a survey I took was which season of the year the survey-takers preferred. I forget the actual percentage, but overwhelmingly, it seems we prefer autumn. And here in the High Desert, it's well known that October is one of the best months, weatherwise. Not too hot, not too cold—"just right," as Goldilocks would say. But why is October named October? And other than it being one of our favorite months, did anything happen throughout history to make it more memorable than just good weather?

If you know your Latin (or Spanish), you'll know that "octo" means eight. That's where October gets its name. But wait a minute. October is the *tenth* month in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars. (The Gregorian calendar is the one we use today; the Julian calendar was used in Europe and Northern Africa until the Gregorian calendar replaced it in 1582.) So why name the tenth month of the year with a derivation of eight? Well, back in the day—way back, we're talking BCE—there were only ten



months in the ancient Roman calendar, and October was the eighth month. But Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar both wanted a month named after them, so the calendar was reconfigured to add the months of July (for Julius) and August (for Augustus). The Romans just inserted the two new months and moved September, October, November, and December forward without renaming them. By the way, in the Anglo-Saxon world, October was known as *Dinterfylleþ*. (I dare you to pronounce that one.)



One of the more enjoyable events each year, particularly for those of German heritage, is Oktoberfest. It was originally intended to be a one-time event commemorating the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig in Munich in 1810. But the event has become a major Bavarian cultural event. Oktoberfest celebrations are now held the world over, but the annual "parent" event is still held in Munich. The folk fair runs for 16 to 18 days, beginning in mid-September and ending on the first Sunday in October and is the largest beer festival in the world. In 2018, more than 6.3 million people from around the world attended and consumed nearly 2.1 million gallons of beer. It was cancelled due to COVID in 2020 but was held again this year.

(Continued on next page)

# Memorable October

## Continued

October has been a busy month throughout history for reasons other than the consumption of beer, of course. Apparently, we aren't the only ones to pick it as one of our favorite months. Here are just a few of October's historical events:

**October 31, 1517** – Martin Luther nails his “95 Theses” to the church door at Wittenberg, Germany, triggering the Protestant Reformation.

**October 7, 1765** – Representatives from nine American colonies met in New York City to protest the British Stamp Act. The colonial protests eventually led to the American Revolution.

**October 13, 1775** – The United States Navy was born.

**October 2, 1789** – The United States Bill of Rights was sent to the member states for ratification.

**October 8, 1871** – The Great Fire of Chicago started.

**October 13, 1884** – Greenwich was established as the universal time from which standard times throughout the world are calculated.

**October 1, 1908** – Henry Ford's Model T went on sale for the first time.

**October 1, 1920** – Women became eligible for admission as full members of Oxford University and were given the right to take degrees.

**October 1, 1925** – The first television transmission of a moving image was made by Scottish inventor John Logie Baird.

**October 6, 1927** – *The Jazz Singer*—the first “talkie”—starring Al Jolson opened in New York City.

**October 20, 1943** – General Douglas MacArthur fulfilled his famous promise of “I shall return” when he landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines.

**October 1, 1949** – The People's Republic of China was founded with Mao Zedong as Chairman.

**October 4, 1957** – The Space Age began as the Russians launched the first satellite, Sputnik I, into orbit.

**October 16, 1962** – The Cuban Missile Crisis began.

**October 2, 1967** – Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993) was sworn in as the first African American associate justice of the Supreme Court.



Along with famous historical dates, a great many famous people were born in October. Among the many were Christopher Columbus (1451), Richard Cromwell (1626), Mollie Pitcher of American Revolution fame (1754), Giuseppe Verdi (1831), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844), Oscar Wilde (1854), Theodore Roosevelt (1858), Mahatma Gandhi (1869), Pablo Picasso (1881), Robert Goddard, the “Father of the Space Age,” (1882), Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890), E E Cummings (1894), Buster Keaton (1895), Bonnie Parker of “Bonnie and Clyde” fame (1910), Mario Puzo (1920), Jimmy Carter (1924), Margaret Thatcher (1925), John le Carre (1931), Vladimir Putin (1952), and Bill Gates (1955).

## Word of the Month



**Zymurgy** (ZY-mər-gee): NOUN:  
Origin: Greek, 19<sup>th</sup> century  
The study or practice of fermentation in brewing, winemaking, or distilling.

Photo courtesy of RitaE, www.pixabay.com

## The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY  
Michael Raff

### Ernest Hemingway

If the authors I have featured in these articles were exceptionally interesting, then I found the life of Ernest Hemingway *fascinating*. Born in 1899, he was raised in Oak Park, Illinois, not far from where I grew up. He displayed a flair for journalism early on and reported for *The Kansas City Star* shortly after graduating from high school. When World War I broke out, the army rejected Hemingway for poor eyesight, so he signed on to be an ambulance driver. This turned out to be a gruesome decision. On his first day in Milan, Italy he found himself retrieving body parts from a munitions factory explosion. After his legs were injured by mortar fire, Hemingway still helped some soldiers to safety, for which he was decorated with the Italian Silver Medal of Military Valor. He was only at the front for two months but spent six months recuperating, and fell in love with a nurse he wanted to marry. She ultimately rejected him. These tragic events ended up as the basis for *A Farewell to Arms*, which supposedly took him 17 drafts to complete.

Hemingway returned home in 1919, the war leaving him a changed man. The spirit of adventure had taken hold. He loved traveling, sailing, fishing, hunting, and perhaps, most of all, writing. He landed a job as a foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, and along with his first wife, Hadley, left for Paris, where he befriended members of the "Lost Generation," such as Picasso and James Joyce, and penned 88 stories for the *Toronto Star*. Additionally, after returning to Toronto, Hemmingway published his first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. A few months later, a second volume was printed. But Hemingway missed the adventures of a nomadic writer and returned to Europe. During this time, he met F. Scott Fitzgerald, became captivated with bullfighting, and was nicknamed "Papa," by those close to him. As he traveled, he wrote and completed *The Sun Also Rises*. The novel epitomized the post-war expatriate generation, received good reviews, and is recognized as one of his greatest works.

Hemingway's safaris in Africa helped inspire material for *Green Hills of Africa* and the short story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." But it wasn't all fun and writing. He contracted amoebic dysentery which caused a prolapsed intestine and, along with his heavy drinking, were the first of his numerous health problems.

Hemingway left for Spain around 1936 to cover the Spanish Civil War. Working in war zones never seemed to deter him. His experiences there led to

his novel *For Whom the Bells Tolls*, which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize and is probably his most famous work. He lived and wrote in locations such as Cuba, Wyoming, Key West, and Idaho. But his health issues persisted. He contracted anthrax and, in Paris, sustained a severe injury in a bathroom when he pulled a skylight down on his head, thinking he was pulling a toilet chain. When he broke his arm in a car accident, the nerves in his writing hand took a year to heal. Clearly, these disasters took their toll. When his father killed himself, he said, "I'll probably go the same way."

While in London during World War II, he suffered a concussion from another car accident and a short time later, accompanied troops at the Normandy Landings wearing a large head bandage. The military considered Hemingway to be "precious cargo," and when his landing craft came under fire, they turned around. Attached to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, he became de facto leader to a small band of village militia and was present at the liberation of Paris. He would have covered the majority of the Battle of the Bulge if he hadn't been hospitalized for pneumonia. In 1947, he was awarded the Bronze Star for bravery.

