



# INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC SAIL ON

JANUARY 2013

## Gearing Up for the New Year: What Prompts You to Write?

I was fortunate enough to have a strong writing background and shared my creative spark with other writers when I joined a writing support group in Lucerne Valley.

Each of us in “Writers’ Ink” found a way to prompt our writing muse. Some offered critiquing to others, some loved sharing stories of their family life, while others loved writing exercises that cranked up the creative juices.

Coming up in January, our HDCWC members will circulate in a “round Robin” exercise where we can share ideas, be prompted by each facilitator, or offer our best insights of how the mystery of writing is generated.

We often talk about critique groups, but that is toward the end of the writing and rewriting process. What about the new writers – the “wannabes” – those who are eager to start but afraid of the first steps?

I believe the best steps have already been taken when they become a member of the branch. Those first steps are soul-searching, to say the least. We wish to encourage new talent and in doing so, we enhance the “old habits” – or is that ream out the old habits, to make room for new trends and ideas within the ranks of our experienced authors.

Experienced authors are the “meat and potatoes” of this branch; newbies are dessert. We need to let them know that not everyone coming into the branch is published. How intimidating that is! This group of authors and writers is inspired to be lifted up by all the others, new and legendary. That’s the way it should be.

No matter how you conjure up the muse for yourself, remember that there are many new members joining us that feel their time has come. They may not be as brave or outspoken about their path to authorship but they are eager to find the key, the prompt, the juice, the passion, the indescribable yearning to be in print.

We’re here to help them reach that goal.

~~ *Rusty LaGrange*

### **What You Missed – The Shyster’s Daughter at CWC Holiday Lunch**



At the club’s December meeting, Paula Priamos, author of *The Shyster’s Daughter*, and English and Creative Writing teacher at California State University, San Bernardino, offered a very well received presentation covering “Plot, Conflict, and Keeping it Interesting.” Paula not only offered invaluable writing advice and tips, but also included interesting anecdotal examples from her unusual life and compelling novel. Among her other writing accomplishments are articles in LA Times Magazine, San Francisco Chronicle, Washington Post Magazine and literary journals.

She also joined us for the annual Holiday Lunch, this time held at Di' Napoli's Italian Restaurant in Apple Valley. Members enjoyed pasta to pizza, salads to sandwiches then shared news and networking. Our gift exchange brought out a variety of books and writing tools mixed with crafts and decorations of the season. Over 30 attended.



After spending some time with Paula, you can definitely say she was raised in a mystery-laden family environment where family members often “disappeared.” She’s working on her next book.

~~ **composite article by Madeline Gornell & Rusty LaGrange**

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## UPDATE: “An Afternoon with Ken Rotcop”

Internationally renowned screenwriting and story consultant, Ken Rotcop, spoke to the public and members of the HD CWC on Wednesday afternoon, December 5, 2012 at the Newton T. Bass Apple Valley Library.

The “Afternoon with Ken Rotcop”



presentation was held from 3 pm to 6 pm, following Rotcop’s guest speaker visit to the Federal Correctional Complex in Victorville as part of the HD CWC’s outreach program.

Rotcop created Pitchmart, the oldest and most respected event that connects hopeful screenwriters with executive producers. The award winning documentary, “Talk Fast”, the story of Rotcop and his Pitchmart, was shown to our members and guests. The film depicts several aspiring screenwriters going through improving their scripts through Ken Rotcop’s guidance, and learning to pitch their stories to studio

executives.

Ken is author of the best-selling guide to enticing film-makers to read your script, “The Perfect Pitch.” The most recent edition has been revised and updated. It was available for those who attended. Ken Rotcop has been called by Oprah Winfrey, “the Pitch Guru”. During his extensive career in the movie business, Rotcop has been creative head of four major studios, and has taught screenwriting at several universities.

