



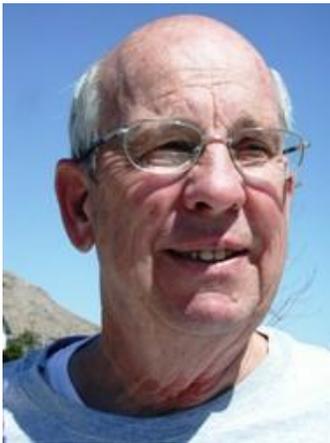
# INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

SAIL ON

Vol. 25, No 2 – August 2010

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



The  
President's  
**P O V**  
Bob Isbill

way they responded to life. But they were all interesting. And each had his share of heartaches and tragedies.

If the legendary St. Peter at the Pearly Gates were really the gatekeeper of who gets in to heaven and who doesn't, it would have to be the most interesting job ever created. Just think. He would meet the most diverse people, sometimes all in the same day. We've all heard a joke or two about that.

But we writers could do well to keep these three gentlemen in mind when populating our stories. We want diversity of moral fiber and not a "sameness" of beliefs because each personality who interacts with our main character tests and/or creates tension in him or her. He/she responds in a different way to each challenging personality. That's one key to developing the person we're writing about—how they react to others, and what they do about it, and how and why they eventually transform. Picture your characters having coffee or dinner together and "listen" to their reactions when your hero makes an announcement. Are the comments about the same? Boredom alert! Keep it lively and interesting.

Remember, your story should contain different folks with different strokes.

## DIFFERENT STROKES

What do Art Linkletter, Gary Coleman and Dennis Hopper have in common?

All three, in that order, passed away as we approached the Memorial Day week-end of 2010. And that's about all that they had in common, at least from the public's viewpoint. Art Linkletter was an icon, so was Gary Coleman and so was Dennis Hopper

But they were so different. Each stood for a world, a point of view, a social (or anti-social) conviction. Linkletter, persona of the family man, was one of the first and foremost anti-drug people in the entertainment business; Hopper is rumored to have openly engaged in alcohol and drug abuse, even on film. Some say that Coleman succumbed to the rigors of show business itself which caused his career to go south. At any rate, they had very different approaches to their professions, and to the

### DUES REMINDER

Just a reminder that 2010 renewal dues are now due from all members. Please bring your check to the August 14, 2010 meeting or send it to:

HDCWC

20162 Hwy 18,

Ste G-281

Apple Valley CA 92307

## HDCWC WILL HEAR MEMOIRIST AT AUGUST MEETING

Author James Brown will speak to our Club on writing memoirs on Saturday, August 14, 2010 at the Apple Valley Library Community Room.

James Brown is a teacher and novelist who has also written two memoirs: ***This River*** and ***The Los Angeles Diaries*** Brown is also the author of several novels, including ***Final Performance*** and ***Lucky Town***. He's received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Fiction Writing and the Nelson Algren Award in Short Fiction. His personal stories have appeared in *GQ*, *Esquire*, *Ploughshares*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *The New England Quarterly*, and anthologized in *Best American Sports Writing*, ***Oral Interpretations*** (college textbook), ***and Fathers, Sons and Sports***.

Brown teaches in the M.F.A. Program at Cal State San Bernardino, and can be contacted through his website at:

[www.jamesbrownauthor.com](http://www.jamesbrownauthor.com)

## WE ARE PREPARED

*Not only are we ready just in case a speaker doesn't show up, we are armed with a great group of volunteers who surrounded the sign up table, last meeting, and made sure every facet of a successful meeting, and Branch operation, is covered by volunteer "labor". Cheers to the volunteers and kudos to the willing spirits!*



## BRANCH PRESIDENT HONORED FOR SERVICE

The July meeting of the HDCWC Branch saw the close of one of the most successful years in its history as the terms of its current officers came to an

end. Carol Warren's presidency experienced a more than 600% increase in membership, highly successful involvement in community outreach with programs at Barnes & Noble, teaching sessions at Hesperia Library, outstanding panels of authors and teachers at their Apple Valley Library meetings, and continued support and encouragement to its writing membership.