Hemingway lived in Cuba after the war. He suffered another car wreck, injuring his knee and forehead and then fell into depression. Unable to write for three years, he endured weight gain, headaches, high blood pressure, and eventually, diabetes. Also, many of his literary friends died and he began drinking heavily. What he needed was to pen another blockbuster novel. —To be continued. Until next time, *A Farewell to Harms*, and keep writing!

"I can't stand to think my life is going so fast and I'm not really living it."

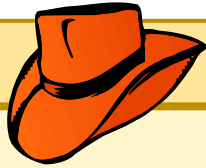
*The Sun Also Rises*



# A WRITER'S LIFE

RUSTY LAGRANGE

## Anxiety and Writing



A first-time writer who wants to write, but builds roadblocks to beginning, is often facing a fear known as anxiety. I'm sure anxiety erupts and takes a stranglehold in different ways. I'm no psychologist, yet I've suffered a few of those "attacks" that seem to stop me in my tracks.

One time I feared I was late for an English class in my rather large high school. I spun out of control. Crowds of bustling students seemed to block me from my path. My panic grew. I focused on my locker across campus, down long twisted corridors without end. I didn't see a path while the dizzying crush of students forced me other directions. I'd never get there in time to get my book and return. Wait! Was I going to the right room? Was English third period or fourth? The east side of the campus or the west?

A classmate saw my panic and touched me on the shoulder. She pulled me aside and asked if I was lost. And I nodded.

My daily schedule was taped to my binder, and as she pointed it out to me, I realized my panic was nothing. The key was right there. She said, "This is fourth period. You should be going to Math."

That's all I needed. A bit of direction, a smiling face, and a push forward.

That anxiety is not a good characteristic to have. It doesn't help you focus, like some believe. It doesn't prepare you for high-stress situations in your future, and you can't control it when you do need it.

Those panic episodes are clearly not beneficial. So you need to work past them. Some use medication, some use clinical help, yet others, like me, learned to push it into a mental box and store it away. It will never disappear, but it can be a piece of history on your mental shelf.

Worry for some people is not a habit that can be stopped with discipline or willpower. Often, the habit of worrying has become deeply engrained anxiety. It can pop up and ruin a perfectly good day.

The best way to grow past it is to find methods that bolster your internal view of yourself.

My best "mantra" is to say: "If you don't do it, who do you know who will?" This falls into the category of "Don't expect someone else to jump in and help you. You'll be disappointed." I fought for a way to manage my bouts of anxiety.

It was my method for seeing what I could manage. And it worked. But in order to see that potential in myself, I had to utilize a mind game: *Act as if you do.*

Years ago, I was privileged to hear sci-fi author Ray Bradbury speak in our little library in Lucerne Valley. Why would he be there? He knew the town's librarian. What a joy. He often had gems he would bestow on struggling writers—I felt any word from him would part the seas—and get them past a mental hurdle. I was right; he employed mind games.

He said: "You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy you." That quote and many others are now inspirational on many Google pages. Just look up "Ray Bradbury and inspiring words."

Believing in yourself is a key benefit. Getting to that step involves looking at your own strengths. Your life might seem out of control right now, but *everyone* is naturally good at some things. Start with what you're already good at then build from there. You might be a great researcher or a talented interviewer, skilled in organizing, or trying short stories for magazines, or wrote at a young age without following up.

If that bud of interest turned into a nagging dream that turned into a strong interest in learning how to write, then your next step is to "Act as if you do."

The term today is: Poser. When you take on the mental role of a person who has skills, the act of believing you can do the job bolsters your ability to see it happen. The more you act stronger and more self-reliant, the more your self-perception will grow. Visualizing being a poser, or acting as if you can do something you aspire to, is the new mantra you can carry forward. This tactic may sound very simple. In fact, it may sound ludicrous; however, mind games come with all sorts of options. Over time, if a simple act of belief works for you, then you're welcome.





## Club Meetings

# HDCWC CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S BOOKS

**"Everyone should write a children's book."**

Dwight Norris

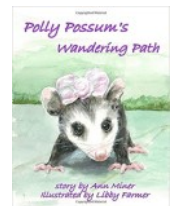
Good advice. According to Dwight, when he's been at book sales, it's the children's books that've been the best sellers. You can always use Ann Miner's trick—put the book in the hands of a child. When they look up at their parents with yearning eyes and a squeaky, "Please," you've got a sale.

On October 9th our club was treated to a panel of experts: Mary Langer Thompson, Ann Miner, Jenny Margotta, and Roberta Smith. While Dwight asked questions, the panel shared their personal experience with everything from writing the text, to working with the illustrator, to getting the end product to look right. Most importantly, they told us about the costs involved with writing a children's book and how to make it less expensive. If you weren't able to attend or to join us on Zoom, you can catch the recording (thanks, Joan!) on YouTube.

As a former public school teacher, I have always had a special place in my heart for children's books. Classics like *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*, *I'll Love you Forever*, *Make Way For Ducklings*, and *Socks for Supper* endure even after all these years.



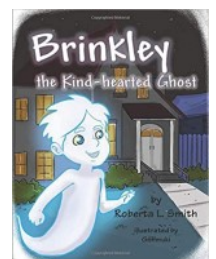
Ann Miner shared with us about writing her book *Polly Possum and the Wandering Path*. She talked to us about how she cleverly used alliteration throughout and how the cute picture on the cover sells the book.



Mary Thompson told us about her book, *How the Blue-Tongued Skink Got His Blue Tongue*. Mary explained how she came upon the title and did her research. She also has a special selling point—she gives away a raspberry Tootsie Pop with each book sold. That way her readers can also have a blue tongue. Mary also shared with us how, when she was a school principal, an author used to come and sell his books at her school. He would build excitement through reminders and then do an assembly for the families. He would sell tons of books.



Roberta Smith shared with us how she wanted to write a book about a ghost who was kind. After working through the story, she came up with *Brinkley the Kind-Hearted Ghost*. Roberta let us know that Brinkley was not patterned after Casper, the friendly ghost. Roberta shared with us how she found her illustrator on Fiverr.com.



Jenny added her publishing expertise and graphics criteria to the panel.

This was an interesting meeting and inspired me to put together that children's book I've been sitting on all these years. I hope it did the same for you.

Mike Apodaca





## Judith Favor Questions

At our last Act II meeting Judith Favor invited us to look more closely at our lives, to get in touch with ourselves and our priorities. For me, it was enlightening.

Judith began by highlighting the book *Sabbath Economics* by Ched Myers. She explained that everyone has a story. She had us write our own personal stories about love and money—the high points, low points, the things we tell our friends and that we lie about and that we hide from others. She called this chronology, “stepping stones.” I wrote my history and saw how my relationship with love and money developed throughout my life.

Judith shared with us her appreciation for lists, something she says does not get enough attention. There are many important lists: The Ten Commandments, The 8-Fold Path of Buddhism, Yoga Sutras, etc.

Next, Judith had us list the books and movies that have had an impact on our lives. I frantically listed author after author. I realized that I have been deeply informed by much of the media that I have consumed in my life and by the books I have read by people far more wise than me.

You can view our time with Judith and many other meetings on the club’s YouTube channel.