Many in attendance at the “Afternoon with Ken Rotcop” wanted his contact information: You can email Ken at [Pitchmart@gmail.com](mailto:Pitchmart@gmail.com) or visit [www.pitchmart.com](http://www.pitchmart.com). His mailing address is 4439 Canoga Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364

~~ **Bob Isbill** ❖



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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### **PURSES ARE GRAB BAGS**

*by Diane Neil*

As the post-Holiday shopping season continues, I want to share some practical information about protecting yourself from theft. As many of you know, my purse was stolen during the October CWC meeting by a young con artist out in the lobby. The purse was right next to me, but the thief made off with it during a moment's distraction.

I'm a trusting person who is often and easily distracted. I have vowed never to carry a purse again and have recently switched to carrying my valuables in a fanny pack around my waist. It's amazing how much of what I used to cart around in a big purse was not essential at all. My driver's license, credit cards, cell phone, keys, and a bit of cash fit nicely in a fanny pack. The wads of tissue, makeup, brochures, souvenirs, family pictures, gum, etc. that used to pack my purse were just extra baggage and a heavy weight on my aching shoulder.

It was fortunate that I had a couple of old fanny packs I could dig out and use, because they are not in fashion today, and I couldn't find one in a sweep of several stores. I did find a hiker's pack at Big Five, but it was a heavy, cumbersome thing that looked like I was wearing a sneaker around my waist.

I've shared my purse theft story with others and have heard horror stories of similar thefts. Thieves can cut the straps of shoulder bags and make off with them before you know what's happening. A friend had her bag snatched from right beside her in an airport waiting area and didn't even realize it until she got on the plane. Another woman was nearly strangled when a thief pulled her double-strapped purse over her head. Men are not immune to thefts, either. Anyone who carries a camera bag or laptop or brief case is at risk.

I hate to be a killjoy during this celebratory season, but I figured a word to the wise might save someone else from the ordeal I went through. I was going to donate all my purses to the Salvation Army, but I did find a use for them. They made great seasonal decorations. Right now, the red and green bags are holding Christmas greens. Happy Holidays to All! ❖



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## AGE

By Linda Bowden

Age, drips on face  
like rain gently seeking  
a new found puddle.  
No amount of face lift  
Botox or tummy tuck  
can turn the hands to a newer hour.  
One second at a time  
Keeps a new minute ticking;  
And age creeps slowly,  
Robbing the spring in the step.  
But alas, age cannot destroy  
The heart, only the body is affected!



## 5 Keys to Painless Prospecting

Let's face it. No one likes to cold call, warm call, or do any type of prospecting. Even if you don't use the phone and, instead, reach out to new potential customers via email, the process can be intimidating.

Your contacts are any prospective readers, buyers, friends and family, or past clients you're connecting with.

*Don't let your eyes glaze over. Sometimes you just have to do it.* Especially when you need to land some new sales fairly quickly. Like maybe a book you're selling.

The good news is, there are ways to make prospecting calls – or send prospecting *emails* – that are easy-to-do and get very good results.

Here are just a few of those ways offered by Steve Slaunwhite of [www.CopywritingTrainingCenter.com](http://www.CopywritingTrainingCenter.com):

**1. Rethink your definition of “prospecting.”** Prospecting is *not* about trying to sell your services or books to strangers. *It's about introducing yourself to people who have a likelihood of being interested in what you have to offer.* So, when you're prospecting – by making calls, sending emails, or connecting via social media – your focus is on *building relationships* with those who may want to do business with you, now or in the future.

And when you think of prospecting in that way, it becomes much easier. (And, as it turns out, a lot more effective.)

**2. Focus on high-probability prospects.** Don't call or email every name you can find in your phone list. That's exhausting and only increases your chances of rejection. Be selective. Ask yourself... *Who in your target market is most likely to be receptive to hearing from you and learning more about your books or services?* Or, to put it another way, who do you suspect has the highest

need for what you provide?

We call these “high-probability prospects.” And if you focus on those people, you’ll be prospecting less, but getting much better results.

**3. Use your REAL voice.** I received an email from an investment advisor recently introducing her services to me. Unfortunately, her message read like a page from a sales brochure. It might actually have been cut and pasted from a brochure! I couldn’t help thinking: *would she send an email like that to someone she knew, like a friend or client?* Probably not. She would probably just be herself and use her own voice. *And that’s what you should do, too, when calling or emailing. Just be yourself!*

Now, there’s nothing wrong with creating a script or template to use as a *guide* when prospecting. Just make sure it reflects the way you normally talk.