While Ms. Warren continues her active participation as liaison with the State CWC organization, plus that of HD Hospitality Chairman, her slot as President will be filled by Vice-President Bob Isbill. Curt James steps into the Vice Presidency while Anne Fowler will continue as Treasurer. Her responsibilities also included Membership Chairman but with the increase in Branch activities, she will continue as Treasurer assisted by a new Membership Chairman in the person of Ann Heimbach. Mary Thompson has been appointed Member-at-Large and Marilyn Ramirez has accepted the position of Branch Historian. Roberta Smith will provide input and member perspective to the Board. Naomi Ward continues as Secretary and *Inkslinger* editor.

(Photo by Marilyn Ramirez)

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## A FESTIVE FOURTH

By Ann Heimback

All eyes looked up, all 9316 of them, at the helicopter hovering overhead. Then they watched as it fluttered down to the green, green grass behind second base on the Mavericks' ball field. The announcer shouted that a VIP was about to be dropped off, and indeed, as the pilot walked around to the passenger door, we held our breath. The crowd went wild when out stepped none other than Woolly Bully. We fifteen or so, from HDCWC, were part of that sell-out mass of 4658 beings who wanted to celebrate.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, "one nation, under God, indivisible," followed by the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," took one's breath away on this birthday of our country.

There was excitement in the air. The sense of family, community and celebration was high. Random fireworks entertained us all during the game, set by hundreds of people who came to have off-site tailgate parties. Those sparks added to the festive air.

It was give-and-take for a few innings. Then the Mavericks got serious, and scored seven runs in the sixth inning, paving the way to a 10 - 8 victory for them and for the community.

HDCWC was the first group to be announced when the welcomes were made over the loudspeaker and on the screen. Later in the game, we heard our name again, and were pleased to hear the website announced, as well. Thanks to Bob Isbill for arranging the game, and many thanks to US Bank for "A Festive Fourth".

By Ann Heimback

## OVERHEARD

(from Winnie Rueff)

I was having lunch with a friend. As we approached our table and waited for the waitress to signal us, I overheard two very sedate older women discussing someone who was obviously not with them. The one with the jaunty feather in her hat said to the very prim woman sitting with her, "You know, Mabel used to be known as a nymphomaniac, and now she's a hypochondriac

## TEN MINUTES RIGIDLY TIMED

By Fran Savage

The reason we will now hear from our own: "What if no one shows up?" Speaking of a scheduled speaker, not the members of HDCWC. A good and enjoyable idea that made the morning speed by.

**Mary Thompson**, the first speaker, and she encouraged us to write poetry. A teacher of Junior High students she came up with an idea that even I could use if and when the desire strikes me, and I can remember it. Her theme "**You Are Such a Cut Up**" has worked for her and her students since 1970. Her ideas have even been published for college classes so you know they work.

She encourages her students to cut out words and phrases from travel guides, real estate handbooks, or from colorful magazines. Then paste them on another sheet of paper and fill the page with trendy phrases that normally don't fit into our everyday vocabulary. She has even made her own Mother's Day cards that are filled with just the right colorful words without the cost.

She read many of the poems from her students, remember they are in Junior High, and they were far above that grade level. Most received 'A's for their work. She gave them ideas that will last a life time, and I bet they will always remember their teacher that taught them how to write poetry.

**Roberta Smith** filled the second spot with her advice to "**Write it Down!**" When an idea hits, no matter the time or place grab a piece of paper and write it down. You think you'll remember it, but you won't. Especially if it happens in the middle of the night.

Sometimes a sentence comes to mind and she will write it down, even if it isn't complete. She can have several sentences started, and when she sits at her computer even if it's two weeks later, she has a road map and she completes her thoughts.

When she is watching television, an idea will pop into her mind, and she is ready for it, and writes it down.

She is always thinking ahead with writing, and in our busy world with so many interruptions Roberta had good advice to help us keep focused. It was advice I plan on using with that tablet and pen at hand. Thanks Roberta.

The third speaker **John Kizziar** transferred from CWC in Sacramento. His advice to keep us on track with our writing "**Set a goal of words, and stick to it.**" He writes every morning between five-hundred and one-thousand words daily. It takes

round two hours with his *hunt and peck* method of typing.

His additional advice was to read more and more. Read the known writers. Watch their skill in writing, and how they use words. Don't steal, but reuse it, rework it with your own words and thoughts.