Judith ended by sharing with us the importance of asking questions. Today was her son’s 60th birthday. She called him and he told her he would rather have questions that can’t be answered than answers that cannot be questioned. She was impressed with her son’s wisdom. Judith told us that she became

a Quaker because Quakers prefer to ask questions rather than to give doctrine.

We were given time to write our questions. My pen flew across my page. When our time was up (five minutes), I looked my questions over and realized I had written seven questions, six of which had to do with my family and my role in it, and how I could help those I love through their present difficulties.

Judith told us about Ira Progoff and his contemplative journaling and *The Morning Pages* by Julia Cameron.

Judith complimented us on having a Writers Support group that meets on Wednesday mornings. *The Harvard Review* just published an article on the importance of listening and how it makes us healthier and boosts our immune systems.

The hour with Judith went quickly. I don’t think I have ever seen a speaker make this big an impact on this many participants in this short a time.


Mike Apodaca



## An Opportunity to Make a Difference

Last month I walked alongside the dry Mojave River bed talking with Debbie Rubio and her foreign exchange student. I was deeply impressed with Debbie's passion and her desire to help people. We have a club of members who want to make a difference. Here is an opportunity for us . . .

# The Scholastic Art and Writing Contest

The 2022 Scholastic Awards are open! Register now to enter your work. 



Scholastic  
Art & Writing  
Awards Alliance for  
Young Artists  
& Writers

STUDENTS ALUMNI EDUCATORS PARENTS



FOLLOW

GOT QUESTIONS?

LOGIN

THE AWARDS

PROGRAMS

GALLERY

SUPPORT

MY REGION

How to Enter

Recognition

Scholarships

Award Selection

History

The nation's longest-running, most prestigious  
recognition program for creative teens

## What We Do

Our members serve as judges. We take a group of writing (called a panel) and we give it a rating according to a rubric. This will be my third year judging and I enjoy it. I get to read some wonderful stories and know that I'm touching the lives of junior high and high school students from across the country (last year we had some from Canada!). The best of these writings will end up in an anthology put together by Scholastic.

The average judge will have to assess from ten to twenty stories over a three week period. You can choose to judge poems, stories, or essays.

Our own Jenny Margotta has put together a terrific PowerPoint for training our judges. She'll be presenting this on December 14th at 6:00 pm on Zoom.

**If you would like to be a judge this year (and believe me, you do), contact Dwight Norris at [dwardwardnorris@gmail.com](mailto:dwardwardnorris@gmail.com)**

Mike Apodaca



## On-Topic Speakers for You Gaining Ground

The On-Topic Speakers Bureau had a meeting on October 29th at the Isbill home. It was a casual affair where we discussed the program and the progress that is being made. Jenny Margotta and Mary Thompson came up with the idea of providing panels as part of our offerings. Bob Isbill supported the idea, pointing out how informative the recent panel on Writing Children's Books was for our club.

### Web Page

I shared with those in attendance the website I am developing for our speakers. I have reached the place where I need several things from each presenter (please email to [mrdaca.ma@gmail.com](mailto: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
- ◆ Pictures of your book covers and a short description of each book
- ◆ Any social media or website you want linked to your page



### Future Meetings

We talked about bringing together people in the future to see and approve their pages once they are finished. We should be able to do five people at a time. Remember, this personal page belongs to you. You will decide what goes on it. We also discussed opportunities where we would work on our PowerPoint presentations and, perhaps, practice our speeches with each other.

Considering joining? Contact:

**Bob Isbill** [risbill@aol.com](mailto:risbill@aol.com).



# The Jack London Award: And The Award Goes To . . .



For Michael Wycombe



For Scott Evans



Sarah E. Pruitt



For Joan Raymond



Rusty LaGrange



Brian Michael Gaps



Andrew Sound



Lisa Meltzer Penn



Sue Andrews

Rusty LaGrange



Heather for Pat Avery



Cathy Chase



Marcia Ehinger



Roger Lubeck



Janet Elizabeth Lynn



For Renee Geffkin



For Nancy Guarnera

## November is National Writing Month by Tess DeGroot

November is National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). And what is NaNoWriMo? It's a 30-day roller-coaster of creativity where participants accept the challenge to finish a 50,000-word first draft of a novel.

In July 1999, NaNoWriMo started when San Francisco-based freelance writer Chris Baty challenged his friend to write a novel in one month. Twenty-one of his friends joined him. The 50,000 word count was chosen as the goal because it was the length of *Catcher in the Rye*, the shortest novel on Baty's bookshelf. In 2000, the event was moved to November "to more fully take advantage of the miserable weather," Baty said. That year the first website was set up with 140 participants. Now there are approximately 500,000 participants worldwide.

The rules are simple:

1. Writing starts at 12:00 AM on November 1 and ends at 11:59 PM on November 30, local time.
2. No one is allowed to start early, and the challenge finishes 30 days from that start point.
3. Novels must reach a minimum of 50,000 words before the end of November to "win." These words can either be a complete novel of 50,000 words or the first 50,000 words of a novel to be completed later. (Validation of the number of words is by self-report.)
4. Planning and extensive notes are permitted, but no material written before the November 1 start time can go into the body of the novel.
5. Participants' novels can be on any theme, genre of fiction, and language. All genres are allowed. Per NaNo HQ, "If you believe you're writing a novel, we believe you're writing a novel too." (I know one participant who used NaNoWriMo to complete their master's thesis.)
6. No editing! Leave all the ugly prose and rough dialog alone. Just get those words down. (Editing is for "What's next?" Month.)
7. "Rebelling" or not following the rule of starting something new is allowed. NaNoWriMo is considered a "self-challenge." Rebels also validate their work and receive the same prizes from sponsors.

To "win" NaNoWriMo, participants must write an average of approximately 1,667 words per day in November to reach the goal of 50,000 words written toward a novel.

NaNo HQ says the aim is to get people to start writing, using the deadline as an incentive to get the story going and to put words to paper. There is no fee to participate in NaNoWriMo. Registration is needed to verify the novel's length and be eligible for "goodies" provided by sponsors.

During NaNoWriMo, participants are given as much support and encouragement as they need. Regular "Pep Talks" are emailed to participants. There are forums to discuss various subjects; for example, "writer's block," "goofing off," and "character adoption center."



*Continued next page*

## November is National Writing Month by Tess DeGroot (Cont)

Continued from page 12

There is also local support. The world is divided into regions that participants may join or “home” to. San Bernardino County is one region—neighboring regions include Riverside, Antelope Valley, and Pomona Valley. Regional volunteers are called Municipal Liaisons or MLs. They help connect local writers, hold in-person and virtual writing events, and provide encouragement. (This year, to keep everyone safe, there will be no in-person events per NaNo HQ’s directive.)

Over four hundred NaNoWriMo novels have been traditionally published. A few of these include:

*Water for Elephants*, Sara Gruen, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill

*Persistence of Memory*, Amelia Atwater-Rhodes, Delacorte Press

*The Night Circus*, Erin Morgenstern, Doubleday

*Cinder*, Marissa Meyer, Square Fish

NaNoWriMo has two additional programs. One is the Young Writers Program (YWP), a writing workshop aimed to aid classrooms of kindergarten through 12th-grade students. The difference between the regular program and the YWP is the young writers choose how many words to write depending on age and experience. The other is Camp NaNoWriMo, held in April and July, in which participants can write something new, plan, or edit.