**4. Tailor your message.** The more customized your message is, the more likely the prospect will be interested in hearing (or reading) it. *To do that, you’ll need to take a few minutes to get to know the prospect better before you call or email. Check out the prospect’s website if they have one. Review recent press releases about the person you wish to know.*

Often, when you do a little digging, you’ll discover a good *reason* to call or email. Maybe the prospect is launching a new product soon? Or attending an important book fair? Any of those facts can make your prospecting message much more personalized, relevant, and effective.

**5. Get introduced.** There’s no doubt about it. If you can say something like, “Your colleague, Dave Smith, suggested I give you a call...” your chances of success go up ten-fold. So explore ways you can be introduced to prospects by people you already know. *You can also just ask your close colleagues and clients if they know people in their networks who would be interested in learning about your books or services.*

**6. BONUS:** *It seems simple but always carry hardcopies of your books with you. You’ll never know when the next best sale will happen: at a club meeting? at the store? at the Post Office? or at the local market?*

There you have it. Five ways to make prospecting easier and more effective. Remember, it’s all about building relationships. And, if you just focus on that, you’ll find that prospecting isn’t such a pain after all. You might even come to love it. Or, at least, *like* it!



## MARKETING REALITY

Mike Raff spent a day at K-Mart in Hesperia offering his books and signing autographs. When CWC members dropped by he said, “It was a different venue than I expected. People



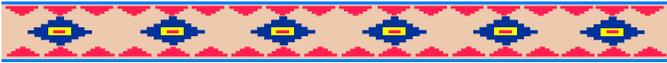
were friendly and talked to me about my book. I didn’t sell that many but I’m going to try it again in March.” Mike can be seen here next to the red cape. Check with the store managers of your selected store and see

if setting up at a busy venue like this one will work for you, too.

Some new authors have tried Book Fairs, Swap Meets, Retirement Homes, and college book stores.

For more ideas, ask other authors what they found was the best regional and least expensive venue with the highest sales.

Sales and marketing ideas are always changing so it’s up to the authors to stay abreast of the latest trends. ❖



## A CHRISTMAS POEM

*By Suzanne Holbrook-Brumbaugh*

Christmas time is coming.  
The best time of the year,  
when all the little children wait  
for Santa to appear.

They hope to catch a glimpse of him  
when down the flue he comes.  
They know that Santa's pack is full  
with toys, CDs and drums.

But Santa knows just what to do.  
He waits till they're asleep.  
He doesn't want to spoil the fun.  
He works without a peep.

And so on Christmas morning  
when all the children rise  
they'll find that Santa's been there.  
Oh, my! What a surprise!

annual event, and two families never answered Gloria's email. When the day arrived, miraculously, everyone did show up. But some came for breakfast on their way to somewhere else, and some stopped by at noon and were leaving as others were arriving for dinner.

Gloria's requested recipes mostly went ignored. The green beans and cranberry sauce arrived in cans, spinach dip and carrot-raisin salad came in Costco containers, and the red, white, and green molded ambrosia was nowhere in sight. Instead, daughter Debby sailed in with a huge stack of Twinkie boxes, which she conferred to the dessert table with the air of a magical fairy godmother.

"You wouldn't believe how many stores I had to shop in to find these!"

That started all the women gabbing about the lines they had endured for the Black Friday bargains. The TV went on, drowning out the Christmas carols playing softly in the background.

Nobody actually sat together at the beautifully decorated table. The kids wandered around noshing, texting and tweeting. Two of the sons-in-law nearly came to blows over politics, some of the grandkids got into the liquor cabinet, and one family went outside to ride their new Vespas.

Jim forgot to light the fireplace, Gloria forgot to light the candles, and nobody remembered to say grace. Finally, everyone left, and they went to bed.