Good advice to set goals for yourself. You may want to work by the hour instead of the amount of words. Whatever goal you set, stay with it until it becomes a daily habit. Your skills will improve and you will build your own confidence.

John, we're glad you came south and joined our High Desert Club.

We all know our fourth speaker **Anne Fowler**. Anne said she is either writing or doing everything else. She carries a yellow pad around because she has to know what to type before she turns on the computer, and starts on the last page where she left off. Once she gets started she really gets involved.

Out on a walk with her husband she talks, and of course he listens. (Anne does he give you suggestions, and you listen?)

When she is in research mode she takes notes that later can be included in her writings. She even sleeps with a tablet . . . by her bed or not? She just writes a thought down, and it may not even be a complete sentence.

Her great idea and I don't say that facetiously, it was a good idea, to have a "**Writer's Block Party**." The response appeared to be where and when, we're ready! Sounds like it would be fun, and profitable.

We enjoyed your speech Anne; you always do a great job. For anyone who may not know, Anne is our Treasurer.

**Diane Neil**, our fifth and final speaker planned to write a twenty page narrative of her "**Family's History**." She is another writer who sleeps with her tablet and pen on her nightstand.

There were many things she wanted her family to know about her history including her childhood during the World War II era. She contacted immediate family and several cousins. What she received back was forgotten family secrets, and a bit of family gossip. The interest in her book grew from twenty pages to one-hundred.

One thing Diane said that stuck with me, "Everything you've ever known is not forgotten but is stored." Our brain I guess is like a computer, and the slightest thing can spring a thought front and enter. Wish I could back mine up. Oops I'm over the limit. Time to quit.

## TO ALL PUBLISHED AUTHORS!

As I told those attending the meeting on Saturday, July 10th, the one-time donation of \$3.50 per book easel to display your books must be changed to \$5.00 each because the less expensive ones will not accommodate a regular size book. I apologize for any inconvenience.

Note: This is entirely voluntary. You are NOT required to display your books nor to "buy" any easel. It is strictly an option. If you do want to display the book(s) at special meetings when notified in advance, the donation will be \$5.00 per easel. They are very nice easels and we would like to uniformly display them, but again, it is up to you to participate or not.

Again, the easels will be kept on hand by the HD CWC and provided for each participating member to display his/her book(s) at such events as the HATM Conference and/or other HD CWC meetings. We will have several easels to display at the August 14, 2010 meeting and if in doubt, you can make your determination at that time. The HD CWC authorized the purchase of 25, which is what we now have on hand.

We will need to know how many are committed to this project on August 14, 2010 at the meeting so that those wanting to participate can sign up, giving your name and how many books you want to display. Priority will be given to those who come prepared with their donation.

As for the "Our Authors" web page, I have had very few responses. If you would like us to post your photograph (optional) and help you market your book(s) on our [www.hdcwc.org](http://www.hdcwc.org) site, please respond to the email address [vmmediator@aol.com](mailto:vmmediator@aol.com) with the following information:

Your photograph (optional) in a jpg file.

Your bio.

Your book titles and how and where they can be purchased

This author's page is "under construction" and will be completed as time allows; however, if you want to participate I need that information.

Thanks,  
Bob Isbill

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## HOW TO SUBMIT AN ITEM TO THE INKSLINGER

*It's interesting how many submissions come in with great stories but which have to be "massaged" before they are useable in the Inkslinger format. Here is one more try at making it easier for both of us. It's said that the third time's a charm – see if it works here!*

Please send your items single spaced in Arial I know, almost everything we've ever read about submitting a MS calls for double spacing, This is a newsletter and single space is better for designing the more compact layout. (And I don't have to fight "fancy" formatting.)

Give it a title I might title it for you and totally miss your emphasis.

Font size should be at least 11 point. If changes have to be made to fit space, the editor will make them

Don't trust your spell check blindly – "to", "too" and "two" don't mean a thing to a spell check – they are all correct and its choice may not be your choice. Recheck after you use Spell Check,

Submissions should be less than 800 words. This is a newsletter, not a magazine. You can easily give us a sample of your style and skill in that amount of words – make them short and pithy – fun to write, fun to read!