I have been a participant since 2007, reaching my goal eleven out of fourteen years. I am also one of the Municipal Liaisons for the San Bernardino Region.

For more information, visit the NaNoWriMo website ([nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org)) or email me ([tess.degroot.books@gmail.com](mailto:tess.degroot.books@gmail.com)).

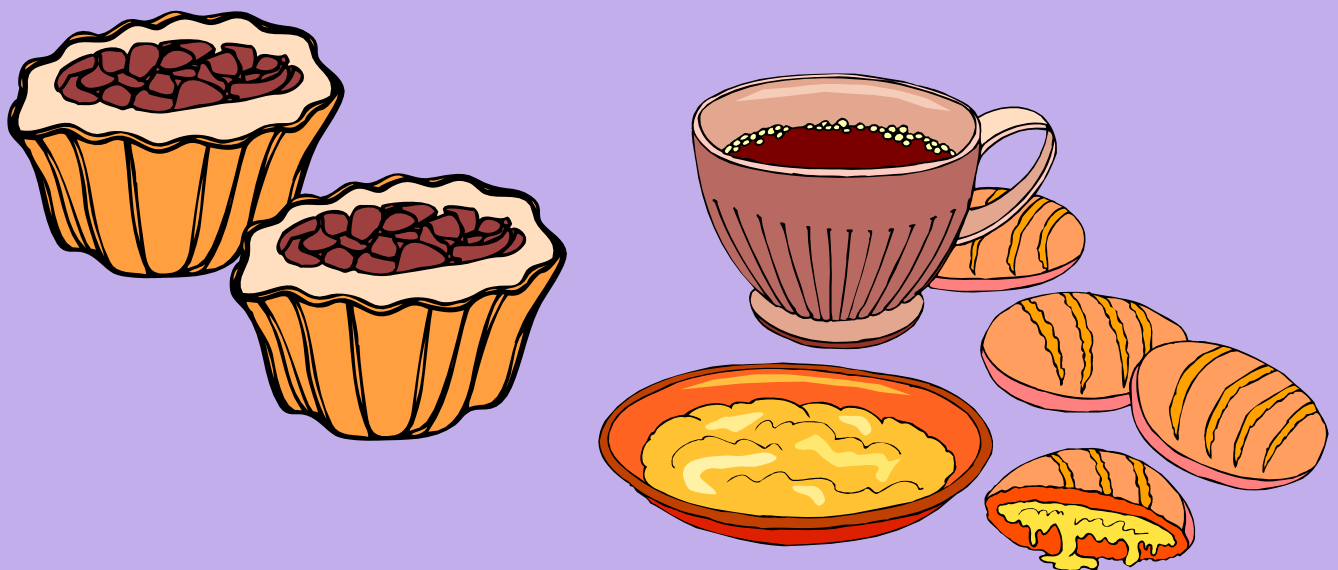


Thank You!

## *Many Thanks for Refreshments!*

The club would like to express its appreciation to all the people who have covered for others as we transition into live, face-to-face meetings. When we fill in for others, we truly begin to understand the scope of their work and contribution. A special thanks to Rita Wells, who continues to set the standard of providing refreshments rather high, as well as Barbra Badger, Anita Holmes, Mike Raff, Mike Apodaca, Linda Boruff and anyone else who so much as laid a pinky on a cupcake.

Thank you!





# HDCWC Authors Urged to Update Branch Website

If you are a member of HDCWC with a published book, you are eligible to have your own page as part of our authors' section on the HDCWC website. To take advantage of this opportunity, send the following data to Roberta Smith at [cwrlsmith@gmail.com](mailto:cwrlsmith@gmail.com) and put "Author Info" in the subject line of your email:

Headshot of you in jpg format.  
Be sure to update your headshot to your best available.

Short Bio

Photo of your book(s) in jpg format

Short synopsis for each title

Links to personal websites

For those of you who already have a page, you may need an update if you've published additional titles. Please look at your page and if an update is needed, send a jpg of your new book along with a synopsis.

**LET PEOPLE KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN. GET YOURSELF OUT THERE.**

The screenshot shows the HDCWC website's author profile for Roberta L. Smith. On the left is a navigation menu with items like 'Welcome to HDCWC', 'Announcements', 'Advertising Special', 'Anthologies and Ebooks', 'Authors', 'Club Meetings - Past', 'Club Meetings - Upcoming', 'Critique Groups', 'Getting Paid', 'Handbook for Dorothy C. Staley Project', 'History', 'Links for Club Members', 'Membership - How to Join', 'Membership Published Book Notification Form', 'Membership Renewal', 'Mini Grant Program', 'Newsletter - The Insider', 'Officers', 'Personal Writing Process', 'Poems/Prose', 'Presentation Preparation', 'Scholarship Training Zoom', 'Special Events - Past', 'Special Project - Staley March', 'Special Zoom Meetings', and 'Testimonials'. The main content area features a search bar, a headshot of Roberta L. Smith, a bio, and a list of books published. The first book is 'SIMONE'S GHOSTS', described as a 'Grand Prize Award Winner of the 2017 Hollywood Book Festival'. Below the title is a video player showing a scene from the book. The second book is 'THE DREAMER OF DOWNING STREET', described as a 'personal mystery set in 1941 Salem'. Below the title is a book cover image. The third book is 'THE SECRET OF LUCIANNE DOVE', described as a 'Mickey McKay mystery with the spirit of a Virginia City ghost story'.

## HDCWC Welcomes Judith Pfeffer as our new Social Media Director

Especially if you count being a teacher, a nanny, a marketer, and a singer, as well as a writer, the life of Judith Pfeffer, HDCWC's new social media director, is all about communication.

She was recently appointed to help boost the club's profile on the internet. She will work with Vice President Mike Apodaca, Publicity Director Bob Isbill and others to enhance awareness of what HDCWC does among current members, potential new recruits, and the overall reading-and-writing public.

Her goal is to communicate accurate, timely news about the club's programming as well as to share information about opportunities from other organizations—online classes, contests, conferences, retreats. She hopes to add value to the club's extant Facebook and MeetUp presences, start a Twitter account and otherwise use the World Wide Web to publicize the club.

Judith became a club member in July 2021 for the second or third time, depending on how you look at it. She was active in 2010 through 2013 but then began spending more time 3,000 miles away, pursuing career opportunities and shouldering family responsibilities just outside Boston, MA. But long before that, she attended the formational meeting of the HDCWC in 1990.

Her primary field is newspaper, magazine and online journalism. She earned a master's degree at the world's oldest school of journalism at the University of Missouri. Back in her native Los Angeles, she worked at monthly magazines and weekly newspapers. To work for daily newspapers full time, she became a High Desert resident, first in Barstow covering law enforcement, the military and other topics for the *Desert Dispatch* and, later, moving to the *Daily Press* in Victorville, where over nearly eight years she climbed from reporter to copy editor to assistant city editor to city editor to director of special projects.

She then transitioned to the Mojave Water Agency, where she ran the public information department for nearly four years, and to Victor Valley College, where she started, enlarged, and advised the journalism program for nearly 16 years. During that time, she also taught briefly at Riverside College and at Cypress College and helped with marketing efforts for the Old Town Property Owners, the California Route 66 Museum, and Congregation Bamidbar in north Victorville.