The next morning, Gloria staggered out to the kitchen to survey the damage. The first thing she saw was the turkey carcass. She got a big smile on her face as she tore it apart and spread the bones and herb-basted skin in the roasting pan. She poured giblet gravy over it and added blobs of mashed potatoes and chestnut dressing. She dumped on green beans and the Costco salads. She crumbled the remnants of her raised yeast rolls and spooned on cranberry sauce.

Three Twinkies were left on the dessert table. Carefully, Gloria unwrapped them, cut them in inch-thick slices, and placed them in precise rows over the whole mess. Humming "Jingle Bells," she carried the pan outside.

The ravens were waiting, fifty strong, cawing in anticipation. As soon as she scattered the food on the ground, they descended, devouring it in minutes.

Back in the house, Jim had lit a fire. He handed her a mug of coffee. "What are you so happy about?" he asked.

She gestured out the window at the ravens still circling.

"Somebody appreciates my cooking." ❖

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## CRITTERS' CHRISTMAS

*By Diane Neil*

Jim and Gloria went all out for Christmas this year. They ordered the biggest turkey they could find--a 30 pounder--and Gloria shopped, wrapped, decorated, baked, and cooked for weeks.

Early in October, she had emailed each of her five married children a 'save the date' message. She had included one recipe for each family to bring: spinach dip, cranberry-orange relish, green bean casserole, carrot-raisin salad, and red, white, and green molded ambrosia.

Jim came home one day with a huge set of Christmas dinnerware.

"Oh, Jim!" Gloria held up a delicate holly-wreathed gravy boat. "Such a splurge!"

"You deserve it." Jim continued unpacking plates. "Christmas is your favorite holiday."

Some of the grandkids tried to weasel out of the



# ONE LITTLE GOLF BALL



*by Mary D. Scott*

## **Sunday, December 9, 2012 – How does one little golf ball cause so much chaos?**

As Jude and I drove home from the movies, we turned onto my street and almost hit a little dog. This is the same dog I almost hit just about a month ago. The dog stops cold in his tracks, sees the vehicle then darts off across the street to somewhere behind my house and the golf course.

When we came into my house, my Mom tells me about something loud hitting our house. She went outside to see if it was a golf ball, but couldn't find it. I told her about that same dog being on the loose again. While I was eating, I could hear the dog barking. I couldn't remember the name of the dog....I knew it was something with an "R" like Rufus or something.

I decided to call Ingrid and tell her about the dog being on the loose again. She remembered the last time she and I tried to find the dog, that the dog's name was Rufus. She told me she would go over to the owner's house and see if Rufus went back home yet and was all right.

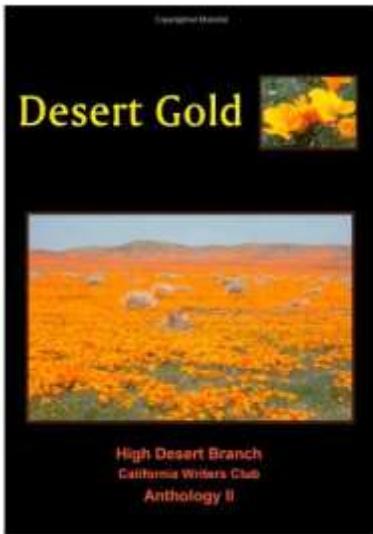
A few minutes later, when Jude was leaving, she drove me a few short blocks to Ingrid's house. We had expected to have already run into her looking for Rufus. As I approached Ingrid's front door I could hear both Bryan and Ingrid then Bryan opened the front door and came out carrying a net. I thought he was going to try catching Rufus with the net.... NOPE, I was wrong. Apparently, when Ingrid went to go out the front door to look for Rufus a bird had been perched in the wreath that hung on their door. The bird took the opportunity to fly into their house. Now, I am sure, their dog, Mr. Poe, would have loved to chase the bird around the house, so they had to put him into another room so they could catch the bird and get it out of the house. Aha! Now I knew why it took Ingrid so long to get out and find Rufus, and why Bryan came out the front door with this net!