One story/item per submission. They go to different folders for different issues.

Thank you for your attention to these "Style Sheet" suggestions...

Naomi Ward, Editor

### WELCOME NEW HDCWC MEMBERS

Our branch is growing like Jack's bean stalk. Newest members who joined in the last two months are: Angie Horn, Gail Luevano, Richard Luevano, Katherine Hamor, Vicki Gesson, Linda Cooper, Tom Saunderson, Mary Scott, and - transferring from Sacramento CWC – John Kizziar.

We are pleased to welcome you to High Desert CWC, and look forward to getting acquainted with you and your writing. Please check out our critique groups.

Ann Heimback – Membership Chairman

## CWC SEEKING ESSAYS ON ON FUTURE OF PRINT MEDIA

What do you think written communication will look like in 2035? Will we still have e-books, regular hold-in-your-hand books, conventional newspapers and magazines? Will we be reading short stories and poems? What will state-of-the-art technology do to our access to reference works, and will the children be asking what was an encyclopedia? Will the continued march of technology have us in a totally different place by then? CWC is soliciting essays expressing the views of CWC members with predictions of the future of print media to be included in a time capsule which will be opened on Mark Twain's bicentennial in 2035!

The capsule will be archived at Bancroft Library, UC Berkley, and will be opened in 2035, as will Walt Disney's time capsule. The theme of the collection will be "The Future of Print Media in 2035" and contain, in addition to the essays, a letter on the subject delivered by the Pony Express 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary run, current magazines and newspaper articles about the changing publication practices and related items.

This isn't a contest. It is a call for comments and projections regarding the future of the publishing world as we know it today, and the opportunity to compare those ideas with the realities of 2035. The CWC will receive submissions thru August 25, 2010. They should be mailed to California Writers Club, P. O. Box 484, Ridgecrest, CA 93556 and include the author's name, age, address and permission to publish all or part of the essay when the capsule is opened. Anyone who does not want the submission read prior to 2035 should write "read in 2035" on the envelope.

Here is your chance to be a part of the future while keeping the past live. Remember, you could publish your best work and have it out of print in a few years but having your essay in the time capsule may keep it around for the ages.

### AUTHOR RECEPTION POSTPONED

The "Meet Our Authors" day tentatively scheduled for August 22, 2010 has been postponed until the publication of our "Howling at the Moon" anthology. We will notify you of the new date when it is rescheduled.

Bob Isbill, President/Publicity

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## 2ND BARNES & NOBLE READING FESTIVAL

For the second year in a row, the HD CWC will present readings from original works of our members on Saturday, August 7, 2010 at the Barnes & Noble Booksellers in the Victor Mall beginning at 10:30 a.m. and winding up at 4 p.m.

Denny Stanz, Roberta Smith, Diane Neil, Mary Thompson, Curt James, Emily Pomeroy, Carol Warren, Mary Scott, Ann Heimback, Harold Meza, Linda Bowden, Suzanne Holbrook, Willard Brumbaugh, Naomi Ward, Jim Elstad, Bob Isbill and Holly LaPat are scheduled to read.

The 2009 event was a big attraction and greatly enjoyed by the members and the public attending.

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### JUST BECAUSE YOU FIND IT ON THE INTERNET.....

I saw this article on Yahoo, about a new site that tries to analyze writing samples and tell you what famous author you sound like. Here's the link: [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us\\_web\\_i\\_write\\_like](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us_web_i_write_like)

My husband snorted and said, "Type in some Charles Dickens and see what it says."

I did. I cut-and-pasted a couple of different sections from an online version of "A Christmas Carol." It came up with James Joyce once and Stephen King twice. But no Dickens.

Then I tried a few samples of my own work. It thinks I write like David Foster Wallace, Kurt Vonnegut ... or Stephen King.

It sounds like the program's designer worked pretty hard on it, poor guy, but there are obviously a few bugs in the system!

.....Holly La Pat

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

**All items in this newsletter are the opinions of the author(s) and do not in any way represent the views or official position of CWC.**

## CRITIQUE GROUPS GETTING EXTREME MAKEOVER

Do commas put you in a coma? Does sentence structure stymie you? Do semi-colons leave you semi-conscious? Oh, what to do? What to do?