In August 2011 she accepted a year-long appointment with the department of Marketing Communication at Emerson College in Boston, a well-known private school devoted to communication.

After that, she was marketing manager for NexGen, an innovative bicycling startup based in Boston, and an editorial assistant for robotics magazines at EH Publishing in Framingham, MA.

Then she used integrated marketing techniques—from pinning notices on the bulletin board at the local ice cream shop to interacting with the intranet of her adopted hometown of Arlington, MA -- to build a career as a "domestic diva." Serving mostly as a nanny, she also did housework and yardwork, fed chickens, walked dogs, ran errands, organized bookshelves, and so on.

One of Judith's most rewarding experiences was starting the part-time pre-school program of South Sudanese Enrichment for Families in Lincoln, MA SSEF, a non-profit, works to help the former "Lost Boys" and "Lost Girls"—legal immigrants, recognized refugees and survivors of genocide in East Africa -- and their American-born children to adapt to the vastly different climate and culture of New England.

Judith began her most recent professional association in spring 2018 with *Your Arlington*, an award-winning news website serving the town of Arlington, Mass. She typically contributes up to four articles per month, and earlier this year she was appointed to YA's advisory board.

While "back East," the former high school choirgirl became a founding member of the country-folk-gospel group Acoustic Thursday, which performs at assisted-living communities and similar facilities. An alto, she sang mostly harmony and backup. For the past six months, she has been lead singer with YesterYear, a Temecula-based oldies-rock band that hopes to begin doing shows next year.

In her spare time, Judith works on original fiction (she has had two pieces published in literary journals), fanfiction (she is an admirer of the fantasy television shows *Buffy*, *Angel*, *The Sentinel* and *Supernatural*), and attempts to grow vegetables, herbs, and fruit in the unforgiving Mojave Desert summers and winters.



# Barstow Craft Fair

On October 23rd Ann Miner and Mike Apodaca represented HDCWC in Barstow at their annual Senior Citizen's Center Craft Fair. There were artists, craft enthusiasts, and two tables devoted to our club. Ann and Mike met people, talked with them about their lives, and even sold a few books.



## 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 November 30th 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 3:00.

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

## MY POT GARDEN

Amy Burnett

I gave my longtime friend, Edith, a welcome-back hug. She had been out of town since March; now we were ending July. In the meantime, my husband and I had sold our family home and moved into a smaller house nearer downtown.

"Come see our new nest," I urged as I led Edith from room to room. I was pleased with her appreciation of my efforts as a decorator.

She followed me outside.

"And in the side yard, I have a pot garden."

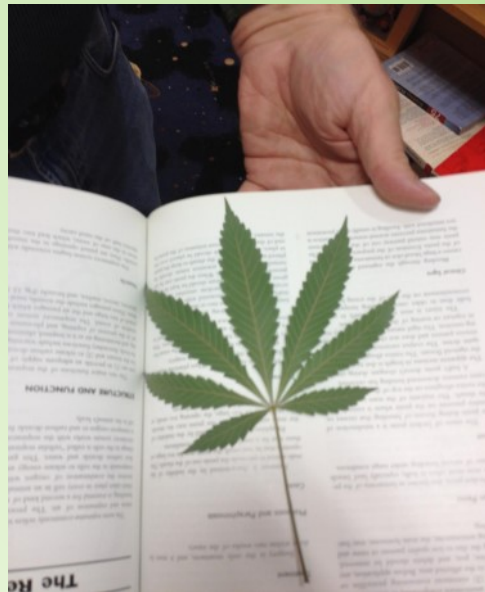
I heard her gasp. "Amy! You're growing marijuana?"

I linked her arm with mine and led her around the corner.

"There. My pot garden." I waved my hand in a grand sweep over 5 extra-large ceramic pots with green garden foliage spilling over the sides. "Swiss chard, summer squash, green beans, tomatoes and cucumbers. The sandy soil here wouldn't do, so I had to get inventive."

"Clever," she said. "Very clever. And I assume we're having salad for lunch."

"Of course. Shall we go in?"



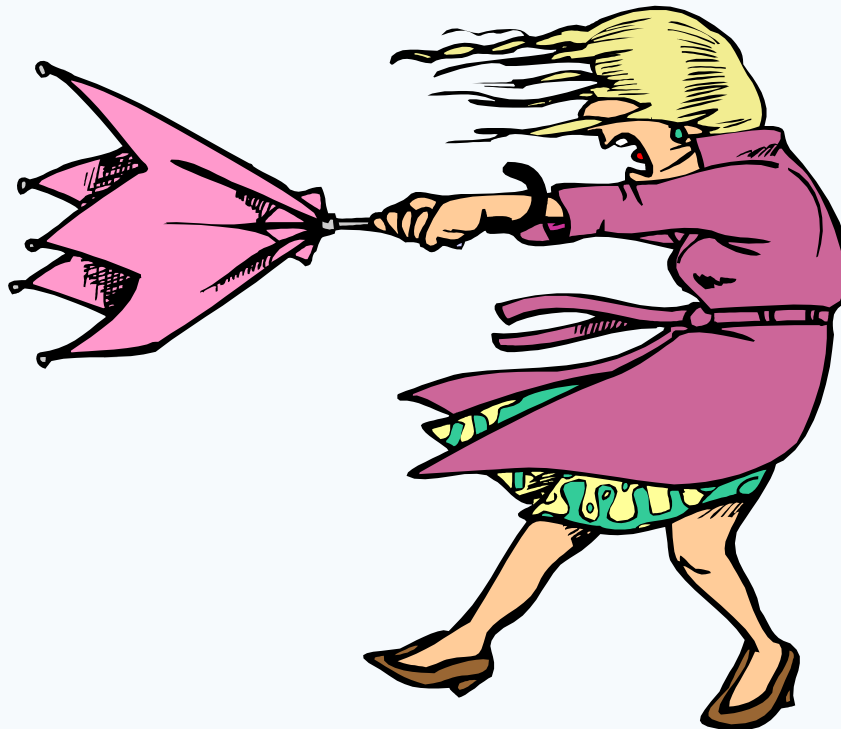
# Rainy Days and Mondays

The loud thunder rolled continuously across the dark sky, while the desert winds tossed the patio furniture across the parched lawn like toothpicks. Then came the rain, just a spit, you know, banishing hope of ending the dry spell. But we desert folk know the rain cloud only hovers for a couple of minutes, then moves on.

"Did ya get any rain over there at your place?"

"Naw, but it rained in the next block over."

Ann Miner



Sara Leach sent me this photograph she took out an airplane window. Like her, I enjoy the thrill of being at a window seat, watching the earth recede and acquiring a completely new perspective. My vision progresses from my normal ground view, to a bird's eye view, to the place where I'm staring at the topside of the clouds (as in this picture) and feeling like I am seeing what only angels see.

Writers need the ability to see the world through different perspectives. Good writers pick up on subtle details that they include to add realism and relevance, even when they have never really been at the place they are describing. I just finished reading the book, *Galaxy Aflame*, which is all about intergalactic war. The descriptions of planets and spacecraft are very well done and make the story come to life.

May we also learn to describe settings and characters realistically for our readers.

Thanks, Sara, for sharing this photo with us.

Mike Apodaca



# Can Soldiers Be Just Like Me?

by  
fumi-tome ohta

It was raining and the sky was angry with thunder, so loud it made me cry. I jumped into Mama's arms. "Does the thunder scare you?" she asked.