Ingrid and I arrived at the home of Rufus to talk to the owner, Hope. Rufus was still not at home. Apparently, a golf ball hit their house and window, and when Hope opened the front door to see if anything broke, Rufus took off out of the house. We talked for a little bit, and I told her that I almost hit him again. She told me not to feel bad if I hit him. She would be sad but there isn't anything she can do about it. Hope had adopted Rufus from the shelter nearly four years ago. She said she could no longer keep chasing after him and would probably take him back to the shelter.

As we were leaving we heard Rufus barking again. He was coming toward us. He still would not let us, or Hope, get him. As Rufus was barking at us, he then started chasing after a cat. The cat also belongs to Hope. Aha! Now I know who owns the cat that keeps coming and pooping in our backyard. If I don't do a poop check before Jude brings her dogs over for a visit, they roll in the cat poop!

**Triggered Events:** Golf ball hits Hope's house. Hope opens front door to check for damage. Rufus runs out of house. Rufus almost gets hit by car again. Mary calls Ingrid to tell her about the dog again. Bird flies inside Ingrid's house as she is trying to leave to find Rufus. Ingrid and Bryan catch bird and set it free. Ingrid and I talk to Hope. Rufus returns to chase the cat that poops in my backyard. Rufus may end up back in the shelter.

ALL of this because of one bad golfer who hit his/her little golf ball. I'm sure he/she is totally oblivious to the chaos that was created! ❖



## *On Sale Now*

*Desert Gold*, a collection of poetry and short stories by members of the HDCWC plus several selections from the Incarcerated Authors Group, our outreach prison writing program, is available at regular meetings for \$10 and at Amazon online.

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## *Notes From the Editor ---*

Do you like what you see in *The Inkslinger*? I welcome all different genres of short fiction, non-fiction newsworthy items, poetry, and new age. Remember: use Arial Font, 11 point type, no need to double-space, and attach photos and /or submissions to your email. Place *Inkslinger* in the subject line of your emails. Now taking short book excerpts of about 300 words to entice new readers. Tell me if your book cover is posted on HDCWC.com and I can copy it directly to the excerpt.

Call for info: 760-646-2661 if you have any questions. Email : [Rusty@aFlairForWords.com](mailto:Rusty@aFlairForWords.com) or [RustyL@hughes.net](mailto:RustyL@hughes.net). Deadline for each month is the 15<sup>th</sup>. It won't change. That's what deadlines are for. To offer a suggestion, please contact me and we'll discuss it. I love new ideas.

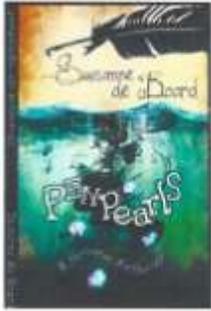
-- **Rusty LaGrange**

### Contact the Editor



[RustyL@Hughes.net](mailto:RustyL@Hughes.net) &  
[Rusty@aFlairForWords.com](mailto:Rusty@aFlairForWords.com)

# Books



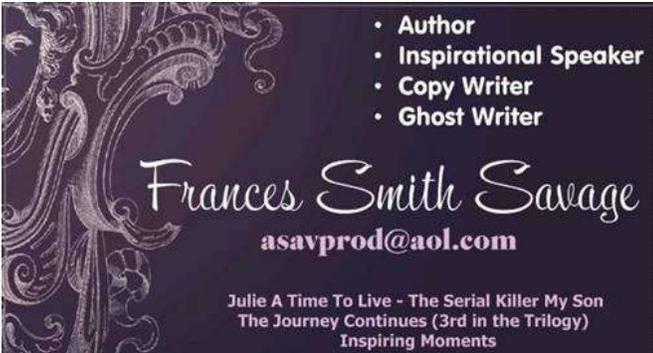
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Ad Size	Cost
One Business Card	\$10
Double Business Card	\$20
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Submit your ad along with payment to Roberta Smith by March 9, 2013 You may provide them at the HDCWC club meeting or mail to:

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If you have questions, contact Roberta at [cwrlsmith@verizon.net](mailto:cwrlsmith@verizon.net)

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