The answer is **Critique Groups**. Join one and learn the how-to's and share your own knowledge with others.

**Are you writing a book?** Then you're gonna love this.

Hazel Stearns hosts a books-only group which meets 6 – 9 every other Thursday in Hesperia. Check with Hazel about any openings, and which Thursdays. 760-964-5797.

Ann Heimback hosts two groups in Desert Knolls (Apple Valley) which meet every other Tuesday evening, 6 – 9, beginning August 3rd. One group is for books only. The other is for general writing, so far. Call Ann at 760-242-2923. Allergies? Ann has a dog and a cat.

#### **Are you a morning person?**

To meet during the day, go to Carol Warren's from 9 – 12 Thursdays beginning August 5th. Call Carol at 760-242-3367

#### **Are you a teen?**

Teens will meet on 2nd Saturdays after the regular CWC meeting. Mentors will be there to help. See Carol Warren for more information. She will be your mentor for the first three months, 760-242-3367.

For more information, check with CWC Board Members at the next meeting, August 14.

By Ann Heimback

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### FORMATTING TITLES

..... (A few simple rules)

Books: Italics or Underline (NEVER Both)

CDs: Italics or Underline (NEVER Both)

Articles: Newspaper or magazines: Quotation marks

Chapter Titles: Quotation Marks

Magazines, Newspapers: Italics/Underline NOT both

Names of Ships, Trains, Airplanes: Italics,

Poems: Quotation Marks

Plays: Italics

Short Stories: Quotation Marks

Song Titles: Quotation Marks

Special Phrases ("let them eat cake") Words/sentences: Quotation Marks

Television Shows and Movies: Italics

## MOTHER'S FINAL GOODBYE

By Linda Bowden

This story I tell from the end,  
To the beginning.  
It's the way I remember, it best.  
The last time I saw you, your head laid at rest,  
On a blue satin pillow,  
Inside a box made so fine.  
Your sweet hands bore the marks,  
Of the needles,  
Which pierced your veins, dried up with no blood.  
The next time I saw you, I held you close to me.  
Cradled you on my lap,  
Your naked body still warm with your soul.  
The line from the bag of blood, still hanging,  
Still dripping one drop at a time.  
Into a vein already slowly collapsing.  
The next time I saw you, they were pumping hard on  
your chest,  
Trying with all their scientific knowledge,  
To save your shell of a body from death.  
The next time I saw you, I looked over and that  
straight line,  
Beeped across the monitor,  
A look of peace on your face.  
The next time I saw you, a tube down your throat,  
But you still wrote me a note,  
How much longer do you think?  
The next time I saw you, was before that hospital stay,  
You sat next to me watching,  
The California Angels play.  
You looked over with that very special look,  
And blew me a kiss, from a body already  
Scheduled to fail.  
The next time I saw you, you'd just rode up on your  
bike,  
A birthday surprise from your mommy,  
That smile worth all of my strife.  
The next time I saw you was the very first,  
As the doctor lay you near to my breast,  
I didn't know then that Cancer would take you;  
I was happy and felt very blessed.  
The last time I saw you, wasn't by far the best,  
But I hold all my memories so close,  
In a box, where I laid you to rest.

""Write a non-fiction book, and be prepared for the legion of readers who are going to doubt your every fact. But write a novel, and get ready for the world to assume every word is true." - Barbara Kingsolver

## POETRY CORNER

### MOTORCYCLE MEN

**Full armored, full throttled, rattling cactus and  
scattering sand,  
you roared into our canyon—our motorcycle men.  
Like Vikings armed with GPS,  
you conquered the canyon on your eastward quest.  
We're glad you stopped at our inn first  
to stoke your bellies and slake your thirst  
and partake of one night's rest.**

**You were up with the sun,  
geared and packed and ready to run,  
revving the ravens and waving to us,  
then out again on your mountain thrust.**

**We stood in your dust, and to tell you the truth,  
we think you took a bit of our youth.  
Godspeed on your journey.  
Come see us again.  
There's always room at the inn  
for our motorcycle men.**

**By Diane Neil (For Paul & Micheal 7/13-14/10)**

### LOVE

When I am near you  
I am calm.  
When we touch  
I feel safe  
When we kiss  
I feel like melting  
When I see you  
I want to run and hug you  
When you hold me  
I don't want to leave  
Is this love?  
I don't know but I like it.