I nodded and gripped her tightly. She must have seen the fear in my eyes because she said, "Sometimes I'm afraid too."

"Mama, you're never afraid. You're a soldier."

"Yes, but even soldiers feel afraid." Then she told me the story of when she first started basic training in the Army. "We were all young girls just out of high school. We came from all over the United States, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Some of us were away from our families for the very first time. On that first night as a recruit, our sergeant came into the bay (barracks) to turn off the light to say good-night and just before she turned to leave, one of the girls at the back of the bay began to sing.

"Why did she sing?"

"We didn't know it but we were all feeling scared, lonely and very much afraid. She must have been feeling scared and missing her family so when she sang, some of us joined in."

"What did you sing?"

"We sang a prayer."

"A prayer? Was it like singing in church?" I asked.

"Well, almost," she said. "We weren't singing because it was a church song or a religious song. For some of the girls the song brought comfort, for others, the song meant very little but yet..."

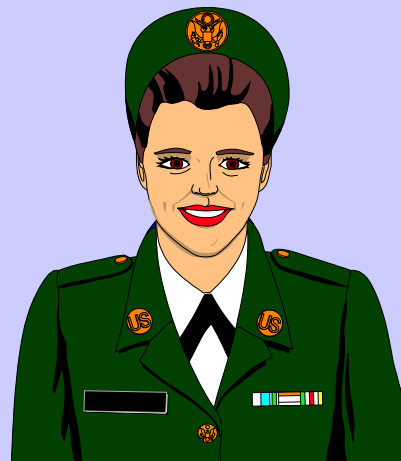
"Then why did you sing, Mama?"

"When we were singing together, it was like we were holding hands and we understood each other's sadness, and each night that we sang together we began to feel like sisters."

All day I thought about what Mama said. I wondered, can soldiers be just like me, afraid and scared? Later, Mama came in to kiss me and say goodnight. I looked up into Mama's face, a soldier's face. Then Mama and I sang together. As we were singing, I felt something stronger inside. It warmed my heart, I saw Mama with different eyes, I loved Mama so much. After we sang, she kissed me then stood by the door looking back at me. "Goodnight, honey," she said as she turned off the light.

"Goodnight, sergeant," I said as the moon winked back.

"Goodnight, son."





# For This We Give Thanks

By  
**Diane Neil**

When our ancestors gathered to give thanks on that first November day that we now commemorate as an annual event, it was after a terrible ordeal. The troubles in England that had led them to flee the comforts of a known environment and to set forth in the *Mayflower* to seek a future in a new land—a raw, rugged territory scarcely on the maps of their day—must have been frightening, indeed.

In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims celebrated their first successful harvest by firing guns and cannons in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The noise alarmed the Wampanoag native people, who went to investigate. This is how the native people happened to be at the first Thanksgiving, although the popular belief that they all sat down together to enjoy a bountiful, harmonious meal is not true.

Eventually, they did befriend the newcomers and showed them foods that were safe to eat and survival skills their ancestors had employed for centuries.

Although Americans now celebrate Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday in November, historians can't pinpoint the exact date of the first Thanksgiving. We know it took place over three days, sometime between mid-September and early November in 1621, and was considered a harvest celebration following a successful planting of corn. Other foods could have been turkey, mussels, lobster, and eel, along with beans, squash, and pumpkins.

Over a hundred people attended the first Thanksgiving, about half the number that had set sail in the *Mayflower*. Those who gathered were truly grateful, as all the others had perished.

When we today enjoy our Thanksgiving feasts, remember to honor our ancestors who had the courage to set forth into the unknown to give us a country where we can be free.

THE END



# Barbi, Is That You?

By  
Gary Layton

It's 102 outside with a hot wind blowing, so I decided to just stay inside and enjoy the air conditioning. As an old man, I sometimes wander off into a dreamland of my youth, and at this moment Barbi Benton came to mind. In my youth I dated this girl named Barbara Johnson. Barbara was a beautiful woman. She stood five foot eight with a slim well-defined figure and was striking.

We would be stared at wherever we went. Eyes would follow us all the way from the entrance to our seats whenever we walked into a restaurant or bar, and I am sure they weren't staring at me. (Unless they were wondering what a plain John like me was doing with this beautiful woman.)

We dated for a few months, and as with all my relationships, we slowly drifted apart. We parted ways and went off in different directions and eventually lost track of each other. The last I heard, Barbara had moved to Northern California.

All of my relationships ended cordially and we remained friends. I never believed in burning bridges. I often wonder how their lives turned out and hope they all had good, happy lives filled with love.

One day I was reading *Playboy* and there was Barbara, a playmate, a centerfold and a confidant of Hugh Hefner. It appeared that she had changed her name to Barbi Benton and was doing well in life. I thought, good for you, girl. You made it to the big time. I was envious but extremely happy for her.

I had over the years thought about writing to Barbara and congratulating her on her success, but I am glad I didn't. She probably would have thought I was an idiot or a nut job as I was about to find out how wrong I was. Barbi Benton attended a fundraiser in Big Bear, and my niece Donna posted a picture on Facebook of them hugging. I couldn't believe it. Donna, who is about the same height as "my Barbara," was towering over Barbi Benton. I Googled Barbi and found out she is five foot three and would have been about eleven years old at the time Barbara and I were dating.

Now I find myself wondering what happened to my Barbara. My only hope is that she had a happy healthy life.



# Poetry

## Changes in the Wind

By  
fumi-tome ohta

Fall and autumn days  
feelings of determination  
steadfast resolutions of  
dreams and goals  
destinies burning within  
Things will change from now  
maybe a new job  
a new kind of job  
promise to self  
I, myself will change  
As the seasons change  
colors abound  
solemn and forthright  
oranges, golds, greens and browns  
Colors so strong  
bold and brilliant  
headstrong, and oh, so spirited  
I want change  
I can do it  
Autumn colors beckon me  
teases me  
challenges me  
The mallards migrating overhead  
Hey, wait me for me!  
flying up in the sky  
my life changes now  
Here and now  
these changes in the Wind



## Places to Publish:

Books for Body, Mind, and Spirit  
<https://authorspublish.com/llewellyn-now-accepting-manuscript-queries/>

Stories that Speak to the Heart  
<https://authorspublish.com/capsule-stories-now-seeking-submissions/>

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

## Memories

By Jim Grayson

Memories memories portraits  
in time

Images of you and me  
magically entwine.

Shimmering perspectives  
rejoice then move on

Like love the recapture . . .  
they're too quickly gone



# Poetry

## Do Not Call Him a Hero

Jenny Margotta, 2013

He is old and stooped and tired,  
halt of foot and dim of eye.  
He passes unnoticed on a crowded street.

But stop a minute to talk  
and he will tell you tales  
of ships and guns, of pain and loss.

You may thank him for his service  
to his country and his fellow man.  
But do not call him a hero.

“Heroes,” he will tell you,  
“Are the ones  
who did not return.”

**HONOR OUR VETS**

## A Haiku By Therese Moore

Cranberries and squash  
Persimmons, pears, and pumpkins  
Colors of sunset



## An Ode To Fall

By Diane Neil

Is sweater weather better weather?

Here in the desert we can't be sure.

Up north the rain is gushing forth

bringing to dry summer a cure.

The streams are gushing and water is rushing,

rumbling and tumbling downhill,

roaring and pouring each river to fill.

But here in the desert? We hope in vain

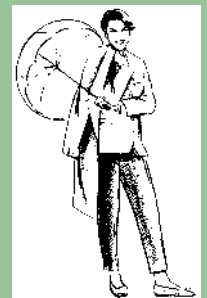
to get more than a night of rain.

We'll take what we get,

grateful to be wet.

Umbrellas out!

Give Fall a shout!



# Therapeutic Writing?

By Dwight Norris

Many years ago, in my twenties, I took some piano lessons. I could have said I studied piano, but that would be a stretch. But my instructor *did* study piano, practiced for hours every day, and played concerts of classical music. And *his* instructor? Well, she was out of sight, played all over the world, and was renowned to have mastered some 1,500 pieces. Her name was Roxana Byers.

Mrs. Byers had not been active on the concert stage for some time, was a prominent part of the Music Teachers National Association, and was known to have many talented and advanced students. It was time for her to polish up the piano and get back on stage. Her first performance was scheduled for a local college in Cerritos, I believe. My instructor and I were in attendance.

Mrs. Byers strode confidently to the majestic instrument, politely acknowledged her audience, and sat for her performance. The name of the piece I never knew, but several minutes in, she seemed to be on her way. The rhythm and melody were filling the auditorium when, suddenly, she faltered, and an awkward silence gripped the stage.

The awkwardness and tension lasted probably for far less time than it seemed, but the unplanned break was impossible to retract. In moments Mrs. Byers regained her composure and resumed her play, and the audience seemed to want to reach out and embrace her, erasing any embarrassment or shame.

I felt badly for the noble lady and wanted to do something to make her feel better and restore her cheerful spirit. And so, (as I have told many of you, in my twenties I was a self-styled poet) I decided to write in her honor a few words to assuage any bad feelings that might linger. Here are the words I wrote to her nearly fifty years ago.

*Continued*

# Therapeutic Writing? Continued

By Dwight Norris

To Mrs. Byers

*Think not that when thy fingers falter,  
Lessen strength upon the keys,  
Degrees of greatness that could alter,  
Deeper still the artist sees.*

*None forget the lightning trills,  
That bolted from thy speedy hands,  
Nor time erase the countless thrills,  
That thousands knew in foreign lands.*

*Thy playing, fine, and lasting, pure.  
All those fifteen hundred pieces.  
E'er the music lover lure,  
Such beauty never, ever ceases!*

*Some had never seen thee play,  
For theirs became a world of blindness.  
Proudly, though, we heard them say,  
So much about thy loving kindness.*

*Surely what the artist gives,  
When rising to her glorious best,  
Is that which only always lives,  
And greatness such will never rest.*

*But thou hast added to thy greatness  
wisdom,*

*Quite a monumental task!  
When thou seest this is done,  
More than this thou canst not ask!*

In a few days, to my delight I received the following note.

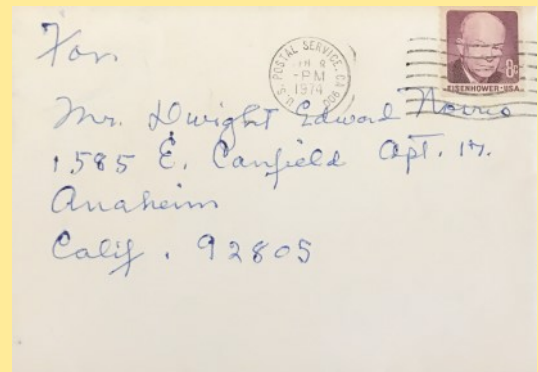
*My dear Dwight Norris,*

*I am greatly touched to receive the beautiful tribute which you have written to me and expressed so eloquently in poetry.*

*With profound appreciation and a humble heart I shall always cherish it.*

*Faithfully,*

*Roxana Byers*





*Kindred Spirits*  
Assunta Maria Vickers

*It has been asked:  
“When a tree falls in a forest, if no one is there to hear... is there a sound?”*

*In a forest called Writers Circle, yes.*

*I liken us as to trees  
Existing in a unique old grove forest  
Having grown at different rates and heights and depths  
Having ‘seen’ various aspects of each others subsistence ~  
and that, related to all manner of secret things  
Not having shared all of the same nutrients, nor angles of the sun*

*But having shared.*

*Having groaned and sighed together through storms  
Having, in concert, shimmered with delight in lovely breezes  
Having, even in respectful silence, all of us, shared.*

*In this earthly existential dependence  
We communicate in a code called writing  
With which, for decades, we’ve held each other up  
In privileged knowing of each other’s root structures  
Reveling in special awareness of each ones lives*

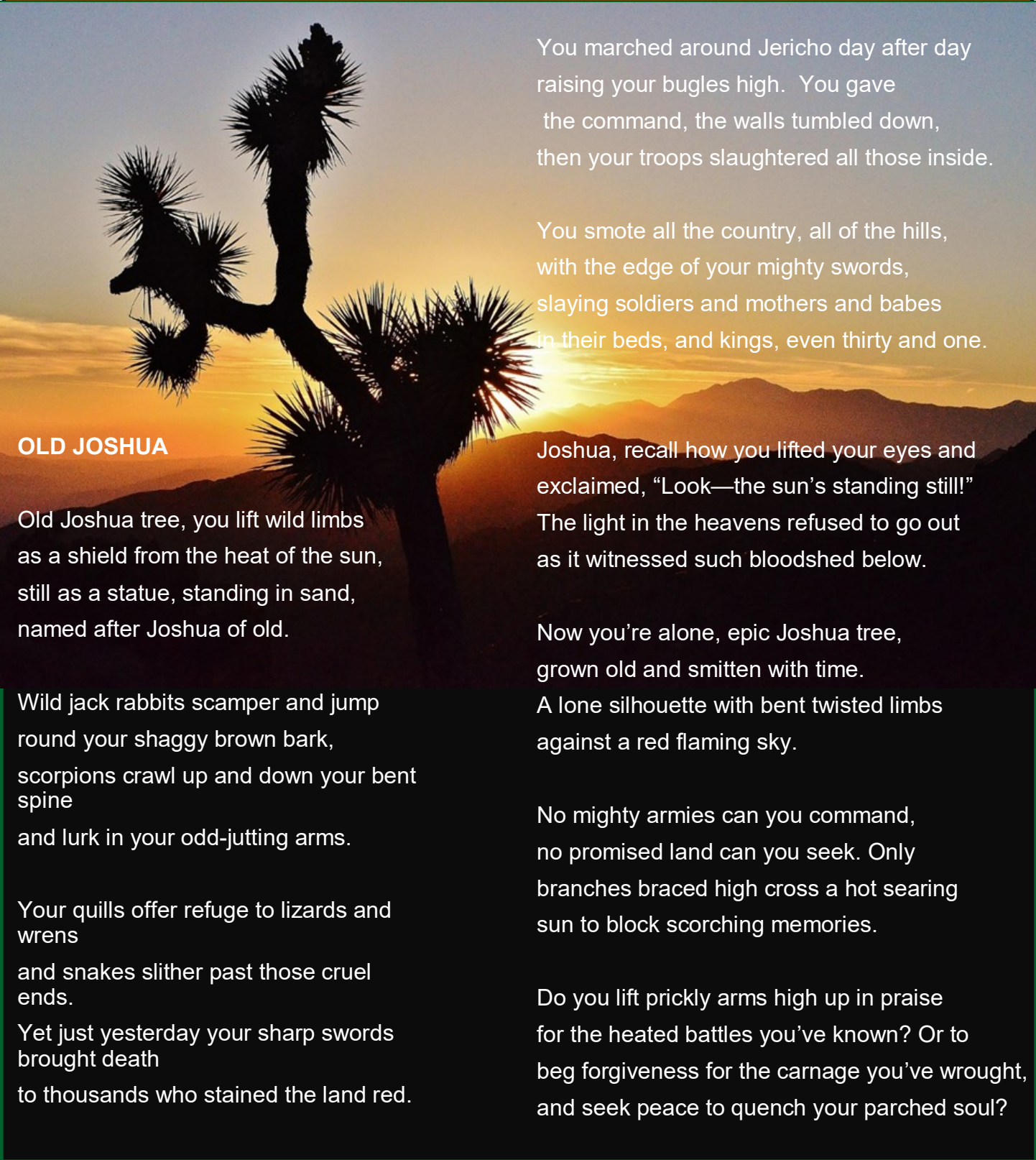
*When one is moved, we others are moved  
When one is changed, we others change also  
For the knowing – among we aging trees – like that of kindred spirits  
Need not be explained; is collectively understood, accepted.*