Alyssa Schultz

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**DON'T FORGET OUR WEBSITE AT**

[www.hdcwc.org](http://www.hdcwc.org)

"Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way." - E.L. Doctorow

## LOST

Madelyn slipped feet first into the cool green water, her mind empty... her eyes devoid of life. She had thought about it for a long time, played with the idea of suicide, but had always dismissed it. After all, people who committed suicide never went to Heaven, always the other place. But even Hell was better than this. No one would miss her. Her family had disowned her and to everyone else she was just a face in the crowd: a broken, bruised face, but still just a face.

She had thought she loved him. He seemed so kind and considerate at first. She knew it was wrong to move in with him, but he was so persuasive. "Just for a little while, until we see if we're really compatible or not." She had been reluctant at first, but she loved him so and he *had* promised to marry her. So she moved her belongings into the tiny apartment and started housekeeping.

Her family's disapproval saddened her, but she assured them everything would eventually work out. It was just a matter of time. Then the beatings started - just a slap across the face...the first time. Why, she had cried? He had apologized, said he had had a bad day at work, asked her forgiveness and promised – never again. He brought her flowers and when they made love his tenderness wiped all the pain away. She didn't tell her family. They wouldn't understand. After all, it was just once.

Months later. Still no ring... Unless you count the one around her eye. She stayed home a lot. She was ashamed. It had become a vicious cycle - beatings, apologies, lovemaking... round and round. She shouldn't complain. After all, it was her fault. She should have known he didn't like stuffed peppers. She could have kept the house a little cleaner, she supposed. But she was so drained. *What has happened to me*, she wondered. *I can hardly make myself get up in the morning*. Then the visit to the doctor. He had insisted. "Get some pills. Anything to get you off your lazy butt," he had demanded. So she went.

Three months, the doctor said. Baby seems fine, but *she* has to take better care of herself. Exhaustion wouldn't do her or the baby any good. That was the day she told her family... the day they disowned her... forever. A child out of wedlock was a stigma they could not bear. She went home, wondering what *his* reaction would be. Would he be happy being a daddy? Angry? Would it matter at all?

"How could you let this happen," he had demanded? "It's all your fault. You've ruined my life." Then he beat her and threw her out. Pregnant. Homeless. No place to go. No family, no home, no shelter... only the river.

She closed her eyes as she slipped deeper into the murky depths. 'But what about the baby?' a voice deep within her subconscious cried out. She opened her eyes. She felt her abdomen. *The baby my baby. I have to live for my baby. Please God. Forgive me. Please don't let me die.* She struggled toward the surface, kicking and flailing. *I'm not going to make it*, she thought, her tears joining with the droplets in the river.

Strong hands... under her arms... lifting, pulling... breaking the surface of the water... blue sky... air... life giving air...thank you, God.

"Are you all right, miss? That was quite a fall. Thought you were dead."

She looked into the deep green eyes of the lone fisherman and smiled. "I'm all right," she whispered. And she knew she was.

By Suzanne C. Deboard Holbrook-Brumbaugh

## OUT OF THE MOUTHS

By Linda Bowden

I'm reminded of the time when my five year old son proceeded to describe an out- of- body experience. We had just moved to New Orleans and we weren't finished unpacking. That day became very memorable because a TV show came on and the narrator was talking about the number of people who describe out- of- body experiences.

Me being a skeptic, I'd never really believed in that concept because I'm from Missouri and more of a show-me type of gal, I didn't give it a second thought. My five year old son became intently engrossed in the film. Suddenly, he turned to me with wide eyes and said, "I did that." "Did what?" I answered. "Came out of my body", he replied. "Came out of your body?" I answered skeptically. "When did that happen?" "When I was in the hospital and they cut me open, remember?" "Well, of course I remember when you had surgery, tell me more". "I came out of my body but the man in white told me it wasn't time, I had to go back in my body." "I was really sad and didn't want to go back. It was so beautiful there more than anyone could ever know." He looked at me with those big brown eyes with so much conviction it would have been difficult to change his mind. I turned off the TV and said, "Let's have cookies and milk," in my best mother knows best words. Out of the mouths of babes sometimes comes information we don't need to know.

### **HOSPICE HUMOR**

By Carol Warren

*(This is one of my Hospice Humor stories which I chose to share "prematurely" as my book is progressing on the very slow side.)*

I was visiting a patient that lived in a separate house, often referred to as "Mother-In Laws" quarters. I had spent a few minutes talking over any questions or concerns with her son and asked if he wanted to come along while I examined Mom. He declined and I started walking toward the back house.

I had walked about 15 feet and had the sensation that someone was following me. I partially turned around thinking that her son must have decided to come with me after all, but no one was there. I continued on another 15 feet or so, as I decided I must have been imagining it. Suddenly I felt something touch the backs of my legs. I let out a little scream and didn't know if I should make a run for it to the patients open door, stop dead in my tracks or try to make it back to the main house. The son came running when he heard me scream but soon stopped as he bent over laughing and reassured me it was only the family's pot bellied pig out for an evening walk.

Home Health and Hospice nurses have many war stories to share.

### **A SMALL MIRACLE**

By Winnie Rueff

There were three of us young ladies starting out on an adventure to New York and environs. All of us were twenty five years old and felt perfectly capable of a trip to "The Big Apple" from Chicago, Illinois.

I had a brand new 1952 Chevrolet Bel Aire hard top convertible, a new concept in the 50's. It was a contrasting dark and light green color combination with a black top. All of us felt very special zooming along the two lane highways through Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Jerrye was a good friend from my class in nurses training at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. She had followed me out to California several years before and had been in a disastrous marriage. I don't know what else happened, but one evening I was at their house in Los Angeles and during dinner her husband dumped a bowl of mashed potatoes over her head because something about the meal didn't please him. She did leave him, but not after having a baby boy. I had been with her when she delivered the baby. Her husband was nowhere around. She had subsequently gone back to Chicago with the baby to be with her mother while she tried to figure out what to do with her life. She was currently an obstetrics nurse.

I had been an operating room nurse at Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, but like so many others wanted to go back "home." Of course, nothing would be as I remembered it, but we were always told to stay at a position for at least a year if we wanted to expect a good reference from our employer. That meant making the most of everything while I was there. I worked in the operating room at Northwestern University Medical center in charge of eye surgery.

Caroline worked there too, but on a medical floor. She was one of my roommates in the apartment house that was the nurses' home. There were four to an apartment and the rent and food

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took most of our salary. It was on the "Gold Coast" of Chicago.

The Director of Nurses was my director of nurses at Cook County when I was a student there. She believed in expanding our education with travel and so happily gave us time off for the trip.

The trip through Indiana and Ohio was monotonous. The motels were interesting. Little houses at the side of the road with a one car garage on the side. They had different motifs. Some were made to look Western. Some were brick, others made from rock. Each had its own idea of what would catch the eye of the tourist. Inside, they were all the same, a bed and a bath. Some had kitchen facilities. We weren't interested in those.

When we got to Pennsylvania the landscape became more interesting. There were some hills! Very green hills! It was good to see the very lovely green hills and valleys. We had been driving through a lot of farm land up until now. Country stretched for miles around with no houses of any kind. As far as the eye could see, just rolling hills and greenery. After California and Chicago it almost took my breath away.

I was very aware of the gas situation in places like this and didn't want us stranded out in the "boonies" and out of gas. I decided we better get gas as soon as we could, and as long as it was near lunch have lunch in the next town while we were at it.

We drove and drove. No town. Finally we saw, up ahead, a gas station. I told Jerrye and Caroline to go inside and use the restroom and then we would meet for lunch. I parked the car and met Caroline in the small lunch room attached to the gas station.

We waited and waited for Jerrye and we finally ate our lunch worrying the whole time about what had happened to her.

After sitting there as long as we could, we walked out to the car. There was Jerrye, huffing and puffing

in her rage. "Where were you guys? I sat in that restaurant waiting for you and finally ate alone!" Caroline and I turned around and there were **two** gas stations sitting side by side, both with small dining rooms. There was no other edifice that we could see for miles around. After all was explained, we had a good laugh. Poor Jerrye, her life was so unsettled at this time. She had no idea what the future held, and she had a child to raise by herself.