*And when any one of the trees fall, in this unique old grove forest...  
Yes, it makes a very loud sound...  
To which some simply cannot respond,  
Except in grieving silence, to weep.*

# Old Joshua

By Lorelei Kay

(Image by [Abhay Bharadwaj](#) from [Pixabay](#))



You marched around Jericho day after day  
raising your bugles high. You gave  
the command, the walls tumbled down,  
then your troops slaughtered all those inside.

You smote all the country, all of the hills,  
with the edge of your mighty swords,  
slaying soldiers and mothers and babes  
in their beds, and kings, even thirty and one.

## OLD JOSHUA

Old Joshua tree, you lift wild limbs  
as a shield from the heat of the sun,  
still as a statue, standing in sand,  
named after Joshua of old.

Wild jack rabbits scamper and jump  
round your shaggy brown bark,  
scorpions crawl up and down your bent  
spine

and lurk in your odd-jutting arms.

Your quills offer refuge to lizards and  
wrens

and snakes slither past those cruel  
ends.

Yet just yesterday your sharp swords  
brought death  
to thousands who stained the land red.

Joshua, recall how you lifted your eyes and  
exclaimed, "Look—the sun's standing still!"  
The light in the heavens refused to go out  
as it witnessed such bloodshed below.

Now you're alone, epic Joshua tree,  
grown old and smitten with time.  
A lone silhouette with bent twisted limbs  
against a red flaming sky.

No mighty armies can you command,  
no promised land can you seek. Only  
branches braced high cross a hot searing  
sun to block scorching memories.

Do you lift prickly arms high up in praise  
for the heated battles you've known? Or to  
beg forgiveness for the carnage you've wrought,  
and seek peace to quench your parched soul?



# Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

## OCTOBER— NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

November 9	9:00 Board Meeting
November 10	8:00 Accountability Meeting
November 13	10:00 HDCWC Meeting
November 17	8:00 Accountability Meeting
November 11	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
November 24	8:00 Accountability Meeting
November 24	5-9:00 Town's End Sale
November 23	6:00 Act II meeting
November 25	Happy Thanksgiving!
November 28	9-2:00 Town's End Sale
November 30	2:00 River Walk
December 1	Start of Hanukkah
December 1	8:00 Accountability Meeting
December 1	5-9:00 Town's End Sale
December 5	9-2:00 Town's End Sale
December 7	9:00 Board Meeting
December 8	8:00 Accountability Meeting
December 9	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
December 11	10:00 HDCWC Meeting
December 12	9-2:00 Town's End Sale
December 15	8:00 Accountability Meeting
December 19	9-2:00 Town's End Sale
December 21	6:00 Act II Meeting
December 22	8:00 Accountability Meeting
December 23	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
December 25	Merry Christmas
December 26	Start of Kwanzaa
December 29	8:00 Accountability Meeting



## Book Sale Just Before Christmas

These dates are available for selling your books at Town's End in Apple Valley. The last time we sold 92 books. Contact Mike Raff at [mpseven@aol.com](mailto:mpseven@aol.com) to reserve a table. They're going fast.

Wed Nov 24 (two spots), Sun Nov 28 (two spots), Wed Dec 1 (two spots), Sun Dec 5 (one spot), Sun Dec 12 (full), Sun Dec 19 (two spots)



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 NOVEMBER

November 10 Ann Miner, November 13  
Katina Newell

**Famous November Birthdays:** 1, Stephen Crane; 3, William Cullen Bryant; 6, James Jones; 7, Leon Trotsky; 8, Bram Stoker, Margaret Mitchell; 9, Anne Sexton, Carl Sagan; 11 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Carlos Fuentes, Issac Bashevis Singer, Kurt Vonnegut; 13, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Gibson; 14, Astrid Lindgrin; 15, Marianne Moore, Liane Moriarity; 17, Shelby Foote; 18, Margaret Atwood; 20, Alistair Cooke; 21, Voltaire; 22, George Elliot; 23, Gayl Jones; 24, Lance Jeffers, Dennis Brutus, Frances Hodgson Burnett; 27, James Agee; 29, C.S. Lewis, Louisa May Alcott, Madeline L'Engle, Amos Bronson Alcott; 30, Winston Churchill, Mark Twain, Jonathan Swift, L.M. Montgomery.

## 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 an October publication of our first anthology, *From Silence to Speech: Women of the Bible Speak Out*. We are keeping our fingers crossed that a California Humanities Quick Grant for \$1500 for the publication of the anthology will come through for us in August. Jenny Margotta would distribute the funds.*

Poemsmiths meet July 8 and 22, August 5 and 19

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

[mh\\_thompson@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

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](http://www.HDCWC.com)

### OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

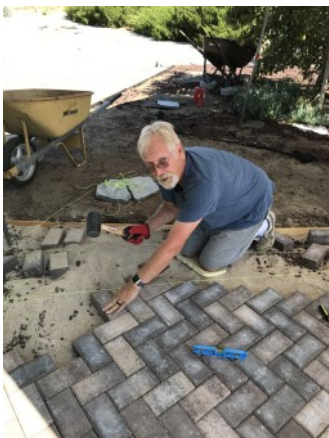
Here's the link to the channel:

<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  
[mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com](mailto:mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com)  
We'll advertise it free of charge!**

### Temporary Editor



Mike Apodaca

## Notes From the Editor

Thanks for all the positive comments for *The Inkslinger*. This month one person called it a tome (I think she meant that as a compliment), another said it was a newsletter of very high quality that our club should be proud of. Every comment I heard was positive. The State website asked to use four articles from *The Inkslinger* in their statewide publication (all solicited contributors were contacted and gave their permission). But what an honor! I will say it again and again, this newsletter is so good because of you. Your poems, short stories, and articles make *The Inkslinger* the powerhouse it is. Thank you for being a part of something fun and exceptional.

Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is [Mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com](mailto:Mrdaqa.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 December items by November 23rd  
Submit January items by December 23rd