We continued on to New York City and drove around town looking at the sights. We found a hotel in the Bronx, across from Yankee Stadium and settled in for a two day stay in the city.

From driving around the city with the traffic and the sun shining in my eyes much of the day, I arrived at the hotel with the one and only migraine headache in my life. Thankfully, Jerrye had some Codeine tablets. I don't know how I would have made it another minute without them.

The next morning we sat down to discuss where we would go that day. Jerrye wanted to go to Bellevue Hospital, reported to be the largest hospital in the United States. Cook County was the second largest. Los Angeles County likes to claim that spot. Regardless, they were all over 2,000 patient beds.

Caroline and I wanted to visit the Statue of Liberty. Jerrye had visited it while a student nurse during her last six weeks at Cook County. A few in my class were selected to go somewhere out of Illinois for experience at other hospitals. I didn't get to do that and was always envious of the ones that did.

So, off we went to see the city. I didn't take my car. We thought it would be great fun to ride the subway. We studied the maps at the subway stations and found the connections to the different parts of the city. (It helped that we had ridden the "L" in Chicago and knew how to navigate the "system.")

The Statue of Liberty was wonderful to see and we spent about three hours there reading the history of the Island and trying to decide if we

wanted to attempt climbing to the top. We decided not to.

We caught the subway back to the Hotel, but midway through the trip I decided I wanted to eat in an automat. Caroline thought that was a great idea, so we hopped off the train when we saw one come into view. We were so excited. We were actually going to eat in a New York subway automat!

We walked along the line of the cafeteria and chose a table. As we ate our lunch, Caroline said "Winnie, you won't believe this. Look in the line over there," I looked where she pointed and there was Jerrye, oblivious to everything around her, lost in her own thoughts and obviously happy, judging from the smile on her face. We called to her and she didn't have to eat by herself this time. And in New York City!

### **JUST LIKE OLD TIMES**

*By George Gracyk*

I waited for her at a table over on the side, away from the noise of the bar. Friday evening but still early and the York Tavern wasn't really in full swing just yet. It was over a year since we'd been close up, face to face. Time was we spent hours on the phone, neither one wanting to hang up and end the conversation. I had called her a few days prior. "It's been a long time, I hear you still drop in at the York. I'd like meet you there, a little small talk. I'll buy you a beer, like old times." She answered back, "It's about time you called, I might be there Friday evening. But it's not going to be like old times." I knew she had a thin, smirkey smile on her lips, I could feel it over the phone line. No, she was right. It could never be like old times.

I spotted her the minute she came in the door. Her blond hair was pulled back in a pony tail. My favorite style and she knew it. She looked good, a little slimmer now but filled out a pair of jeans nicely. She walked with a mature self assurance and with reason. She was twenty-four, a college grad with a good job in the city. She weaved

through the tables and nodded to Boots the bartender. Boots brought over a long neck Bud and a glass, he knew which table.

Boots poured her beer and said, "Hey there." She gave him a smile and then flashed it on me.

She laid her car keys down, took a sip of beer and said, "Well, start talking". It was time to make my pitch, now or never.

The old York Tavern was the right place for this. If we could talk and work it out at all, this was the place. There was a ton of good time memories here to help pad things out. Back then, the tavern was a comfortable suburban beer joint with a noisy younger crowd, a friendly hangout with a jukebox. Between us, we knew almost every person in the room. I signaled Boots for another beer for me and started to make my case.

I had a pretty short story to sell. There wasn't much we didn't know about each other. We had started out dating early in High School. As a steady couple, we went to all the games and dances and parties, the prom. She went off to college two states away, I made the trip two or three times and then I was off in the service. When we met up again, we were different people, dating seemed stiff and awkward. It just didn't want to work out, we were like strangers. We drifted apart but in a small town and with the same friends we were aware of each other. But the memories were burned into me and I wanted them back. I couldn't forget her and didn't want to. I was giving her my best shot about us being adults now, clean slate, fresh start, and all that other sorry bullshit.

She leaned over close and whispered in my ear, "If you'll let go of me, I'd like to go pee."

I was stunned. Unconsciously; I had been holding her hands and playing with her fingers. And that was just like old times.